

THE DEMAND AND THE SUPPLY.

The question of how much lumber will be called for during a season, and how much will be forthcoming to meet this want, is always an interesting one to those engaged in manufacturing or selling this article. They spend as much of their time and thought in considering it as they venture to lay upon any other one thing connected with their business, and with a result that in most cases is probably as little satisfactory as any that attends their efforts. It is very rare that an adequate solution of the problem is reached in advance; it is even doubtful whether any is often possible. Operators may scan the horizon of their trade with the greatest care for indications, may figure up the visible stock of logs and lumber, may estimate as closely as it can be done, the probable or possible increase in consumption over what it was in former years,—they may take all these things into consideration most carefully, but when they have done so they are generally obliged to acknowledge themselves unable to reach any certain conclusions in regard to the quality they will have to sell, or the amount they will be able to dispose of to their customers. Both the demand for lumber and the supply of it depend largely upon circumstances concerning which much more is known at the end of the season than at the beginning. The failure of the crops, the hanging up of the drives, or many other occurrences that cannot be foreseen, are liable to affect one or the other materially, and sometimes make all the difference between a busy and profitable season, and an inactive and unprofitable one. Any conclusions in regard to the probable demand or the probable supply, that are drawn from a study of the outlook, as it appears on either hand, must possess, therefore, to a certain degree, the nature and value of speculations are valuable, if not always absolutely accurate. They show what may reasonably be looked forward to, provided certain conditions exist, and, hence, afford some data from which an idea may be obtained within certain limits, as to what lumber, may be, or should be, worth.

Inquiry in regard to what the demand for lumber is likely to be in the immediate future comes at once upon certain facts in the present situation of the trade that are too important to be overlooked. We find that the sale of lumber at all principal points of distribution is larger than it ever has been at this time in the season, that country yards, as a rule, are buying freely, and that they are selling their stock more rapidly than usual, that in all parts of the country there is a remarkable activity in building operations; that preparations are making to carry out railway enterprises that were abandoned when the hard times began a few years ago, and have since laid dormant, that, in fact, every where the lumber trade and other lines of business intimately connected with it are in such shape as they have not been in before in many years. We find another thing. The immigration to the United States from other countries has been, and according to reliable reports will be, large beyond all precedent. Every vessel that reaches our shores from the opposite side of the Atlantic brings as many new settlers as she can carry, and it is well known that all the steamship accommodations for such passengers have been engaged months ahead. There is not the smallest chance to question that the number of immigrants arriving before placed on record, is palpable and undeniable. Then, there is every reason to believe that the yield of grain and other crops in the agricultural districts will be such as to give farmers an abundance of means to carry out any improvements they may have in contemplation. The harvest may not be the largest we have had in proportion to the acreage planted, but we doubt whether it will be exceeded by that of any former year in the aggregate quantity obtained, or in its money value. True, a combination of unfavorable circumstances might reduce both or either of the latter considerably, but such a drawback is not more likely to be met with this year than in any other; so that we may assume the probability that those depending for their means upon the products of the soil will have, later in the season, a large amount of money, which they will be apt to invest in im-

provements requiring lumber in their construction. In addition to these important features in the situation, we find that universal confidence in the present and future permanence of the existing prosperity prevails, that capital is abundant and seeking investment, and that generally the country is in a state of remarkable prosperity.

Consideration of the facts we have just recited can hardly fail to leave, upon the mind of any lumberman who undertakes it, a very decided impression in regard to the future of his own business. It can hardly fail to convince him, we think, that the demand for the commodity in which he is interested is more than likely to reach a figure that will make the business of other prosperous years seem small by comparison. It is difficult to see how any other conclusion could follow, legitimately. We have a combination, apparently, of all the favorable circumstances required to make an active demand, and have it at a time when activity in business is decidedly the fashion, and when consumers are in the best condition imaginable for buying. From these circumstances, the *Lumberman* feels bound to conclude that the outlook for the trade during the coming summer and fall months is most flattering, and that the probabilities warrant the belief that, so far as the demand is concerned, it will be all that the most exacting lumberman could ask for.

