

OUR ALBANY LETTER.

ALBANY, N. Y., Nov. 26th, 1890.

This month will close the season's work in the Albany market, and from this out nothing but a limited car trade will be carried on until spring, when navigation opens again. We have had only a touch of cold weather so far with a few flurries of snow, but the majority of the boats on the canals have gone into winter quarters, as the canals close officially on Sunday night the 30th instant, unless closed sooner by ice. Shipments on the Hudson from this point will continue as long as the river keeps open, as there are yet many orders to be filled, notwithstanding this has been a very busy month with heavy shipments daily. The coarser grades of pine have experienced the most demand, with a liberal sprinkling of good lumber.

1x12 inch shippers have been in good sale. One firm in the district shipped this week nearly two million feet of Canada stocks alone for the South American trade, while some others have done nearly as well.

The stock of Canada pine wintered over here will be large, as the lumber has been coming forward rapidly ever since the duty was reduced to \$1.00 a thousand; but there are two things the market is short on—thick uppers and 1½ inch of all grades—both of which have been in constant demand all summer.

1½ inch pine is practically cleaned out of the market, especially 1½x10 13 ft. plank, of which there is scarcely a boat load to be had, although only a few years ago there were millions of feet of them piled up here with a good demand from all sources.

Everybody now wants 16 foot lumber, and dealers find it almost impossible to dispose of 13 foot stocks, which are slow sale, and as you cannot make ten inch 13 foot plank without making 13 foot siding, which nobody wants, the plank trade has to suffer. Other dimensions have taken its place, but notwithstanding there are daily inquiries for plank from old time consumers who have used them for years, and would yet if they could be obtained.

1x10 13 ft. pine boards have also fallen off in the quantity consumed of late years, although there has apparently been a sort of revival in the demand for them this fall, considerable quantities of them having been shipped by boat and rail from the Ottawa district to the Albany and New York market.

Prices on Michigan pine stiffened up in the west, and also in the Tonawanda market, and its influence has been felt here, as some grades have been advanced a dollar or two in the last month. The trade has been exceptionally good, but as some concerns have larger stock than usual to carry over the winter, there is little probability of the higher rates holding, as the temptation to undersell the market in order to dispose of surplus stock is great.

In a few days now the dealers will have moved into their winter quarters in the city and for the next month will be busy figuring up accounts, after which there is practically nothing to do until navigation opens again in the spring.

There is always something of a demand, however from the New York market throughout the winter for odds and ends, which have to be shipped by rail; but the car trade from this point, taken all together, is scarcely a drop in the bucket when compared with the shipments by water during the summer season.

The Spruce and Hemlock men are anxiously looking for an old-time winter, with lots of snow and plenty of logs, so there will be no danger of a shortage of stock another year, as there has been this. Dealers say the stock on hand here now is the highest carried over in years and the outlook for the spring trade is not very promising, especially if there is much demand during the winter months.

The supply of marketable spruce in the Adirondac region is growing smaller every year, and already dealers and manufacturers are looking to Canada to supply their wants. It is an actual fact that better prices can be obtained for spruce in Northern New York for pulp manufacture than to bring it into the market in the regular way, and the consumption of spruce for that purpose is increasing rapidly and the business is as-

suming enormous proportions. One big concern in Albany, we understand, has already contracted for two large spruce commission accounts with parties in Canada, to supply their next year's trade.

The Outlook for Next Year.

[Southern Lumberman.]

As things are shaping themselves, 1891 will be a good year for general business. The basis of all prosperity is in a prosperous condition of the tillers of the soil. Farmers and, as far as our information goes, cotton planters will plant large areas for the coming season, having had satisfactory results this year. American and foreign markets have taken every thing offered them at good prices. Should crops be good next year, or rather should they be promising from the start, business channels will feel the effect in an enlarging demand. Preparations are being made among manufacturers, miners, railroads, jobbers, and all producing and exchanging interests to do a heavier business. There is a possibility that enterprise may overreach itself, but that result is not immediate. Business men feel safe; money lenders exhibit confidence in the future, and they are generally the first to smell danger to the general business interests. Railroad men are fixing up a basis on which they can get more out of traffic, and live without fighting. Ship builders have a year's work ahead, and car builders have as much work assured as they can get through this winter. Hardware manufacturers have been busy twelve hours per day for two months in many branches. Iron and steel makers have never had such a season, and new and cheapening processes are coming into practical use. Carriage and waggon makers are busy. Engine builders are enlarging their plants, and many new ones are going up. Miners of coal, ore, copper, silver, and gold have requirements placed for additional machinery and cars. Electricians are loaded up with an indefinite amount of work. With all this activity, prices are low—that is, they are as low as the individual, or firm, or corporation can make them. Competition is doing its work. Vast fortunes are not being made as they once were. If one channel offers exceptionally high rewards, it is at once filled by anxious competitors, and a general level is soon reached. An honest living is about all there is in business at present. The country is critically watching the effects of recent legislation, and stands prepared to approve or condemn the legislation as it is tested by experience. Too vast interests are at stake to tolerate errors of legislation, and the masses of the people comprehend economic and commercial questions in their entirety and in their relations to the best interests of the whole community better than they ever have. Business and manufacturing interests are organizing themselves for easier and smoother operations. Gigantic combinations are visible on all sides, but there are keen eyes watching them that they keep within safe limits. The moneyed interests once so powerful are now facing a country well informed on the probable outcome of any new policy. Hundreds of millions of capital are invested on the presumption that wisdom and foresight shall prevail at the helm of public affairs. British capitalists are finding this country under its conservative management a profitable field for heavy investments. The outflow of foreign capital will continue doubtless until a sort of equalization is effected.

