

## Columbia's Lumber Trade.

Mr. John Hendry, of the Royal City Planing Mills, New Westminster, is in the city, on his way home from San Francisco, whither he went to arrange for timber charters by vessels to Australia, South America and other countries from his mills. Mr. Hendry states that the only obstacle to a very large trade is the unsatisfactory state of the Fraser river channel from the sandheads inwards for a couple of miles. Once a channel is established of say 24 feet, vessels will ascend as far as New Westminster and load lumber at his mills for the countries we have named. He found his principal difficulty to lay in the fact that no chart of the Fraser was extant for the use of the underwriters in San Francisco, New York and London. Steps will be taken to have a proper survey of the lower Fraser made and a chart prepared. Once the river is properly buoyed and vessels can go up Mr. Hendry is of the opinion that the traffic is practically an unlimited one. Unless the Fraser is dredged the Royal City Mills will be compelled to look elsewhere for a site whereon to erect their mills for their export trade. This will be a serious matter for New Westminster. It is to be hoped the Government will be impressed with the necessity for dredging a channel as suggested by him.

He believes that a reciprocity in the natural products of the soil will be of an immense advantage to this province. In his line of business it would be equivalent to \$2 per thousand feet, besides affording a home market, which would consume all the products of his mill even if they were doubled or trebled. He leaves for home to-morrow morning. — *Victoria (B. C.) Colonist.*

## EXCHANGE ECHOES.

## Chicago Timberman.

Whether there shall be more or less than an average output of lumber during the season of 1888, of course, is impossible to prognosticate with any degree of certainty at present; but from the tabulated and published statements one inference is plainly deducible at least, viz. that there is an increasing consumption, which augurs well for the maintenance of prices in the future. The only logical conclusion deducible from the statements alluded to is that there is less lumber at the distributing centers than there was a year ago, as well as a smaller supply at the manufacturing centers; hence, there must inevitably have been an increased consumption. The shortage at the large wholesale markets must be met as early as possible, and this must inevitably result in an active demand as soon as the selling season is fairly inaugurated, which will be in the near future. The indications point fairly and forcibly to the conclusion that there will be no weakening in lumber prices in the absence of unforeseen and unanticipated financial or other disasters generally. Anticipated extensive building operations throughout the country are fairly deducible from market and other reports, and this fact is another guarantee that the spinal columns of the holders of lumber will have no reason to exhibit any sign of weakness during the season of active operations which is approaching.

## Northwestern Lumberman.

An anticipatory effect has been exerted upon certain Canadian holders of lumber by the present serious consideration of the free lumber question, since confidence is felt on the other side of the line that duties will be removed. The larger and more independent of the Dominion lumbermen are reported as showing no anxiety to dispose of stocks except at a good profit, believing in an increased demand from the United States by means of the removal of \$2 duty, and under this feeling prices have acquired firmness and in some cases have been advanced, though the severe winter season has seriously restricted demand. This condition of affairs, however, appears to be a straw in the wind by which to judge the inclination of Canadian lumbermen. It is apparently more profit that they want rather than increased business. The United States is looked to as a source of demand to keep up a normal activity across the line, in the face of decreased export trade and this could result to a considerable extent without important injury to American prices or shipments, though the course of trade is likely to be changed somewhat by such competitive influences. It does not appear that the Canadians will make extra efforts to place their lumber output by underselling American producers, but rather do they seem to rejoice in the possibility that they will be able to sell their output at an increased price. If demand is small now and margins narrow, it would be quite another affair to sell more lumber in the United States at a good living profit. Yet it does not follow that the increased trade between Canada and the United States would soon reach a point of competition that would cheapen lumber to an extent, as the ordinary individual seems to think it would. There would likely be local friction near the line, but the Canadian flow of lumber would merge into the great stream of trade, and gradually lose its identity as a disturbing influence.

## Miramichi (N. B.) Advance.

Now that the claim of the Province on account of Eastern Extension Railway is to be paid, it is to be hoped that the local government will recognise the claims of the lumber industry by relieving it of a portion of the heavy stumpage burdens imposed on the plea of revenue necessity. The fact that the lumber business is much depressed, that prices are low in the world's great market, with no prospect of material or permanent increase; that the cost of lumbering operations is growing greater every year, and that the accumulated burdens of business have driven many operators to the wall and left many mills in idleness, ought to warn the government and legislature that the continued imposition of the existing high stumpage charges is suicidal. An opportunity is now presented for reducing these rates, and instead of new and, perhaps, needless avenues of expenditure being opened, let there be a just measure of relief afforded to our most important staple industry.

## London Timber.

Whatever may be the opinion held as to the improvement or not of general trade, there can be no doubt as to the favorable development of business in the hardwood line. From its rise a month or two before the close of last year until now, the progress has been constant and regular, and at the present time matters look equally promising with the condition of the market at any time during that period. The outlook for the future is good, and there is a reasonable prospect of a continuation of the present revival of business. There are not only in this district, but all over the country, a large number of commercial enterprises either projected or already started, which largely increase the consumption of hardwood, and so considerably benefit the trade during the season. It is anticipated that there will be a large distribution of hardwood this year, and up to the present there has been nothing to induce a modification of those anticipations; but on the other hand the general report is that the demand is more lively, whilst stocks are within very moderate limits, the rate of supply not equaling the distribution. As the issue of these features the condition of the market is firm, and from the present outlook a good and improving trade appears to be assured.

