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The Canada Lumberman

DEVOTED TO THE LUMBER AND TIMBER INTERESTS OF THE DOMINION.

PUBLISHED SEMI-MONTHLY BY
TOKER & Co. PETERBOROUGH.

Terms of Subscription:

One copy, one year, in advance..... \$2 00
One copy, six months, in advance..... 1 00

Advertising Rates:

Per line, for one year..... \$0 90
Per line, for six months..... 50
Per line, for three months..... 30
Per line, for first insertion..... 10
Per line, for each subsequent insertion to 3 mo's..... 05
Cards not occupying more than 12 lines (1 inch) per annum..... 8 00
Cards not occupying more than 12 lines (1 inch) for six months..... 5 00
Cards not occupying more than 6 lines per annum..... 5 00
Cards not occupying more than 6 lines, for 6 mo's..... 3 00
Special rates will be made for page, half page and column advertisements.

Advertisements intended for insertion in any particular issue should reach the office of publication at least three clear days before the day of publication, to insure insertion.

All communications, orders and remittances should be addressed and made payable to TOKER & Co., Peterborough, Ont.

Communications intended for insertion in the CANADA LUMBERMAN, must be accompanied by the name of the writer, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith. Communications to insure insertion (if accepted) in the following number, should be in the hands of the publishers a week before the date of the next issue.

PETERBOROUGH, Ont. SEPT. 15, 1881.

OUR TIMBER POLICY.

We are not aware that anything could prove more conclusively the short-sighted and destructive system with which the timber lands of the Province have been and are dealt with than the circumstances which are now about to compel the Ontario Government to place in the market a considerable area of pine lands in the Nipissing district. It is no longer a state secret that the Crown Lands Department of Ontario have recently organized parties to make reports on the timber in those townships in the district referred to that are now prejudiced and liable to be destroyed by the squatters and settlers and pine fire bugs, to which on several occasions we have found it necessary to refer. With wonderful acumen they seek to transfer the risk of this valuable trust to the lumber trade at par. Do they expect that the trade are equally ignorant of their business, and will bid such bonuses as they would have been justified in doing had the fire risks been protected by the department? It is within our knowledge, and our attention has been recently called to the immense depreciation that lumber operators put on the value of standing timber where the ground has been forestalled by the squatter or settler. Perhaps the statement of a practical operator, and one who is prepared at any time to bid for public timber lands, may call attention to this subject; the information is given freely to us to publish, backed up by evidence which may be available should we require to use it.

The circumstances are these, and seem to us what are liable to occur on this now area about to be exposed to sale. The operator states that he bought a limit not a hundred miles from the townships which are to be sold. He discovered that the settlers were damaging the timber, and although most unwillingly, he was compelled to operate. No sooner were his operations started than these settlers and squatters actually cut down and put three to four cross-cuts in from four to six hundred pine trees of the choicest kind. The only reason he could ascertain for this was that they would make sure of shingle timber when, or if over, they should require them. The operator states that each tree would have averaged 140 feet of the best board timber. He further states that he appealed to the Crown Lands Department for protection with no results, and then asked the department to allow

him an equal number of trees from the next township, which was not under licence, and was also refused; so that the operator lost this valuable timber, and the Province the Crown dues which would accrue therefrom.

We do not wish to be understood to claim that the department should not now expose these timber lands for sale; probably it is the only thing left to be done; but we do say that so long as the revenue of the Province did not require it, and the manufacturing requirements of the Province did not demand it, fresh timber areas were better unsold. There are quite enough timber lands under license west of the Ottawa section and south of Lake Nipissing exposed to dangerous fire risks, and which should be forced to furnish revenue by keeping other fresh territory out of the market, if it were possible.

A WORD TO THE TRADE.

We are now, notwithstanding the fair wind and flow of trade, approaching the period when the careful navigator will take in sail. We are going to ask a question, the answer to which ought to lead all thinking operators to operate carefully. Mr. Operator, had you the pine growing to-day that you have cut down within the last ten years still standing on hand, would you not be able to sell out for more money than you are worth to-day? We anticipate the affirmative reply.

