

ence may be noted, however, that where the amount owed by individual Canadian traders was smaller last year, the reverse was the case across the lines. Among American traders the average liabilities, which were only \$15,000 in 1882, were \$18,700 last year.

Referring to the signs of the times in the States, the *New York Bulletin* said, last week :

"There can be no doubt that the unsatisfactory condition of business and the numerous failures are largely a consequence of over-trading that has been rendered possible by the cheapness of credit during the last few years. This is made apparent by an examination of the schedules of most of the firms that have lately failed. For example, a firm of cotton dealers who had been in business since 1880, failed the other day with liabilities estimated at \$400,000 to \$600,000 and a capital of only \$75,000 to \$100,000. There is just now among the banks a marked degree of caution engendered by their lamentable experiences of the dangers of excess of confidence during the recent past."

### THE LUMBER TRADE.

The state of the timber trade, one of Canada's chief industries, is not encouraging. In J. Bell Forsyth & Co.'s latest circular, we read :

"The spring business opened with a feeble demand as the shipping houses were holding over stocks from 1882 ample for their requirements, so that a very few sales were then effected and at prices slightly under the closing figures of the previous year. During the summer months the market remained in a drooping state, only an occasional raft being disposed of with difficulty. While early in the autumn several sales were effected at fair rates; since that period everything has been stagnant, even the local market is exceedingly dull, and at present we can discern no signs of recovery from this unfortunate state of things."

The following prices for the last two months are based on actual sales at Quebec, except in some cases where no sales have taken place :

White Pine, in the raft, for inferior and ordinary, according to average, quality, &c., measured off.....	\$0 18	\$0 20
For fair average quality, according to average, quality, &c., measured off.....	0 20	0 23
For good and good fair average, according to average, quality, &c., measured off.....	0 23	0 26
For superior, according to average quality, &c., measured off....	0 27	0 36
In shipping order, according to average, quality, &c.....	0 20	0 38
Waney board, 18 to 19 inch, according to average, quality, &c.	0 31	0 34
Waney board, 19 to 21 inch, according to average, quality, &c.	0 34	0 36
Red Pine, in the raft, measured off, according to average and quality.....	0 12	0 18
In shipping order, 35 to 45 feet, according to average and quality.....	0 16	0 22
Oak, Canada, by the dram, according to average and quality.....	0 40	0 43
Oak, Michigan and Ohio, by the dram, according to average and quality.....	0 47	0 49
Elm, by the dram, according to average and quality, 45 to 50 feet.....	0 34	0 85
Elm, by the dram, according to average and quality, 30 to 35 feet. No sales.....	0 00	0 00
Ash, 14 inches and up, according to average and quality.....	0 32	0 35
Birch, 16 inch average, according to average and quality.....	0 23	0 26
Tamarac, square, according to size and quality.....	0 12	0 13
Flatted, according to size and quality.....	0 10	0 12
Staves, merchantable pipe, according to quality and specification.	\$350	\$360

Staves, W. O. Punccheon, merchantable, according to quality and specification..... \$80 \$85  
Deals, bright, according to mill specification, \$108 to \$110 for 1st, \$68 to \$70 for 2nd, and \$32 to \$34 for 3rd quality.  
Deals, bright, Michigan, according to mill specification, \$125 to \$127 for 1st, and \$86 to \$88 for 2nd quality.  
Deals, dry floated, according to mill specification, \$104 to \$106 for 1st, \$66 to \$68 for 2nd, and \$32 to \$34 for 3rd quality.  
Deals, bright spruce, according to mill specification, \$36 to \$38 for 1st, \$22 to \$24 for 2nd, and \$10 to \$21 for 3rd quality.

The timber trade is subject to periodical inflations and depressions; and periodically, production is greatly in excess of demand. When heavy stocks have to be carried over a year or two, the interest of the weakest holders is apt to drop out, and the banks become the parties chiefly interested. This experience is not lost on the banks. At present they are drawing the reins tight on lumberers; and production will consequently be greatly decreased this winter. Still Messrs. J. Bell Forsyth & Co. express the opinion that the supply, greatly restricted as it will be, will exceed "the present very limited requirements." Of course, it is not exactly the present, but the near future requirements that will control prices; and the important question is what next year's demand is likely to be? A question more easily asked than answered.

