

condition, and preparations are being made to put large quantities of lumber into the market. This object, however, may be defeated by the labor famine which threatens the country. It appears to be impossible in many districts to secure men for the woods. We are told of a lumberman who wished to take fifty workmen back into his limits, who, after several weeks' work, finally secured six. Wages have materially advanced, and as high as forty dollars and board per month is said to have been asked in the Georgian Bay district. It appears to be a general belief that these conditions are only temporary, and that the labor market, while remaining on a higher level than for some years past, will soon find a less extravagant basis.

The announcement is made this week of an advance of two cents in freight rates. This is somewhat higher than was expected, and is due to the exceedingly high rates which vessel owners are now securing for carrying ore and grain on the lakes and St. Lawrence. Railway men, in the opinion of the trade, might with advantage to themselves, study more carefully the lumber trade. In every mill centre it is the case that products of the forest are wasted, which might, if lower local freight rates prevailed, find a market in neighboring towns and cities. These products would not stand shipment at high rates or over long distances, but both lumbermen and railway companies would benefit by a trade which could be developed in them by the establishment of a special schedule of rates, adapted to the particular requirements of this trade.

Great development is being predicted for the lumber trade in the Canadian West. We understand one Georgian Bay manufacturer is making a special examination of this market, and has made several shipments for distribution from Port Arthur and Fort William. Freight rates for shipment west should be low, as a remunerative return cargo is guaranteed. Large quantities of lumber are now going into Manitoba from the extreme west of Ontario, and with improved railway facilities the region around Rainy Lake should be an important lumber producer. But in the opinion of those interested in lumbering and the carrying trade, the lumber requirements of Western Canada will soon be felt in a marked degree in the Georgian Bay district.

A SUGGESTION AS TO THE LUMBER TRADE.

The sale of Government timber limits, which took place at Ottawa on Wednesday last, was of more than ordinary interest. A number of prominent Canadian and American lumbermen were present at it, and the competition was very keen. No less a sum than \$431,300 was realized on the limits offered, and the prices paid were much in advance of any sales in recent years. This was notably so in what is known as Berth No. 82, composed of thirty-six square miles on the north side of Lake Huron. This property was knocked down to Thomas Pitts & Co., of Detroit and Bay City, Mich., for the sum of \$315,000, which is reported to be considerably more than it cost its late owner, who has taken off it fifteen or twenty million feet.

Whatever discouragements may have been put in the way of sending Canadian lumber into the United States, they have not prevented Americans bidding at this sale and sending up the prices beyond those that

had prevailed for years past. It may be remembered that predictions to the contrary were confidently made last spring by Mr. Charlton, M.P., himself, that such an effect would be produced by what he called the selfish policy of Canadian lumbermen. It is stated that he is directly interested in the berth referred to. At all events an Ottawa telegram of Wednesday evening says that "Berth 23 sold for \$70,000 to Mr. Charlton, and Berths 136 and 137, which have been largely cut down, fell to Mr. Charlton for \$30,000. This would seem to indicate that in his opinion it will be quite possible in the future, as it has been in the past, to send Canadian lumber into the United States, there to be sold at a profit.

STOREKEEPING FOR COUNTRY PEOPLE.

Canada is essentially an agricultural country, and as such requires an excellent mercantile service for those living in the small towns and villages, and on the farms. This service has, until within recent years, been almost exclusively performed by the country merchants, but the trend of country trade is now increasingly in the direction of the large city stores. The establishment, or rather the development of the mail order system by the departmental stores has diverted a large volume of trade to the cities. We have previously discussed this question on different occasions, and do not now need to go into it in all its branches. A visitor to a number of Ontario villages and towns several weeks ago was strongly impressed with two ideas; (1) the reasonable prices at which goods are sold by country merchants, and (2) the inferior methods adopted by them to attract trade to the village stores. The former of these, namely, low prices, may be regarded as the only essential of successful storekeeping, but to a close observer of the situation certain "frills" and modern appliances are indispensable. Each merchant will do well to enquire whether he is travelling in a rut worn deep in the course of years. It is unnecessary to point out at length the means which should be adopted to make a store attractive, even if we were able to undertake this difficult task. The arts of skilful advertising, bright and clean premises, window dressing, interior store decoration, holding special sales, and a host of other things that go far in making up successful modern storekeeping, must be studied, their practice elsewhere observed, and adapted to special circumstances.

THE ADVANCE IN METALS.

The advance in the price of metals, which began some months ago, has kept up remarkably. Excitement was earliest shown in tin and copper, and the advance in them was great; but the iron and steel market has in turn shared in the upward movement until prices of some lines or articles have nearly, if not quite, doubled; almost everything is dearer, many things are scarce. The effect of this upon contractors of various kinds has been one of confusion and in some cases dismay. We have heard of engine makers, stove-fitters, and even plumbers, who had contracts to fill, and are being seriously inconvenienced, not alone by the advance in price, but by the scarcity of goods. Even lead is now sharing in the advance, although the last to move. Some of