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PETERBOROUGH, Ont., JULY 15, 1886.

ONTARIO FORESTRY REPORT.

THE annual forestry report of Mr. R. W. Phipps to the Ontario Government is now before us, and it shows that Mr. Phipps is active and zealous as ever in his conduct of the Forestry Branch of the Agricultural Department. His report conveys much useful information which should be attentively studied, and his suggestions are worthy of adoption before it is too late.

The most important improvement recorded for the past year was the establishment of a staff of over forty, at the joint expense of the lumbermen and the Government, for the purpose of preventing fires and enforcing the Fire Act.

The effort made to arouse public opinion on the necessity of taking steps to conserve our existing forests and to form new plantations where required, cannot be said as yet to have had much practical effect, though much has evidently been done already to open people's eyes, and there is some encouragement to continue in this course of education.

With this view Mr. Phipps still perseveres in this report as elsewhere. He again urges the benefit of keeping a part of the land in forests, the moisture supplied in dry seasons, the protection from inundations and the shelter afforded to the crops in winter, both by retaining the snow and warding off cold blasts. The money value of plantations is fully pointed out, information being supplied from various sources, from trips taken by Mr. Phipps himself in several States, reports from other States and details of accounts of the pecuniary results in the mother country. It shows conclusively that plantations can be formed and managed very cheaply, as compared with the satisfactory results obtained.

As to the conservation of our existing forests, though some advance has been made, it is very certain that public opinion has yet to be aroused on this important subject. The interesting report from the State of Maine, under very similar circumstances to those prevailing in a large portion of our own country, shows how easily a great improvement on our present sys-

tem may be made, even before the time arrives when Canada will be prepared to adopt scientific forestry as practised in Germany, France and other European countries and some British colonies.

Mr. Phipps adds to the value of his report by an almost complete list of our forest trees, with descriptions, use, habitat, &c. There is also an estimate of the pine timber remaining in each of the States, a useful glossary of scientific terms, and that rare and welcome aid to utilizing the information supplied, a very full index.

We have reserved to the last some consideration of the most important subject of all. Mr. Phipps deals with the question of establishing forest reserves, but the restricted territory to which he refers, shows how sadly the field is already circumscribed and how very soon it will be too late to adopt this wise system. It is not a matter that will permit delay. Quebec sets Ontario a good example in this respect, having made provision for extensive forest reserves, where the land is better fitted for arboriculture and perpetual forests than for agriculture. What had economy it is to attempt to unite the two may be gathered from many an incidental passage in this report. Burnt timber and poor farms seem to be the result of the combination. In Australia they are now establishing enormous forest reserves with fairest promise; yet, we remain lethargic though it will soon be too late. If Mr. Phipps could succeed in persuading his department to introduce such a system he would add immensely to the value of his already great public services.

THE TRADE OF LONDON.

The aspect of the Surrey Commercial Docks this week appears unchanged, very few vessels unloading from the quays, and those out in the stream, overside into lighters, are mostly firewood ships with carques of ends, &c, in which there still seems to be something doing. These and the pitch pine cargoes form the chief of the arrivals the past few weeks. There is no plainer sign of trade depression than the dock deliveries, and these, so far from improving, are getting less and less as the season rolls on.

We are not comparing them with last year's, but even if we did the advantage recorded last week over the corresponding week of 1885 is not maintained, the record in the present number giving 1885 the advantage on deals of 383 standards; and though less flooring went into consumption by 36 standards, the delivery of pondered timber for 1885 exceeded last week by 531 loads; this difference, however, might probably be traceable to Whit-Monday. There is also a considerable quantity of goods being delivered outside of the docks, of which the only record to be found is in our import column. A large well-known firm in Lambeth have just completed taking their third cargo overside, and this, of course, becomes an important factor in the apparent falling off in the deliveries.

Fraights, we are all aware, have reached a pitch at which it will not pay to keep steamer's fires going, but had as these rates are, if they could be readily secured, owners might yet keep their vessels at work; but there is no certainty of obtaining charters, and steamers have often to rove from place to place in search of cargoes, eating themselves up with expenses, with very little prospect of making up the loss. We chronicled a vessel at Petersburg, which had been lying there some time, going all the way to Galle to accept a cargo for London at 19s. This state of things seems at length to have become intolerable, and amongst those disinclined to work at a loss is the Bedale, and as soon as she has completed her discharge, she will, we are informed, be laid up till better times.

Another vessel lying up, that not long since brought a cargo, is the steamer Hollamshire, and we hear of numbers of others also being taken out of employment. Though very self-sacrificing on the part of the owners, we fear that it will not effect any material alteration in tonnage, the ships wanted being very disproportionate to the amount of unfixed tonnage still afloat. Sailing ships, we hear also, are being taken out of work, owing to the little

there is for them to do, and those which are looking for employment apparently are not anxious to accept the present low rates to the pitch pine ports. These latter places are certainly not liked by the generality of wood traders, the delays taking all the profit of the voyage. Profit at the present quotations seems almost farcical, but there must be something got out of the charters, or else the ships could not trade to such remote ports.

We notice one of the early arrivals from Archangel, the SS Pickwick, with a cargo of Russian deals, for Messrs. Simson & Mason is at the Centre Yard quay, but she seemed all alone in her glory. The flooring seems to be moving off rather more freely, and we observed several wagon loads of prepared stuff being loaded. In the stave yard sheds, Nos. 10 and 11, is a cargo marked FB, Fx B, and F-B, from Porsgrund. These are Messrs. Franklin & Baker's manufacture, and the first cargo of boards they have shipped. The white seemed to us to be very good, and looked quite equal to Dram. Both the 1st and 2nd were well made and clean. In the red we saw nothing specially to comment upon, though here again there was not much room for fault-finding. If the class of shipment of which these form a sample is maintained, the marks are likely to become favorites with the London trade.

