

IS A QUESTION OF WAGES

VIEWS OF JOHN HANBURY ON THE LUMBER SITUATION.

PROMISED TO INITIATE MOVEMENT FOR REDUCTION.

"A. E. B." contributes to the Toronto Globe a review of the mountain lumber situation based, allegedly, largely upon the views of John Hanbury, of Brandon, Man., who is described as one of the largest lumber manufacturers in the province having mills at Vancouver and points on the Crow's Nest line.

According to Mr. Hanbury the wages question was the chief factor in the situation.

The following extracts from the review in question will be of interest, but it is not intended to quote the whole of the review.

The following extracts from the review were written at the time of the recent special convention of the Mountain Lumbermen's Association:

"There will be no reduction in prices of lumber in the west this year, in my opinion," says John Hanbury.

"The high wages which are paid to all classes of employees in the lumber camps and the mills," said Mr. Hanbury, "furnish the principal obstacle to a reduction, if such a move were contemplated. Ordinary laborers receive \$2.75 per day, and the skilled workmen in some instances as much as \$3.50 per day. That scale of wages is very high in proportion to the figures which rule in other classes of employment, and the wage itself is no more difficult to believe that the wage scale should be materially lowered, and that the reduction should come at the earliest possible opportunity. Some of the smaller mills are reported to be suffering from this handicap, and there is talk of their closing down on account of it. It does seem remarkable that the ordinary unskilled laborer should receive \$2.75 per day in a lumber camp, while he could earn only \$1.75 as sectionman on a railway. The latter work is more trying, gives fewer opportunities for advancement, and requires longer hours. Besides, the cost of living is probably smaller for a lumber camp employee than for any other class of laborer. The high-priced men on a level as far as remuneration is concerned, with senior conductors and locomotive engineers on the railways, although their term of apprenticeship and service is usually much shorter. The fact is the bill of wages for a lumber company is out of all proportion to the necessities of the situation and it must be decreased. If a reduction were made there would probably be some trouble at first, but affairs would adjust themselves, and the companies would be able to secure all the help they required. The main reason for our not feeling the lowering of the wages as keenly as mechanics or others having a more settled occupation. Many of them are unmarried, with little or no property, and they are in the community in which to work, and they would readily and easily adapt themselves to the new conditions."

"The cost of production," continued Mr. Hanbury, "has steadily increased during the past few years, and the selling prices cannot well be lowered while present conditions obtain. The addition of men there has been the case for several years past this action on the part of the government has been greatly appreciated."

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ROADS AND BRIDGES

Good Work is Now Being Done at Over the District by the Government

Gold commissioner Harry Wright has just returned from a trip over the whole of the district under his charge and says that everywhere progress is being made upon the trails, roads and bridges which have been asked for by the inhabitants of the country either singly or through the associated boards of trade.

One of the improvements is the installation of a ferry on the Kootenay trail between the end of the Dewdney trail on the western side of the lake and its continuation to Fort Steele for the other. The eastern end of the ferry is not far from Creston, while the western is the continuation of the wagon road up the Pend d'Oreille valley eastward. The ferry is about 90 feet at this particular point and will be run by a winch on the ferry soot taking up the slack of the cable attached to strong posts on either side and lying along the bottom of the stream. As there is practically no current at this point it is expected that there will be no difficulty in operating the ferry.

Nearer Nelson, the road connecting Beasley with the Queen Victoria mine is being built. The bridge over the Kootenay river, as far as Nelson, for the better accommodation of ranchers and of the mine and mill at Beasley, is not yet to be put in, the government thinking that this will cost too much money. This road will form part of the whole road down to Slocan crossing which is planned for the opening up of this section of the country, which is now studded with fruit ranches.

At Wytheville, the bridge over the Kootenay river, which is now being constructed, is another section of the proposed wagon road along the north shore of the arm to Procter. The part completed lies between a 6-mile creek and connects with a road of the same name, which runs up to that creek. Just now there are various parts of the road completed for a mile or two here and there but the full completion seems almost as distant now as ever, notwithstanding the large influx of settlers during recent years.

