

REPORTS OF COMMERCIAL AGENTS.

The last quarterly report of the Department of Trade and Commerce of Canada contains communications from commercial agents in which subjects of interest to the lumber trade are discussed. Under date of June 10th, Mr. J. S. Larke, of Sydney, Australia, writes:

"Reclamations have been made on another cargo of timber from British Columbia. They are made on two grounds. One is for inferiority of timber. The amount under this head is small. The cargo as a whole was very good. If it had come to one buyer only it would no doubt have been accepted, but it belonged to several persons, and all the alleged inferior stuff fell to one shipper, and he demands compensation. The other demand is for delay in delivery through improper stowage. Instead of being placed in the ship so that each owner could get at his portion in turn, the several lots were so mixed that the owners had to keep their punts and laborers about the ship during the delivery, making the cost several times more than it otherwise would have been. Not having seen the cargo I am not personally aware how much the losses in this way may have been, but they are errors that may occur and should be prevented. The failure of a large San Francisco firm engaged in the timber trade of this colony is reported. It is charged, justly or unjustly, with cutting prices to the low ebb which now prevails in the effort to monopolize the trade. They may have been a factor in doing this, but only a factor. It seems to me wise to support the view advised in a previous report, that the British Columbia mill men should emancipate themselves from the San Francisco middle men. There are too many agents in the business, and as a consequence the San Francisco broker, through his agent here, and the Sydney indent merchant, representing the lumber from a common mill, are found competing against each other and cutting the price of products of the same mill. Under such circumstances demoralization in prices must occur."

One month later the same agent reviews the timber trade as follows:

"The price of rough merchantable Oregon continues very low. It has been brought here at 6s. 4d. per hundred feet, and one or two sales have been reported at 6s. 3d., which includes freight, insurance and brokerage. There are at present in the harbor two ships unloading timber from British Columbia. So far no exception has been taken to one, but damages have already been claimed on the other cargo. I went and saw it. Some spots of fungus growth showing dry rot appeared on some pieces. Otherwise the lumber was of excellent quality, and if properly stacked this fungus would disappear. However, an allowance will have to be made or a survey demanded. The market has been so spoiled by shipping practically clear lumber as rough merchantable, that ordinary rough merchantable will not be accepted as up to grade. One Puget Sound company is reported as having instructed its agents here to sell and guarantee all cargoes. It is selling at a very low figure and sending down very high grade stuff. There can be little profit at present rates to either shippers or importers under such conditions. Some who have hitherto imported are desirous of acting as

agents for mills, preferring a commission instead of a possible profit. Very heavy loss results in the case of reclamation for defects in quality. On one cargo from the United States, the claim on which has only recently been settled, the direct loss was nearly six thousand dollars. There were some indirect expenses also, and both together were enough to prevent the mill from receiving anything for the cargo shipped. One or two firms who have done a large timber trade are endeavoring to secure agencies for Canadian mills, but it is probable that the low prices here may make the mills hesitate to take the risk of the trade. They could secure a much larger sale of dressed timber than is being done, as the relative high price of Baltic just now should create a larger demand for dressed Oregon as flooring and boarding. Some Oregon shelving has been sold here. It is used in cheap work instead of spruce."

Mr. Larke also refers to a shipment of carriage axles made from Gananoque, Ont. The goods are said to have been superior to a sample lot from Cleveland, Ohio, but the higher freight rates rendered the venture unprofitable.

Mr. E. Eustace Burke, Commissioner for Jamaica, under date of July 17th, says:

"America supplies large cargoes. The dressed descriptions are increasing in demand, and I consider the Dominion ought to share the supply. This latter remark will also apply to ready made doors, blinds and sash frames."

PAVING BLOCKS.

The general commercial information in the report contains the following with respect to paving blocks:

Large quantities of wooden blocks are used every year in paving the streets of London. These blocks have so far for the most part come from Sweden.

On the 21st June the vestry of Marylebone, one of the parishes of London, passed the following resolution:

"That it be an instruction to the works committee to avail themselves of the present unique opportunity, when so many colonials, officials and others are in London, to confer with those interested to ascertain whether it is not possible to obtain equally serviceable material for wood paving within the British Empire as that now obtained from foreigners."

