

THE LUMBERMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO.

The annual meeting of the Lumbermen's Association of Ontario was held at McConkey's Restaurant, Toronto, on Wednesday, February 14th. Preceding the business meeting an excellent luncheon, provided through the hospitality of the President and Board of Management, was partaken of.

The members in attendance included Messrs. John Waldie, president, Toronto; Robert Watt, second vice-president, Warton; W. B. Tindall, secretary, Toronto; W. B. McLean, J. B. Miller, W. P. Bull, Robert Laidlaw, Walter Laidlaw, Toronto; William Laking, Hamilton; George Chew, Midland; C. Beck, Penetanguishene; N. Dymont, Barrie; M. Boyd, Bobcaygeon; George Thomson, Goderich; R. Cook, South River; D. G. Lummis, Spragg. The guests were Messrs. T. G. Brough, manager Dominion Bank; Aubrey White, Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands; Thomas Southworth, Chief Ontario Bureau of Forestry, and T. S. Young, representing the CANADA LUMBERMAN.

The toast of "The King," and "Canada Our Country" being duly honored, the business of the meeting was proceeded with. Letters of regret were read from Messrs. James Playfair and D. L. White, Midland, John Bertram, Toronto, and W. J. Sheppard, Waubesa.

Mr. Waldie, on behalf of the Board of Management, submitted the following report:

REPORT OF BOARD OF MANAGEMENT.

Gentlemen,—We are pleased to report that the year 1901, now completed, has proved a reasonably prosperous season. That it has not been as profitable as the two preceding years is owing in the first place to increased cost of manufacture. This, however, is not an unmixed evil, as labor has received higher wages, until Ontario to-day is occupying a premier position in affording abundance of employment at higher average wages than any other country we know of. Formerly wages were higher in the United States than in Canada. Now these conditions are changed, and to-day the workmen of Canada are better remunerated than the workmen of the United States or elsewhere.

Owing to the activity occasioned by the South African war, the year 1900 was one in which there was a large demand for red pine for the English market, but on account of the high ocean freights which prevailed in the fall of that year (owing to the immense tonnage employed in the transportation of war supplies to South Africa), it made the cost to the English buyer exceedingly high. Consequently, when a sudden cessation of the active demand occurred, the market for a time in England was rather demoralized, and many of the English buyers on arrival in this country in the spring of 1901 were so despondent that they closed out contracts at considerable loss.

The Canadian producer saw no reason to submit to any reduction in his price, and throughout the season maintained that conditions in England would soon right themselves. This anticipation is now being realized, partly owing to a reduced ocean freight rate from America to Great Britain—shipments having been made during last fall and this winter at a 50 per cent. lower freight than a year ago—and we accordingly look for an improved demand for red pine.

Our white pine has been in unusually good demand. Prices advanced steadily from June until the close of the season, and so far as the higher grades were concerned the advance was really abnormal, averaging as much as from \$5 to \$10 per M. feet.

We are entering the present year with limited stocks of sawn lumber at the mills, and these largely contracted for. This gives promise that the year will

be a prosperous one. It is not desirable that we should seek to advance present prices on the supposition that white pine—which is the largest product of the Ontario mills—is the only wood that can be used. Further, we must realize that as population is concentrating in the large cities, where the buildings requisite for housing are largely constructed of iron, brick and cement, the great consumer of pine is the country, not the city population.

We are pleased to note the increase of self-reliance amongst the people, extending throughout the whole of Canada. This is attracting the attention of the world, and we may therefore look for a very rapid immigration into this country; and this Association through its insistence upon the Ontario Government adopting the Manufacturing Clause, has contributed its whole quota to the prosperity now existing.

The question of transportation is the most important factor in aiding or hindering the advancement of this country, and while the lumber interest suffered very seriously from the car shortage during the months of October and November, we are pleased to note that the executives of the trunk lines of railroads in Canada, realize that if they are to get the best results from the operation of their roads, they must supply additional locomotives and cars. We trust that in future they will time their betterment and ballasting to a period of the year when it will inflict the least loss upon the lumber industry. The withdrawal of a large number of flat cars in the fall of the year is a serious loss to the lumber interest of this country.

We do not think the interests of this country are forwarded by negotiations with the United States looking to a renewal of any kind of Reciprocity Treaty, nor by discussions about the "balance of trade." We serve our best interests by pressing our own Provincial and Dominion Governments to legislate for Canada alone, and it would be unwise for a member of this association to speak of any legislation that we are promoting as retaliatory. Let us act, not talk, and we as lumbermen will continue to saw wood and keep our axes sharp.

