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A BOOM IN BARK.

Something over two years ago the bottom dropped out of hemlock bark and some heavy dealers were driven to the wall. Heavy failures occurred at about the same time in the leather trade, which was kept in an unsettled and unsatisfactory state for months afterwards. The New England tanneries which are the chief consumers of the Canadian bark that is exported were run on a reduced scale, and that with the large stock of bark on hand made the outlook a poor one, and as it has proved kept the price of bark depressed for over two years. But the causes which inevitably bring about an improvement have been quietly at work for some time. The leather trade has picked up and the tanneries beginning to use more bark stock in New England yards have been perceptibly reduced. A few weeks ago there began to be a sharp inquiry for bark and prices began to harden. The fact is there is not a great supply of Canadian bark accessible. The low prices prevented peeling on anything like the old scale. Outside of what is held by Canadian tanners for their own use, the bark in sight in the Province of Quebec does not exceed 100,000 cords and is probably considerably under that figure. The chief holders are Church & Fee, who have about 37,000 cords, and Goodhue, of Danville, who owns from 25,000 to 30,000 cords. The price has gone up with a bound from \$4 to \$6 per cord and there is a combination to corner the market and kite values up to \$8 or \$9, and perhaps \$10, on the cars here. Now England tanners have become frightened and have agents picking up small lots in the hope of being able to tide over the scarcity till they can draw supplies from the new Pennsylvania bark next season, say in July or August. The holders of the Canadian article, which was in the main purchased at a low figure, are in a position to net a handsome profit on their deal and recoup themselves for former losses.—*Waterloo Advertiser*.

LUMBER EXPORT DUTY.

The recommendation for the abolition of the import duty on Canadian lumber into the United States contained in President Cleveland's message to Congress is attracting great attention in this city. It is not the first time by several, that a similar suggestion has been thrown out, but hitherto the opposition of the Michigan and Wisconsin lumbermen, and the interest they can bring to bear on the members of the Legislative Assembly have hitherto proved fatal to the abolition of the tax. In view of the possibility of the recommendation being acted upon, a *Free Press* scribe waited on a number of Ottawa lumbermen, and asked their opinion of the effects of the remission of the duty. Mr. Bronson, jr., said it will be of great im-

portance in increasing the exportation of the coarser cuts of lumber. The greater parts of the finer cuts are imported from Montreal or Quebec, or to South America, passing through the United States in bond, these would not be affected; the coarser cuts, however, are entirely consumed either at home or in the United States. Upon those the producer here has to pay all charges, freight and duty, and no doubt the remission of the duty would increase the sale of these cuts considerably. Still I do not think the Canadian producers would get the benefit of the whole duty on their price. The duty is \$2 per thousand feet, and they perhaps would get the half, and the New York or American importer the other. You must understand that the general run of timber now made is coarser than it used to be. Lumber is made now which would not have been considered marketable years ago, but the pine trees are very scarce, having been first used and therefore the tendency of the lumber trade is towards coarser cuts.

Would the abolition of the duty make vital difference in Ottawa?

I can hardly say, but it is possible it might. Of course, the Michigan lumbermen would oppose it, lest we should cut them in price.

Mr. Pattee, of Messrs. Perley & Pattee, said: "Oh yes, I think it would make a considerable difference. I am not prepared say what difference it would make to Ottawa, but it would produce a boom in all lumber producing towns in Canada."

"The duty is a fixed duty of \$2 per 1,000 feet is it not?"

"Yes, it used to be an ad valorem duty, but that was found so confusing the fixed duty was substituted. The duty is the same all along the line. I think it would be a boon throughout the Dominion, and certainly Ottawa would come in for its share."

Mr. Booth was away from the works, but his representative said: "There is no doubt it would make a great increase in the export of the coarser kinds of lumber, and would bring more trade into the city. I would rather not say much about it just now, as I think any sign of halting the change would stir up the Michigan men to a more strenuous opposition. The duty does not effect the higher class of fine cuts."

"It runs sometimes to 50 per cent. on the coarser, does it not?"

"Nearly 33 and 40 per cent.; yes nearly 50, but I think it would be unwise to say much about it."

Mr. Cushman, manager for Mr. E. B. Eddy, said: "I do not think it will make any great difference; the consumer as a rule pays all charges, and so it does not come out of the Canadian lumberman's pocket; still there might be a division of the amount. If they

would take the duty of the manufactured article it would enable Canadians to make up their lumber at home instead of in the States. I do not see that it would greatly effect us here."

