



PUBLISHED
SEMI-MONTHLY.

The only Newspaper devoted to the Lumber and Timber Industries published in Canada

SUBSCRIPTION
\$2.00 PER ANNUM

VOL. 5.

PETERBOROUGH, ONT., FEBRUARY 1, 1885.

NO. 3.

WOOD AND WOOD-WORKING INDUSTRIES OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

The following article on the "Woods and Wood-Working Industries of New Brunswick," by Ira Cornwall, Jr., Agent-General for the Province of New Brunswick, is taken from a book "St. John and the Province of New Brunswick," by Mr. John R. Hamilton:—

In treating of this subject it is not our intention to enter into an exhaustive treatise, or attempt any scientific details. We will deal with the matter simply from a commercial point of view, and avail ourselves of the opinions of the best authorities we can command.

Our readers will readily observe that the general advantages of the cities of St. John and Portland, as to location, harbor, climate, &c., will apply with equal force to this as to any other branch of manufacture.

Cheap fuel, cheap living, ready and accessible markets being admitted, we must give some evidence of a sufficient supply of the raw material being available.

Large portions of our Province are covered with forests of the most valuable woods, which we enumerate fully in the following pages. Our supplies of the most important of these woods are practically inexhaustible.

The forests being intersected in almost all directions by rivers and streams, makes the transportation of the timber a question of but small expense. Once the log is cast upon the stream the process of floating it, by steam-driving or rafting, to this point is easily and cheaply accomplished. Nearly all important sections of the Province are intersected by railways, thus affording great facilities for transportation.

The large number of saw mills now located here prove their successful competition with those located at other points. The reputation of our timber and lumber is sufficiently well established in all markets, and our trade large and growing in what are now our staple products, and it is not our intention to urge extension in those lines. Our object is to divert a portion of capital, labor and material into a branch of trade which will not only utilize a greater variety of the our raw materials, but also extend the amount of labor put upon all our wood exports.

The simple vastness of our supplies of timber have led to such anxiety to get it into the market that, up to the present time, our efforts have been directed to the most expeditious way of placing it in the foreign markets. This, assumed no doubt by the scarcity of laborers, has led to our putting just sufficient labor upon it as would prepare it for export. Up to the present time our exports have consisted mainly of square timber and deals.

The large development of other manufacturing industries throughout the Dominion has aroused our people to an appreciation of their

mistake in thus sending comparatively raw material to be worked up in other countries. It is now realized more clearly that the labor expended upon our woods at home benefits not only the individual manufacturer, but enriches the whole country.

As an illustration of our meaning let us take a maple tree. For export as square timber it is taken from the forest, cut into proper lengths and squared. Not only is the amount of labor expended upon it comparatively small, but much of the most valuable portions of the material is wasted in the process. After reaching its destination another large portion, equal to about one-seventh, sacrificed in its preparation for use. The same tree, if placed in the hands of our wood-workers, would be turned into portions of furniture, mouldings, bases, skirtings, architraves, flooring, bench screws, boot and shoe trees, lasts and crimps, tool handles, wringers, towel rollers, bobbins, spools, ship blocks, rolling pins, potato mashers, shoe pegs, &c. Besides utilizing every particle of the raw material, consider the vast amount of labor the latter employs, and the much larger amount of money the manufactured articles will bring into the country. It is necessary to ask which use of the tree is best for the largest number of people, and therefore for the country.

Take a spruce tree as another illustration. The amount of labor expended upon that tree in manufacturing into deals for export is relatively light, and the loss of material large as compared with its use by small ware manufacturers. In the hands of the latter not a single portion need be wasted in producing various valuable portions of furniture, building material, handles for brooms, mops, hoes, &c., washboards, venetian blinds; packing—fish, salt, and others boxes, onion and fruit crates, &c. In this case, as in the former, further comparison is unnecessary, and the advantage of having the labor put upon the wood at home will be apparent to every reader, even admitting all other circumstances to be equally favorable for our competitors in other countries.

Our interest in having the work done at home being thus demonstrated, we will now touch upon some of the reasons why it is for the interest of our customers, as well, to allow us this privilege.