We believe the Dominion Government should put wood products on the dutiable list so that in a period of depression (and to offset the American cut on through rates from the South) a tariff would act as a hindrance, and thus prevent Canada from becoming a slaughter market. While the theories of protection and free trade may be discussed academically, this country asks for legislation to suit the conditions that exist here. It is not a matter of theory, it is a matter of deciding what is going to presently promote the welfare of the country.

The arbitrary, perpendicular and unjustifiable increase of insurance on sawmills and lumber in yards has been the subject of discussion with the representatives of the Underwriters. They admit that the rate is unscientific as well as unjust, and we have expectation of improvement, either by reduction or by special rating, where conditions warrant same.

JOHN WALDIE, President.

The president stated that it was not thought prudent to further press the railways regarding insufficient cars owing to the inability of the roads to supply cars for all kinds of traffic, as the result of the general prosperity of the country. The question of forming a mutual insurance association for self-protection in insurance matters had, as stated in the report, been considered. The lumbermen had mutual insurance in Massachusetts, but they were only able to carry \$5,000, and this amount was too limited for the members of this Association.

Mr. Dymont concurred in the statements set forth in the report. He was surprised that the prosperity in the lumber business had continued so long, but in his opinion the outlook for white pine was good, even better than twelve months ago. The large amount of lumber made last year had been worked off at very satisfactory prices.

As one of the advocates of mutual insurance

Mr. Beck was asked to speak. He contended that a large amount of money in insurance premiums was each year being sent to the United States and England, and urged that if the lumbermen could not arrange among themselves to carry their own insurance, they should at least place the risk with Canadian companies. If a lumbermen's mutual insurance company could be formed it would be a check upon the present companies. He was in favor of the Lumbermen's Association of Ontario amalgamating with the Canadian Manufacturers Association, on the ground that in this way it might be possible to obtain from the Government more consideration than had been received in the past. Mr. Beck also brought up the question of labor and urged that the Government should give more attention to the immigration of German settlers.

STATISTICAL REPORT.

The following statistical report was presented by the secretary:

GENTLEMEN,—Herewith I beg to submit to you the following statistical information based upon replies as I have received from the circular letter of Jan. 3, 1901.

PRODUCTION WHITE PINE LUMBER.—The total production of mills in North-Western Ontario, which embraces all mills on the Georgian Bay, Northern Division of the G.T.R. to Callender, and C.P.R., North Bay Rat Portage, was 351,000,000 feet in 1899, 476,000,000 feet in 1900, and 466,000,000 feet in 1901, the decrease in 1901 from that of 1900 being 10,000,000 feet, which is mainly accounted for by the output of one or two of the mills being seriously affected by fire, and also the some of the operators did not saw as much as they expected.

The stocks on hand at the mills December 31st were 120,000,000 feet in 1899, 216,349,000 feet in 1900, and 181,000,000 feet in 1901, the decrease in stocks on hand as compared with that of 1900 being 35,000,000 feet. Of the stock on hand on the 31st of December, 29,000,000 feet was sold waiting delivery in the yard, and 152,000,000 feet unsold. Of this stock 50,000,000 feet will go entirely to the Manitoba and North-West markets.

In regard to my inquiries in the circular letter as to whether it was considered that present prices should be maintained, unanimously the answer received has been that no reason can be given why the present prices should not be firmly maintained, and some held for an increase.

The trade press of the United States reports that the production of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota shows a decrease in 1901 over 1900 of 112,000,000 feet, and the stocks of lumber stored at the mills show a decrease for the same period of something like 529,229,000 feet. The stocks on hand are the lowest which statistics show since 1894, all of which must certainly make one come to the conclusion that the requirements of the market both for manufacturing and distributing purposes remain the same, that the can only be one effect, namely, firm or rising prices.

I have not been able to get satisfactory figures as to the cut of logs this winter, but understand that it is probably be about 10 per cent. less than last year.

W. B. TINDALL, Secretary.

A discussion of market conditions followed. Mr. Miller asked regarding the quantity of culls in the market. He had heard that the quantity was large, whereas on the other hand he had been told that in Michigan an advance of \$1 per thousand on mill culls had been put into effect. The opinions given showed that while one or two concerns hold a considerable stock, the total quantity unsold is less than one year ago. Mr. Dymont stated that he found mill culls selling very satisfactorily.