

## CANADA'S LUMBER TRADE IN 1894

## A Review of the Business of the Year.

## THE GENERAL SURVEY.

A CAREFUL study of lumber conditions in the Dominion in 1894 tells the one story of a quiet year. In Ontario, more in some respects than in the other provinces, trade suffered from unsettled tariff conditions in the United States during the season when lumber should have been at its best. Fortunately the year did not close without a settlement in this matter having been reached and a brief respite from the dullness of the preceding months was manifest during October and November. There is reason to suppose that in 1895 Ontario lumbermen will secure some practical benefits from free lumber. Quebec reports for the year are not encouraging. Quebec port is losing its old time pre-eminence as a lumber shipping port, whilst Montreal is putting on trade that had hitherto gone there. The annual report of the Harbor Master of Montreal shows that there were shipped from that port during the season to the United Kingdom and continental ports 176,405,425 feet, board measure, and to River Plate, 10,466,000 feet board measure, making a grand total of 187,871,425 feet, or an increase of 49,158,629 feet over the previous year. Prices in Quebec during the season advanced, but these did not keep pace with the increased value of timber limits and standing pine. A fair trade was done with South America. The year 1895 was not favorable to lumbering in the Maritime provinces. A severe winter in 1893 and 1894 was productive of a small output of logs, but fortunately the season of 1894-95 gives promise of much better things. It is noticeable of the trade in these provinces that the stock of merchantable deals on hand at the close of 1894 is phenomenally small. New trade is expected with the United States as a result of free lumber, and the change in tariff relations with France is expected to open out a trade with that country, a start having already been made. The story from Manitoba, the Northwest Territories and British Columbia is not a very encouraging one.

## ONTARIO.

As in the other provinces of the Dominion the lumber trade in Ontario in 1894 showed many signs of dullness. In the early months of the year it was possible to write encouragingly of the outlook. The sale of timber limits that took place in Ottawa in January of 1894 commanded prices that augured hopefully for the season's trade. In the first month of the year Ottawa mill men also closed sales for lumber represented by several million dollars. Elsewhere at lumber points in the province enquiries and sales during the first two months of the year were of a character to build up the hopes of the lumber trade. Not many moons had passed, however, before darkness covered the horizon, and the clouds continued to gather and add to their blackness from month to month. The prolonged discussion over the tariff bill of the United States, and which was only completed late in the year, aggravated these conditions. During the months from April until September lumbermen could not force trade to any extent, even when the price was made a temptation. No one wanted to buy and the wisest heads did not want to sell, for it was difficult to know how satisfactorily accounts would be paid. Within a month of the passing of the tariff bill some activity showed itself and shipments from Ottawa as also from the Georgian Bay district, began to move. The season, however, was too far advanced for any remarkable impetus to be given to trade.

The response to the enquiry of the LUMBERMAN, "What was the output of your mill in 1894, and how did this compare with 1893?" has shown in Ontario, at least in important sections, where other conditions did not alter the case, that a conservative policy was pursued and the cut was light. The answer to the enquiry touching the volume of trade done and prices in 1894, as compared with 1893, brought the almost universal reply that business was restricted in volume and prices were lower. One large wholesale firm, for example, said, "Volume reduced one-half; prices average decline 5 to 6 per cent." Others place the decline in prices greater. Stocks carried over in the Georgian Bay dis-

trict, with some exceptions, were larger at the end of 1894 than they were in 1893. The heavier shipments from this district go to the United States, and herein is the explanation of heavy stocks. The same conditions did not apply in Ottawa, as a large portion of the stocks go to the United Kingdom and other foreign markets, and in some cases the entire output of the mills was contracted for early in the year. These conditions therefore prevail, that where heavy stocks are found at some points in our North Shore territories, the stocks at Ottawa are comparatively light.

The estimate of the lumber sawn in the various mills on the Ottawa valley during the past season is given as follows:

J. R. Booth, Ottawa.....	90,000,000 feet.
Branson and Weston, Ottawa.....	73,000,000 "
Bue, J. Orr & Hurdman, Hull.....	70,000,000 "
W. C. Edwards & Co., Rockland.....	65,000,000 "
Hawkesbury Lumber Co.....	55,000,000 "
McLachlin Bros., Arnprior.....	50,000,000 "
Gilmour & Hughson, Hull.....	40,000,000 "
McLaren & Tate, Buckingham.....	35,000,000 "
W. E. Edwards, New Edinburgh.....	25,000,000 "
Gilles Brothers, Brantford.....	25,000,000 "
Ross Brothers, Buckingham.....	10,000,000 "
Making a total of.....	538,000,000 feet.

The United States consul at Ottawa furnishes the following figures of shipments of lumber recorded at his office for 1894:

Quarter ending	March 31.	June 30.	Sept. 30.	Dec. 31.
Hemlock Bark.....	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056
Lath & Shingles.....	5,739.89	19,872.39	16,648.02	15,122.26
Lumber in bond for export (principally S. Am.)	64,563.20	22,354.88	50,072.45	860.27
Lumber to United States (% pine, balance hemlock and spruce).....	443,733.74	609,809.87	599,498.91	666,745.02
Pickets.....	409.40	2,724.46	3,107.54	13,493.69
Match blocks.....	1,200.07	1,200.07	1,200.07	1,200.07
Wood Pulp.....			2,160.00	214.28
Timber.....				267.22
Railroad Ties.....				2,440.93
Total.....	\$513,746.33	\$657,017.60	\$671,446.92	\$700,550.55

Exports from Ottawa to United States from Jan. 1st to December 31st, 1894, not including square or flatted timber, were as follows:

