

## MEMORIAL FOR AN IMPORT DUTY ON LUMBER.

The lumbermen of Canada have taken vigorous action to secure the imposition of an import duty on lumber coming into this country from the United States, and apparently do not intend to relax their efforts until the desired end is accomplished. In December last, it will be remembered, the British Columbia lumbermen passed a strong resolution, for presentation to the Dominion parliament, favoring such a measure, and since that time the movement has been gradually spreading and growing in interest.

On Thursday, March 17th, a deputation of lumbermen from the Georgian Bay district waited upon the Premier and Sir Louis Davies, Minister of Marine and Fisheries. The representation included Messrs. John Waldie, Victoria Harbor Lumber Co.; John Bertram, Collins Inlet Lumber Co.; E. W. Rathbun, Deseronto; John Charlton, M.P.; C. Beck, Penetanguishene; H. Lovering, Coldwater; and James Playfair, Midland.

The purpose of the deputation was to present to the government a resolution passed at a meeting of lumbermen held in Toronto on August 19th, 1897, requesting the imposition of an import duty on lumber. It was pointed out that, as the Congress of the United States had prevented Canadian lumber from reaching the American market by the imposition of a duty of \$2 per thousand feet, the government of Canada should impose a similar duty on American lumber, which now comes in free, until such time as the American duty on Canadian lumber is removed and free trade in lumber restored. It was further stated that yellow pine from Georgia comes into Quebec and Ontario very extensively, and that red pine also from the States is shipped in at a low rate, because of the displacement of red pine by hemlock in the American market. The Premier, in reply, said that the great difficulty was with the lumber supply of Manitoba and the Northwest. He would, however, give the whole question careful consideration.

A few days later a deputation of western lumbermen, comprising Messrs. Walter Ross and D. C. Cameron, Rat Portage; Geo. Graham, Port Arthur; J. A. Christie, Brandon, Man., and F. Gordon, of the British Columbia Mills, Timber and Trading Company, Vancouver, B.C., presented a similar request to members of the Dominion Cabinet. The situation was fully explained in the following memorial:

OTTAWA, March 21, 1898.

Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, G. C. M. G., Premier, Ottawa:

Sir, The lumber trade of Canada, suffering as it now is from unfriendly legislation by the neighboring republic, is in an entirely opposite position from what it was when the lumbermen of north western Ontario and Manitoba had the pleasure of appearing before the tariff commission at Winnipeg. Before that commission we stated that we had no grievance and no complaint to make against the tariff. Rough lumber and lumber dressed one side was on the free list, and this was fair and equitable, as the United States then had rough lumber on its free list, and our statement was that so long as the United States admitted lumber free the Canadian Government should do the same, but should the United States Government impose an export duty on lumber it was the duty of your Government to impose a similar duty. The latter condition has arisen: the United States has passed an act which not only imposes a duty on lumber, but presumes to punish by imposing double duty on the lumber of any foreign country which may impose an export duty on logs. Under these circumstances we ask the Government to impose an import duty on lumber entering Canada.

Our position is not changed since appearing before the tariff commission at Winnipeg. We believe in free lumber if it is reciprocal, but we object to the one sided condition of affairs that at present exists, and believe that by meeting them in the same spirit they themselves display, the desired condition of free lumber on both sides of the line will be sooner reached than by giving them free access to our markets, which they are now allowed to enjoy. We believe that the vigorous policy of the Ontario Government, if supplemented by the imposition of an import duty on lumber, will bring to the front an influential and numerous body of men in the United States who will exert sufficient influence to bring about the desired condition of free lumber in both countries.

Some anxiety has been expressed that in Manitoba and the Territories a rise in the price of lumber would result from an import duty; this would not be the case, the price would remain as it is, but the trade, which is now divided to a very large extent, would then flow naturally to Canadian mills, giving employment to many thousands of Canadians (instead of, as at present, this labor going to foreigners), and give increased trade to Canadian merchants and manufacturers. If Canadians have any trade or calling which is capable of being called their national calling we think it is that of producing lumber, and they can be depended upon to keep the prices at a reasonable rate through competition. Lumber is widely diffused, and no corner has ever been successfully formed in lumber either in Canada or the United States. It has been the experience of the trade that if lumber from any cause becomes scarce and the price abnormal, it springs from all points of the compass to fill the demand and reduce the price.

It is quite generally accepted as a fact that large portions of the province of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories are treeless, but nature has provided within their own limits extensive tracts of timber which supply mills at Whitemouth, Selkirk, Winnipeg, Brandon, Dauphin, Rapid City, Calgary, Edmonton, Prince Albert, and numerous other points in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. To supplement these sources of supply are the inexhaustible forests of British Columbia. To the east are extensive mills at Keewatin, Rat Portage, Savanne, Fort William and Port Arthur, and further east are the mills on Georgian Bay, which are now shut out of the American market and anxious to ship lumber to Manitoba. We might say that many millions of Georgian Bay lumber have been shipped to Manitoba and the Territories. With all these sources of supply operated by as enterprising lumbermen as any in the world, it would seem to us unreasonable to conclude that it is necessary to divide the limited home market of Canada with the United States lumbermen for fear of high prices, which cannot and will not occur, except in the minds of men who do not understand the conditions.