Mayor McDougal said: "It would be a great boon to Ottawa, it would increase her trade immensely. There is a class of lumber sold for somewhere about \$4 per 1,000, upon which the \$2 duty acts as a prohibitive one. It would not effect the trade in superior lumber, but would make an immense difference to the lower kinds."—*Ottawa Free Press*.

DURABILITY OF CROSS-TIE TIMBER.

In an investigation of this subject made by Mr. F. B. Hough for the Department of Agriculture, some interesting facts are brought out. The relative importance of the various kinds of timber for railway purposes are reported in the following order:—Oaks, pines, chestnuts, hemlock, cedars, tamarack, cypress, elms, ash, cherry, black walnut, firs, spruce, beech, locust, redwood, maple, butternut, coffeenut, mulberry, and musquit.

The average durability of oak, as reported in 32 cases, is 7.4 years, while the average prices of each cross-tie is 41.2 cents. The kind of oak is not specified. For whiteoak the average durability in 152 reported cases is 7.3 years, and the average price in the 173 cases is 40.6 cents. The average duration of a post oak tie is 7 years, and the average price 33 cents. For burr oak, durability, 7.4 years; price, 37 3/4 cents. Rock oak showed an average durability in 18 cases of 7 years; price 42 cents. In the case of red oak 5 years is the average durability, with an average cost of 27 cents. Chestnut oak is more durable, showing an average lifetime is a tie of 7 1/2 years, cost, 28 cents per tie. Black oak shows an average durability of 4 1/2 years; average price, 43 cents.

Long leaf or southern pine will last on an average 6 1/2 years; average cost per tie, 37 cents. White pine has about the same durability with less cost, the latter showing an average of 3 1/2 cents per tie.

Cedar shows the greatest average durability, being 1.18 years, with average cost of 34 cents, but is too soft to bear heavy freightage, and for that reason is not much employed in railway construction. Red cedar is more durable than white cedar, being in proportion of 11 to 7. Cypress shows greater durability than white oak, the former showing an average of 8.7 years. White ash and black ash rot very quickly, the former in 4.3 years, and the latter in 3.8 years. Cherry is a durable timber when used as cross ties, running from 6 to 10 years. All woods are much more lasting when hewn than when sawn.

The redwood of California makes very durable ties, lasting over eleven years, but allow-

ance must be made for the fact that they are used on the Pacific road in a dry climate, where the causes producing decay are not so great as in states east of the Rocky Mountains. The growth of the redwood is very slow. Trees 15 years old have a diameter of only 10 or 12 inches, and will make about three ties. When younger than this the wood is not durable. The redwood of the Santa Cruz Mountains furnishes the best ties it being much heavier and denser than when grown further north. The average cost of redwood ties is 40 cents. The total length of railway track in the United States approximated at 150,000 miles. Assuming that the average durability of ties is seven years, and the distance apart is three feet, there will be 2,640 to the mile, which is rather under than over the actual number employed, making the total number in use 396,000,000. Estimating one-seventh to be replaced every year, the annual demand to keep up the present railways will reach 56,571,428. Supposing that an acre will supply 100 ties, a liberal estimate, it will require 565,715 acres annually to furnish the ties required by the existing lines of railways. For each line of railway there will be an annual demand for 377 ties, requiring the cutting off of 3.77 miles. It will require 30 years on an average for trees to grow large enough for making cross-ties. The acres that must be kept in timber and growing will be 16,971,420 for supplying ties to the railway lines now in existence.

The increase in railway mileage, estimated by two decades, is about 4,150 miles annually. To construct the railways that will probably be built in the next ten years, 109,560,000 ties will be demanded, the product of 1,095,600 acres of woodland. Allow 30 years as the period of growth for ties, this would add 3,286,801 acres to the timber reserve for railways alone, making a total of 18,995,579 acres as the needful reserve. Evidently this question is one demanding roach of statesmanship and a careful preservation of our present timber supply. The time is not far distant when one of the largest items in the construction of expenses will be the one for cross-ties.

It is reported that Canadians are again scouring the woods of northern Michigan for rock elm ship timber for export. They pay from \$1.25 to \$1.50 for each tree standing. The sticks are hewed in the woods. Last season, it is estimated, there was 5,000,000 feet of rock elm timber shipped out of Michigan.

The schooner *Ottawa* started from Chicago for Georgian Bay, loaded with outfit, 16 horses and 40 men, for the establishment of logging camp. Encountering the great gale of December, 4th and 5th, the vessel had to put into Grand Haven, where she lay up, and the expedition was abandoned.