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THE TORONTO TRADE.

To the Editor of the Canada Lumberman.

DEAR SIR,—When your paper comes to hand we always turn to your Toronto reports first, and I am led to say that, if the price list therein is not stereotyped, you should change it. For months you have given us the same thing. This would not be so bad were the whole thing not utterly misleading. I have been led to wonder who the prices were for. I take it very few consumers of lumber ever see your paper. In fact I understand it to be a lumberman's paper, patronized by the manufacturers and dealers in lumber. From issue to issue the price of mill culls, boards and scantling is put in at \$10.00. Now if this information is for the mill man he must fancy the retail man get a good round profit. On the other hand every builder in this city knows he can get all the culls he requires at from \$8.00 to \$8.50, and the other figures in the price list are just as misleading so far as the trade is concerned, as in the instance cited above.

Now, what should we say if we found our Toronto papers affording such reports of the pork and flour trade? Why they would not be tolerated the second week. Is the lumber trade so scabby that it is to be treated so? True, according to your Toronto correspondent it must be in a bad way, for on May 16th he says it is "pitiful indeed," following along down to your last issue we are led to believe it could not be worse.

What with young men of no experience, and too many in the retail yards, and last, though not least, things have gone utterly to the dogs. Now, Mr. Editor, I beg to say the youngest man in the wholesale trade was to the manner born, is now of age, and is making it known, and that there are no more retail yards now than there were last year, and they are all fairly healthy. Doubtless the strike among the laborers has hurt the trade and business generally. But I hold, and am satisfied, that the lumber trade is in as good condition, both here and throughout Ontario, as any other line of trade. If business is a little slow with us, is that not the case in every line, and I may say everywhere? What to-day is the outlook for pork dealers, wheat growers, and cotton or sugar makers or growers? The fact is we appear to have come upon an era, shall I say an age, of low prices and small profits—it would look so. But with regard to our trade in Toronto, the worse phase, the most unbusinesslike and senseless, is, the turning of the railway yards into ventable scab, retail lumber yards. This is wrong every way we look at it, and should not be tolerated either by the railways or by the trade. What would become of the flour trade, or the iron trade, or the pork trade, if men were to bring in car lots and then hawk it about to the consumers under the admission that it is on the cars, and must be sold. This is what ails

the trade in Toronto and the men who incepted and perpetuate this kind of trade will reap the natural harvest of such a mode of doing business sure and certain.

However, the yards are taking it easy and will ultimately triumph over this way of doing trade. Relying on the careful selection from the mills or from the wholesale dumping ground here, of such only as they require.

Truly yours,

N.

Toronto, July 15th, 1885.

THE CEDAR BUSINESS.

The getting out and marketing of white cedar for the consumptive demand of the Northwest is an immense industry, and yet less is definitely known of it, among those not directly interested, than of any other forest product. The demand for cedar railroad ties, telegraph poles and paving blocks calls for the great bulk of cedar. It is true that there is a large amount of this wood used for posts in the rural districts, but this requirement, altogether, would not cut much of a figure in comparison to the demand for the other commanding purposes named. Throughout the Northwest there is nothing that can compete with white cedar for railroad ties. This is partly on account of its abundance in contiguity to the navigable waters of the great lakes, which makes transportation to market easy and cheap, partly on account of its durability, and partly because it is a light wood, easily handled. Like white pine, its very quality, adaptability and handiness to regions of consumption brought it to the fore in the first place, and will keep it there until the supply is exhausted. For telegraph poles, fence posts and paving blocks it will always distance competitors while it can be had. The question of future supply will therefore be one of vital and growing importance.

The cedar trade of the city dates back to the time when the prairie West began to be settled up, and has run an even course with the lumber business. It is, however, quite differently conducted. As has been said, the bulk of the cedar arriving at this port is for railroad, telegraph and paving purposes. For this reason the most of it is contracted for before it is cut. There are several firms here, with offices on South Water street, in the vicinity of the lumber market, who make a specialty of acting as the intermediaries between the swamp on the one hand, and the railroad and telegraph companies and the street contractors on the other. In this manner cedar is handled from the stump to the consumer, and by the method as stated following:

In the first place, the cedar dealers secure contracts to furnish railroad and telegraph companies, cities, towns, street contractors or yard dealers, certain quantities of product. They then hunt up the necessary supply. As a gen-

eral thing this is found in the hands of landowners of various grades, lumbermen, jobbers, speculators or farmers. But the larger number of cedar operators are men without means to carry on a heavy stroke of business unaided by the city dealers. Hence it is common to furnish the jobbers with means to go into camp with an outfit in the shape of advances. This, of course, involves a stipulated price for the cedar delivered on the lake shore or river bank.

