

THE LUMBERING INDUSTRY IN CANADA

By ROY L. CAMPBELL

(Second Article).

ONTARIO.

The Pioneers of the Ottawa.

The trade and the exploiter are always the precursors of civilization. Long before the City of Montreal was an established town of large proportions, commercial interests had spread far and wide over the great North West, and furs were being brought down the Ottawa from the far regions which we now know as northern Ontario. Long before the valleys of the Ohio and the Mississippi were thickly settled there were Hudson's Bay posts up into the valleys of the Saskatchewan and the Peace.

In the case of the lumberman it was somewhat the same. The tree feller was decades in advance of civilization in the modern sense. Naturally, the first areas to be cut over for timber were those nearest Quebec. Logging was very simple; the country was not very rough, the logs of wonderful size, and the rivers easily driven. The north shore yielded vast quantities of pine. But the richest supplies of all came from the valley of the Richelieu. For several decades following the British occupation the lower St. Lawrence valley supplied practically all the timber that went out from Quebec.

Had it not been for the giant pines whose hewn trunks were sent to timber-hungry Europe, Canada would be comparatively undeveloped today. If the forests presented only their obdurate bole and root, and not their commercial possibilities, to the early visitors to the land, agriculture would probably have been declared impossible, and "the Bread Basket of the Empire" would not be in the north temperate zone.

When the current of development once sets in, it swept up the natural channels of traffic—the rivers—almost as rapidly as their waters flowed down. In 1800 few timbermen had ventured past Montreal. Then came the flow up the Ottawa River, the great blue-green stream that flowed four hundred and fifty miles through the vast timber country between Lake Timiskaming and Montreal Island. Main river and tributaries were alike marked out for the operations of the logger. For three quarters of a century this valley has poured its wealth of wood material through a multitude of mills and out to all corners of the land.

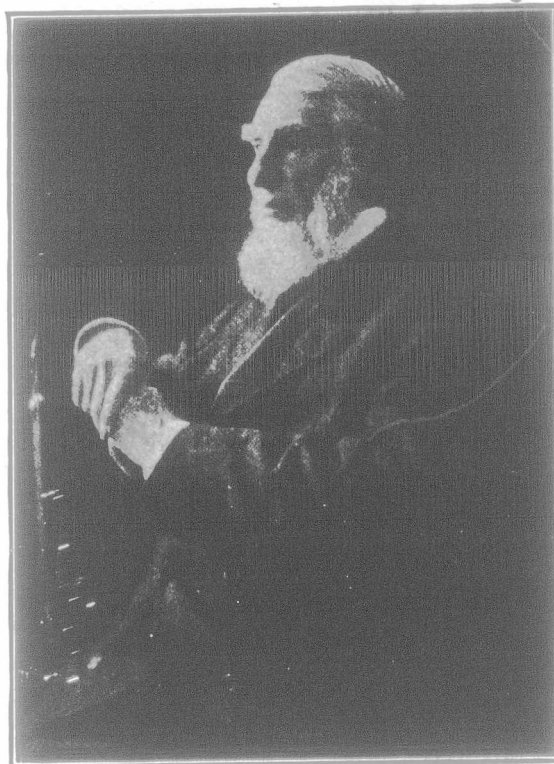
First of all came the hardy forerunner whose name still lives in the country formed after his settlement had become a populous centre.

Philemon Wright of Woburn, Massachusetts, was the first pioneer in the timber trade of the Ottawa Valley. In 1796 he made his first visit to the Ottawa district, and was particularly impressed with the value of the timber ("sufficient" as he afterward reported, "to load a thousand vessels"). On February 2, 1800, he obtained an extensive grant of land from the government, opposite the present City of Ottawa. The first tree was felled on the site of his homestead on March 7 of the same year. In 1807 Mr. Wright took the first raft of square timber down the Ottawa to Quebec. It required thirty-six days, as the venturesome pioneer and his assistants were unacquainted with the river and had to proceed with great caution. He built his first sawmill and grist mill in 1808, and the first timber "slide" on the Hull side of the river, in 1829. In 1830 he was elected the first member of the Canadian Parliament to represent Ottawa.

It is interesting to note in passing that not only did the timber trade give Canada the principal impulse in her internal economic development, but it provided a large proportion of the captains of industry and the

legislators who have fashioned largely the fabric of our governments. The annals of legislative history in our Dominion are graced with the names of scores of the great lumbermen. Some of these will appear to the reader as we trace the wonderful flow of development into the timber districts.

In the early years of the 19th century the timber business was just coming into its development, and lumbermen were all over the provinces of Quebec and Ontario practically irrespective of the distance to which the timber had to be brought. For instance, while the Quebec trade was being greatly developed in the twenties the far Ottawa district was also being exploited, and in 1833 the Hon. Jas. Little, who was one of the great lumbermen in early Ontario's history, was constructing a dam and shipping his product from the Grand River in the far western peninsula of Ontario. Over all the terri-



J. R. BOOTH, of Ottawa
Canada's best known Lumberman

tory between the head of Lake Huron and Quebec, lumbermen were taking up timber lands and sending their product through the one main port, Quebec. Later the United States ports south of Lake Erie received a great deal of timber, and with the building of the Erie Canal vast quantities went down to New York. It should be noted here that a pioneer settling in Western Ontario was not much farther away from other settlements than was a man in some portions of Lower Canada, because the development which went on in the United States was rapid, and the town of Oswego, what is now Buffalo, and other settlements in Ohio, New York and Illinois, were very close to the Canadian pioneers.

The point at which Philemon Wright made his first raft became the great lumber centre of Canada. Up and down this picturesque stream from the City of Ottawa are tributaries which have yielded more to the lumber