

HOME AND FOREIGN TRADE REVIEW.

Office of CANADA LUMBERMAN, }
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Trade in Toronto may be described dull. No orders for bills of any size have made their appearance, and business is confined to sorting up orders from the yards and purchases for immediate requirements by the factories and builders. The same may be said of the trade in Western Ontario. Yet while trade is comparatively dull, it is impossible to forward with any degree of rapidity at all, the few orders that call for shipment. There is not a wholesale firm or a manufacturer that has not on his books orders a month old unfilled. The car shortage of last fall was serious enough while it lasted, because every one was busy and anxious to clean up orders before the close of navigation. But the present difficulty is intensified by the fact that business is dull, and still the stuff cannot be moved.

The ice business seems to be the primary cause of the trouble. The Grand Trunk Company are handling ice from Barrie, Orillia, Gravenhurst, Midland, Jackson's Point and other places, and are letting the lumber, grain and stone shippers stand still and wait for a more convenient season. This ice business is going to continue all summer so that no relief may be expected from the stoppage of shipments. The root of the difficulty lies in the penurious policy of the Grand Trunk Company. They have not engine power sufficient to move more than half of the daily shipments, and consequently at every siding in Toronto and out of it may be seen empty and loaded cars detained for days and sometimes weeks, while the ice trains go through in quick time. Some radical measure must be adopted to obtain a remedy for this evil. If lumber, grain and stone shippers could be united for action something could be done at once, but the grain men are frightened at the first move on the part of the railway company, and it is left to the lumbermen to bear the brunt of the fight for decent treatment. The lumbermen are considering the matter now and will take it up in dead earnest without delay.

The indications are that the buildings to be erected

in Toronto this year will be chiefly of the more expensive class, iron, stone and brick structures. House building has received a check, partly through the advance in rates of interest, especially on progress loans, and partly because suburban building has been overdone, and rents are declining below a remunerative figure.

In the west, where the trade is very largely dependent upon the farming community, there has been so little business done through the winter that stocks are comparatively unbroken, and the yards will be able to supply the early spring demand without difficulty.

Prices remain unchanged, and there seems to be no immediate prospect of an advance.

In the Ottawa valley the mills are busily engaged in getting ready for the season's operations, and the outlook in the timber trade may be considered fair. The prospects are considered to be far better than they were in the early part of the winter.

FOREIGN.

Since our last report the timber trade at London has been anything but brisk, the deliveries from the docks being almost confined to the requirements of London and the suburbs. As regards Canadian and New Brunswick freights, chartering continues very slack. Some spruce vessels from Miramichi have been fixed on the basis of 57s. 6d. and Richibucto at 62s. 6d. for usual range of ports on the other side.

The hardwood market continues quiet with the exception of American walnut, in which there is a brisk movement just now. High prices, says a London paper, can be obtained for prime wood for which there is a brisk demand. In cedar there is a steady movement, and prices though firmer are still weak.

Trade at Liverpool has been decidedly dull for some time past, in consequence of which competition has been very keen. Timber says the stock of satin walnut logs is exhausted, and some fresh, well figured parcels would yield excellent results, as it is still being largely used by wholesale cabinet and chair makers for the cheaper description of bedroom furniture. Some thousands of hands have quit work at the great steamship lines, and considerable excitement has existed at the north end docks, but so far no interference with the

timber porters or the lumpers, at the few ships discharged has been manifested.

Messrs. Farnworth & Jardine in their recent wood circular report: Business, as is usual at this season of the year, has been quiet; the deliveries have been fair, but prices generally are lower, and the stock of most articles still too heavy.

CANADIAN WOOD, QUEBEC.—Yellow Pine Timber, both square and waney, have moved off slowly. Waney pine maintains its value, but square pine, of which the stock is excessive, is dull of sale, and prices easier. Red Pine: There has been little inquiry; the stock is ample. Oak, in the log has not been imported; there has been a fair consumption, but the present stock, which consists chiefly of United States wood, is still large; values are unchanged. Oak Planks have been imported in excess of last year, but the demand continues good, and stocks are now more moderate; prices are steady. Elm: There has been fair inquiry, but the stock is still much too heavy. Ash is dull of sale; the stock is ample. Pine Deals. There has been more inquiry, and the deliveries have been satisfactory; the stock, however, is much in excess of the same month last year.

NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA SPRUCE DEALS.—The import has been less than last year, viz: 455 standards, against 1,097 standards; the deliveries have been fairly satisfactory, but it is difficult to maintain present prices; the stock is much in excess of last year, viz: 15,889 standards, against 6,025 standards, and it is very desirable that shipments for the early part of the season should be reduced to a very moderate scale. Pine Deals have not been enquired for.

The arrivals at Glasgow have been unimportant. Rates of freight on parcels per steam liners from the States are still so high as to restrict imports, but easier rates are anticipated, when larger shipments may be expected. The latest scheme in the timber trade is a proposal, emanating from London, to amalgamate the timber concerns of the east coast of Scotland, with a view of abolishing competition.

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