

CANADA'S LUMBER TRADE IN 1891.

A REVIEW OF THE BUSINESS OF THE YEAR.

THE GENERAL SURVEY.

THE lumber situation in Canada for the year 1891 is very fully reflected in the detailed reports from the several provinces of the Dominion, which we are enabled to present below. Nowhere can it be said that trade has been brisk.

The returns from Ontario tell of a reduced output for the year as compared with some previous years, and the causes which have led to this decrease are mentioned in our review of the trade of this province.

The information, which we sought to obtain for the benefit of our readers, covered not alone a question of the present, but also an effort to peep into the misty future. The word in this regard is encouraging. In answer to the question: "What stocks are being carried over this winter?" the replies have told generally of smaller stocks than for some years past. One of the largest operators of the Ottawa says, "very much less;" McClymont & Co., Ottawa, "much less;" the Collins Inlet Lumber Co., "150,000 less;" and only in a few cases is an increase reported. In fact, nearly all the piling docks are well cleared. This shortage of stock has already had the effect of stiffening prices and the spring trade will open with the market quite firm. Another favorable condition is the activity in the woods this winter, indicating confidence in the future on the part of our largest operators. The cut in the majority of the camps will be larger than for 1891. We asked: "Is the work in the woods in your district this winter likely to be in excess of last winter?" C. A. McCool answers, "About double;" S. & J. Armstrong, McKellar, "Double;" Burton Bros., Barrie, "20,000,000 excess over 1891;" Wm. Laking, Fesserton, "One-fifth more;" J. W. Howry & Sons, Little Current, "20,000,000 excess;" J. & T. Charlton, Little Current, "3,000,000 excess;" Cameron & Kennedy, Norman, "20% greater;" Parry Sound Lumber Co., Parry Sound, "Our cut will be 11,000,000;" McLachlan Bros., Arnprior, "10 per cent. excess." It is believed that in the Ottawa district alone nearly 5,000 men are to be found in the camps, as compared with about 3,000 last season. So the hope is for good prices an increased demand, and stock cut to supply the demand.

Quebec trade shows a noticeable curtailment compared with other years. This is to be accounted for, to no small extent, by the depressed condition of the English lumber markets for more than a year past. The official figures of the English Board of Trade tell of a shrinkage in lumber imports from Canada as follows:—

Hewn timber, 1890	£ 883,461
Hewn timber, 1891	703,604
Sawn wood, 1890	2,093,524
Sawn wood, 1891	2,013,452

Quebec shared, as did the Maritime provinces, in this depression. Lumbermen, however, are not disconcerted by these conditions, but view hopefully the outlook for the future, as the following from our own correspondent in the Ancient City, who is thoroughly acquainted with lumber matters, past, present and future, would indicate. He says: "Although the snow was very late in coming and considerable delay was caused in hauling logs, we believe that lumbermen, generally speaking, have been able to make up time lost by the fine weather and good roads that we have had since the snow fell. In the district of Quebec, with the exception of birch, ash, hemlock, tamarac and spruce, very little timber is manufactured; although a large quantity of spruce logs and some pine are got out every year for mills in the neighbourhood of Quebec. As spruce is doing better in Great Britain we have no doubt that a larger supply of logs than usual will be made this winter. From the Ottawa we learn that the production of square and waney pine will not exceed the estimated quantity; so that the Quebec trade as far as one can see is in a healthy condition. The manufacturers in Michigan and Ohio who have hitherto brought waney pine to this market are doing very little this winter, as the cost of standing timber is very high and with the manufacture, transportation and charges of different kinds no margin is left for profit at present Quebec prices. The Quebec houses are at present well represented in Great Britain, one or more partners from each

firm being on the other side of the Atlantic to look after the wants of their customers."

The report from the Maritime provinces says everything that need be said of lumber conditions down by the sea. The one regret is that no improvement in trade is to be noted.

Our returns from British Columbia are not as complete as we had wished, yet the information that we furnish under heading for this province will give a fair idea of conditions on the Coast in 1891.

ONTARIO.

The returns that we have received from the leading lumber sections of the province would indicate that the cut for 1891 was considerably less than that of 1890. This is to be accounted for to a large extent by the falling off in the Ottawa section, where the total cut was only about 175,000,000 feet, as against 325,000,000, the average of other years, representing a decrease of 150,000,000 feet. The circumstances that led to this abnormal decrease were somewhat varied. The season opened with large stocks on hand, and the policy adopted, apparently, was to clear these out, rather than work for a larger cut; and this was done, it is agreeable to say, at improved prices over past years. The strike of the millmen, lasting a period of four weeks, meant a curtailment of cut proportionate with the average working capacity of the mills for that length of time. Then the E. B. Eddy Co. and Pierce Co. were out of the race in 1891, so far as sawing lumber was concerned. The cut from the leading mills is as follows:

Perley & Pattee	36,000,000 feet
Bronson & Weston Co.	38,000,000 feet
J. R. Booth	22,000,000 feet
Buell, Orr, Hurdman & Co.	18,000,000 feet
McClymont & Co.	22,000,000 feet
Wm. Mason and Sons	6,000,000 feet

In the Georgian Bay, Parry Sound and northern districts about an average trade was done. Burton Bros., of Barrie, cut 15,000,000, which was about the same as the year previous. The Collins Inlet Lumber Co. cut 5,400,000, about 900,000 less than in 1890; Longford Lumber Co., of Longford Mills, 15,000,000, which does not differ materially from that of a year ago. A reduction is shown in the figures from the Parry Sound Lumber Co., which are as follows: 1891, lumber 7,500,000, lath 2,800,000, and 6,500,000 shingles, against 13,000,000 lumber, 4,300,000 lath and 7,200,000 shingles. Wm. Laking, of Fesserton, cut 3,500,000 feet, an increase of 500,000 over 1890. Cameron & Kennedy, of Norman, whilst located within the province of Ontario, represent in a large sense the lumber interests of Manitoba and the Northwest. Their cut for 1891 was 13,000,000 feet, an increase of 4,000,000 over 1890. This entire output goes to Manitoba and the Northwest. Shipments from this district in 1891 were about 65,000,000 feet, as against 45,000,000 in 1890. McLachlan Bros., Arnprior, cut 80,000,000 feet, which beats the record of the year anywhere.