Among the cargoes that took our special notice coming on to the quay, were the planks ex Stratford, to which we referred in our last. These seemed to be about the best pitch pine planks that we have seen for some time. Remarkably clean, a total absence of wane, no knots, particularly free from centres, and rich in colour; the cargo was evidently a selected one, and in splendid condition. These goods, we understand, were the shipment of Sullivan, of Pensacola.

The absence of freshly piled goods is still a noticeable feature in the docks, most of the stocks having last year's bloom on them, and from the dock offices right away down to centre yard only one bright pile is observable, a thing without precedent, and at this season of the year quite unknown in the history of the docks. Like everything else, the present evil state of trade will work its own cure, and sooner or later an improvement must come.

The tonnage taken out of the market, the lessened production at the loading places, with the large increase in the colonial trade, will afford chance of working off a good deal of the present burdensome stock, and bring the demand rather more in proportion to the supply; but when will all this culminate? that is the question. While the remedy is in operation trade still remains prostrate, and the convalescence, we fear, will be very gradual when the recovery sets in.

It seems an anomaly all these new enterprises while the trade of the nation is falling off, and it is a problem difficult of solution, how it comes about that new docks on a gigantic scale are built, while those that have the advantage of locality and priority find their profits daily diminishing through loss of trade. What to do with the big docks recently completed, and which were to be such an immense boon to the port, is likely to become the next question.

There is one use they may be turned to that will save the reproach of having wasted the money expended in their construction, and for which they are very suitable, make them into a great naval dock. Expecting them to be filled with shipping while on all sides vessels are being laid up for want of employment, is hanging to a straw; like many other big speculations that were undertaken too soon, they must pay the penalty.

Last year was notably a bad one for trade, but the import was much better maintained than appears to be likely this season. Buyers were more plentiful, and trade in a much more settled state. The bad feature of the present time is the great want of confidence that pervades the community, and for which there is, unfortunately, too much foundation.—*Timber Trades Journal.*

THE Rathbun Company have purchased more wharf property in Oswego. They have storage room now for 15,000,000 feet of lumber.

PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN TREES.

We read wonderful stories of the immense trees one sees in California, but they sink into insignificance beside the Baobab tree, which I found in many parts of Western Africa, principally just south of the desert of Sahara. It is not distinguished for its extraordinary height, which rarely reaches over one hundred feet, but it is the most imposing and magnificent of African trees, many, it is said, are over one hundred feet in circumference, rising like a dwarf tower from twenty to thirty feet, and then throwing out branches like a miniature forest to a distance of one hundred feet, the extremities of the branches bending toward the ground. The botanical name of the curious tree in Adansonia digitata. The first in honour of its discoverer, Adanson, and the second, descriptive of its five parted leaf. The leaves are large, abundant and of a dark green colour divided into five radiating lanceolate leaflets. The flowers are large and white, hanging to peduncles of a yard in length which form a striking contrast to the leaves. The fruit is a soft, pulpy, dry substance about the size of a citron, inclosed in a long green pod the pulp between the seeds tastes like cream of tartar, and this pulp, as well as the pressed juice from the leaves, is used by the native Africans for flavouring their food. The juice is greatly relished as a beverage, and is considered a remedy in putrid fevers and many other diseases.

The Baobab is said to obtain a much greater age than any other tree, thousands of years being hazarded as the term of life of some specimens. It has extraordinary vitality; the bark which is regularly stripped off to be made into ropes, nets for fishing, trapping and native clothing, speedily grow again. No external injury not even fire, can destroy it from without; nor can it be hurt from within, as specimens have been found in full splendour, with the inside of the trunk hollowed out into a chamber which could hold a score of people. One-half of the trunk may be cut or burned away—even the tree may be cut down, and while lying on the ground so long as there is the slightest connection with the roots it will grow and yield fruit. It dies from a very peculiar disease—a softening of its woody structure, and it falls by its own weight a mass of ruins. The native villages are generally built around one of these immense trees, and under its far spreading branches, which form an agreeable shelter from the sun, is the Kotla, or place of assemblage, where all the public business of the tribe is transacted. The circuit described by the extremities of the lowermost range of branches is fenced around, so that none but those privileged to attend these meetings can intrude. In thinly populated districts of Southern and Central Africa, where lions, leopards and hyenas abound, the natives live in huts like beehives, firmly fixed among the large branches of the tree. On the approach of night they ascend to their huts by means of rude ladders, while the lions roar about their camp fires until the approach of day drives them to their lairs. As many as thirty families have been found to occupy a single tree. In many instances, natives who till the ground at any great distance from their tribe build these huts for nightly accommodation. In travelling through the country one frequently sees these trees alive with baboons and other kinds of the monkey tribe, busy in collecting the fruit and indulging in ceaseless gambols and chatter; for this reason it is commonly called the monkey bread tree. When the tree is not occupied as a habitation, the hollow trunk is used by the natives as a sepulchre for executed criminals—the law of the people denying them the right of burial—inside of which the bodies dry up and to a great extent resemble mummies. To European this tree is a marvel; coming across one inhabited by monkeys, it is extremely dangerous to shoot any unless one is with a party, for, if any are wounded, the whole colony take up the battle, and more than once I found that a retreat in short order was necessary.

My first experience of living in the air was very novel; the first night was one continual growl, roar, etc., so much so that I found it an impossibility to sleep: finally the most horrible squeal broke out directly under me; it was very dark and being unable to see any objects but knowing something was wrong, I threw a can