In regard to the supply, the question that has most to do with the stability of the market is whether it will prove greater than the demand. The *Lumberman* is of the opinion that in reply to this question it may be truthfully said that it will not. If we restrict our inquiry for the moment to the Northwest, and the territory supplied from it, we have at our command reasonably accurate data upon which to base our calculations. Several weeks ago we published statistics of the logs obtained in all the important districts last winter, and those carried over in the streams, with estimates of what might be depended upon as the result of operations during the summer and along the various lines of railway running into the pines, which, making allowance for logs that will be hung up or held over in booms, showed the amount that will probably be available for sawing this season to be, as near as possible, 6,250,000,000 feet,—an increase over last year's production of about 600,000,000 feet, or ten per cent. The actual cut may overrun this figure somewhat, but even allowing that it does so to the extent of increasing the excess as compared with 1880 one half, or more, making it 900,000,000, or even 1,000,000,000 feet, we submit that the difference would not be greater than will be required to meet the demand. An increase of fifteen per cent. in the demand for the year, which is certainly not outside the bounds of probability, would use up all the excess in the output, and leave the lumbermen of the north west with no more stock on hand at the close than they brought from 1880. No one who remembers the trouble experienced last winter with broken assortments, and stocks too small for the amount it was necessary to sell from them, will venture the assertion that the total stock on hand, January 1, should not be increased at least twenty five per cent. We do not see that there is much chance that it will be increased to that extent, or to any extent, this season. We do not see where the lumber is to come from. The logs to make it are not in sight, and if they were, all the saw-mill capacity in the Northwest would not avail to turn them into lumber. No talk of any excess in the supply over the probable legitimate demand, in the face of such facts as these would be simply ridiculous. The preceding figures and comparisons, to be sure, relate only to the Northwest; but in this case what is true of the Northwest is true of the whole country. Out side of this district there is no source from which any supply of pine lumber may be obtained that will in any way affect our conclusion, and as for the demand, it shows an equal likelihood of increased activity, east, west, north and south,—wherever lumber is sold, in fact,—which is all the more reason for believing that by no possibility can the supply exceed, or even equal, it.

These points being determined, there remains no question as to the probable condition of the

lumber trade during the latter half of the season. It would be very strange, under such circumstances as are likely to exist, if it should not be active and satisfactory to a remarkable degree. With a good demand, and only just about enough lumber to supply it, operators ought to have things go as nearly their way as anybody could expect. They will certainly not be obliged to shade prices unless they choose to, they will not have to force sales in order to clear off surplus stock, and if they sell their lumber without making a fair profit on it, candid people, acquainted with the facts, will be very apt to say the fault is their own. There will be no occasion for practicing any of the tricks of the trade that are sometimes resorted to, for the purpose of securing customers, or getting some advantage over a competitor. As there will undoubtedly be business enough to keep every dealer fully occupied, no one need fear, if he is ordinarily industrious, but that he will get his full share of it, and, as the demand will call for pretty much all the stock that will be available, no one need worry himself about disposing of what he has or can get. It is not often that the demand and supply get into the respective positions in relation to each other that they now occupy. It is in all respects an exceptional occurrence, and lumbermen should make the most of it. We are inclined to think they will. When this market settles down upon a fair scale of prices, as it must sooner or later, we look for activity and firmness to rule all along the line, and for the members of the trade, individually and collectively, to make quick sales and good profits.—*Northwestern Lumberman.*

WOODEN IDOLS.

From that portion of the Apocrypha known as the "Wisdom of Solomon," the following quaint extract is made. Now a carpenter that felleth timber, after he had sawn down a tree meet for the purpose, and taken off all the bark skillfully round about, and hath wrought it handsomely, and make a vessel thereof fit for the service of man's life. And after spending the refuse of his work to dress his meat, hath filled himself. And taking the very refuse among those which served to no use, being a crooked piece of wood, and full of knots, hath carved it diligently, when he had nothing else to do, and formed it, by the skill of his understanding, and fashioned it to the image of a man or made it like some vile beast, laying it over with vermilion, and with paint, coloring it red, and when he has made a convenient room for it, set it on a wall, and made it fast with iron. For he provided for it that it might not fall, knowing that it was unable to keep itself, for it is an image, and hath need of help. Then maketh the prayer for his goods, for his wife and children, and is not ashamed to speak to that which hath no life. Again, one preparing himself to sail, and about to pass through the raging waves, calleth upon a piece of wood (an image) more rotten than the vessel that carrieth him. And verily desire of gain devised that (the ship) and the workman built it by his skill; therefore do men commit their lives to a small piece of wood, and passing the rough sea in a weak vessel are saved. For in the old time also, when the proud giants perished, the hope of the world governed by the hand, escaped in a weak vessel, and left to all ages a seed to generation. For blessed is the wood whereby righteousness cometh. But that which is made with hands (the image) is cursed, as well it as he that made it, he because he made, and it because being corruptible it was called god.

