

WHITEWOOD.—The western peninsula of Ontario once boasted a good deal of this rather attractive wood, which has been much demanded for furniture-making and paneling of cars, &c. It brings good prices, and is no longer plentiful.

BUTTERNUT.—For pulpit and altar decoration, for bed-room furniture and dining-room wainscot, for cigar boxes and sundry other purposes, butternut has come to be regarded as very desirable; indeed the limited supply of it, existing mainly in the north and west of this province, must soon be exhausted.

SYCAMORE.—This wood is growing scarce and dear. It is principally used for tobacco boxes, for which purpose quantities have for years been shipped from Essex and other counties to American lake ports, and even as far as Virginia. Kentucky parties have, we understand, placed saw mills at Essex Centre for cutting sycamore.

CHERRY.—A favorite and handsome wood, susceptible of a high finish, and making very rich furniture, or interior fittings for offices, &c. Ontario has but a limited supply remaining, and for this there are plenty of customers. Cherry has always been deemed a choice wood, and to-day has more admirers than ever. In two or three years, Canadian cherry must, at the present rate of consumption, become extinct, and then birch will come into vogue.

CHESTNUT.—In the fitting of hotels or offices, and in some interior fitting of churches, this wood is used, but only sparingly, because the tree is a large grained one. It will have to be resorted to as the butternut, which it resembles, becomes exhausted.

BEECH.—Not many uses have been found for beech, which remains one of our cheap and common hardwoods, to be had nearly everywhere. Tool-makers have use for it to make planes and tool-handles.

BALM.—A species of whitewood. It is used in place of basswood and real whitewood. It is called by some of the Americans cottonwood; but deemed superior to the wood growing along the Mississippi and the State of Ohio. It also takes the place of inferior quality of pine. The counties of Kent and Essex produce it largely. It is used for stave and heading bolts, and a large quantity is sawed into lumber and shipped to the United States, where it is used in wagon shops, agricultural works and so forth. There is still a large quantity remaining, but it is being used up fast, as the demand for it is great, and good prices are obtained.

THE COAL LANDS OF THE NORTH-WEST.

Of the extent and value of the coal mines of the North-West there is still much to be learned. That the deposits are large there can be little doubt. Before these mines have begun to be worked, it is very desirable that they should be placed under regulations which will ensure their being utilized in such a way as to secure the greatest advantage to the public. The intense cold of the winters, makes abundance of fuel the first condition of existence in the North-West; and as there is but little wood in the country,

the coal mines must be the main reliance. The great danger to be guarded against is the tendency of the holders of coal lands to create a monopoly. The United States is suffering from this cause, and Ontario as importer of American coal is also suffering. And as this object may be difficult to attain, there is the more reason for making every possible effort to secure it.

The Canadian government first set out with the intention of leasing the coal lands of the North-West, and exacting a royalty on the output. Now, it seems, these lands are to be sold outright. Which of these plans is the better is a matter on which opinions will differ. A royalty, if large enough to make it a tax which would bear heavily on the consumer, would be highly objectionable. The principle ought to be laid down that an article of such prime necessity as coal, ought to be untaxed. If the royalty were very small, it might be no more than a fair remuneration for the lands; and in that case, it should not be regarded as a tax. A lease would carry a rent; but a substantial rent with a royalty added, would be equivalent to a tax, and therefore objectionable. If the coal lands were sold, the government should reserve some control over the output. The proprietors should not be at liberty to restrict production so as to produce an artificial scarcity. Competition is the true principle, if it can only be kept active; the danger is that it may be neutralized by combination among coal producers. To require the continuous working of the mines might be to insist on production beyond the demand. There are difficulties of opposite kinds to be avoided.

The policy which may ultimately be found to be best, in connection with the working of our coal mines, cannot be traced now. Experience will teach us much that we have now no means of knowing. Meanwhile, no great extent of the coal lands ought to be alienated, though the greatest freedom of working ought to be allowed.

A COAL RING TRYING TO COERCE.

With a Coal Ring, using its exertions to raise the price of coal by force of combination, the public can have no sympathy. An attempt to form such a ring is being made in this city. A number of dealers met and resolved to raise the price of Anthracite coal to \$6.75 a ton, 25 cents above the price that has ruled since the close of navigation. This attempt is made at the dictation of parties on the other side of the line, by whom a circular was sent here suggesting that the proposed rise in price should be made. Nevertheless, this strategy will not succeed. The strong men in the ring can coerce the weak ones, whom they supply; but one strong firm stands out and resists the attempt to raise the price. The result will be that the public will not pay \$6.75 to the members of the ring, when they can buy outside for \$6.50.

The tactics of the ring, at an earlier stage, met defeat. In September, its members lowered the price for a few days, with the view of compelling others to raise prices under a threat that they would have to sell at an abnormally low price if they did not

respond. But one firm—A. & S. Nairn, the same that stands firm now—stood out; and the ring soon gave up the losing game. A few clubs and corporations, having the means to do so, took advantage of the low price and purchased their winter supplies. But the mass of the people is obliged to buy its fuel from hand to mouth; and the attempt to make those who can least afford it pay an extravagant price for so indispensable a commodity as coal, deserves to be discouraged by all classes. The attempted coercion of the ring has not succeeded, and we believe it will not succeed. Coal can still be had at the old price. Let no one pay the \$6.75 a ton demanded by the ring; but all go where they can buy cheapest. In this way only can an odious monopoly, in the last degree injurious to the community, be broken.

—The people of Toronto have voted upon the Free Library question, and have shown themselves, by the result, to be in favor of the library, for 5,400 votes out of 8,000 cast were in favor of the scheme. The majority is a decided one—and indeed the vote itself is far larger than is usually polled when local by-laws are submitted—and sufficiently indicates the feeling of her rate-payers that Toronto stands in need of a free public library. Mr. ex-alderman Taylor, not less than Mr. Alderman Hallam, deserves the thanks of the citizens for energetic efforts towards this desirable end. Both these gentlemen have labored, in season and out of season, for the success of the scheme. Now that it is decided upon, let us hope that steps will be taken to have the library worthy of the city and of the times we live in; not principally a depositary for novels or a reading room for periodicals, but a library of reference, and a storehouse of solid information for the people.

TELEPHONIC versus LEGAL PROFANITY.

It is rather a staggerer to be told that the word "damn" when used as an adjective and applied to mundane things is not a profane word. Furthermore, when the word is used in temper and takes the shape of a verb, in the imperative mood, too, as applied to a person or a thing, even that is not swearing! This is startling, also, but it is the opinion of no less a personage than a judge in the Circuit Court of Cincinnati. However, two other judges, out of the three who composed the court, differed from him on the question, which we think fortunate for the good taste of the court, as well as the future good manners of the rising generation in that city. The circumstances were these:

A person in that city called through the telephone in his office that he wanted to communicate with a certain individual. The operator at the Exchange called up the wrong person, whereupon the customer ejaculated through the telephone to the Exchange man: "If you can't get the party I want, you may shut up your damn telephone." It was shut up, *ie.*, taken out by the company. The profane customer thereupon brought suit to have it restored. The company set up the defence that by his profanity the plaintiff had forfeited all claim to the use of the telephone. Two of the judges held it to be "too plain to admit of argument" that "damn" is a profane word and a highly improper one to transmit by telephone. One judge rendered a dissenting opinion. He thought that "in a bus-