

THE TIMBER TRADE OF CAPE COLONY.

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA, Sept. 20th, 1899.

Editor CANADA LUMBERMAN:

DEAR SIR,—Since my last letter appeared in the columns of your paper many changes have taken place in the conditions governing the timber trade of this colony, and I believe of the whole of South Africa. At the time referred to, the principal supplies of timber were brought from the Baltic and the port of Pensacola in South America, with small lots from Quebec and St. John, N.B. The most favored timber then (and for that matter at the present, only not to the same extent) was the Baltic deal, for the reason that builder's specifications invariably called for deals of an average length of about 20 feet, and these lengths were only obtainable from Norway and Sweden.

Within the past eighteen months, however, what is called here "Douglas Fir" or "Oregon," a wood hitherto unknown on this market, has made its appearance, and I understand it to be commanding a good place and a large sale. This wood has long been sought after for use in harbor improvements on account of its enormous length, and I believe it was on representations by the Harbor Board of Table Bay that the first logs were brought here. Since the time of its introduction it has been steadily growing in favor, not only on large works, but for building purposes also, and in conversation with one of Cape Town's most extensive timber importers recently, he bespoke for this wood a very large consumption, not only in this colony, but in all the ports of South Africa. This opinion seems to be well founded, from the fact that whereas only one cargo arrived at this port from British Columbia during last year, three cargoes have arrived up to the present date of this year, and more are expected, besides what has come from United States ports on the Pacific. During last year the United States product seemed to have preference with dealers here, but at the present time, for some reason, there seems to exist a preference for the Canadian, which will account for increased shipments from British Columbia. It may be that British Columbia mills are prepared to cut the most suitable specification for this market.

I understand, too, that one cargo which arrived from British Columbia was so far ahead of what had been hitherto received from American ports, insofar as grain and quality were concerned, as to give it first place at once. Be this as it may, there is no reason known here why British Columbia should not obtain a large share of the future trade with this country, providing she can supply the same quality of timber and on as favorable conditions as London and New York houses, acting as brokers for the American millman, offer, and it might be worth mentioning here that one New York commission house has been offering Douglas fir c.i.f. Cape Town at a lower price than English houses have been able to touch heretofore. It is the high freight from port of loading, coupled with the heavy expense of handling long timber at this end, which makes the price of an otherwise cheap cargo run into big figures before it reaches the yards of the South African importer, and it is possible in the particular instance referred to, that the New York commission house had an offer of low freight from a vessel near to or at the port of loading.

The following is a specification of a cargo such as would be suited to this market at any time:

DEALS AND SCANTLINGS.

Average length to be not under 30 feet.

4½ in. x 3 in.	20 to 40 ft	20 standards.
6 in. x 3 in.	"	20 "
7 in. x 2½ in.	"	20 "
9 in. x 2 in.	"	10 "
9 in. x 3 in.	"	350 "
11 in. x 2 in.	"	20 "
11 in. x 3 in.	"	200 "
12 in. x 4 in.	"	25 "

Average length to be not under 45 feet.

9 in. x 3 in.	40 to 50 ft	200 to 300 pcs.
11 in. x 3 in.	"	"

LOGS.

Average length not under 40 feet.

9 in. x 9 in.	30 to 50 ft	50 logs.
12 in. x 12 in.	"	100 "
12 in. x 14 in.	"	50 "
14 in. x 14 in.	"	100 "
15 in. x 15 in.	"	50 "
16 in. x 17 in.	"	50 "

FLOORING.

Average Length 17 feet.

T and G 6 in. x 1½ in.	12 to 24 ft	15 standards.
" 4 in. x 1½ in.	"	25 "
" 6 in. x ¾ in.	"	20 "

The value of such a specification as I have given at Cape Town to-day would be in the neighborhood of £10 sterling per St. Petersburg standard, for lengths up to 40 feet, cost freight and insurance, with a slight advance on longer lengths. No. 1 flooring is worth £12 25 6d per standard and No. 2 flooring £11 5s per standard.

The following ships have discharged British Columbia timber at this port during the present year: "Kennebeck," 2127 tons; "John A. Briggs," 2110 tons; and "Undaunted," 1764 tons; and the "Harvester," 1494 tons, is expected. Apart from the business of this port, I believe The Lingham Timber Co. bring a considerable quantity of this timber to Delagoa Bay and the east coast of Africa.

If any of your readers are in a position to secure a low freight at any time, the opportunity might be seized upon to send in a cargo to this port in accordance with the above specification, as there would be no difficulty in placing it with some importer here. Another course is to offer the above or a similar specification to some of the several London houses representing the merchants here, among whom are Messrs. Mackie, Dunn & Co., Davis & Soper, and Findlay, Durham & Brodie, all well known firms.