On this side of the arm a road has been made with the road so as to give better access to Black's ranch and farm generally. The continuation of this road is a difficult problem as in many places the railway takes up about the whole of the possible location of a road.

Through Fairview generally the bridges are being repaired or are being put in a state of repair, also the bridges in the other direction along the Silver King road. As this mine is working, it is supposed that some of the men there have been the case for several years past this action on the part of the government has been greatly appreciated.

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Of Interest to Fruit Growers

Editor Daily News: Not being in possession of facts and figures to enable me to furnish information of the lines suggested in your request for an article in your special edition, I take the liberty of taking your good nature and encouraging you to space by requesting publication of the following, which will be of more interest to the practical orchardist than individual opinion regarding the present and future possibilities of the fruit industry in the Kootenay.

D. C. McMorris, Kootenay.

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At a meeting of the Provincial Board of Horticulture, held on the 27th September, 1906, the list of varieties of fruits previously recommended was revised, and the following list was adopted. This list is published as experience has shown that the varieties named may generally be safely grown for commercial purposes, and to put interested orchardists on their guard against recommendations of tree-vendors and of others who have not the means of obtaining reliable information. This road will form part of the whole road down to Slocan crossing which is planned for the opening up of this section of the country, which is now studded with fruit ranches.

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Transfer has been made of a quarter interest in the Ora Plata and Tonka mineral claims on Goat river by Mr. Smith and John D. Kay, to a company called the Rising Star and Rising Sun mineral claims, to E. A. McLaughlin and H. Anderson, respectively.

Ottawa, Aug. 29.—The surplus earnings of the government railways for the year ending June 30, 1907, amounted to \$400,000, compared with \$62,000 last year. In 1906 there was a deficit of \$1,725,000 and in 1904 \$900,000.

The lumbermen believe that the public will go on paying the present prices for lumber for an indefinite period. If the demand should show a serious falling off at a time when the output could be maintained, the manufacturers would store their supplies until the market improved. It has been calculated that 80 cents will pay for the holding of one thousand feet of lumber for one year, including insurance and interest. At that rate the cost of holding even 5,000,000 feet for one season to another would not be a particularly severe burden. Such measures are not considered necessary, however, at this stage. Some little difficulty has been experienced through reductions in prices at a few easterns in the prairie country. At present a short time ago there was a cut, amounting in some cases to \$8 per thousand, in quotations by one yard, and the slams were promptly met by the manufacturers. The warlike did not become general, and peace was soon restored. A state of affairs much similar was reported from Calgary recently. The reason given was due to the recovery from the effects of over-stocking, the decline in building activity having caused a slight feeling of uneasiness.

Further back in the district a road is being constructed along to the Yellowstone, giving access to a number of properties recently opening up in this section of the country. The wagon road along the edge of the plateau has been completed from the Columbia to Waneta back for 16 miles, has been completed for yet another five miles into the mountains. This has become more necessary because of the opening up of the district to fruit growing. From Trail a road is now being built southward to Sayward on the far bank of the Columbia river, six miles in extent. This road will open up a promising section of the country. The old road along this part of the river having fallen into a state of bad repair is thus once again brought into use.

From Trail northward on the western bank to the Columbia road has been started which will eventually run the whole way to Castlegar. Similarly about the junction of the Kootenay a road is being built by Thrums and Tarr's which will eventually reach the mouth of the river. A full account of the road partly built from Nelson to Slocan Junction.

Along the Arrow lake work is also being undertaken upon the roads. In Fire Valley the road between the lake and the river is being repaired. Further up Fire Valley the road is being cleared out to the commencement of the trail across to Ernon. The trail itself is also being cleared out. The trail is a fine, being repaired as far as the forks of the Kettle river at the extreme verge of the district, nearly 30 miles back from Arrow lake.

Lastly, road is being cut from the lake at the Needles to Whatchan valley, involving a bridge across Whatchan creek. Here is a section of the country which has been much advertised for fruit land, and which is in the hands of the present, but usually difficult of access.

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