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## TREND OF THE CAMP SUPPLY TRADE

**Price Fluctuations During the Past Year Comparatively Narrow.—Only a Few Lines Show Important Changes.—Labor Still Scarce and Wages High.**

In this, our Second Annual Camp Supply Number, it is appropriate to take a retrospective glance over the field and enumerate the changes which have taken place in the prices of supplies for the logging camps as compared with one year ago. Not that we can hope to tell the purchasing agents of our lumber companies much that is not already within their knowledge, but rather that in crystalized form the information may be useful for comparative purposes and for reference at some future time.

The business of supplying the camps is of increasing importance, for while our production of lumber may have already reached the maximum quantity, more men are required to-day to bank a given number of logs than were necessary ten or even five years ago. The average woodsman of to-day is a man of independence. He knows that if his services are rejected in one camp he will be extended a hearty welcome at another. In other words, the labor supply is scarcely equal to the demand, and the shantyman does not feel that compulsion which he once did to exert himself in his employer's behalf. This latter remark will apply to other walks of life as well as "in the woods". Nevertheless, the result is that the lumberman conducting operations on a similar scale to some years ago is called upon to provide food for a greater number of men.

Taken as a whole, camp supplies have remained almost stationary during the past year. Some lines have advanced, others declined. The most important advance is in the price of cotton goods, owing to the sharp but somewhat artificial rise in the price of the raw material. Pork prices represent the greatest decline, current values being much lower than one year ago.

### LABOR.

As in all other lines of industrial effort, the labor problem plays an important part in the lumber world. True, strikes have never in an organized state caused much trouble except at the mills, but on the other hand the question of supply and demand has always cut a big figure on the limits. This problem has in fact reached an acute stage in the past few years,

toba Capital and neighboring towns with strong young immigrants from the British Isles particularly, and Europe generally. After the summer's work in the harvest fields, these men were out of employment and readily accepted work on the limits. As the rate of wages was lower than in Ottawa, the American firms gave the western men the preference. Just here it may be remarked that this new phase of the labor problem may have an important bearing in Ottawa, but it is difficult at present to make a prediction with any degree of assurance.

Getting back to Ottawa, however, it may be stated that until recent years the supply of men was equal if not greater than the demand and wages remained normal. Wages have been known to drop as low as \$10 a month and board, and \$18 a month and board was considered a good thing. The French Canadian had the field to himself, and the field had the French Canadian to itself. The mill, camp and drive were his principal avenues of employment. However, the establishment of pulp and paper mills, the building of railways, the movement to Western Canada and the



THE DINING ROOM OF A LOGGING CAMP.

and naturally occupies much attention and creates much discussion.

Since the days of Bytown, Ottawa has held the position of Hub in the Eastern Canadian lumber world. The far reaching river with which the Capital shares its name, has been the means whereby the industry has been developed and maintained. The Chaudiere district alone with its mills has attracted and held an industrial army in Ottawa. Hence it is but natural that the city should have become the great hiring center for the workers on the limits and the log drives. Even the firms operating in the Georgian Bay district and farther west in Ontario look to the Capital for their men. As a matter of fact though, Winnipeg entered the field last year and supplied many hundreds of men for the Lake of the Woods district. The popular move to the Canadian West filled the streets of the Mani-

northern parts of Quebec and Ontario, and the increased industrial activity in the cities, have all done their share in recent years in luring the hardy lumber jack from the limits. With this marked decrease in the labor supply came a corresponding increase in the demand and a decidedly interesting situation was the result. The influx of American capital and the increase in Canadian capital in the Georgian Bay, Nipissing, Kippewa, Temiskaming and other districts made a new and vigorous call for men, and Ottawa had to respond. The consequence was a rapid advance in wages, in fact they have doubled within the past few years. The ruling wages for the season just closed were: Axe hands, \$30 to \$32 a month and board; teamsters, \$35 a month and board; road men, \$30 a month and board; river drivers, \$40 to \$45 a month and board.

The question naturally arises, will these