The disposition to pay bonuses for timber lands based on the profits of stocks got out with cheap labor and supplies; the fact that a dear labor and supply market to face for the coming season of manufacture; the fact that for every percentage of advance in our labor there is an equal percentage less work done; the fact that the old tide of trade will face us with our stocks on hand, got out on these expensive, and perhaps to some extent unavoidable circumstances, this array of facts should arrest the natural and fatal anxiety of many in the trade to operate too largely and to endeavor to get rich too fast. To those that hold timber lands, we say, go slow. Keep your plant account in service; don't increase it. Keep your mill going—not too high pressure; your foundry bill will be less, and you will cut better lumber. Make up your mind to operate to the extent that you can handle under your personal supervision, and don't compete with your wealthier, but perhaps reckless neighbor for labor, and we safely predict that you will find your properties three years hence more valuable and under better control than those who, carried away by a little temporary prosperity, project increased operations, which can only be carried out under the most advantageous circumstances.

A DESPATCH dated Parry Sound, Sept. 2, says: Serious difficulties have arisen here between the river drivers in the employ of the Ontario Bank and the foreman of the Parry Sound Lumber Company about water rights on the Seguin river. Years ago the company purchased the right to overflow land, and constructed a large dam at the outlet of Mill Lake to hold a supply of water for their mill during dry seasons. The water is now very low, being barely enough to float logs through the sluice at Mill Lake. In order to keep a supply for the drive the Bank men have taken forcible possession of one sluice and have jammed logs on the rapids, holding back the water so as to shut down Mr. Wm. Beatty's flour-mill and the large saw-mill of the Parry Sound Lumber Company. The logs of the Bank, after leaving Mill Lake, must pass over the sluice at the company's mill before reaching the Bank's mill on the Georgian Bay. It is understood that orders have been given by the company's manager to resist this passage by force if necessary, and very serious complications, and even bloodshed, are feared.

THE very great scarcity of fodder next season consequent on the poor crops of hay is a matter of serious concern by the coming winter's operators in the woods. A double misfortune has befallen those of New Brunswick in the destruction of the great reserve fund, that of the Tantamar and now and west marshes being flooded by salt water. The dykes broke at the late high tide, completely submerging them to a depth of upwards of four feet.

PREVENTION OF FOREST FIRES.

The Kingston *Whig* has the following editorial:—

"The curse curseless shall not come," and though like Mackbeth's wife we may hail the oft-seen terror as a "thing of custom," it will not the less work its mission as the penalty for the breach of moral or economic law. A race gifted with other aptitudes than that which has found its home in this country might work out the utilization of the forests which clothed it by converting them into materials which would add to their own wealth and so of mankind; but the discussion hereof would probably open up questions of ethnology as various as those presented by the contemplation of many parts of the world endowed with everything but an intelligent population. There have been forest fires in Ontario since the settlement of the U.E. Loyalists, increasing in destructive energy year by year, and it would seem vain to hope that they will not recur with greater ravage. The Ottawa valley has been desolated throughout entire townships until there are millions of acres which no man will buy. The consolation afforded by the agricultural commission report that such is not the case is probably the best an ignorant and inculpable people can desire to have. While we can sell a few millions of feet every year, and while the party in power are satisfied with the returns, it is idle to discuss the propriety of enquiring whether this source of revenue is ever likely to fail us, or whether it is worth while to diminish the revenue by measures calculated to ensure its duration. With abundant fuel in the coal mines of a foreign neighbor we may cheer ourselves, while the miles of woodland yearly recede from view, that we have never made any effort to carbonize our wood into charcoal, but have instead dissipated its heat to the empty air. While our streams dry up, and the hum of many a mill is hushed forever imported coal will supply our frontier manufactures with power we have flung back to the heaven that gave it.

