

I now desire to turn to a pleasant duty I have to perform; that is in making recognition of the very many obligations I am under to the travelling salesmen of the honorary members in the interest they have taken on behalf of the association. I have not known of them deviating from the association rules in making their sales, and through their kind interest in directing all persons desiring to embark in the lumber business to first obtain membership, much benefit has been derived thereby by this association. My humble opinion is that in doing this they were implementing the approval of their employers.

In pursuance of the very general advance in the cost of lumber and building material, of course the retail prices will require to move in sympathy therewith.

I propose giving a good deal of attention to proper established price lists at the various points and bespeak your kind assistance in carrying it on to success.

I have observed in issuing notices of changes of membership and of additional membership furnished to honorary members that there is a liability of such becoming mislaid, and I thought it would be of service to issue to honorary members new membership lists monthly and purpose carrying this out.

In conclusion, I lean upon the assistance of all members in furthering the objects of the association and would ask all to keep well versed in the by-laws of the association and if acted up to the spirit of them much good will be the result.

ISAAC COCKBURN,
Secretary-Treasurer.

DISCUSSING THE REPORTS.

D. Sprague, of Winnipeg, in moving the adoption of the report, spoke at some length in a pleasant manner, in which he complimented the officers, directors and members at large on the satisfactory nature of the reports read. The trade, he said, was in a different condition from that experienced a year ago. At the last annual meeting a good deal of dissatisfaction was experienced by members from some districts, who had to put up with very severe competition, on account of a cheap class of low grade lumber which was being brought in from the United States and slaughtered here, much to the detriment of the trade. However, the members agreed to stand by the association, and happily the difficulty had since been removed. The trouble had cured itself by the changed conditions in the United States. The improvement in the lumber trade there and the sharp advance in prices on the other side had rendered it unnecessary for United States mills to seek to slaughter their low grade lumber in this market. Mr. Sprague urged the advisability of the wholesalers fixing their price lists as early in the year as possible. Last winter Winnipeg dealers had figured on contracts on the old basis of prices, but when the new lists came out they found that prices had been advanced, causing considerable inconvenience to the city retail dealers.

J. L. Campbell, of Melita, seconded the motion, following it up with a very happy, and we might even say eloquent address. The secretary's remarks, he said, were full of whole some advice. He complimented the president for the work done during the year. There was no successful business without co-operation. Co-operation and even combination existed all

the way through the business world. Professional men, such as doctors, lawyers, etc., had their societies. Combination was not always an evil. It had been said that competition was the life of trade, but it sometimes was the death of trade, and when carried to extremes reacts against the consumer, by the inferior service rendered and the inferior goods offered. When this went to extremes it led to combination to correct the evil conditions brought about by excessive competition. Combinations have always existed. The guilds of early days were organizations formed to protect the interests of different trades. There were combinations all the way up from the tramps, who associated together for mutual protection, to the alliances of nations. Our own confederation was a combination, and who would say that it has not been productive of good and wonderful results. The lumbermen's association was not operated to injure the consumer. The public had not paid any higher margin on lumber by reason of the existence of the association, or than was paid before the association was formed, while the dealers had been benefited by the improved conditions now existing. The association occupied a unique position among similar organizations on the continent, having over 90 per cent of the dealers within its territory as members.

D. C. Cameron, of the Rat Portage Lumber Co., was called upon for an address and in a few words complimented the association on its success

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

was then proceeded with. President Byrnes was re-elected by acclamation, as was also Vice-President O'Hara, of Brandon. A committee composed of Messrs. Cuddy, Davidson and Chaplin was appointed to nominate a board of directors, and the following were named: Thos. Turnbull, Manitou; J. L. Campbell, Melita; D. C. Sprague, Winnipeg; Wm. Armstrong, Rat Portage la Prairie; A. Stevens, Cypress River; J. F. Boyd, Minnedosa.

The auditors for last year were re-elected.

T. J. Robinson brought up the question again of urging the wholesalers to fix the price of lumber early in the year and not have any change till the close of the season.

D. C. Cameron explained the impossibility of doing this. Conditions varied at different times and they could not tell what the lumber was going to cost them, as rates of wages and other things are always liable to change. The present winter they were at a great disadvantage owing to the absence of snow. They were not able to get any logs out until about Feb. 1st, and had skidded much less than they had expected to do, thus making the cost of logs greater. The snow was now liable to go any time. He said that recently he had made inquiries as to the cost of a large quantity of gas pipe and they could only get a quotation from day to day. The makers would not guarantee prices for more than 24 hours. This showed how business was done in other lines, and they (the lumber manufacturers) could not reasonably be expected to guarantee prices for a year ahead. He advised dealers in a humorous way to buy all the lumber they could get hold of, as soon as possible.

A complaint was made that low grade lumber from the United States was still being sold at a point in southern Manitoba lower than the Canadian dealers could handle it for.

Mr. Cameron replied to this, that he had recently returned from the United States, and some of the manufacturers there complained that the Canadian mills were selling low grade lumber too cheap.

A member said that in his district some lumber had been sold very low, but he allowed the party who was selling it to take the trade and he soon went broke.

A long informal discussion then followed on credit business, discounts for cash, charging interest, cash business, etc. It was explained that the dealers had to pay for cash for freight, which was a big item on a heavy commodity like lumber. The dealer also has to pay interest after 60 days on his purchases from the manufacturer. This, they did not complain of, as it was a legitimate way of doing business and they had always received very reasonable treatment from the wholesalers. Where the injustice came in was in selling to the farmer on long terms of credit, without interest. Farmers became hostile at once, if they were asked to pay interest, though they would come to the dealer and get the lowest cash price, on the understanding that they would pay in a short time, and then let the account stand for months. Many of the members gave their opinions as to how business should be done to correct these abuses, but scarcely any two agreed fully. Some members said they charged interest invariably, and when they insisted on it, they found it not so difficult after all. One member asserted that he did a strictly cash business, and he said it was wonderful how the farmers came up with the cash when they knew they could not get credit. Other members reported that they had two prices, one for cash and one for credit customers, their credit price being \$1 per thousand higher than spot cash. Others had a credit price only and gave a discount for cash. The greatest complaint was as to the number of purchasers who would get prices on the understanding that they would pay cash, and then compel the dealer to wait a long time for his pay. How to deal with this and other similar matters and place the trade on a more uniform basis as to prices and terms, was the problem. No formal resolutions were moved, but it was the general feeling that the executive should take up this matter at once, and see what could be done to place business on a more uniform basis as to prices, interest, discounts, credits, etc. Price cutting was not much complained of, though some instances were given of cuts being made by reason of purchasers telling dealers they could buy at a lower price from a competitor. In some cases which had been traced up, it was found that the purchaser had invariably lied about being offered lumber at lower prices by competitors, to which The Commercial will add that in nine cases out of ten the purchaser who reports that he can get a big reduction from another dealer, in any line of trade, either lies or labors under a misconception.

The cuts of the officers of the Lumber Association, given herewith, were first published in a special issue of the Canadian Lumberman issued a short time ago.

DIRECTORS MEET.

At a meeting of the directors the following afternoon, Isaac Cockburn was re-elected secretary-treasurer.

Some discussion took place on the question of wholesalers selling to improper persons, a few complaints of