

THE Wood-Worker and Retailer

LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT.

The following letter was addressed to the president of the Western Retail Lumbermen's Association by Mr. D. E. Sprague, of Winnipeg, who was obliged to be absent from the city when the annual meeting was held on March 23. It refers to a meeting of manufacturers held in Winnipeg a few weeks previous to the convention of retailers:

My Dear Mr. Campbell:

I regret exceedingly that owing to your recent illness you were unable to be present and preside at the meeting recently held here of the Honorary members with those of the Active members who were able to attend.

At this meeting large and influential delegations were present representing the manufacturing interests both at the Coast and in the Mountains. From the trend of the discussion, it would appear that the Honorary members in British Columbia had become imbued with the idea that the retail dealers were receiving excessive profits, and were in consequence responsible for the agitation and criticisms aimed at the lumber interest in the Northwest generally, and that their interests were prejudiced by the greed of the Active members. It was amply demonstrated, and I believe convincingly, that apart from a very few isolated instances, where exceptional conditions prevailed, the profit obtained by the retail dealer was not more than that allowed by the by-laws, viz., 20 per cent., and it rarely exceeded 15 per cent., surely as small a margin as will profitably maintain any lumber business. This information went towards strengthening the good feeling between the Honorary and Active members. Knowing their own margin of profit and having satisfactory evidence of the reasonable profit of the retailer, they were forced to the conclusion that the consumers of lumber in Manitoba and the Northwest procured their supply of lumber as cheap as it was possible to furnish it. So far as the cost properly belonging to the manufacturer and retail dealer was concerned, the only other factor entering into the cost of lumber to the consumer is the charge for transportation. To this last item of cost the delegations, therefore, directed their attention, with what success we have had some intimation.

The net result of the conference seems to have been to promote the most friendly feeling between the two classes of members, and to stimulate the loyalty of both to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Association; but more important still, so far as the resident public and the incoming settlers are concerned, was to establish beyond successful contradiction the fact that lumber can be procured in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories at retail as cheap, if not cheaper, than in Minnesota and Dakota, notwithstanding the fact that the largest source of the pine supply is located in Minnesota, and that the territory served is much nearer the point of production than that covered by our members.

The operation of the Association so far as regulating prices within proper limits, maintaining suitable stocks and the dealing of the Active members with the public, was justified in the minds of the Honorary members, and it gives me pleasure to be able to tell you that they were not slow in expressing their satisfaction and admitting that the information upon which they had formed their earlier opinions had been misleading and incorrect; as statements made regarding the Association generally are.

I regret exceedingly that I shall be unavoidably absent from the meeting. I shall, however, be deeply interested in the proceedings.

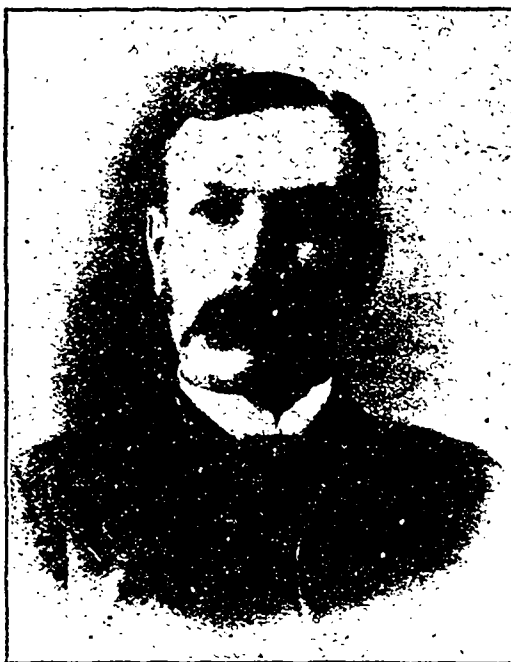
Trusting that you may have a profitable and satisfactory session, and looking forward to again addressing you as President, I am, with kindest regards,

Sincerely Yours,

D. E. SPRAGUE.

MR. N. A. RHODES.

Mr. N. A. Rhodes, vice-president of Rhodes, Curry & Company, Limited, manufacturers and builders, Amherst, N. S., is a self-made man in every sense of the word, having lost his parents at an early age and being thrown on his own resources when ten years old. He was born in Amherst, N. S., in 1845. After learning the



MR. N. A. RHODES,
Vice-President Rhodes, Curry & Company, Amherst, N. S.

carpenter trade he went to the United States, where he remained for ten years, during five years of which he held a responsible position as superintendent with a large building and contracting firm.

In 1877 Mr. Rhodes returned to Amherst and engaged in the manufacture of building materials. Later he took into partnership his brother-in-law, Mr. N. Curry, who is now president of Rhodes, Curry & Company, Limited. The business of this company is varied in character and includes operation of saw mills, planing mills, lath mills, shingle mills, brick works, car works, machine works and foundry. The figures of the business speak for themselves and need no further comment. The total business transacted in 1903 was \$2,700,000; wages paid, \$483,000; freight paid, \$154,567.54.

Mr. Rhodes also holds large interests in

other enterprises. He is half-owner in a large lumber concern at Sheet Harbor, N.S., where he and his partner, Mr. Curry, are operating on a large scale. He held a large interest in a Newfoundland lumber property, which was recently sold to a Boston firm for a large figure. He is also interested in other lumber properties.

Mr. Rhodes is a director of the Misaquash Marsh Company, which has been reclaiming a large block of over 5,000 acres of bog marsh, on which they have expended \$60,000 in cutting a canal about seven miles long through the centre of the marsh, draining off the fresh water and allowing the salt water and mud to kill the vegetable matter. This has proven a great success and will be a wonderful source of revenue to the province in which it lies. He is also a director of the Maritime Heating Company, who employ a large number of men, make the Robb heater, and carry on a machine business. He is a large owner in the New Brunswick Petroleum Company, for which there is a good outlook. The company have bored forty wells, all of which are giving splendid results. The oil is of the best quality and the company is now arranging to build a refinery.

As one of the Governors of Acadia University at Wolfville, N.S., Mr. Rhodes takes an active interest in the progress of that institution. He believes in a young man aiming high, and that with honesty and hard work the highest aims can be attained.

The popularity of Mr. Rhodes as a citizen was evidenced by his recent election as Mayor of Amherst, the first public office which he ever sought.

KILN-DRYING HARDWOODS.

Concerning the drying of hardwoods a writer in The Wood-Worker says:

As for the question of air-seasoning lumber before it is kiln-dried, that is a matter of opinion, and depends largely on whether you can carry a sufficient stock to allow of it. I do not consider it a necessity, as lumber can be dried as well green, if done properly, and without checking, but under ordinary conditions and with the appliances generally in use, a few months outdoor seasoning is beneficial; but this depends largely upon the season of the year the stock is piled, as lumber will season much faster during the spring and fall months than in the summer, owing to the wind, which draws the moisture from the pores of the wood and leaves them open, not shrinking the stock as much as does the heat. Of course, this air-drying helps the lumber when placed in the