LUMBER SALES.

The *Montreal Gazette* says:—Our Quebec correspondent telegraphs as follows: On the street to-day I hear of the following sales: Joly's spruce deals mill cutting, \$36, \$26, \$20 and \$14, and charges 20 per cent, odd sizes, and a dram of McRae's elm at 28c. News from the other side indicates a dull market in the lumber trade.

A Cough is usually the effort of Nature to expel some morbid matter irritating the air passages of the lungs. It may, however, proceed from an inflamed or irritable condition of the throat, a slight rash or humor often being perceptible. Let the cause be what it may, the remedy should be Hagar's Pectoral Balm. A purely vegetable Balsamic throat and lung healer. For sale by all dealers in medicine, at 25 cents per bottle.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

WOODSTOCK.

This is a beautifully situated and well laid out town. The streets are wide, and, as well as the public parks, are planted with maple and other trees, which now (June 9th), are in full foliage. The town is surrounded by good farming land, occupied by an industrious class of people, chiefly from the north of Scotland. Many of the original settlers were those who were driven from their native glens at the time of the Sutherland evictions. Their descendants, however, have no cause to regret the event, though at the time, painful enough to the expatriated Highlanders. They are now amongst the most comfortable and independent of any farmers in Canada.

Railway accommodation is convenient and ample—the Credit Valley, the Grand Trunk and Great Western Railways, each give Woodstock a station.

Considerable manufacturing is carried on. Mr. F. B. Scofield is an extensive dealer in lumber. At his saw and planing mills in East Woodstock, he manufactures cheese boxes, wooden bowls, broom handles, etc. The establishment has the latest improved machinery. It is provided with a simple but ingenious contrivance, consisting of a rapidly revolving fan, which, being in connection with exhaust boxes or pipes leading to morticing, planing machine, etc., draws through itself, by the vacuum created, shavings, chips, and sawdust, into a general receiving pipe, thence into a box near the furnace of the engine, supplying the boiler with fuel and producing a cool and refreshing blast for the fireman. The sand-papering machine for finishing doors, etc., works like a thing of life.

There are several other planing mills and lumber dealers in Woodstock. James Hay & Co. carry on cabinet manufacturing on a large scale. Two organ factories are doing an extensive business. The largest black leather tannery (harness and upper) in the Dominion is here, operated by Messrs. J. & J. Grant. They also manufacture bolting. About forty men are employed, and 1,600 cords of hemlock bark are used per annum at \$5 per cord.

Another extensive industry, which competes with wood fencing, is largely carried on by the Metallic Spinning Co., Mr. J. G. Short, manager. This concern spins the steel barb fencing wire at a rapid rate. Five machines are employed in twisting the wire and inserting the bails. Three men are kept busy finishing the coils of wire by putting them through various baths after leaving the machine previous to having them galvanized. The manufacturers claim that the material with which the wire is coated is not broken off when the galvanizing process takes place after the insertion of the barb between the stands. Large quantities of this material is sent to the North-West, where wood-fencing material is scarce.

Mr. Whitlaw, manufacturer of boilers, etc., has just completed a portable steam saw mill, with upright or muley saw, for M. F. Shaw, of Guatemala, Central America. Mr. Shaw has already been at Guatemala, and will bring his "rig" along with him. He proposes to cut mahogany and Spanish Cedar, which is found in abundance there, extending from the coast twenty miles into the country, and is in great demand. It is expected that several other portable saw mills will follow this trial machine.

SOMEONE who claims to have tried it asserts that boiled linseed oil and charcoal mixed to the consistency of paint, and applied to timber to be buried in the earth will give it almost the durability of stone or iron. It is claimed to make such woods as poplar, basswood, ash, etc., as good for fence posts as any that can be found. Bar wood posts coated with this preparation have been taken up, after being seven years in the ground, as sound as the day they were set. The process is certainly very simple and inexpensive.

THE lumber establishment at Winnipeg of Clark & McClure, which Thos. Scott has managed for several years, has been bought out by H. Sutherland & Bro., who also purchased a quantity of lumber, shingles and laths now being flat-boated to Winnipeg by Clark & McClure.