

The Stumpage Crisis

Freeman

Aug 1, 1874

The Lumber Lands and Stumpage

The government are displaying unwonted zeal in protecting those lands which the Rivière-du-Loup company have selected, and of which they intend to become owners as soon as possible. Trespassing should always be prevented, but we heard of no efforts to prevent it until it became necessary in order to prevent the cutting of the lumber which the government resolve to protect for the benefit of their masters of the Ring.

The same person is employed by the government to run lines and protect government revenues, and by the Rivière-du-Loup Company to look after their interests, and the best way to look after them just now is to protect the government reserves most rigidly. The Messrs. Morrow lumbered largely for many years and we never heard of their having poached before, but now a million of their logs have been seized in the boom, and these will be sold unless they pay a dollar thousand stumpage because it is alleged, they were cut on one of these Ring Reserves. Mr. Forbes, of Victoria, had half a million seized for the same reason or on the same pretext, and probably several other seizures have been made of which we have not yet heard. The lumber trade is prostrate just now; the most prudent operators will be delighted to find that they have not actually lost on the year's transactions, and this is the time the government have selected to put the whole lumber trade of the province at the mercy of the Railroad Ring and that other Ring their masters. No wonder that the indignation is wide-spread and deep.

Freeman

July 28, 1874

The Stumpage Impost

It has been duly announced that the government will compel all who lumber on lands under license from the province to pay stumpage 80 cents per thousand--on the lumber cut on the river Saint John and its tributaries, and 60 cents on lumber cut on the rivers which discharge their waters into the Gulf of St. Lawrence. But pine must pay 80 cents no matter where cut, and hemlock will pay only 60 cents.

It is also ordered that lumberers may obtain a three years' license for any lands on which license to cut is hereafter sold by the government. This at first may seem to be of advantage of the lumberers generally, securing them a return for their outlay in clearing streams and opening roadways, but a correspondent asks us to warn all who are interested in lumbering in the counties through which the Rivière-du-Loup road runs or is to run, that this is but a skillfully devised plan for shutting them out from the choice lumbering grounds in those counties which the railroad managers have already selected, and which they are determined to secure with all the lumber now on them. Not being in a position as yet to claim some of those lands they intend to bid them in at the next sale and thence to hold them for the three years or until they claim the absolute title to them under the Facility Act.

If it were a condition of the sale that a certain quantity must be cut each year on every square mile or that stumpage for such quantity should be paid whether it was cut or not, the schemes of the monopolist would probably be frustrated. But no such condition is attached, and the lumberers will find themselves completely at the mercy of the Ring, who govern the government--shut out from the best lands in York, Carleton and Victoria as completely as if these were already the property of the Company.

Freeman

Aug 18, 1874

The sale of the Timber Berths commences at Fredericton today. The lumberers who were on their way to attend the sales, loudly and energetically, without distinction of parties, condemn the recent regulations respecting stumpage dues. They say that the business in its present state cannot bear the impost, and that the regulations will seriously restrict operations. Some of them say that the imposition of this stumpage is a breach of faith towards the Dominion Government. The stumpage was formerly paid by way of export duty, a far less onerous and less vexatious impost. The export duty was abolished, the Dominion Government undertaking to pay the Local Government for it fully twice as much as ever it yielded, and how the very same burden is re-imposed in such a way as to be very much more grievous and seriously to cramp and restrain the business of the Province, and so reduce its ability to contribute to the general revenues. There was talk of combination amongst all the other lumberers to resist, and if possible overthrow the baleful influence of the rings, whose slaves the Local Government now are, and it was said that so well do the members of the Local Government know what a feeling the imposition will evoke that all who could have run away from Fredericton to avoid meeting with the lumberers, leaving the Surveyor General alone to bear the whole brunt of the storm.

Reporter

Aug 19, 1874

The Timber-Lock

If walls have eyes as well as ears the old stones of the Crown Land Office witnessed a marvellous sight yesterday, when thousands of acres of timber berths were offered at competition and not a bidder in all the crowd. It was one of the large annual sales, and had drawn to Fredericton nearly all the lumber merchants of the North Shore, and the County of Queens, many of them coming, no doubt, to bid as formerly or little dreaming of the turn affairs have since taken. Engineered by a few of the larger operators a combination was formed and it was concluded not to bid, nor yet to purchase secondhand from any outside party who should presume to compete. This agreement was faithfully carried out, only two berths were disposed of, and these through some casual misunderstanding. It is further declared by the North Shore men, that all the lumber operators in the Province, "outside of the Railway rings," will join the combination formed yesterday.