In dealing with this portion of the subject we have availed ourselves of the experience of some of our practical wood-workers. Mr. John D. Howe, of the firm of J. & J. D. Howe, furniture manufacturers of this city, who has taken an active interest in the development of our Province, and made considerable study of our woods and their uses, gives us his opinion and experience as follows: He says, "Authorities differ as to whether our supply of what is generally looked upon as marketable timber is diminishing. Be this as it may, we still have

enormous supplies of those woods. Independent of these it is a well known fact that immense tracts of our lands are covered with most valuable woods generally considered of little value, but which will eventually yield a more profitable article of export than either pine or spruce, as the latter are now handled. The poplar, white birch, basswood, maple, and other deciduous varieties of our forests, if cut and shipped in the ordinary manner of shipping spruce and pine, would in most cases prove a failure. A demand for it in that shape could never be worked up. In order to make their export a success their nature and their peculiarities must be well understood, and a desirable amount of intelligence and skill brought to bear in their manufacture. We might as well attempt to send away our grass or grain as we take them off the fields, without curing, as to export these woods without seasoning and manufacturing into desirable sizes or articles for which they are most suited. Our poplar, which is very abundant, is valuable for many purposes; it is very white in colour, and of light weight. It becomes hard and tough when dry, and is susceptible of a high degree of polish. It is now used chiefly for making "Excelsior," an article used for mattress making, upholstering, and for packing purposes, etc., for which there is a large and increasing demand. On account of the hardness of this wood it is considered superior to pine or spruce, where narrow stock is required, for flooring and other interior finish. It can also be largely used for cabinet work, tool handles, paper pulp, and many other purposes.

Basswood, like the poplar, is even more liable to spoil after the tree is cut down. Like all other vegetable substances there is not any remedy for it after decay sets in. The early stages of decay, or souring of the sap, as it is called, should be carefully guarded against; it alike destroys the color of the wood and the firmness of its grain. It destroys the qualities which render it so valuable for many purposes, such as carriage bodies, furniture, interior finish, &c. It takes walnut or mahogany stain equal if not superior to any other wood, and makes a pleasing finish in its natural color—pale yellow.

The white birch, although not so liable as the basswood, poplar, and maple to deteriorate while green, or before the sap or moisture leaves it, requires careful treatment in order to preserve its strength and colour. The many purposes to which this valuable wood may be applied are too numerous to mention. Large quantities are now being shipped to Europe in the shape of spool bobbins, blocks, &c. It is becoming exceedingly popular for first-class flooring, and for this purpose should be cut on the rift rather than on the slash of the grain. Maple and beech are also excellent for flooring, but their chief value is for tool stocks and

handles, agricultural implements, lasts and an almost endless variety of articles requiring a strength and hardness that will resist wear. The preference given to English plane stock and tool handles is not due (as the prevailing opinion puts it) to the material used by those makers being superior to ours. It is rather attributable to their proper method of treatment of it. The trees are cut down in the proper season, while the sap is down; they are then blocked out to suitable sizes, and then dried—not allowing the sun to check or dampness to heat or mould it. On no account is the log allowed to remain uncut for any length of time either in or out of the water. There is not any class of woodwork where the proper cutting and curing of wood is of so great importance as in its preparation for wood engraving.

Our rock maple, if prepared according to the foregoing observations, becomes dense and capable of receiving almost as large a number of lines to the inch as boxwood. In other words, it is suitable for fine work. If the same wood was allowed to remain in bulk for any length of time, even in the log or plank, or worse still, a close pile, it would become worthless for wood engraving."

Mr. Howe continues "It is to be regretted that the beauty and nature of our native woods have not been better understood and properly appreciated. This is probably due to their abundance, but it is not any reason why we should not make the most of what we have so plentiful. It is hoped that when it becomes apparent that we still possess a valuable supply of timber that it will not receive the same ruthless and greedy treatment that the pine, spruce and hemlock have received in the past."

In again referring to the proper preservation and seasoning of timber, while Mr. Howe's remarks apply to some lumber or material not exceeding three or four inches in thickness, the same cannot be applied to cases where it is used for shipbuilding. For these purposes another eminent authority says: "The decay of wood by the growth of fungus, denominated dry rot, may be traced to the putrifying of the sap (as alluded to by Mr. Howe) when this has been left within the pores of the timber in the same condition as it exists in the living tree. The various means employed to arrest this destructive fermentation are, either to wash out the sap by long soaking in water, aided by the action of the sun; to dry up the sap, either naturally by exposure to the sun and wind, or artificially by heated currents of air." Nearly all authorities agree that there is great advantage in having our woods properly seasoned in this climate. A firm of dealers in wooden ware, writing from Liverpool recently commented most strongly upon the subject, and stated: "The advantage of having the woods seasoned in New Brunswick climate gives her