Low prices and a feeble demand in England will affect production on the Baltic, as well as in Canada. The *Timber Trades Journal* prints a letter from Riga, in which it is stated that shipments to England have only been made to clear off large stocks before next spring. Only small quantities are expected to come on the market next spring. Exporters are unwilling to enter into contracts at present prices. The cut will consequently be restricted here as well as here. These facts lead the Riga correspondent to express the opinion that higher prices may prevail next spring.

We learn from the same journal, of the 22nd December, that the London dock deliveries for the previous week had been unusually heavy. But in dock stocks the difference is not great; and the small difference between present stocks and those of past years is attributed to cheap freights. So much stress is laid on this fact that the opinion is expressed that "with the normal rate of freight ruling for the fall, probably the difference between the 1883 and 1882 stocks in the docks here would have been several million pieces in favor of the latter on deals alone, while the augmentation to the flooring stocks, which has turned the scale against those of 1882, is also due to a cheap rate of tonnage." From this, the conclusion would seem to be fair, that any sudden impulse given to the demand might, next spring, send up prices. But that impulse may be found to be wanting.

Returning to the Forsyth circular, we find the export of the year from Quebec of the following woods exceeded that of 1882 :

WHITE PINE.		
	SUPPLY.	EXPORT.
1883 { Square.....	7,412,034	10,427,000
{ Waney.....	3,786,523	
1882 { Square.....	8,053,086	7,912,160
{ Waney.....	3,127,129	

### STOCK.

1883	{ 7,780,620 } Square.
	{ 2,758,840 } Waney.
1882	{ 6,532,152 } Square.
	{ 3,854,943 } Waney.

Of red pine the quantities that now come forward are very small compared with what they were formerly—about one-tenth. The Irish market that takes much of this timber cannot now be depended on :

	SUPPLY.	EXPORT.	STOCK.
1883.....	498,111	1,048,960	1,510,925
1882.....	1,474,881	1,024,680	2,362,624

The sources of supply of oak for the Quebec market seem to be approaching exhaustion; the quantity found there has greatly decreased in the last decade. And the quantity wintering at Garden Island is less than usual :

	SUPPLY.	EXPORT.	STOCK.
1883.....	1,916,322	2,132,880	1,203,347
1882.....	1,316,719	1,957,320	1,362,153

There is encouragement to cut more elm, since the demand for it last season seems to have fully equalled the supply. And in Great Britain the stock is exceedingly small. The stock at Quebec is unprecedentedly light :

	SUPPLY.	EXPORT.	STOCK.
1883.....	309,531	739,920	87,424
1882.....	714,549	778,360	530,611

Ash, too, has been in good demand; and the stock on hand is light :

	SUPPLY.	EXPORT.	STOCK.
1883.....	263,448	346,320	135,228
1882.....	310,769	297,040	212,422

For birch there is a good demand, with a light supply; and manufacturers will of course take these facts into account :

	SUPPLY.	EXPORT.	STOCK.
1883.....	132,624	233,040	6,629
1882.....	251,920	213,680	78,413

American competition has of late interfered with the trade in staves, at Quebec; experts thence having greatly fallen off :

	SUPPLY.	EXPORT.	STOCK.
1883 { Pipe.....	680	549	470
{ Punccheon...	663	933	805
1882 { Pipe.....	565	450	293
{ Punccheon...	1,430	850	1,007

The Quebec trade in deals is increasing :

	SUPPLY.	EXPORT.	STOCK.
1883.....	3,228,622	3,993,072	1,543,359
1882.....	4,611,875	3,148,688	2,507,704

The quantity of deals wintering at Ottawa is about the same as last season. In spruce deals the Quebec market is represented by these figures :

	SUPPLY.	EXPORT.	STOCK.
1883.....	3,569,440	2,729,635	1,752,725
1882.....	3,239,960	2,787,309	1,012,920

This kind of wood, largely obtained in New Brunswick, is greatly over-produced; and it is believed this winter's cut will be, as it ought to be, small.

It may fairly be concluded, from these facts, that over-production will not be pushed dangerously far this winter. The future prospect of the timber trade is gloomy, but not hopeless. A brisk demand falling upon a moderate supply would cause a much desired revival; and even with a moderate demand, it ought not to be difficult to carry the stocks that will be marketed next spring.

A PLEASING little episode of the past week was the presentation to Mr. Edmund Wragge, late Manager of the Toronto, Grey and Bruce Railway, of a testimonial, consisting of silver plate, by the officials and employees of that road.