It is a great hardship to have the markets of the neighboring republic shut to us, and besides have to divide our market with the United States lumbermen. We can compete with them, and do compete, but with Canada treated as a dumping ground and foreign railways granting rates on traffic consigned to Canada much more favorable than they grant their own countrymen similarly situated, we cannot more than compete, and on even terms the trade would be naturally divided. As further evidence that no attempt would be made to advance the price in Manitoba or the Territories, we would state that all lumber is sold at one price, and that price is the Winnipeg price, and although there are many points in Manitoba and the whole of the Northwest Territories which cannot be reached by American lumber owing to the fact that the American and Canadian railways do not pro rate their freight charges, and all this territory is entirely dependent on Canadian mills for its lumber, still each and every point so situated is supplied at the price prevalent at Winnipeg, which is the centre of railway competition, the price here being the lowest in the province.

The mills at Rat Portage and Fort William shipped lumber to the United States, and would have continued to do so had it not been for the imposition of the United States duty; in fact the mills at Savanne were built with a view to shipping to the United States. The mills at Fort William devoted all their attention to the American market, and last season, owing to the threatened impost of United States duty, the mills at Fort William were idle and the logs were sawed in the United States; and to illustrate how the Canadian market is whipsawed, as it were, the Fort William people, although sawing in Duluth, were able to market a portion of their lumber in Sarnia, Ontario, thus proving that the Canadian market can be divided with ease by a country of pronounced antagonism to our lumber trade. These mills, like all Canadian mills, are shut out of the United States, and are besides forced to divide a limited home market with American lumbermen. There is twice as much plant in northwestern Ontario and Manitoba as would suffice to supply the home market, which

is a strong argument that competition will keep the price reasonable.

We also protest against lumber being the only important industry allowed to be subject to free trade, more particularly when there is no reciprocal treatment by the United States. Our market is divided with foreigners, and everything we use such as machinery, belting, oil, pork, food, farm products, etc., are highly taxed.

Much capital is invested in the lumber business, which is now greatly impaired by the existing tariff arrangements, and we ask for relief at the hands of your government. So far as the mills of northwestern Ontario, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories are concerned, it is not more money per thousand that is required—it is more sales. This is in your power to grant, with great benefit to a large number of Canadians and to the detriment of no citizen of our country.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the lumber trade of western Canada.

This western deputation also met, in Toronto, a representation from the Lumbermen's Association of Ontario, including Messrs. J. B. Miller, John Bertram, John Waldie and C. D. Warren. The above memorial was unanimously endorsed, and it was decided to bring all possible pressure to bear upon the government to pass such legislation as was asked for.

The British Columbia Legislature, on March 18th, unanimously adopted a resolution urging the Dominion government to impose a duty on imported lumber equalling the United States duty on Canadian lumber.

## NEW BRUNSWICK LETTER.

[Correspondence of the CANADA LUMBERMAN.]

THE business of Mr. Alexander Gibson, of Marysville, is about to be taken over by a company, to be called the Alex. Gibson Railway and Manufacturing Company, for which incorporation is now asked. It has been known for some time that a change was contemplated. Col. McLean, while in England a short time ago, arranged a loan of two million dollars for Mr. Gibson, and the government is asked to give authority to issue debentures for that amount secured on the entire property. Mr. Gibson's property embraces the timber limits of 200,000 acres on the Nashwaak, town of Marysville, cotton and lumber mills and the Canada and Eastern railway, valued at seven million dollars, and capital stock to that amount will be issued to Mr. Gibson. The loan will be a mortgage on the property, and will enable him to discharge his liabilities and leave a working capital of half a million, exclusive of the railway. Mr. Gibson's sales of lumber and cotton last year amounted to two million dollars, and he paid out at Marysville half a million for wages. His disbursements at St. John, loading 60 vessels with lumber, and the labor bills of the Canada Eastern, swell this to \$700,000. The incorporation sought is the largest ever asked in New Brunswick.

The St. John River Log Driving Company will hold its thirteenth annual meeting at Fredericton on Wednesday, April 6th. This meeting will be a very important one, as besides the election of a board of directors and the usual general business, tenders will be opened for the contract of log driving on the river for a period of three years. The rates to be paid for the work are as follows: 1st, from the head of Grand Falls, 20 cents; 2nd, from the mouth of Salmon river, 18 cents; 3rd, from the boundary line on Aroostook river, 2 cents; 4th, from the mouth of Tobique river, 16 cents; 5th, from the mouth of Big Presque Isle river, 13 cents; 6th, from the mouth of Becaguimac river, 13 cents; 7th, from the mouth of the Meduxnickag river, 11 cents.

## INDIFFERENT LENGTHS.

New Brunswick lumbermen are protesting against the new local freight rates enforced on the government railway by Mr. Harris, the new traffic manager.

In some sections of the province there was a heavy snow fall early in March, which interfered with log hauling. Reports of three feet of snow are common. Mr. Richards has a large number of teams hauling supplies into the woods from Boistown and Glassville for next year's operations. He will have about \$20,000 worth stored in the woods.

ST. JOHN, N. B., March 21, 1898.