

NORTHERN PINE CONDITIONS.

The shipping season on the great lakes is near its end and there is found a great demand for boats, but so scanty a supply that it seems probable that much lumber which should be delivered before the close of navigation will not go forward, while a good deal absolutely contracted to be delivered will remain on the mill docks. There has been a decided falling off in the lumber carrying fleet proper this year and especially is there a lack of this class of vessels for Lake Superior ports. Vessels which have been depended upon to carry lumber now prefer to make their final trips with ore or grain, though the impending blockade in the latter commodity at Buffalo has lessened the demand for boats, but too late in the season to accomplish any good results for the lumber trade. Consequently the mill docks are fairly well filled with lumber, but it is largely sold, with the little remaining in first hands held at high prices.

Recent sales on Lake Superior are at the highest prices of the season. Low grade stock has at last come up to something like the figure which the mill men have been wanting, though it is not to be expected, nor perhaps desired, that the quotations of the latter part of 1899 should again prevail. A good profit is being realized by lumber manufacturers, and

even when we take into consideration the high price of stumpage and the extraordinary cost of logging there still remains margin.

The movement of white pine lumber by rail from the interior mills in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota has not been as active within the last few weeks as a year ago at the corresponding period, but as far as can be observed the cause of this slackening in movement is due mainly to the condition of supplies, added to some shortage of cars. People simply cannot get the lumber they want, for the stocks neither in size nor assortment are adequate to the requirement. Doubtless the demand of the season has been somewhat affected by the partial crop failure in some sections, but as far as the lumbermen are concerned it is fortunate that that should be so, for having difficulty in meeting what demand there is with the available supplies it would have been impossible to have taken care of a larger requirement.

One thing seems certain—that there is to be practically a lumber famine before next year's cut of white pine will be on the market. There is, of course, nowadays no question whatever as to upper grades. The output would have to be considerably larger than it is or than it possibly can be to meet the call for finishing and shop lum-

ber and for other uses which require the better class of white pine.

In the lower grades there is more or less fluctuation. In some sections this year there has been a larger output of inch proportionately than of dimension, and so we have seen prices somewhat out of line; but as the year draws toward a close and as the mills are shutting down we find values adjusting themselves on strong lines.

There is no advance to be particularly noted on items which have been strong throughout the season, but those which have been in some seed or at certain times inclined to weaken are showing a sympathy with the remainder of the list, and so the white pine industry and trade promises to go into the winter with assurance of a steady market.—American Lumberman.

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