

settle down to this steady style of business until he has been severely bitten—perhaps wholly ruined. To make a hit by speculating is not uncommon in the trade, but it is more common to make a loss. The excitement of winning, however, is so great, that there is a constant temptation to try again. In fact—and this is the whole business in a nutshell—the conditions of grain speculation are precisely the same as the conditions of gambling. Every little gain makes the operator bolder. He ventures deeper and loses all he made, and a little more. He tries again to recover his loss, and is perhaps successful: he ventures deeper, hoping to make a fortune at a stroke, and this time he is ruined beyond redemption. Scores of men and firms in Canada have gone through this process, and are to be found in almost every town and city, broken down, ruined and miserable.

There is no necessity for this kind of thing. Whatever may have been the case formerly, the grain trade can now be carried on as steadily and legitimately as importing. A miller may have, and ought to have, a regular line of customers for a well-known article, or articles. To make these specific articles, in certain well known quantities, he buys his grain; and with such facilities for buying as there now are, at all seasons, there need be but a very slight element of uncertainty in such buying. Buying and selling, in fact, can go on almost simultaneously. So with grain. A grain merchant who knows his business will take care to have correspondents whose wants he knows, who keep him advised, and who give him orders. In fact, the only legitimate way of buying grain is to buy by order. Those who deal with Britain have the cable at command, and can have the views of their correspondents daily, and act accordingly. Those who buy for the States, in the same way can be in constant communication with their customers. There is no reason now for hap-hazard. Cable and telegraphs are part of the necessary expenses of business, and those who make a free use of both in buying and selling will in the long run find it to pay. But the essential point is to have done forever with the blind buying and blind selling of former days. The Banks have something to say in this matter, and if they would make it a rule to lend no money for grain except to those who are buying certain quantities for certain purposes, and only lend as much as these specific operations demand, they would weed out from the trade its most dangerous element, and save many a foolish venturer from ruin.

### THE DEPRESSION IN LUMBER.

The lumbermen of Canada though struggling under rather depressing difficulties, are full of hope as to the future. It is felt that the diminished production this winter owing to the slack demand, will have the effect of equalizing once more the demand and supply. The United States alone, it is estimated, consume ten thousand million feet per annum; but the state of the money market in that country has so checked building improvements as to greatly restrict its consuming capacity. On the other hand, the lower prices to which lumber has fallen must act as a powerful stimulus to consumption. A careful balancing of all the influences at work leads to the conclusion that next season should bring a decided though not rapid revival. As it is, large stocks have been left on hand, to be carried over. The following is a comparative estimate by Messrs. Carbray & Routh of Quebec and Montreal, showing the approximate supply and stock of lumber in the Ottawa and St. Lawrence districts:

#### *St. Lawrence and Tributaries below Montreal.*

	Dec. 1873.	Dec. 1872.
Deals, sawn.....	296,000,000	265,000,000
Deals on hand.....	100,000,000	60,000,000
Sq. timber on hand	286,000,000	205,000,000
Boards sawn .....	90,000,000	135,000,000
Boards on hand ....	50,000,000	10,000,000

#### *Ottawa and Tributaries.*

	Dec. 1873.	Dec. 1872.
Deals sawn .....	160,000,000	60,000,000
Deals on hand.....	25,000,000	5,000,000
Boards sawn .....	280,000,000	320,000,000
Boards on hand ...	180,000,000	80,000,000

It will be noticed that the amount cut last season was much less than in the previous year. This, though arising from exceptional and supposed adverse causes, turned out fortunately. There seems to be some disposition on the part of dealers to buy at the low rates now offered by the mills; and it is thought not unlikely that the great bulk of the stock will have changed hands before the season opens. Mill-owners seem to think the prospect good enough to justify them in getting out the usual average of logs this winter; that is, sufficient to keep themselves busy the whole of next season, night work included. Whether these anticipations be well-founded or not it is evident that all the lumber we are able to produce is certain to be wanted by and by, and at high prices, if we do not allow it to be sacrificed.

On the important question of the lumber supply a letter was addressed by Mr. Little of Montreal to the United States National Board of Trade which has caused some discussion. A Mr. Wait, of Muskegon,

who replied to it, estimated the total lumber supply of the Northern and Southern States of the Union at 105,440 millions feet, and of Canada at 100,000 millions. Mr. Little, in a rejoinder, published in the *Boston Lumber Trade* entirely disagrees with this estimate, and doubts if we could supply the present yearly rate of consumption for twenty-five years, instead of one hundred, as Mr. Wait estimates. "All we have would not" he insists, "give a three years supply to the States." He apprehends that we will in a very short time be called upon to supply the Eastern and Middle States with nearly their whole consumption, and in consequence will not have as much pine left as will supply our own local wants a dozen years after the close of the next decade. But even Mr. Wait's more sanguine views give only twenty years, measured by the existing rate of consumption, as the term within which our lumber supply will be practically exhausted! This is a startling statement when seriously considered. If it be true that all this vast industry is to be wiped out of existence in that comparatively brief period of time the fact is of the utmost moment. As Mr. Little puts it: "All the panics, all the monetary and commercial difficulties the country has ever undergone, all these put together, with their aggregated effects, confined to one period, would not amount to a tithe of the terribleness of the calamity the country will experience when a total exhaustion of its timber takes place, and that time is near at hand and will fall upon us like a thunderbolt, and yet little or no notice is taken of the question." In view of such facts, even if exaggerated, it is apparent that a prominent feature in our public policy should be to preserve from destruction and waste the immense latent wealth our timber regions contain. At present they afford employment to about 50,000 men annually; they figure twice as large in our export returns as all agricultural produce combined, and should yield a very much better margin of profit to the producer. The decay of this industry would therefore be a stunning blow to the prosperity of Canada, which must be averted if possible.

### HURON AND ERIE SAVINGS AND LOAN SOCIETY.

The results shown in the report of this Society are very favorable and cannot fail to be gratifying to the proprietors. With a paid-up capital of about \$550,000 at the beginning of the year, an average deposit line of about \$400,000, and a reserve of a little over \$80,000, net profits were earned