

timber, piles, telegraph poles and ties are being taken out this winter; the total number of men employed in the woods exceeding that of any previous year. Year by year the attention of the Provincial Government has been called to the loss caused by forest fires, with recommendations that the standing pine be sold. Already untold millions of standing timber have been rendered absolutely valueless, and this state of affairs continues. A large amount of high grade Georgian Bay lumber would be imported here and planned for shipment to the Northwest were the freight rates changed. I am informed by one firm that they could handle ten millions per annum more than they do if some reduction was made in the tariff. As it now stands, the rate on lumber from Rat Portage to Winnipeg is fifteen and a half cents per hundred pounds; from Port Arthur twenty-seven cents. Our shippers, therefore, have to compete with the Rat Portage dealers and are handicapped by a differential rate of eleven and a half cents per hundred or from forty to fifty dollars per car. This Board should make every effort to have this condition of things changed.

AGRICULTURAL AND MINING EXHIBIT.

The Algoma Exhibit of the products of the soil and mine at the Toronto Industrial Fair in September last did much to place our position and resources in a true light before the Canadian public. It was a highly creditable showing of what can be produced in this, to many, an unknown land.

THE RAILWAY SITUATION.

A year ago, when addressing you, I had every confidence that the Port Arthur, Duluth and Western Railway would have been completed by this time, into the heart of the mining district.

As you are aware the negotiations for the financing of the undertaking have not succeeded, and some substantial recognition of the enterprise must be made by the Provincial Government as well as the municipalities; with that, the whole enterprise could be successfully carried out. Other applicants for public favor, as well as schemes of more gigantic proportions, have been brought to your notice, but it appears to me that our first duty to the Town and District is to lend all our energies and combine all our resources in building the first fifty miles of this road. The completion of that portion would directly draw all the mining trade to Port Arthur and tend to improve the situation in many ways. If necessary, the road so completed might then be a common line for all companies, whether they propose to advance in the direction of the Rainy River District or to tap the iron deposits at the Boundary. It is needless for me to draw your attention to the beneficial results which must follow the building of such a line; already much has been written on the subject. Strong efforts are now being made in Toronto to induce the Provincial Government to subsidize the line by either a cash or land grant. In either case the small amount of aid asked would be no great weight on any Province. In this case it would have the effect of making of much value the mineral lands at present unmarketable, owing to their situation. The result would be that for every dollar so invested the Province would be directly recouped at least tenfold; while if land only be given it would cost the Province nothing and ten times the quantity would be rendered saleable at the Crown price. This Board should take a decided action in this matter, as well as the citizens and municipal corporations interested, it being of vital interest to all the inhabitants of this District.