The Compass in the Watch.

A correspondent of the London *Truth* sends the following: "A few days ago I was standing by an American gentleman, when I expressed a wish to know which point was the north. He at once pulled out his watch, looked at it, and pointed to the north. I asked him whether he had a compass attached to his watch. 'All watches,' he replied, 'are compasses.' Then he explained to me how this was. Point the hour hand to the sun, and the south is exactly half way between the hour and the figure XII. on the watch. For instance, suppose that it is 4 o'clock, point the hand indicating 4 to the sun and 11 on the watch is exactly south. Suppose that it is 5 o'clock, point the hand indicating 5 to the sun, and the figure X on the watch is due south. My American friend was quite surprised that I did not

know this. Thinking that very possibly I was ignorant of a thing that everyone else knew and happening to meet Mr. Stanley, I asked that eminent traveler whether he was aware of this simple mode of discovering the points of the compass. He said that he had never heard of it. I presume, therefore, that the world is in the same state of ignorance. Amalfi is proud of having been the home of the compass. I do not know what town boasts of my American friend as a citizen."

FELLING FIR TREES IN OREGON.

A correspondent of the *Southern Lumberman*, writing from Oregon, tells how they fell large trees in that State. He says: "Some of our tall timber will measure from six to twelve feet in diameter, and run up three hundred feet. The way to get them down perhaps will be interesting to some of your readers. When a tree is too large to saw down we bore an inch augur hole straight into the body of the tree about two feet from the ground, from eighteen to twenty-four inches deep, and then we bore another hole about twenty inches in a line above and let the augur range down so as to strike the inner end of the first hole bored. The points where they join must be near to the center of the tree. Then we put in some maple coals that are aglow with heat, and they fall down to the junction of the two holes. Then we blow them into a blaze with a hand bellows, and your work is done. They will come down themselves, and once down the fire goes out. The upper hole forms a stove pipe and the lower hole forms the draught. Trees up to six feet in diameter we saw down. We cut a small notch, say from eight to ten inches deep, so it will be square, then we take a seven-foot cross-cut saw and go on the opposite side and saw straight into the notch; we follow up with iron wedges to keep the tree from going back until we saw clear through, lacking three or four inches. Then it comes down and does not spoil your timber."

TIE TIMBER IN LATIN AMERICA.

The following data about the use of tie timber in Mexico and South America is interesting.

Argentine Republic.—East Argentine railway, handerby; Western of Buenos Ayres, quehacho and urunday.

Uruguay.—Uruguay North-Western railway, creosoted pine.

Brazil.—Herecoba and native hardwoods.

Chili.—Antofagasta railway, Chili oak; Copiapo railway, Chili oak; Coquimbo railway, cypress; Talca railway, white oak.

Peru.—Pisco and Yca railway, California redwood.

Venezuela.—La Guaira and Caracas railway, lignum vitae.

United States of Columbia.—Lignum vitae.

Mexico.—Merida and Prefeso railway, ironwood; other roads, yellow pine.

Hawaii.—California redwood.

Railroad Ties.

According to a government report on the consumption of forest supplies by railroads, about 73,000,000 ties are annually needed for new construction and renewals by the roads of the United States, which is equivalent to about 365,000,000 cubic feet of raw material. The various woods are estimated to be used in about the following proportions: Oak, 45,000,000; chestnut, 3,500,000; pine, 12,500,000; red, white and California cedar, 5,000,000; hemlock and tamarac, 2,500,000; cypress, 1,500,000; redwood, 2,500,000; other kinds, 500,000. Thus oak furnishes about 60 per cent. of the supply, and not only from choice trees mainly, but from the young growth which may make one tie to the tree or one to the cut.

The Canadian Pacific Railway have constructed large lumber docks at Owen Sound, which accommodate over 7,000,000 feet. Since their completion large quantities of lumber are being shipped over this road. The company, it is stated, will make a direct bid for all the lumber shipment of the north shore next summer.