

CANADA: ITS LANDS AND ITS FORESTS.

We reproduce with pleasure the following interesting paper from the *English Timber Trades Journal* of June 7th, 1884:

The Dominion of Canada is, doubtless, the most nearly connected with the mother country of all its various colonies, as much from its colonial institutions as from its facility of access, and because it contains within itself all the elements of a great nation in cordial co-operation with its parent state, and rejoicing, without a particle of envy or jealousy, in its pre-eminence. Therefore all that relates to the progress and prosperity of that essential part of our empire interests here at home, and especially in the timber trade; for, though our supplies from other lands are in no danger of failing, there are certain varieties of timber which are considered indispensable here that can only be obtained on a large and liberal scale from the Dominion. Such are pine and spruce, which for years past have been publicly declared to be getting scarce and difficult to get in the settled parts of the country, but which the Northwest Territory, as civilization spreads, will be able to supply to this side of the world for ages yet to come.

For evidence of its immense capacity of expansion, and its power of affording occupation for all the spare labor of the Old World, we have only to refer to the pages of a Blue Book lately issued by the Canadian Department of the Interior, and presented to the Dominion Parliament. From this we learn that the land disposed of during the year 1883 for homesteads, pre-emptions, and by sales, amounted to 1,831,882 acres, as compared with 2,699,145 in 1882. The decrease is accounted for by the fact that in the spring of 1882, during the period of inflation experienced in the Northwest, the demand for lands, especially in the British country, was very great and the area disposed of correspondingly large. The subsidence of speculation in these lands last year was remarkable, and a difference of 867,263 acres between the two years shows how much was done in 1882 beyond what was needed for actual occupation, and the sales of last year were more in accordance with the natural progress of the country, and still in advance of any year since the North-West had been incorporated with the Dominion, except that of 1882.

There are at the present time twenty-six colonization companies in the North West, to whom grants of land have been made of nearly 3,000,000 acres, one-half of which area is open to homestead and pre-emption settlement upon application to the companies, who are for this particular purpose, under their agreements, constituted the agents of the Government.

Fifty years ago, when railroads were in an experimental state, colonization was slow and difficult in Canada, because to be settled in any locality, at a distance from a market town, without roads, or such as were only passable at certain seasons of the year, was like being banished for life; and the occupier and his family were often subjected to privations and miseries, which were sometimes unendurable, and many half cultivated homesteads lapsed back into barbarism from being abandoned by their hopeless proprietors, who could neither live on them, nor find a buyer to relieve them of their unprofitable investments. All this is now entirely changed. Steam and railways have brought distant places nearer together, and lands in proximity to the lines may be obtained within reach of all the advantages of civilization and easy transmission of produce to the nearest market, where in return all the implements and seed necessary to husbandry can be procured without loss of time and labor. These lands have been mostly bought up by the companies above mentioned for the purpose of reselling to emigrants for occupation, and it is stated that, with the view of making their lands as attractive as possible, most of the companies are at their own expense furnishing their settlers with many of the necessary conveniences, such as saw and grist mills, stores and blacksmiths' shops, and carpenters' shops, stage communication and postal facilities where the regular mail service has not already been established. They are also introducing superior qualities of seed

grain, thoroughbred and well graded live stock, and improved implements of industry. It is shown by the returns made to the department that generally speaking the expectations of the Government in offering inducements to cattle raisers, to place their stock upon the eligible grazing grounds lying along the base of the Rocky Mountains, have already to a large extent been attained. The rents paid into the department on account of such lands during the last fiscal year amounted to \$19,293, which exceeded the whole cash revenue derived from the sales of Dominion lands in any one year down to the close of 1878. The development of the mineral resources of the country is proceeding satisfactorily. In regard to the surveys, the area subdivided into sections and quarter sections during the past year amounted to 27,000,000 acres, equal to 168,750 acres of 160 acres each. Briefly summarized, last season's surveys, as distinct from their technical and scientific results, prove beyond dispute that large tracts of lands represented upon the educational maps, with which the present generation is familiar, as useless deserts, are found to be of good quality and suitable for the varied branches of agriculture.

It is evident from the foregoing that a good class of men receive every encouragement to settle on these lands. But so much the more will those who have only their sinews and their good will to offer in the field of labor, be in request, and in the colonies the man who begins at the foot of the ladder is often found in a few years far up towards the top of it, for, as Dr. Johnson said long ago, "few things are impossible to diligence and skill."

