



SOME days ago Mr. C. H. Clark, of Barrie, Ont., drew my attention to a comment in the WEEKLY LUMBERMAN, where it was intimated that one reason why prices for white pine were cut in Duluth, was because there were not a few men engaged in the trade there lacking the capital which would enable them to hold out for better prices. Our friend Clark has about made up his mind to become a resident of Duluth, and has already spent considerable time there, and done some business. He tells me there is no lumber section in the States where men stronger financially are engaged in the lumber trade, and that if a long pull is necessary they are quite equal for it. I have no doubt but that this is the case, and, for my part, I did not read the paragraph named as meaning that, financially, Duluth lumbermen were weak. I am quite sure, however, that Duluth is no different to other lumber sections, and that among those engaged in the trade are quite a few who find it necessary to make a quick turn-over of their product, and cannot always hold lumber for a better price. We have had such experiences in Canada. During the past winter, when lumber was so terribly dull, from time to time a break in prices would occur in Michigan from just the same conditions. The large majority of the Michigan men held on bravely to their stocks, and to this cause is due the fact that there was no general break up in white pine. Nevertheless white pine could at times be bought at a good shading under market prices. In new districts these conditions are almost sure to prevail in a larger degree than in the older territories. What is the trouble with lumber in the southern states? A lot of jobbers have located themselves there, who are simply into the business for speculation. They are not particular whether they pay their workmen even. All they want is to get a certain quantity of lumber cut, shove it on the market, make their sales, pocket the money, and in many cases get out. This, of course, is demoralizing to the general trade. It is almost certain to be the case in Duluth, where the lumber business is developing rapidly, that to a modified degree, at least, these same methods will prevail. Or else Duluth is different to any other lumbering district that has yet come to light.

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Nearly every day additional illustration reaches us of the importance that is attached to the timber products of Canada by United States lumbermen. Michigan lumbermen are such heavy investors in Canadian timber limits at the present time that a busy newspaper man has started the rumor that Michigan lumbermen intend to form a syndicate and completely control Ontario lumber affairs. Of course, an item of this kind serves very well for a daily newspaper, but anyone who is disposed to reflect a few minutes on the question would see the absurdity of any such suggestion, and for the good sense of the Michigan men themselves, let it be said, that they only laugh at the proposition. United States money is being liberally spent in some of the lumber districts of Ontario, and this year, more than in previous years, our country will benefit by the energy being put forth, from the fact that a number of the larger concerns have, within the year, erected their own mills and will cut on this side of the line, where, without free lumber, they would either have not made the investment at all, or sent the logs over to Michigan to be cut there. A fortnight ago I met Mr. W. S. Taylor, of Taylor & Felin, lumbermen, Philadelphia, Pa. Mr. Taylor was prospecting a little and has some notion of securing a timber berth or two, and perhaps locating a mill here. His firm have to get lumber from some point, and like others, he looks with favor upon Canada. Mr. Taylor tells me that the outlook for lumber this spring is encouraging. In Philadelphia building operations will be engaged in on a liberal scale, and generally throughout that section of country trade looks hopeful.

A correspondent, representing one of the largest lumber firms in the province, has written, saying: "Write up Canadian joists instead of Georgia." Now, this is a sensible suggestion, and I have been thinking a good deal along that line. Recent unfortunate events in Toronto have provided strong arguments for the use of white pine in our larger buildings, rather than the yellow pine of the southern states. I do not need to reiterate the position taken by the lumber section of the Board of Trade, after the large Globe fire in Toronto the early part of the year—a position that has found further confirmation in recent fires since that date. The case rests a good deal with the architects. They have been in the habit, in a measurable degree, of recommending yellow pine for joist, contending that it is possessed of a degree of hardness and endurance that is not general to white pine in similar places. This statement is questioned by white pine men, who believe they know what they are talking about. Furthermore, white pine is not possessed of those obnoxious elements that add flame to the fire when a big conflagration takes place in any city. Saying this much, and there is no doubt that white pine men have reason, as well as patriotism on their side, I am never one to scare over anything of this kind. It is a harsh doctrine, perhaps, the survival of the fittest, but it is one that serves with unswerving exactness throughout all nature, and it is not likely that any exception will be provided amid the trees of the forest. If it can be established that yellow pine, for certain particular purposes, is the best wood that can be used, it is going to be used. Crying it down will not close it out. So with white pine. It has held a premier position among the woods of the continent for years, and the introduction of a new rival by no means indicates its annihilation. I always think that white pine holds a position so substantially strong that every man who owns a stick of it may feel that he has got a gold mine. There is not such a quantity of white pine anywhere that its displacement by any other wood need be feared.