	Quantity.	Value.
Planks and Boards.....	195,469 M. feet.	\$2,769,704
Laths.....	32,408 M.	48,746
Shingles.....	15,077 M.	25,379
Bark.....	1,282 cords.	6,906
Firewood.....	4,165 "	5,371
Sleepers and Railway Ties.....	15,640 pieces.	3,086
Wood Pulp.....		6,281
Hop Poles.....		3,566
Posts, Cedar.....		285
Telegraph Poles.....		75
Other articles of the forest (Match blocks, Curtain Sticks, etc.).....		40,227
MANUFACTURED.....		
Doors.....		1,085
Wood Pulp.....		120,386
252 000,000 ft. shipped to Montreal and Quebec for re-shipment to Great Britain, etc., at \$12.50 per M. ft.....		3,402,000.
Total.....		\$6,433,050

The trade of 1895 opens out with free lumber as the policy of the United States and Canada, and as business generally returns to normal conditions, there is reason to expect that the lumber trade of Ontario will revive. Operations in the woods are about on a parallel with 1894. Possibly the cut will be a little heavier. Conditions in hardwoods encourage the expectation that there will be a distinct improvement in 1895. Shingle manufacturing in the province suffered during 1894. Manufacturers, however, will curtail the product of 1895, and this, it is hoped, will have a tendency to bring up the trade to something like a decent level, both in point of consumption, and especially in prices.

## QUEBEC.

WE are indebted for the particulars of the Quebec lumber trade of 1894, embodied in the following review, to the J. Bell Forsyth & Co. circular, which has been issued regularly by this firm for many years past. The facilities enjoyed by the compiler to secure his statistics at first hand, gives unusual value to the document.

A continued decrease in the business of Quebec is noted. The growing scarcity of some descriptions of timber, and the advanced cost of others, have reduced the supply on the one hand, and limited the export by diminishing the consumption on the other.

The concession of the use of steam in taking on board timber, obtained by the shipping merchants from the ship laborers, in connection with steamers, has resulted in a transfer of an increased proportion of the export carrying trade from sail to steam, and has to some considerable extent checked the tendency to send timber from Montreal by steamer in preference to shipping from Quebec.

With similar concessions and arrangements in the handling and stowing of deals, tending to lower the

present cost, it is felt an increased volume of business must be the result, which will be to the advantage of all interested and connected with the trade of Quebec port.

**WHITE PINE.**—The supply again shows a striking diminution, although it includes considerably more than a million feet produced for the preceding season and wintered above Quebec. The reduction in stock, when this is taken into consideration, is remarkable, amounting to nearly one and three quarter million feet, or only an inconsiderable quantity of last winter's production failed to reach market.

Prices have advanced during the season, and recent sales, for average and quality sold, are at figures beyond anything previously paid in the history of the trade. Even these extreme prices have, however, been insufficient to stimulate production as against the greatly increased value of timber limits and standing pine.

The higher grade of square pine of deckplank dimensions and lengthy waney pine of medium girth, are especially scarce. Unless higher prices than hitherto can be obtained in the United Kingdom, the export of white pine in the log must shortly come to an end.

	Supply.	Export.	Stock.
1894 { Square.....	838,246	3,468,600	1,656,993 Square
1894 { Waney.....	2,288,663		1,610,571 Waney
1893 { Square.....	1,121,102	4,092,280	2,134,281 Square
1893 { Waney.....	3,117,285		1,627,936 Waney

**RED PINE.**—Has not been in demand this year, pitched pine from the Southern States having largely replaced it in the United Kingdom. The stock on hand, though reduced, is still ample. Fresh wood is scarce and the manufacture has almost ceased.

	Supply.	Export.	Stock.
1894.....	59,835	146,120	282,084
1893.....	303,391	312,640	339,789

**OAK.**—The supply has been in excess of the export, having an increased wintering stock. Choice wood is difficult to procure, and any fall in value would certainly cause the production of this article to cease.

	Supply.	Export.	Stock.
1894.....	1,276,869	937,840	699,205
1893.....	1,156,746	1,013,160	376,141

**ELM.**—With reduced supply shows a diminished stock. The quantity will be supplemented by new wood received early in the season, and is ample.

	Supply.	Export.	Stock.
1894.....	528,761	528,880	244,145
1893.....	588,478	421,840	391,452

**ASH.**—Has not been in request and shows an increased stock. The production will be restricted, as choice wood is difficult to procure and the larger averages are scarce.

	Supply.	Export.	Stock.
1894.....	183,626	134,920	99,659
1893.....	172,136	168,840	56,761

**BIRCH.**—Has not been in demand, the consumption in Great Britain having been greatly curtailed by the abundance and cheapness of African and other low grade mahogany. In view of this the production will be moderate.

	Supply.	Export.	Stock.
1894.....	131,191	189,920	13,242
1893.....	164,478	121,480	29,254

**STAVES.**—The commerce in staves, which was years ago a large and profitable one, has come to an end as far as Quebec is concerned.

Staves are now largely shipped to the loading ports in Great Britain from the United States as dunnage at nominal freights, and are distributed on the other side by steam coasters to the smaller ports.

	Supply.	Export.	Stock.
1894 { Pipe.....			
1894 { Puncheon.....			
1893 { Pipe.....	5		
1893 { Puncheon.....	16		

**PINE DEALS.**—Are no longer produced to any extent in the neighborhood of Quebec.

The business is still largely carried on by Quebec merchants who have branch offices in Montreal, and who purchase largely in Ottawa and elsewhere.

The wintering stocks are extremely light, especially in fourth quality, which has been largely taken for the United States markets. The removal of all duty on sawn lumber going into that country will, on the revival of business there, certainly cause a serious advance in the lower grades of pine deals and possibly in all qualities. First of regulars and broad dimensions have been