

Free canals in the United States and cheap railway rates have drawn away the traffic in lumber and coal through the Welland Canal, which seems a great pity when we consider the advantages it possesses as a means of communication between the great lakes. Are not canal tolls, like toll gates, an antiquated restriction on trade? The latter have been almost universally abolished. Why not also the former? It would be a boon for the lumber trade.

THE much discussed question as to what constitutes dressed lumber is not settled. Nor is it likely to be for some time, much to the loss of Canadian lumbermen who put in machinery for planing, and tonguing and grooving, under the impression that such lumber would be admitted free of duty to the United States markets. It will be remembered that certain United States customs officials held that while lumber planed on both sides might be admitted free as dressed lumber, when tongued and grooved it becomes manufactured lumber and is subject to duty. The distinction is a somewhat finely drawn one, and like many of the interpretations put on the tariff by United States customs officials is aimed to prevent Canadians having access to their markets. The matter was referred to the board of appraisers, who listened to a great deal of conflicting testimony. When they give their decision it will not end the matter, for should the question be decided against them the United States mill men will probably carry it to the federal courts. In the meantime we are shut out of the market, or have to pay the duty.

A mill-owner at Gravenhurst takes a somewhat pessimistic view of the lumber situation in this country. He says he has never known the business to be in a worse state than it is at present. The yards are filled with lumber which cannot be sold, and there is little piling ground. The largest mill on the Northern road is not running, as it has a two years' stock on hand. One of the largest concerns is shipping all its good common to the United Kingdom, not only in the shape of deals, but one-inch and upward. The smaller mills, he writes, will all be wiped out. We fear our friend is of the lugubrious cast, and is one of that class of people who always look on the dark side. While it is true that the lumber business, like every other line, is dull, we do not think it is quite so bad as the Gravenhurst man would have us believe. At all events there is a rift in the cloud, and though the sunshine of prosperity has not fully broken forth, there is a fair prospect that the clouds will soon disperse, and that the lumber trade will wear a smiling face again. Let us look on the bright side and hope for the best.

Mr. R. E. Gosnell, librarian of the British Columbia provincial library, was recently in Toronto on a visit. Speaking of the outlook for lumber in the Pacific province he remarked that the foreign trade, upon which they mainly depend, has been very bad. Mill-men have, he said, actually been losing money on their operations. Though prices have not risen, foreign demand is improving and he looks forward to a good time coming, when the timber of British Columbia, which he describes as the finest in the world, will prove a great source of wealth. When Mr. Gosnell was here the good news had not arrived of the reduction in duty on lumber entering the colony of Victoria, Australia, or he would doubtless have been in better spirits over the outlook. But it seems to us that the British Columbians do not cultivate as they might the vast market for lumber on the treeless prairies of the northwest. It is true settlement has been slow of late, but the magnificent crop of this year must give a great impetus to immigration, and while waiting for the opening up of Australian and other far away markets, more might be done to secure trade near at hand in our own country.

The old Egyptian monuments show that the saw was in use at least one thousand years B. C.

THE summer meeting of the American Forestry Association at Springfield, Mass., was held in a church. The subjects which came up for discussion mainly related to New England and New York forestry matters.



OUR friends in the United States contrive to mix a good deal of fun with their business operations, and when they meet in convention to deliberate on important interests, season their discussions with wit. One of the lumber organizations which recently met at Minneapolis is known as the Concatenated Order of Hoo Hoo, and has for its totem a black cat. Its chief officer is known as the Snark, and the other officeholders rejoice in such titles as Bojum, Scrivenoter, Bandersnatch, Custocatian, Arcanoper, Gurdon, etc. These names would suggest a school boy's organization for fun, but the Hoo Hoos exist for the purpose of regulating methods in the lumber trade. They evidently believe in the quotation which used to adorn the title page of Grip, that the gravest man is the fool. And why should we allow the sterner duties of life to drive out all its brightness?

FOREST fires appear to have been unusually prevalent all over the United States this season. In the state of Washington particularly the clouds of smoke are so dense as to interfere with the salmon fishing on the Columbia and with navigation on Puget Sound and streams in the interior. Considerable areas of timber have been destroyed, but fortunately there has been little loss of life. These fires do not start themselves. They are frequently the result of carelessness, and they do infinite damage to the lumberman. There are strict regulations in force respecting the setting out of fires, but it is difficult to carry them into effect. Too much care cannot be exercised in this regard.