The returns show that only one cargo arrived at this port from British Columbia during 1898, and two from United States, whilst Canadian ports have taken the lead by sending four ships already this year, which is a sure indication that the consumption of this timber is on the increase at the expense of the trade from the Baltic.

I shall be pleased to give further information to individual enquirers.

Yours truly,

THOS. MOFFAT.

SKETCH OF MR. MOFFAT.

The writer of the above contribution to THE LUMBERMAN is a son of the late Lt. Col. James Moffat, Brigade Major, Canadian Militia District No. 1, London, Ont. He was born at London on August 22nd, 1861, and resided



MR. THOMAS MOFFAT.

there until 1885, when he was admitted to practice as a barrister and solicitor of Osgoode Hall. He practiced at Chatham, in co-partnership with James Magee, Q. C., the present County Crown Attorney for the county of Middlesex, and at London until March, 1895, when he removed to Cape Town, South Africa, which has been his headquarters ever since.

Since his arrival in Cape Town, Mr. Moffat has been engaged in furthering Canada's interests in trade, and in the beginning of 1897 founded the firm of Moffat, Hutchins & Co., now one of the best known firms in the colony, and dealing exclusively in Canadian manufactures and products. His partner is Mr. William J. Hutchins, also a native of Canada. When Mr. Moffat reached South Africa, importers had not heard of Canada's manufactures, and were too conservative to give them a trial, so the most practical plan to adopt was the formation of a firm which would handle them and thus obtain for them a foothold in the market. The success which has attended his efforts has justified the means, as merchants are always willing to buy goods which are being sold by others.

In the early part of 1898 the Dominion government,

recognizing Mr. Moffat's efforts towards trade extension, rewarded him by appointment as agent for the colony.

The business of handling Canadian shipments is left to the firm of Moffat, Hutchins & Co., whilst Mr. Moffat attends to his government office, looks for new fields of enterprise, and gives information to enquirers both in that country and in Canada.

THE CARE OF BOX MACHINERY.

In regard to the care of box-making machinery, there are general rules that apply here just as they do to any woodworking establishment, and these general rules are the things to be used for the foundation of any system for the maintenance of such machinery. The individuality, the variation owing to the special character of the machines and their work, is only a matter of detail and is easily kept up with if there are brains and system in the attempt, and if there are not both there may be a lack of money on the profit side of the ledger when the machinery has served for only a short while.

The model of ideal in shop arrangement has been pictured many times by mechanical writers, and with some variation, owing, partly, to a matter of individual taste. The general rules for observation in this are, an arrangement of machines in order that the stock may go through the necessary machines and come out at the finishing end of the shop with as little work and confusion as possible. Presume a beginning at the surfacing planer at the stock-receiving end, then step by step through the shop the material should come to each machine in the order of their work, without any circumventing or coming back again for any part of the machine work. Some consideration, however, must be taken as we go along of the machines themselves, and their connection with the driving power, or else in catering to the convenience of handling stock there may result a poor mechanical arrangement of machines. In conforming to the mechanical idea in shop construction we should bear in mind, first, that the machines and driving line of shafting should be so arranged that the belts going from the line to the counter shafts of the various machines may not all pull on any one side, but be distributed so as to pull against each other as much as it is practical to so arrange them so that they balance, as it were. This idea has been diagrammatically laid out heretofore, but every man can make his own diagram if he will only bear in mind that the idea is to get his line of shafting in the center, not necessarily of the building, but in the center of machine distribution, and if he has two lines of shaftings to the building he should not put them along each side wall, but divide the machine distribution into two parts and center each half with a line of shafting. The other general mechanical idea to be borne in mind is to try and get the heaviest driving nearest to the power end of the line. This cannot be easily conformed to in all cases, as that of distributing the counter shafting, for it is sometimes necessary to get a light machine near the power end, and likewise a heavy one away out toward the other end, but it is well to bear the idea in mind, and get all the heavy machines possible up near the power end of the driving line.

After the machines are all up each machine should be numbered on the body of the machine and the same number tacked up by the counter shaft. Of these a record or book should be kept, opening with the cost of the machine in detail, including belting and all connections, with date of application and name of manufacturer. This may seem like a lot of red tape at first, but by and by the advantage of it will become apparent. The millwright can enter on his book the repair expenses of each individual machine, and incidentally record the substance of his opinion of the trouble and worry of keeping the machine in good running order. Then the foreman in his book of estimates on the cost of getting out stock has something to conjure with in the number of these machines. It is easy, under such an arrangement, to get the record of each machine, and a comparison of books by the foreman and millwright would tell, without any guessing, when it would be advisable to discard a machine for something new. And, too, there is something fascinating about this positive knowledge of what you are doing once you get started at it, and instead of seeming like a useless rigamarole of a task, it will appear like the only real manner of business, and you will wonder why you did not take it up sooner. —Barrel and Box.

Hemlock shooks are beginning to be quite as popular as pine in the United States.