

EDITORIAL NOTES

THE statement of imports and exports from May 1st, 1889, to May 1st, 1890, and from May 1st, 1890, to May 1st, 1891, embodied in the report of the Minister of Customs and laid before the House at its present session, show the exports of the forest for 1890 to have been \$21,529,828, and for 1891, \$19,736,193, a reduction of \$1,793,635.

THE annual consumption of railroad ties is placed at 73,000,000, which requires 365,000,000 cubic feet of raw material. The opinion generally held by railroad managers that young wood is more desirable because it is young is erroneous. On the contrary, young wood, which contains a large amount of albuminates, the food of the fungi, is more apt to decay, other things being equal. Sound, mature, well grown trees yield more timber than very young or very old trees. It has been found that hewed ties will last from one to three years longer than sawed, and the explanation is given that the sawed face is more or less rough and collects the water and thus gives opportunity for fungus growth, while the smoother face of the hewed tie sheds the water.

"THE timber and deal trade with England," says the *Monetary Times*, "has had its period of reverse too, and the heavy losses made by shippers of last year can now be somewhat fairly estimated. It was in some respects the most disastrous year which the trade has experienced for a good while back. These disasters were not confined to the trade in Canada, in fact they only reflected the losses which had befallen the trade in the United Kingdom, where some old established and respectable firms have disappeared from the scene altogether, while others have had to put up with heavily diminished returns on their capital, or no return at all, if not a depletion of capital itself. In Canada there has been only one failure of magnitude in the trade; but this failure has entailed considerable losses to the banks with whom the firm did business. These losses have largely been confined to exporters. The manufacturers in the interior, whether of deals or timber, have escaped with little or no loss. A heavy curtailment of production is the only remedy for such a state of things as arose last year, and this curtailment has already taken place."

A RESOLUTION on the part of any branch of trade, to maintain prices, does not necessarily mean a "combine" to raise prices. Unfortunately the abuses of monopolies and combines have been so many, that when a body of business men form themselves into an association, the "cry" is generally raised that "here's another trust." The case is illustrated just now by the action of the lumber manufacturers of South Georgia, who have recently resolved to unite in an effort to maintain a living price for their product, as against the demoralizing "cutting," that has been prevalent among the trade in that section of the country. Certain members of the trade have refused to join the association, on the ground that the movement is one to prevent legitimate competition. The CANADA LUMBERMAN is not in position to confirm or refute this statement, further than the assurance of our esteemed contemporary *The Southern Lumberman*, that "if it is a combine it is in the defensive sense and not the offensive." We do know that there is an unfortunate disposition in nearly every section of country to cut prices, and that the real interests of many leading departments of business are discouragingly disorganized for this very reason. It is only common sense on the part of common sense business men to make any effort that will remedy this evil, and if this can be done by organization, who should object?

In an age when "diamond cut diamond" is the ruling policy of too many engaged in business, and where

one man's disaster is utilized for the gain of some one else, it is pleasing to note the disposition of the people of Winona, Minn., towards Messrs. Schroth & Ahrens, sash and door manufacturers of that city. This firm were unfortunate enough last month to have their extensive plant destroyed by fire. The total loss was \$90,000, with an insurance of only \$20,000. How did the fellow citizens of this firm show their regrets? At once, a voluntary act on their part, they went to work and subscribed \$10,000 to assist in the work of rebuilding. Accompanying the donation was a letter in which are recorded these kindly words: "While this is in the form of subscription, we beg leave to assure you that that which particularly and especially influences this action is the great respect and friendship entertained for each of you individually and the desire to show you the appreciation in which you are held by your neighbors. Were it not that business has for some time been dull the sum would have been made much higher." We hear more or less of "man's inhumanity to man; here is an evidence of that touch of nature that makes a whole world kin. The firm in question have good reason to be proud of the esteem of their neighbors.

