

OTTAWA LETTER.

MAY 23rd, 1887.

From Our Own Correspondent.

ALL fears of damage from the high water in the Ottawa river has now completely subsided. The water rose to a very high pitch but reached the highest about a week ago. Since then the water has fallen very fast. It was at one time feared that the mills at the Chaudiere would be shut down but nothing of that kind occurred. Since I last wrote you Messrs. Parley & Pattee's lath mill at the Chaudiere was completely destroyed by fire with a loss of probably \$6000. As there was a heavy wind blowing at the time it was feared that the fire would extend to the other mills and the lumber piles but the prompt energy and discipline of the city fire brigade speedily dissipated all fears and the fire was confined to the lath mill. The firm are now getting everything in preparation for the erection of a new lath mill on the old site.

The movements in lumber from this point are fairly active although no material change has yet taken place in prices. All the deliveries so far are on last year's contracts. Nearly all the shipments are taking place to the United States and the barge traffic on the Redeau Canal is kept well employed in this particular. None of last winter's cut of logs has yet reached the mills here from the Upper Ottawa but a good many are now out of the tributaries and are in the Ottawa, being in charge of the Upper Ottawa Towing Company. Speaking of the Towing Company, I may mention that they have placed a new iron boat on the Lower Allumette lake this season and have called her after one of the best known lumbermen of the Ottawa, G. B. Pattee. This addition to the company's fleet was much required as the boat used last season in the territory assigned to the "G. B. Pattee" was very old and not of sufficient capacity to handle all the logs assigned.

There is considerable discussion in lumber circles here with regard to the recent action of the Quebec government in raising the ground rent on limits, and of the Ontario Government in putting up the dues 25 per cent. This latter action makes the lumber dealers who operate in Ontario pay \$1 per thousand feet instead of 75 cents formerly.

The Chaudiere lumbermen and others in the Province who work their limits year after year do not object to the increase of ground rents by the Quebec Government nearly so much as those lumbermen who merely hold the limits for speculation, and these latter class are not a few. There are men in the province of Quebec who never cut a log or a stick of timber, but who, when a limit is for sale are most eager and active buyers, and gain hold of the limit either to hold it themselves for an advance or simply act the part of middleman or agent for another, who for purposes not known to themselves do not care to enter into public competition. The amount of rise in the ground rents do not amount to much for men who work their limits, but it does amount to a good deal to men who are simply holding the limits for speculative purposes, for then the rise is just so much more to pay without any return. The result of this will be to make it much easier for those lumbermen working their limits to purchase those held on speculation, as it will no longer pay for speculators to hold limits for any considerable time. In the matter of the rise in the ground rent the Chaudiere men do not make any strong objections, but they are a unit on one point, the Ontario Crown dues are excessive, three quarters of a cent on square timber and 25 cents per thousand put on sawlog board measure. This increase looks trifling at first appearance but it is anything but trifling. With J. R. Booth, Parley & Pattee, Bronson & Weston it means \$20,000 a year each. As a result of the increase of ground rent some of the lumbermen say that they will relinquish possession of some claims on the Gatineau and in case they do this land will be thrown open for settlement. On the whole, although the Crown dues are a little excessive, the rise in the ground rent will have one good effect. It will banish the dog in the manger lumbermen who only hold what might otherwise be profitably worked that he might make a haul out of the exigencies of the trade.

One thing is now forcing its attention upon men engaged in the trade and that is there is not sufficient officials to prevent forest fires, and fires will be destructive until this adequate protection is extended. For the whole Upper Ottawa forests, which is thousands of miles in extent, there are only about half a dozen men employed, whose duty it is to look after the setting out of fires. How in the name of common sense is this handful of men going to prevent the putting out of forest fires? Now as I write, extensive fires are raging on the Dumoine river, on Black river and on the Schyan, and tens of thousands of dollars worth of valuable lumber is being destroyed. It is an old saying, but its truth is not spoiled by age, that the fire has destroyed more than the axe, and this truth is repeating itself every day. This spring has been remarkable for having no rain so far and the waste material in the bush is in a very inflammable state. Hunters, drivers and others who

