

## The White Pine Supply.



It is difficult to arrive at satisfactory conclusions concerning the white pine supply, because the conditions of the trade are undergoing constant changes. It is stated by some that the supply is becoming rapidly exhausted; the size of the saw logs is diminishing, and Mr. G. Johnson in his "Forest Wealth of Canada," from statistical information he received, draws a gloomy picture of the trade. He summarises his conclusions as follows:—(1) That the first quality pine has nearly disappeared. (2) That of second quality pine there is a considerable supply.

(3) That of other timber woods there is a considerable supply. (4) That we are within measurable distance of the time when, with the exception of spruce, as to wood, and of British Columbia as to provinces, Canada shall cease to be a wood-exporting country.

Taking the first of his conclusions, it cannot be denied that pine of the great size and splendid qualities of years gone by is not so plentiful in the market, and the supply of really first quality forms a much less proportion of the export, but that a great quantity of remarkably fine trees still exist, scattered through the timber limits and the Crown Lands is well known. The preponderance of smaller sizes and lower qualities, it is held by some, may reasonably be attributed to the present method of cutting, as it now pays to manufacture trees that were years ago not considered worth felling. In support of his conclusion that the forests are becoming exhausted, Mr. Johnson quotes returns from the cutters showing a diminution to the average size of the logs year by year.

### TIMBER.

|                         | Average cubic feet per piece. |       |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|
|                         | 1865.                         | 1893. |
| Waney white pine .....  | 80                            | 58    |
| Square white pine ..... | 66                            | 44    |

From which it would appear that waney white pine was 38 per cent. larger in 1865 than in 1893, and square white pine 50 per cent.

### PINE SAW LOGS.

|               | Average size, board measure. |       |
|---------------|------------------------------|-------|
|               | 1887.                        | 1893. |
| Ontario ..... | 124½                         | 98½   |
| Quebec .....  | 138                          | 127½  |

On talking this matter over with Mr. Johnson, he maintained that the present severe cutting of the forests existed before 1865, but others think that it is wrong to conclude from these figures that the size of the existing trees is less than when the forests were differently exploited. Much of the timber and many of the logs now used would not have been touched by the lumberman in former years. Also when a tree was felled in many cases only one log was taken, and the smaller end of the tree discarded, but now two or three logs will be taken to the mill from such a tree, and, of course, the top logs being used, a smaller average will result.

To show that it is now general to cut smaller trees, it may be quoted that in the Province of Quebec the rates of dues chargeable on pine logs of a diameter of eleven inches or less, made out of the top of trees cut on timber limits, have been fixed at 80 cents instead of one dollar, because the rates of dues on the small tops was too high to make it profitable to float them to the mill, and the leaving of these small parts of the trees on the ground constituted a danger in spreading forest fires.

The second and third conclusions above referred to are acquiesced in by every authority.

As regards the fourth conclusion, which raises the great and much discussed question of the duration of the forests of the Dominion to supply the export trade. Much has been written on this subject, and many prophecies have been made, which have not been fulfilled. It was said over twenty years ago that the supply of white pine would be exhausted in ten years, but the trade appears to go on still from year to year without inconvenience and interruption. Some portion of the lower part of the Province of Ontario has been denuded of pine, and consequently the lumberman has to go further for his supplies, but with the opening

of new lines of railway and the improvement of water communication, the existing forests keep up an adequate supply. In the districts of Ontario which have not yet been developed, much of the pine is growing, interspersed with hardwoods, and where it grows under these conditions it is usually of good quality and size.

In 1893 Mr. Edwards, M.P. (see *Hansard* 1893, page 3319), said: "There are those who believe that our pine lumber is very nearly exhausted, and has been most largely exhausted at the instance of the lumberman. This, Mr. Speaker, is not at all the case. There is another source from which the forests of Canada have suffered, and far more extensively than from the lumberman's axe. I refer to forest fires and to fires which are brought about by the settlement of the country; not in every case by legitimate settlement, but very largely by illegitimate settlement. It is safe to say, and I am sure that every lumberman in this House will bear me out in the statement, that ten times the amount of forest wealth has been destroyed in Canada through that instrumentality than has been cut by the lumbermen, and those who desire to protect our forests should devote themselves to advocating the care of our forests and discouraging in every way this illegitimate settlement. If this is done I will venture, this statement, that you may let our timber be cut even as it is being cut to-day, and it will last this country for at least one hundred, perhaps two hundred, years to come."

Before the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly of Quebec in 1894, Mr. Edwards gave the following interesting evidence concerning the pine trade:—

"The profits on spruce are larger than on pine. The pine of to-day is very remote; and for the operations in the pine lumber trade of to-day the investment is large. In the next place, the investment for improvements is large, because you have to improve the streams for a great distance; and, moreover, you have to put your supplies in one year before operations begin. We are buying supplies now that will be consumed next winter. All our oats, hay, pork, flour—in fact, everything that goes into the operations—are being bought and paid for now, and next September our men go up to the woods, and the logs are cut. Now, a portion only of these logs will reach the mills next year. That portion is sawed, and a small portion of it is realised on; but the bulk of it is not realised on till the next year. Then the logs that remain behind come down, and the same thing follows; so that the average may be taken as two and a half years."

"Now, in the spruce operations, you simply put in your supplies the year you operate. You get the logs the same year, and you realise upon them largely the same year. It is a very short operation compared with the other. The cost of taking out the logs is nothing as compared with the cost of taking out pine. And having regard to all these points, and also having regard to the fact that in the investment in a spruce limit you have an investment that can be kept in perpetuity, so long as you take care of the property, I regard no investment in Canada as good as an investment in a spruce limit, and prefer it to pine."

"As regards red pine, the quantity is, of course, to some extent limited. I think east of the Gatineau there is very little red pine in the country. Red pine is not of the commercial value of white pine. It comes immediately into competition with the Georgia pine, which is preferred to our red pine; so that the red pine is not a saleable article. And while I certainly attach commercial value to the red pine, it is not nearly so valuable as white pine. If, however, you ask me if I attach value, I make the statement here, that I attach value to every green thing that grows upon a timber limit."

"As pine becomes less, I consider the value of other woods enhanced. I might say this, that for the last year or two I have been contemplating the idea of commencing to operate our hard woods."

"I consider the pine, spruce, red pine, birch, maple, hemlock, tamarac, and cedar of commercial value. Beech, I think, will come in too. Whitewood and basswood also; in fact, in the purchasing of any of our limits we have been governed to some extent by the whole of the timber on the limits irrespective of what that timber might be."