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The clever fellow who holds the quill of the Bobcaygeon Independent has written up a sketchy account of lumbering operations in the far north. He tells how 30 years ago Bobcaygeon was the centre of lumbering operations; 10 years later the centre had moved back about 30 miles; and to-day the great lumbering field of the Gilmour Company is 100 miles to the north. Then follows a brightly written account of the changes in methods of lumbering, how the cross-cut saw has superseded the axe, and the many changes that have taken place in the way of hauling logs, how the railway has become a part of the equipment of lumbering in the woods, just as it has cut its way in as a helper in every other branch of commerce. For anyone who wants the details of these changes I refer them to the Bobcaygeon Independent. What struck me in connection with the sketch was the lesson reflected in the first few sentences, telling how from decade to decade Bobcaygeon was moving back from the centre of lumbering operations. What is the matter? Geographically, I fancy, Bobcaygeon stands to-day where it stood 30 years ago. The surveyor's lines would mark the same place to-day as then. But the timber has been gradually cut away, there, as everywhere else throughout the province, and the man who would engage in timber operations to-day needs to get a long way into the interior to find his product. This fact explains the downfall of not a few villages in Ontario. It has been the custom to talk of certain places as ruined because of the rafting of logs to the American side. To some extent this has been the case, but what is true of Bobcaygeon is true of Midland and other places, once thriving saw mill towns—the logs have got far away from the saw. Another lesson: and it is a serious one; no matter how much timber may still be remaining in the interior, we are rapidly clearing our timber out. Thirty years ago Bobcaygeon was in the woods. The woods are a long way from it to-day, and in place of these woods is a barren waste, which as a country we are doing really nothing to replace.

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"I just wish the LUMBERMAN would give it strong to the sharks and "skins" who manage to get into the lumber trade," was the way I was greeted, as I stepped

into the office of a local lumber concern the other day. What is the matter? I remarked. "Well if you had to get out on the road and buy lumber as I have to do," said this person, "you would take in the full import of what I have said. Take last week, I was out north at one of the mills buying lumber to meet some calls we have from the States. It was the hardest thing in the world to get this mill man to come to any other conclusion than that the great majority of wholesale lumbermen of Ontario were a lot of rogues. He, unfortunately, had been soft in his day and got badly fooled by some of the real sharks himself. He was one of the mill men who made a donation of several cars of lumber to a certain firm of lumbermen in Toronto, who to-day are *non est*, whose creditors bemoan their sudden collapse, and one of the principals of which has had a chequered career running the gauntlet of detectives and police courts. And because these fellows had bitten him badly the mill man was going to be particularly sharp after this and watch everybody who wanted to buy lumber." I remarked that this kind of thing was too bad, and yet in a sense one could not blame the mill man for being careful where he placed his lumber. He was only going to the opposite extreme, which, is too much the rule with everyone. This led to a discussion of another phase of the lumber business, where sharp practices prevail. I remarked to this friend that the LUMBERMAN was likely to have something to say about the operations of a certain German lumber commission house, and I told him how some Ontario mill men had fared with this concern. My friend took another line this time and in his usual plain-spoken manner said he knew something of the situation and was not sorry that mill men sometimes got sold by these outsiders. "They have only themselves to blame," said he. They get a nicely worded letter, with a letter-heading that is unusually prepossessing, from some presumably big concern on the continent, who holds out all sorts of inducements to them. I remember talking to a mill man on this point one time, and he was very "cockey," as the saying sometimes runs. He was not going to bother selling goods to Canadian wholesalers any longer. They could not be counted on. He was going to be his own exporter, and was going to send his goods to Germany, United Kingdom, the United States, and it was hard to say where else throughout the civilized and uncivilized world. All he had to do was to ship his goods, and promptly on their arrival a sight draft, covering the full amount would be paid. This man has had his experience, just as I judge some of the others whom the LUMBERMAN, I understand, will talk about have had their experience. The mill men ought to learn the lesson by this time that their best customers after all are the wholesalers within their own country. They know the state of the market, know what the lumber is worth and are ready to pay the best price that is going at any time. The outsider, who tempts with a little bit of sugar on the stick, offering a higher price than lumber is really worth, needs watching. He is after more than the lumber, unless it is the whole lumber and nothing but the lumber."

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ON the size of the white pine log crop of the new season will rest, to a good extent, the future of the market. One is able to form a better idea now than earlier of what this crop will amount to, and it seems safe to say, so far as Canada is concerned, that the crop will not be in excess of that of a year ago, and the probability is that it will run rather lighter. This is likewise the report that reaches us from the white pine districts of the United States. The crop there will certainly not be larger than a year ago, and to such an extent has the spirit of caution marked the work of the lumbermen during the past winter, one feels sure in saying that the crop will be a comparatively light one. In those sections that suffered by fire the crop will necessarily be heavier than would otherwise have been the case. Self protection has demanded this. But this excess in spots will not make any serious effect on the average of the crop, taking the white pine territories in their entirety.

The factory and saw mill of the Port Elgin Brush Co., Port Elgin, Ont., is advertised for sale.