HON. Mr. Hardy, Commissioner, and Mr. Aubrey White, Deputy-Commissioner of Crown Lands for Ontario, recently paid a hurried visit to Rat Portage and points along the north shore of Lake Superior. Mr. White informs me that the lumber trade at Rat Portage is very much depressed, with no immediate sign of recovery. Speaking of spruce and the supply for the Sault Ste. Marie pulp mill, he told me that there were reports of a good supply up the Nipigon river, but he and Mr. Hardy failed to find it, though they were not on an exploring expedition. He thinks any spruce which is to be found in Ontario south of the height of land is small in size and scattered. Most of our spruce is to be found in Quebec and the Maritime provinces.

SOME idea of the demand for paper now-a-days may be formed from one fact. A large paper pulp mill has been built at the Canadian Soo, and will soon be in operation. The company, a United States one by the way, undertook to develop the water power there to the extent of 20,000 horse power, half of which they intended to use themselves and rent the other half. But after they got under way they determined to use the whole of it themselves. Yet the manager told Mr. White, Deputy Minister of Crown Lands, that they would not be able with their extensive plant to supply the New York World alone with the paper it requires. A gentleman from Australia recently visited the Sault and wanted to make a contract for all the pulp they could produce, which they had of course to decline.

ANOTHER concession has been made which will help lumbering in British Columbia. An order in council has been passed at Ottawa reducing the dues on timber cut within the railway belt of that province. A rebate is also allowed on manufactured lumber exported from the province to foreign countries. These concessions were the result of representations made at Ottawa of what the provincial government had done. The latter had reduced the dues and granted a rebate on timber cut outside the railway belt, so those holding limits within the belt felt that they were placed at a disadvantage. They represented the matter at headquarters with the result stated. It will be recollected that while the provincial

government holds the crown lands in general, the Dominion government took possession of a belt along the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, for which compensation was made to the province. It will be seen that unless the two governments act together injustice may be done, and the passing of this order-in-council is simply the removal of an injustice.

CAPT. James Murray, who died at St. Catharines on the 27th ult., was a well known figure in shipping, contracting and lumbering circles. He possessed in a marked degree the characteristics of the Scottish race from which he sprung, and to this is due in a large degree the success which attended his enterprises. In 1837, when five years old, he immigrated from Argyshire, his native place, to this country, settling with his father's family on a farm in the county of York. Subsequently he went to St. Catharines, taking up his residence with an uncle. At sixteen he took to sailing, and in five years had reached the position of captain. Several years later he purchased a number of vessels and carried on shipping operations on an extensive scale, his vessels being known as among the finest on the lakes. He then took to contracting, and carried out extensive works on the Welland canal, along the lakes and on various railways. In conjunction with the firm of McArthur Bros., of Toronto, he established the Collins Bay Rafting Co., a well known company in the rafting and wrecking business, of which he was a director for some years. He was also president of the Casselman Lumber Co. His death was caused by an obstruction of the liver, and was quite unexpected, as he had been in his usual health up to within a few hours of his death. Capt. Murray is another example to young men of that energy and perseverance in the face of difficulties which is sure to win its way in the world.

THE possibility of transporting timber in large rafts by sea instead of the more costly freighting by vessels or rail seems to have been settled, though it must always remain a risky business, and he who would save in freight must be prepared to take the risk of loss, which cannot but always accompany such an enterprise. Numerous attempts of the kind have ended in disaster, but several of these large rafts have recently reached their destination, and as experience teaches how to put them together so they may best resist the storms which put them to the test, shippers will be more ready to assume the risk of transporting timber in this way. If I mistake not, the first successful attempt to convey a raft in this manner was from a Nova Scotia port to New York. Another large raft has just been taken from the Columbia river to San Francisco. Capt. Robertson, one of the managers, made a similar attempt last year, but the raft was broken up, resulting in a loss of \$40,000. Nothing discouraged, he made another attempt, and this time succeeded. The raft was put together at Stella, Oregon, and contained 7,000,000 feet. It was 525 feet long, 52 feet wide, and 30 feet deep, and drew 20 feet of water. The timber contained in it if put end to end would reach 90 miles. In shape it was like a huge cigar, having a middle girth of 139 feet, tapering to 40 feet at the ends. Over 60 tons of chain were used in binding it together. The saving in freight is estimated at \$25,000, a sum worth taking considerable risk to save. The timber is for the use of the Southern Pacific Railway in the repair of its bridges and trestles. Instead of using a tug as has been done before, a powerful steamer was employed. It is in contemplation by the same parties to take a raft from Puget Sound next season. The great danger in such attempts is stormy weather, which works the chains loose and allows the timber to get out. In this last attempt it was so closely bound together that not a stick moved, and the great ocean on which it was afloat proved so true to its name, that no stormy weather was encountered. That portion of the Pacific is very open, there being no protection whatever from westerly winds, and had there been a big blow the trip might not have been so successful. While this attempt turned out well it is hardly to be expected that such methods of conveying timber to market will ever become popular. If it could be relied on it would be a good thing for lumbermen on both of our coasts.