THE annual report of the Minister of the Interior just issued, shows the amount collected from timber dues in British Columbia and the northwest territories to be larger than those of 1889 by \$25,878.79. Of the revenue from timber, \$45,485.09 was derived from bonuses, ground rents and royalties on timber cut from lands in the railway belt in British Columbia, being an increase of \$27,440.32 over the previous year. An interesting statement of the report is that showing the decrease in the average prices of lumber within the several crown agencies during the last six years. The crown timber agent at Winnipeg reports that fuel is somewhat cheaper than last year, cordwood on the railway car at Winnipeg being \$2.25 to \$4 a cord for poplar and spruce, respectively; \$8 is asked for American anthracite coal on car, and \$6.75 for native soft coal. The regulations of September 17, 1888, governing the disposition of timber in Manitoba and the northwest territories, were, December 18, 1890, amended, so that licensees have now the option of either paying the royalty of 5 per cent. provided for by the regulations on the value of the lumber in the log, or at the period at which the lumber, when manufactured, is sold, and if the dues are paid at the former period the royalty is to be on the average price received for lumber during the three months next prior to the date upon which the dues are paid. The reason for making this change was, that in British Columbia it was found impossible for those persons holding licenses for Dominion and provincial lands, to separate the lumber manufactured from timber cut upon Dominion lands from that manufactured from timber cut on provincial lands. "It was also thought advisable to cancel the provision for a rebate of one-half of the royalty, amounting to about 25 cents a thousand, paid upon timber limits of Canada, and the order-in-council of December 18, 1890, above quoted, repealing section 20 of the regulations of British Columbia provide for a rebate of 25 cents a thousand on timber exported, but that it was considered that the timber on Dominion lands was more valuable than that on provincial lands, owing to the fact that the towage from the nearest point on the latter to Vancouver exceeds 65 cents a thousand, whereas from Dominion lands, it does not average 25 cents a thousand. It will thus be seen that the licenses of timber berths on Dominion lands, even although not allowed a rebate, have the advantage over those holding licenses for timber berths on provincial lands, who are allowed a rebate of 25 cents a thousand."

THE five colonies collectively, comprising the continent of Australia, annually import timber from other parts of the world to the value, at times, of over £2,000,000 sterling. This circumstance has set the Australians confronting the problem of forest conservation. It is not alone the cost of present consumption that is considered, but the question is asked by the Director-General of Forests for the government of New South Wales, "if such is the annual value of the

imported timber at this comparatively early stage of our existence, as a nation, what will it be, say fifty years hence?" "And, secondly, will the supplies from which we now draw remain always available?" Undoubtedly these are important and practical questions. The first carries its own answer, and the second, Mr. Brown, the officer asking the question, thinks may be answered in the negative. Then follows the further conundrum, "what are the native timber resources of these colonies," and are they being utilized in such a way as to make the most of them?" It is understood that whilst woods, such as the tulip, cedar, blackwood, and mahogany are not as acceptable to the colonists as the imported walnut, ash, elm, and hickory, that yet they are in every way equal to the imported article. This argument favors the conservation of the ingenious forests, and also the planting of exotic trees, which it is claimed can be successfully grown in Australia, both the soil and climate being suitable. We are not so sure that Mr. Brown is not a little Quixotic in some of his conclusions. It is doubtful, if these antipodal colonies can within themselves grow woods that to day they are importing. In any case, if we know anything of forest preservation in this part of the Empire, the contract to hold their own in native timber is large enough for present consideration. At the same time, we are glad to see our colonist brethren from "down below" taking so lively an interest in the question of forestry. It is one of these subjects, that requires all the enthusiasm that is likely to be thrown into it.

LAST year the Dominion government despatched William Ogilvie, the well-known explorer, to investigate the resources of the upper Ottawa and the country lying contiguous to the Hudson bay. His report has been laid before parliament, now in session. With regard to the timber resources of the district traversed by him, Mr. Ogilvie says: "It is needless to say anything of the timber resources of the upper Ottawa, they being well-known, but the country near the water shed we are not so familiar with. Here there is much red and white pine, with some fair spruce available, which will compare well in size and quality with a great deal that is now taken out. Timber on Barrier lake, Lonely river and Long lake, and its affluent streams can be directly floated into the Ottawa. That beyond the water shed, around Island lake and its affluents, can with very little trouble be floated into the waters of the Ottawa as follows: I have already mentioned that in high water the water from Summit lake flows both to the Ottawa and Abitibi. Now it appears to me that a few hundred dollars judiciously applied would make this exit to the Ottawa available for the passage of timber through it down to Long lake. By deepening and straightening Snake creek, which could be easily done, and placing a tug, such as is on Quinze lake, on Summit and Island lakes, all the timber around there could readily be placed at this exit and thence easily brought to the Ottawa by the aid of a tug on Long lake, Lonely river and Lake Barrier. As we approach Lake Abitibi the pine gradually thins out, until six miles below it, on Abitibi river, the last white pine is seen, and thenceforward we have only spruce, poplar and some birch and tamarack, of which only the first named is large enough to be of any commercial value. On the Moose river there are many spruce trees fifteen inches and upwards in diameter, and some balsam and poplar which could be utilized for many purposes. Very few trees were seen around James bay of large enough size for other use than fuel. In the vicinity of Rupert's house some building timber might be found, but not much suitable for any other purposes, the same remark applies to East main and all intervening country. If the timber on all the other rivers flowing into the bay is no more important than that I saw on the Abitibi, I would hesitate to call the timber resources of that district valuable, for though it is all thickly wooded only a percentage of it, along the river at least, is large enough for merchantable lumber. Yet the time is coming when it will have to be resorted to, and when this time comes we shall find ample water power on the ground for the cheap manufacturing of all the available lumber there, so that the consumer here or elsewhere will not be burdened with the cost of transport of the refuse part of it"