## The Chicago Timberman.

The Michigan lumbermen who are strenuously opposed to the removal of the tariff on Canadian lumber, are watching congressional action with a vast amount of anxiety, believing as they do that free-trade in lumber and logs as proposed, will be fatal to the interests of Michigan's great industry; some of them are a good deal vexed at the bill recommended by the ways and means committee, and in substantiation of their position on this question refer to the fact that there has recently been an enormous rise in the value of Canadian timber limits from about \$400 per square mile to \$3,000 per mile. They say that this fact does not indicate that American consumers are to receive the benefit of cheap lumber, or Michigan mills to receive the benefit of cheap logs, as has been argued by the advocates of the removal of the duty on lumber but, rather as one says, "that the Canadian government will secure an enormous increase in its revenue, and Canadian manufacturers will secure about \$2 per thousand feet advantage over American manufacturers, and the benefit of the whole range of the American markets." Michigan lumbermen, at all events, are not, as a rule, in love with the advocates of the proposed measure.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

TORONTO, March 12th., 1888.

## Editor Canada Lumberman,

DEAR SIR.—You ask for a few words regarding my business the past year, and in reply would say that my operations for a retail yard the last twelve months were very extensive, having handled upwards of four million feet of all grades of lumber, my margin on same being very close indeed. Bills cut so close and heavy losses in some cases have left small profit, and we retail lumbermen have now got to make up our minds to one of two alternatives, either to do a small business and look after it properly, or take our capital and put it into some other business. For instance, to take a bill from a builder we have to figure it down as low as a wholesale man, who has no yard to keep up, or to lose it altogether. Again, the wholesale men in nearly all cases, have a portion of their lumber piled off on the Northern, Grand Trunk and Midland R. R. yards, and if a carpenter, butcher, baker, tailor, or any other tradesman wants half a thousand of lath or shingles, two or three scantling, or one hundred feet of boards, down they go to any of those places, and would you believe it, buy it from those who call themselves wholesale men at as low a rate as they would charge me if I took two or three thousand feet. How can the retailer expect to make a profit in the face of such unrighteous work as that? (I may here say there are a few

exceptions but very few). All I can say is no wonder the trade is in such a demoralized state.

The retailers have been trying to form an association to put a stop to such work, and have been ably assisted by five of the largest wholesale dealers in the city, but whether from the present depression, or that some of the concessions they will have to sign to bind themselves might injure their trade for a time, half of them have withdrawn, and unless they form soon I have no hope of them organizing this season. A most unwise policy, particularly when all have expressed themselves as having made no money last year. I for one could see great good resulting from such an association, and the few meetings that were held in discussing a few matters, furnished information in an informal manner, that I consider is worth a few hundred dollars to me. How in the world a body of men commanding so much capital as the retail lumbermen of this city do can be so blind to their own interests I cannot account for. However good may flow from the agitation already commenced, as the wholesale men will have to be very chary of what builders they supply, and find out if they are customers of those yards they supply most to, and if so, it is but quite right that they should give them shorter time and charge them at least 50 cents per thousand more, as I fear the retailer will not be imposed upon any longer.

Another thing now that the Northern has come into the hands of the Grand Trunk we may look for a change and will realize that they will find other uses than making a piling ground of such a valuable piece of property.

Now, Mr. Editor, that I have opened up this much vexed question between the wholesaler and retailer, and taken up so much valuable space in your paper, I trust you will call upon every interested subscriber to give us their views on the matter.

Yours respectfully,

J. CARNOCHAN.

## EUROPEAN NOTES.

—Baltic goods in London are said to be greatly diminished.

—Steamers are offering Montreal to London, at last year's opening rates, viz.: 47s. 6d. for deals.

—Public timber sales in London seem to be more numerous than ever. The bidding, as a rule, has been active and well sustained.

—Free-on-board business is reported as very quiet in England, stocks are mostly cleared for first open water, and imports are coming in for later deliveries.

—Messrs. Browning & Co. have issued a very neat stock list made up principally of Canadian goods, containing a good assortment of all sizes of dry pitch pine and spruce, of which they make a specialty.

—The returns issued by the London Board of Trade shows that the imports during the month of February increased as compared with the same month last year £1,020,000, and that the exports increased as compared with February of last year £1,740,000.

—The sales of Quebec timber in Glasgow, so far this year from all accounts have been very limited. Up to the present a considerable business has been done by the Quebec merchants for spring shipment. Most of the importers are acting with caution, however, and the advanced f.o.b. prices being asked are deterring not a few from going in for very large cargoes. Of course the timber merchants round the coast have all been going in for their usual supply, and most of this business is now closed.

—Denny, Mott & Dickson, of London, in a recent circular speaking of Canadian timber say: "The market being practically bare of square white pine and oak, negotiations are confined to contracts for next season's goods. Shippers have come over with very enhanced ideas of value, and there seems little doubt that a substantial advance on last year's prices must be conceded by those who adopt the policy of covering themselves at once against their prospective requirements."

—The *Canadian Gazette* states under the heading of Quebec news:—It is understood that some heavy transactions in spruce and pine deals have lately been made in the market. It is said that McArthur Bros., W. & I. Sharples, and Dobell, Beckett & Co., have bought up most of the next season's cut of nearly all the more important mills in the Province, to the value of about £7,000,000, sterling. If this statement was true, adds *Timber*, the three above mentioned firms would be doing about 40 per cent. of the export trade of the vast Dominion of Canada. The total exports of all articles from the Dominion of Canada to all countries—timber, grain, cattle, hides, &c., &c.—for the fiscal year ending 30th June, 1886, was \$85,251,314, or equal to about £17,000,000 sterling.