It could not be otherwise where national opinion is impervious to any conception of the curse which is wrought on us by the destruction of fertile soil, of fuel, and of building timber every year, it could hardly be expected that criminal negligence in dealing with fire would be punished. The record of the general iniquity in this respect might be shown in darker light. The hideous crime of arson is common in Ontario, and, as might also be expected, no steps are being taken in the interests of justice to bring the criminals to account. No insurance company will keep a policy on foot upon unoccupied farm buildings, and the record of their business shew the wisdom of this provision. It is well known also that bad harvests immensely increase the losses of insurance companies. Much may be allowed for the difficulty of detecting incendiarism, but the difficulty is too often made an excuse for supineness. From the combustible material of farm buildings a law exacting people would derive a reason for greater activity in ferreting out incendiaries. The very ground for such a reason makes them dread injury to themselves from the hands of the wrong doer should their endeavour to track him prove abortive. And so it is with field fires put out among stumps and in log-heaps during the season between May and November. If the farmer is negligent his neighbors suffer and they put up with it. If one per cent of the actionable cases had been dealt with ten years ago it is more than likely the damage would be enormously less. Those who, from a sense of public duty, will bring the offender of this year before the courts, will merit the thanks of the public. Not a single case of negligence should go unpunished. It is one means only, but an important means, of educating criminally careless people to a sense of their duty, and of the rights of others. And such a conviction will spread into the domain of those cases attributed to accident. When the farmer shall be made keenly sensible of their rights and duties in this matter, there will be a ray of hope available to the public that the Government of the Province will do something to protect the Crown Timber Lands from destruction by fire.

TAY BIRD'S BLOOD BITTERS, the great system renovator, blood and liver syrup, acts on the bowels, liver and kidneys, and is a perfect tonic.

TORONTO.

From Our Own Correspondent.

Since my letter to you of two weeks ago lumber has been arriving for export by the N. & N. W. R. quite freely, and the docks belonging to that company are crowded with lumber, recalling to mind the good lumber times which existed at the close of the American civil war. The local dealers, however, are still complaining bitterly at the treatment accorded them by the railway company in the matter of supplying them with cars for the local wants of consumers; dimension stuff in consequence is extremely scarce, and the company persistently refuse to grant them more than a limited number of cars for the wants of the city trade. This discrimination in favor of the foreign markets, as against the wants of our home market, is certainly unjust, when we consider the large amount of pecuniary aid given by our citizens to assist railroad enterprise. This, however, is not the only instance of unfair treatment received by Torontonians at the hands of railway corporations, and so it will continue to the end of the chapter. Railway companies are proverbially slippery customers to deal with, and you never know when you have them; there always seems to be some loop-hole through which to escape from the performance of their engagements.

Another serious cause for complaint, as mentioned in my last letter, is the large increase in their freight tariff, 20 per cent. being the rate of advance from all points of the N. & N. W. R. and its various branches. True, the company try to convince their customers that they are actually granting them concessions, instead of laying on more onerous burdens, inasmuch as they grant them the privilege of loading on a car 20,400 lbs. instead of 20,000 lbs., the latter being the weight previously allowed to shippers. At a first glance this appears plausible, but the company know full well that previously, in at least eight cases out of ten, the latter weight was brought over the road, but want of time and other causes prevented the weighing of all cars to detecting offenders. Their specious pleading in this case virtually amounts to this: We will grant you the liberty to do that which you have hitherto done, and charge you 20 per cent. additional for the privilege of so doing. This increase in rates will tell most severely on dimension stuff cut to order, as shippers cannot venture safely in putting on more than 7,500 feet and keep within the weight at present allowed. This estimate, of course, is based on the lumber being green from the saw, therefore the only course open to them will be an increase in prices on all bill stuff cut to order; and last, unless dry, had better be left at the mills until they are seasoned, as cost of manufacture cannot be realized if brought here in a green state.

Another discrimination in favor of the foreign trade, as against the local dealers, is to be found in the difference of about 25 per cent. in freight rates in favor of all lumber passing over the company's docks; so that all things considered, it is little wonder that yard men and local consumers deal out hard names when discussing this matter, and the fact is undeniable that retailers are so heavily handicapped through the above and other causes, that it is little wonder that so many go to the wall when times of financial depression occur. At present, however, in spite of all difficulties, building goes on as briskly as ever, and it would seem that Toronto had obtained possession of Aladdin's wonderful lamp, for turn whichever way you will, new buildings are springing up in all directions, and vacant lots in eligible positions will soon become a thing of the past.

Prices at the various yards remain firm, and former quotations are fully maintained, and should the present dry weather continue much longer, bill stuff will be hard to obtain at any price, as a large number of mills have been compelled to shut down, not daring to continue running until rain has fallen, as the sparks from their smokestacks easily ignite the combustible material laying all around them. Rates to Oswego rule about the same as mentioned formerly, and vessels hard to obtain.

Toronto, Sept. 9, 1881.

Improvements are constantly being made in the manufacture of steel pens. Esterbrook's are of superior excellence. For sale by all stationers.