The briskness and profit of the cedar trade each season depends mainly on the railroad demand for ties. If that is active, business is good, for it supplements the constant requirement for street paving purposes, that does not vary so much from year to year as the railroad call, though it is gradually increasing as the cities grow. As a general thing the demand for telegraph poles is influenced by the amount of new railway construction going forward. This year, as has been true of the years since the decline in railroad building in 1881-82, the requirement from the railroads has been comparatively meager. As a consequence the cedar trade has been dull. The chief representatives of the business here do not consider that the depression prevailing is caused by any marked increase in production. They think that if the demand for railroad ties were large the trade would be in a healthy condition. This conclusion is reached because the call for street paving purposes is heavy, and it is more likely to increase in the near future than to decrease. Indeed, a dealer remarked this week that the street requirement had this year been the salvation of the cedar trade. Yet the smallness and sluggishness of the railroad and telegraph demand has had a depressing influence on prices, and a decline within the year of probably 10 per cent. has been suffered. Since 1881-82 railway ties have dropped from 36 to 38 cents each to 28 cents. The amount of decline in the value of poles is not easily ascertained, as each inch in size and the differences in length cause a wide range in values that nobody but a practical cedar man could fully appreciate. Lake freight rates are low and weak, which tends to demoralize prices of cedar.

What has been said in regard to the cedar trade of this city, and prices, pertains wholly to cargoes as passed from the woods to the consuming corporations or contractors, and has no reference to sales on the bank of lake or steam or stream or to the yard trade. The latter has its price list, which is firm or weak in sympathy with lumber and other commodities. The cargo dealers here are rather close mouthed, and are averse to stating as to what they pay for cedar on the bank. Of course values at different points differ, according to distance from market, ease of loading, cost of freights, etc. In order to learn the value of cedar at the various points of production, one would have to address inquiry

to each, and the result would be of no general consequence.

One leading cargo hauler of cedar in the city diverges in his view of this year's trade some what from his compeers, especially as respect to the demand for ties. He reports it very good, in his own experience, and that he has had a fair demand for ties. All the other dealers assert that cedar is dull, some even going so far as to say that it is utterly flat.

The question of cedar supply is one that is being seriously considered by men who handle this product. When operations began for the supply of this market, the Green bay country was the main resource, though considerable was from the east shore of the lake. The larger portion of the cedar along the shores of Green bay and the lake in Door county, Wis., has been cut off, and operators have to go further back for timber. For this reason some think that the cedar supply of the Green bay country is nearly exhausted; but one dealer declares it his opinion that there is enough cedar on the Menominee and its tributaries to supply this market for 30 years. But that view is probably rather strong. It is certain, too, that the cedar of the back country in Wisconsin and the upper peninsula of Michigan will largely go west and southwest by rail, and will not come to this market at all. The paving cedar of Kansas City, Omaha and other western cities now goes directly from the woods to points of consumption by rail.

The diminishing of the supply that is handy to water has induced operators to go farther for cedar than they once did. The shores of Lake Huron and Georgian bay, and the islands in those waters, furnish a large amount of the cedar that reaches this market. Drummond island, Bois Blanc island, the Great Manitoulin island, and the numerous smaller ones that cluster around it, are all important producers of cedar. Much comes from the mainland of Canada; and it is a noteworthy fact that no duty is required on Canadian cedar, even when it is formed into ties. This encourages the shipment of cedar from that country to western markets. A large amount of cedar also comes from the Huron shore of Michigan. Altogether the sources of cedar supply are many and wide spread, and it is not likely that there will be any lack for many years.—Northwestern Lumberman.

The new consul of the United States at St. John's N. B., is Mr. James Murray who was a member of the lumber firm of Holyoke & Murray, New York. He is chiefly remembered in St. John as the shipper of a large quantity of piling from St. John to New York two years ago, in rafts, or rather cribs, the first attempt at shipping lumber in this way; many prophesied that the rafts would never reach New York, but they did.