perambulate through the woods have to eat, and in order to eat they must cook, and in order to cook they must make a fire. When the repast is over they go about their business but leave behind them the nucleus of a devastation. The governments of both Ontario and Quebec make a big blunder when they do not increase their staff of bush rangers and see to it that they do their duty. Enough of valuable timber has been destroyed in the Upper Ottawa region this spring to pay the salaries of a thousand men. One man cannot cover hundreds of miles of territory. He cannot be ubiquitous. Therefore I say it is false economy having only a few men to do the work of a hundred. They cannot do it and the country suffers in one of its chief wealth producing resources. Wise administrations would look after a matter of such importance. Fortunately, the weather has been calm and that in itself confined the fires, but should a heavy wind set in now and no rain come, hundreds of miles of valuable timber will be laid waste. Last week a jobber on Black River for J. R. Booth had a shanty burned and all the rigging and stores that it contained for next winter's use burned with it.

The water in several of the lesser streams has gone down within the last week very rapidly and fears are some of the log drives on these lesser streams will be stuck unless rain comes to replenish the fast diminishing water. On the larger streams, however, their has been high water and it still maintains a good pitch, and no fears are entertained but that logs drawn on such will come out all right.

Messrs. Klock Bros., of Klock's Mills, are shipping by rail 65 cribs of square lumber to the Quebec market. It will be railed to Papineauville, there dumped into the Ottawa, rafted and floated to Quebec.

NEW BRUNSWICK.

From our own Correspondent.

THE Maritime Bank failure has ceased to cause so much excitement as in the first days of the disclosures of the means by which the shareholders and depositors were defrauded of their money, and as permanent liquidators have been appointed the winding up of this unfortunate institution will now be proceeded with in proper and legal form.

The Messrs. Stewart's have succeeded in earning for themselves an unenviable notoriety, and certainly the senior member of this prominent concern must be remarkably thin skinned, for I hear of his having entered suits for libel against this and that newspaper, that has dared to lift up its voice, and voice the popular idea as to the strange methods of business adopted by the gentleman mentioned. I sincerely hope the CANADA LUMBERMAN will not fall under the ban, or excite the ire of this timber king.

We have had a very strange season, so far, in our section. No rains in the upland district, and in the low-lying sections of the St. John river there has been a regular flood. The telegraph has doubtless informed your readers of the vast extent of this unprecedented freshet, and of the enormous amount of damage occasioned by the overflowing waters. Other sections of the country are very much in need of rain, although it is certainly a great mercy that we have had none lately, for, had we been visited by our usual spring rains, the damage caused by the waters of the St. John and its tributaries would have been almost incalculable.

Lumber remains very quiet, indeed as far as the English market is concerned, it is dull to the extreme. The latest reports from London and Liverpool are to the effect that while the consumption since the first of the year has been fair, the stock is lighter than for many years, and the import much less than for a long time, still there is no life in the market. Prices still remain at a very low figure, and dealers will not put in stock but simply buy from hand to mouth. All this is very discouraging to manufacturers and shippers on this side of the water, who were in hopes that this season would open with something near remunerative prices for our great staple.

The American market on the other hand seems to present a brighter and more buoyant appearance, and prices there opened well and still maintain a good position. Laths are selling well in New York at this writing, bringing \$2.50 per thousand, and in the Boston market and at the Sound ports, clear boards and good random cargoes command paying prices. It is to be hoped for the sake of the coasting trade of these lower Provinces that no friction will occur between the Dominion Government and that of the United States, causing the enforcement of the Non-Intercourse Bill; for there is no denying the fact that were this bill to come into operation very serious financial trouble would follow in this and other maritime localities; perhaps I may be somewhat pessimistic in my views on this matter, but I know what a large industry our coasting trade with the United States is, and I would be sorry indeed to have any action on the part of our own government place this industry in any jeopardy. I trust that no trouble may arise, and I am inclined to think from recent action on the

part of the Government that calmer counsels have prevailed and that peace and good will between neighbors will be maintained.