It is rather remarkable, however, that in these returns, and in reckoning up to the settler the advantages of his allotment, very little is said of the timber upon it, which, according to the accounts which are current here in the trade, ought to be regarded as a valuable asset of the property. The "grazing lands lying along the base of the Rocky Mountains" are described as "eligible," and have, according to the report, attracted settlers to a large extent, as distinct from forest lands, which require altogether a different sort of occupier. But at any rate there is not that greed among settlers for land well stocked with timber which one would expect from the possession of a commodity which we are gravely told the world will be greatly in want of in another ten years. There appears to be always ten years between the prophecy and its fulfilment, and it is just ten years since the whole theory of "forest extinction" was fully explained in our columns by a great Canadian authority on the subject at that date, and in the interval timber produce of Canada has fallen in our markets by at least 15 per cent. Nor need we go far to ascertain how the value stands in the lands of production at this day. Our last number furnishes us with authority on the subject from a witness who would naturally put the best value he could on the staple of his own country.

Our correspondent at St. John, N. B., states as follows:—

"Deals appear to be plentiful, with the supply considerable in excess of the demand. Low prices obtain. I heard of one dealer offering dimension deals (regulars) at the remarkably low price of \$8 per mille, which is certainly not encouraging to the producer."

A mille of feet represents a fraction over half a Petersburg standard. Consequently the price quoted would be rather less than £3 4s. per standard, estimating the value of the Canadian dollar as five to the pound sterling; fifty shillings added for freight and another five for charges, these goods might be set down in any of our seaports, ex ship, at about £6 per standard.

Turning now to this side of the Atlantic, our columns naturally abound with different views of the probabilities of trade. One is disposed to think the supply abroad will run short at the latter part of the season. Another asserts confidently that there is every likelihood that the importation will be a very large one. One thing all agree upon, that is great competition, and the difficulty of realizing a satisfactory margin on wholesale transactions.

Nor do our reports from the provinces last week at all modify this general impression, as

it is evident the shipbuilding trade, which absorbed last year most of the superfluous stocks imported, is now in a very depressed condition; and a large gap in the ordinary rate of consumption must occur in the ports which chiefly represented that important business; and it is lamentable to see so many industrious men of skill in their handicraft discharged for lack of orders to keep them employed. Formerly the yards had always a ship or two on the stocks on builders' account, to turn the hands on when orders were slack, but now the prospects are so bad that there is no encouragement to do any thing speculatively in that way, and the masters in their own defence have no alternative but to pay off the men for whom they have no longer employment. Our Sunderland correspondent, who may be considered to speak in the name of that trade generally, stated last week that it was going from "bad to worse," to the great injury of the timber interest; and though steam vessels are still plentiful as timber carriers, it is said that in the north the number laid up for want of employment is increasing.

On the whole there is nothing to justify any expectation of a rise in prices as yet. Goods coming in at low freights will cause the old stocks to be offered on very easy terms, and that of itself impinges on the profit of the new. So that to hold its own is as much as the trade can expect until a more advanced period of the season enables it to judge pretty nearly what the importation is likely to be.

EMIGRATION.

The *Northwestern Lumberman* says:—There is one feature of this season of progress worthy of account; and that is the fact that the tide of immigration from the old world is comparing favorably with that of former years. The large majority of the thousands of foreigners arriving are going to the newer states and territories to the westward. The effect of this increase of population, and the settlement of new lands, will be seen within the next year or two in the progress of Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Texas, Oregon and Washington Territory, as well as in Kansas and Nebraska. The Dakota boom is said to have spent its force last year, but it is bound to accumulate a new one. It is always the case that when a new country begins to settle up, the speculators have everything their own way for a year or two, and this is followed by reaction. Afterwards comes the development of substantial progress. The farmers get a start, begin to have produce to sell, improve their holdings, and thus quicken the life of all trade. It is then that the paper towns disappear, and the centres of trade that are really to begin to grow. Dakota has had her speculators' boom, and henceforward will make advance in solid improvement. So it is with the newer sections of all the great West and Southwest. The man who is counting on the present extent of demand for all kinds of commodities, including lumber, as the ultimatum, is making a grand mistake. And the increase is coming much sooner than most men are now counting on, under the influence of these comparatively slow times.

SWEDEN.