The specifications have heretofore called for the following:—

"The blocks to be of the best Swedish yellow deal and cut from Soderham or Gefle deals, and the channel blocks to be of the best memel timber, the whole to be sound, close-grained, free from sap, shakes, dead knots, decay or other defects, to be cut truly to the specified dimensions and to be in every respect fairly equal to the sample blocks deposited with your surveyor."

The prices paid per 1,000 for 6"x3"x9" blocks were 32 24
do. 5"x3"x9" do. 28 23

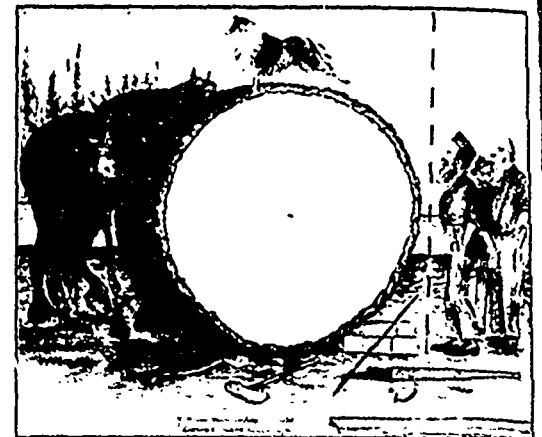
A specimen of these blocks may be seen at this department. It would seem as if Canada might be able to participate in this, and intending exporters are requested to correspond with the High Commissioner and to send him sample blocks.

NEW TIMBER CULLERS.

EXAMINATIONS for timber cullers were held by the Quebec government at Hull on the 11th of August. Out of 48 candidates 34 were successful, whose names are as follows: A. Yull, A. Normand, A. Adams, W. Adams, A. St. Amour, J. E. Lindsay, J. E. McIntosh, D. McGregor, J. Fraser, S. Buchanan, J. C. McMann, M. Donah, H. Brock, D. Bourgeois, I. Dupuis, W. F. Sims, G. J. Aren, C. M. Cheney, T. Desmarais, A. M. Adams, F. Jordan, J. Carty, J. Howard, J. B. White, J. F. McNamara, H. Link, H. Link, jr., R. J. Duff, D. R. Stewart, P. Baternon, R. F. Grimes, A. Fadbout, S. C. Lawless.

SECTION OF DOUGLAS FIR FOR KEW GARDENS.

DURING the past summer a beautiful specimen of Douglas fir was shipped from New Westminster, B. C., to Kew Gardens, London, England, the great botanical and forestry display centre. Referring to the photograph from which the accompanying illustration was made, Mr. John Sprott, of New Westminster, says: "The enclosed being but a camera reproduction of sketch, correctness in all detail is not guaranteed, but in the main a fair idea of the size of the tree is conveyed. The pole in the man's hand is 10



SECTION OF TREE SHIPPED TO KEW GARDENS, LONDON, ENGLAND, JUNE 3RD, 1897.

feet long, and if the diameter of section is set with this, 7 feet will be shown. The actual length of the tree was over 250 feet from ground to top, and 116 feet from ground to first limb. Owing to large roots at the base, the tree had to be felled some 8 to 10 feet from the ground to get a clear section, and as perfect in circle as possible. On the butt, measurement ran between 8 and 9 feet." The timber is said to be without knot or blemish, and will no doubt be the means of making known to European users of wood the wonderful forest possessions of British Columbia.

THE SAW.

PLINY says that the saw was first invented by Dædalus, but according to Apollodorus, it was the invention of Talus, who used the jawbone of a crocodile to cut through a piece of wood, and then made an iron instrument in imitation of it. The saw is represented on the monuments of Egypt, from 2500 to 3000 years B. C. As early as A. D. 1327, sawmills driven by water power were in operation at Augsburg, and it is believed before this that they were in operation in Paris, driven by the current of the Seine. The first sawmill erected in the Norway pineries was in 1530. Sawmills were numerous in Italy in the sixteenth century. They were not introduced into England until 1663, when a native of Holland built one, but was compelled to abandon it by the opposition of the populace, carpenters and other artisans, who saw no good in such a new-fangled contrivance.—Journal of Building.