MADAWASKA, N. B., May 25th, 1887.

To the Editor of the Canada Lumberman.

DEAR SIR,—Your valuable journal deserves the greatest of credit for the interest taken to stir up and show the fraud practised by allowing Americans to slaughter our forests and use it as if it were their own.

At the eleventh hour Dame Rumor says that the export duty on raw lumber is about to be exacted on the head waters of the River St. John, whereas if it had been put in force years ago Brother Jonathan and New Brunswick capitalists never would have laid out a hundred thousand dollars on the American side to manufacture the lumber they have taken out of our forests for years back.

The American duty saved by floating our lumber on their side, and there manufactured, was equal to allowing Americans a premium of \$3 per M. superficial feet on all the cedar they have robbed our forest out of, besides reaping the benefit of manufacturing the same.

Our politicians pay too little attention to protect the small channels of our resources, which swell up the large ones, and the sooner they learn to protect all the small feeders leading to our Treasury the sooner our revenue will be able to stand the heavy drain public demand makes on it daily.

Some say it is only a make believe, and others say its the intention to make American's pay all back export duty on lumber they have robbed and stole away. No doubt the latter would be harsh and not doing as we would wish be done by, as we failed in our duty to enforce the tariff in time, before New Brunswick and American capital built mills on the American side to manufacture our lumber, but, on the other hand, they had to run their own risk of getting clear of paying.

We can blame our local Parliament more than the Dominion for it's the former's duty to see that our Province resources are not tampered with by Americans. But capitalists and monopolist carry it: N. B. House of Assembly in one pocket, and the Legislative Council in the other, and if I am called on to show it, I shall do so with pleasure, by referring to acts they endorsed, now disgracing our statutes.

It is already rumored that by the enforcement of the export duty new shingle mills will be in operation this summer. All we want is a fair deal with foreigners to manufacture our lumber. Place us on an equal footing with them, to manufacture our own lumber, by exacting an export equal to their import, and we ask no favours, but to do as we have been doing, giving Americans \$3 per M. feet of a premium over us to slaughter and manufacture our lumber, no wonder us New Brunswickers have to leave the country daily to seek a living abroad.

Next month we will know more about the new energy the export duty will create.

Respectfully yours,

O. P. BYRAM.

THE QUEBEC TIMBER COMPANY, LIMITED.

The report of the Quebec Timber Company, Limited, to be submitted to the annual meeting on the 4th inst., is as under:—
The balance-sheet and revenue account for the year ending 31st December, 1886, with the auditor's report, are herewith submitted.

The Quebec accounts have been audited and certified as correct by Mr. William Walker, the Canadian auditor.

The revenue accounts for the year 1885 showed a profit of £2,232 18s 1d., and it was expected that the profit for 1886 would have largely exceeded that sum.

A large quantity of logs had been got out, and a sale had been arranged at remunerative prices. Owing, however, to an exceptionally dry season, and consequent scarcity of water in the rivers, comparatively few of the logs reached the mills.

In the annexed revenue account credit has been taken for a sum of £11,700 8s. 2d., as the cost of the logs got out and in the rivers at 31st December, 1886, and the same sum appears in the balance-sheet as an asset. The logs are all so situated that it is confidently expected they will reach the mills shortly after the rivers open this spring. There is every reason to believe that a considerable profit will be realized by their sale.

The directors have arranged for remittances from Canada to meet the interest due to the company's creditors at Whitsunday, and they hope, at or prior to the term of Martinmas, to receive remittances from Canada which will enable them considerably to reduce the indebtedness of the company, and to meet the interest due at Martinmas.

The manager of the company has been in this country for a few weeks, but he has returned to Quebec, in order to have everything ready at the mills for the arrival of the logs in April.

One of the directors Mr. James Tait, retires by rotation. Mr. Moncrieff and Mr. Walker, the auditors, also retire, and their re-appointment is recommended.