The correspondent of the *Timber Trades Journal*, writing from Stockholm under date May 17th, says:—Notwithstanding reports of financial difficulties in both New York and London considerable parcels of redwood of the best shipments from the lower Gulf have been disposed of within the past few days. It is, I believe, correct that amongst other sales one of about 1,200 standards of a leading Gefe mark has been sold to an English house at £11 10s., £9 10s., £6 15s., £5 15s. Prices for battens did not transpire, but are understood to be nearly as good proportionately. Other favorable sales of 2nd class marks have also been made from the Soderham and Gefe districts.

Small sales of whitewood from lower Gulf continue to be reported at £5 10s. to £5 12s. 6d. for 3x9 & 11 deals, and £4 10s. to £4 12s. 6d. for 2½x7 & 8½ battens, both as falling from saw. Sales of Swedish whitewood for shipment from Drontheim are likewise said to have taken place in good sized lots at prices better by about 6s. per Petersburg standard than those above named as now being effected on the Swedish side, ac-

count being taken of the difference in freights. These goods are culled from practically the same woods as Sundwall whitewood, and the sales must therefore be taken as an expression of consumers' opinion as to the increased value of sawn whitewood here, that has been converted from fresh-cut and unshaken logs, as compared to that manufactured from barked logs that have lain two seasons in the water. Importers who intend to put their whitewood through the planing-mill will, doubtless, in time find it to their interest to pay even 10s. per standard more for unshaken goods than for the usual shipments from the north of Sweden, that are converted from logs that have been lying a long time in the rivers with the bark peeled off. The case that I have referred to constitutes a trenchant argument for the removal of the compulsory barking regulation which now obtains on meet waterways of this country, and especially as far as whitewood is concerned, which is subject to such great and increasing competition from not only the Russian Baltic provinces and Finland, but also from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in Canada. If we estimate the difference in the value of the goods at only 5s. per standard, and the cost of barking at 2s. 9d. per standard, we have a sum of 7s. 9d. per sawn standard thrown into the river for the problematical good of the fishes, who, according to the opinion of one of our most foremost Swedish men of science, are not even thankful for this careful regard of their health on the part of the Swedish authorities.

MOISTURE AND VEGETATION.

In his notes on the glaciers of Alaska, Mr. Thos. Meehan, of Philadelphia, states that he observed on the tops of what are known as "totem poles," in some of the Indian villages, trees of a large size growing apparently in good condition. These totem poles are thick logs of hemlock or spruce, set up before the doors of Indian lodges, carved all over with queer characters representing living creatures of every description, and which are supposed to be genealogies, or to tell of some famous event in the family history. They are not erected by the Indians now, and it is difficult to get any connected accounts of what they really tell. At the old village of Kaigan there are numbers of poles erected, with no carving at all on them, while many are wholly covered, and these all had one or more trees of *Abies sitchensis* (sitka spruce) growing on them. One of these trees must have been about twenty years old, and was half as tall as the pole on which it was growing. The pole may have been twenty feet high. The roots of the spruces had descended the whole length of the poles, and gone into the ground from which the larger trees now derived their nourishment. In one case the roots had grown so large as to split the thick pole on one side from the bottom to the top, and here this root projected along the whole length to the ground, about two inches beyond the outer circumference of the pole. Only in an atmosphere surcharged with moisture could a seed sprout on the top of a pole twenty feet from the ground, and continue for years to grow almost, or quite as well, as if it were in the ground. We may understand by incidents like these how tree-life endures so long in this part of Alaska, and why rocky acclivities, on which no vegetation at all could exist in the dry climate of the Eastern States, are here clothed with a luxuriant fresh growth so thick that is almost impossible to make a journey through it.—*Lumber World*.

Shipping of Great Ports.

During the course of last year 4,379 vessels entered the port of Antwerp, gauging a total of 3,744,428 tons, which places Antwerp, as I have already stated, at the head of European ports. In 1882 the tonnage of Havre was only 2,200,000, that of Genoa 2,250,000, and of Bilbao 315,000, owing to its iron ore exports. Among the English ports a few only exceed Antwerp. London is still the first port in the world, with a tonnage of 10,421,000 tons; and Liverpool the second, with 7,351,000 tons; Newcastle follows with 6,000,000 tons, also in excess of Antwerp, but both Hull and Glasgow are below, with respectively 1,875,000 and 2,110,000 tons.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.