QUEBEC.

We are indebted to Mr. J. Bell Forsyth, of Quebec City, for the statistics of the Quebec lumber trade that are embodied in the following review, the complete and accurate character of which reflects credit on the industry and ability of the compiler.

The year 1891 did not add strength to lumber affairs in Quebec. There was a considerable falling off in arrivals from sea, as the following figures show: 313 ocean steamers, 623,858 tons, against 341 ocean steamers, 642,874 tons the previous season, and only 251 sailing vessels, 233,327 tons, against 381 vessels, 320,093 tons in 1890. In the spring of 1891 the markets in Great Britain were depressed, and in many ports the stocks were heavy, an outcome in some respects of the stringency of the money market in England, and the strikes of the workmen in the building trades. The result was the arrival of a very small spring fleet, and the summer and autumn arrivals were also small.

Conditions in detail will be learned from a careful study of the following tables:

WHITE PINE.—The shipping merchants were fully stocked, and the market opened last spring without any demand, although some lots were offered at easier rates than would have been accepted at the close of 1890. As the season progressed an improvement both in prices and in demand took place, and a number of rafts

changed hands at fair rates. The quantity measured by the returns from the Supervisor of Cutlers' office has been exceedingly light, even less than the small supply of 1887 or 1888, and as a consequence the stock now wintering is a greatly diminished one. It is chiefly held for account of Quebec Merchants.

	Supply	Export	Stock
1891 { Square	1,072,002	4,715,120	2,943,680
1891 { Waney	1,730,609		2,048,898
1890 { Square	5,082,772	5,498,380	4,799,633
1890 { Waney	3,694,742		3,525,209

RED PINE.—The supply has been almost nil, far less than in previous years. This wood is not in great request and is becoming scarce.

	Supply	Export	Stock
1891	41,680	249,350	348,165
1890	324,702	355,520	612,918

OAK has been in less demand than usual, and though prices have been fairly maintained it will be observed that quotations for this wood are slightly reduced. The supply, export and stock wintering are lighter than usual.

	Supply	Export	Stock
1891	679,506	897,280	522,040
1890	1,227,982	1,119,160	753,566

ELM.—While the receipts have been about one-third less than the previous year, the stock now wintering is unprecedently light. This is one of those woods difficult to procure, unless high prices are given for standing timber.

	Supply	Export	Stock
1891	488,731	657,800	102,608
1890	611,582	530,260	459,501

ASH.—The demand has been very limited; stock wintering exceptionally light.

	Supply	Export	Stock
1891	101,060	130,320	21,357
1890	142,450	15,280	99,383

BIRCH.—This wood is easily procured and the supply is altogether regulated by prices offered. The wintering stock is about the same as last year.

	Supply	Export	Stock
1891	133,997	148,320	13,177
1890	224,752	493,740	13,752

STAVES.—Little report in this branch of trade, shipment of staves having almost ceased.

	Supply	Export	Stock
1891 { Pipe	10	13	5
1891 { Punccheon	4	77	1
1890 { Pipe	11	77	34
1890 { Punccheon	8	142	21

PINE DEALS.—There has been a fair demand during the season, though it must be remembered that the quantity of pine deals sawn at or near Quebec has become extremely limited, most of the production coming from the Ottawa and Western Canada. The stock wintering is something heavier than last season, at the same time considerably under the average of past years.

	Supply	Export	Stock
1891	983,230	704,472	274,782
1890	878,810	1,075,992	246,015

SPRUCE DEALS opened rather heavily in spring, improved towards summer, and have been in fair demand since that time. The quantity wintering, although heavier than last year, is only slightly over the average.

	Supply	Export	Stock
1891	2,955,979	2,280,049	1,199,950
1890	3,839,914	3,975,576	774,020

SAWN LUMBER.—During the early part of the year the market was very much depressed for shipments to the United Kingdom, but later on it improved somewhat, and now the prospects are more favorable. The American market has not been as good as in former years, but the prospect for 1892 is more encouraging.

Pine is quoted at \$15 to \$18 per 1000 feet b.m. and Spruce at \$10 to \$12, according to quality, sizes, etc.

Freights opened at 18s. for timber, and 42s. for deals; closed at 25s. for timber, and 65s. for deals.

THE CARRYING TRADE.

The following are the arrivals and tonnage at the port of Quebec for the five years 1887 to 1891 inclusive:—

SAILING VESSELS FROM SEA.					
	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891
Vessels	393	318	392	381	251
Tons	295,912	260,301	326,706	320,093	233,327
OCEAN STEAMSHIPS.					
	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891
Steamships	287	244	324	341	313
Tons	541,324	484,449	596,598	642,874	623,858
LOWER PROVINCES.					
	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891
Vessels	425	447	371	442	519
Tons	193,136	231,518	196,269	241,242	275,084