The causes which have led to this lockout are already familiar to the public. For years it has been a standing accusation against successive governments that they were mismanaging the public domain; that while companies and private individuals were realizing handsome profits, the government, yielding to the pressure of the lumber dealers, were sacrificing the interests of the many to the few and allowing our forest and valuable timber lands to become worse than profitless. No later than last season it was charged upon the government by Mr. Gough that the lumber merchants of the Province held the Government in the hollow of their hand, and the very journalists who now take sides with the malcontents were loudest to repeat the charges of mismanagement. What then. Acting in the interests of the public at large, complying with repeated suggestions of the Legislature, and imitating the example of the United States, our Government has imposed a stumpage duty of 60 and 80 cents on the North Shore and southern districts of the Province respectively, and it is in resisting this duty that the lumber dealers have formed their present Combination. What they expect to gain by the present procedure we fail to discover. They cannot expect to starve the government into complaisance, since the latter can afford to do without the purchase money, say \$40,000, far better than the former can afford to do without the lumber, shut down their mills and break up their business. The malcontents at present are about 90 in number, and although embracing some very strong men they cannot expect to carry their point against the Government, providing the latter are found acting in the interests of the people generally.

It is argued by the lumber ring that prices having declined so largely in England the imposition of 60 cents is more than sufficient to cripple the business in New Brunswick already unprofitable in a majority of instances, and that it is a load which this industry cannot possibly sustain. The decline, however, upon which this proposition is based, is merely fortuitous. The market in England may be down today

and up tomorrow, and gives no ground for any fixed or definite line of action, on the part of the government. Those same men, in face of this decline, will pay \$1.00 stumpage to a private individual or company, while they complain it will ruin them to pay 60 cents to government.

The grievance therefore, is now reduced to a question of cents, the principle of stumpage duty being generally conceded. Then would it not have been better to have met the government fairly, talked over the situation in manly and friendly spirit and arrived at some definite understanding, rather than attempt in this childish manner to surprise or coerce the government into conceding their demands. What course the latter intend pursuing we cannot tell, but we do know that if they allow themselves to be brow-beaten or terrified into acquiescence they are unworthy the confidence of the public and should give place to better men.

The lands in question belong to the people, not as has been too generally supposed to the lumber operators solely. For the present, we understand, the sales will continue as usual, the berths unsold yesterday and today being again offered after the customary notice.

After the sale yesterday, a committee consisting of Hon. Mr. Muirhead, Mr. McLeod, M.P., Mr. Ferris, M. P., and six or seven others waited upon the Surveyor General to ventilate their combined grievances but received no encouragement that the impost will be abated. In fact the disaffected differ among themselves, and while some would resist stumpage dues altogether the committee would consent to 25 cents and a ten year's license. Some of those loudest in complaining declare that the new arrangements are simply a device to compel parties to lease from Mr. Gibson and the New Brunswick Railway Company, but this charge is so absurd that we only mention it to prove how lame are some of the arguments against the new regulations.

The question, we understand, will be discussed by the Saint John Board of Trade this evening, and will no doubt engage the earnest attention of the government at its approaching session.

The recalcitrant bidders left this afternoon, firm in their resolve to stand by the combination, and rejoicing in the fact that several of the mill owners would refuse to say for any man outside the association.

Freeman

Aug 20, 1874

The Lumberers Insurrection

The government and their papers have probably learned by this time that the discontent amongst the lumbermen is not confined to a few and that it is not be easily allayed. The Ring and the operators who are not of the Ring are now arrayed in deadly hostility, and the lumberers must succumb or the power of the Ring will be broken, and the government, whose members are slaves of the Ring, will be swept out of existence. The odds against the lumberers are very great. Many of them assisted the government to carry the late elections, little dreaming what they were doing, and entirely disregarding our warning. They then succeeded in clothing the government with an unwonted degree of power which the government are now using as their real masters direct. It is all very fine to threaten them with public indignation if they persist in their purpose of compelling the lumberers to pay heavy stumpage to the government or heavier to the Ring, but what care they for such threats if they are sure of a majority in the Assembly. Their lease has been renewed for four years, and they believe themselves masters of the situation. they want to enhance the value of the lands they have authorized the Ring to pick and choose, and they want more money in the treasury for their bridge jobs and other such jobs. It is whispered that they have not a majority in the new Assembly willing to assist them in imposing this great burden on the lumber trade, but they have had some experience, and they think they know how a majority can be secured. They have the Pope too on their side, and many of the lumberers now discounted know how great his influence is and how useless it is to contend against it.

The North Shore lumberers who were in Fredericton to attend the sale of Tuesday held a meeting in the Queen Hotel on Monday night. Hon. Senator Muirhead

was appointed chairman, and George McLeod M. P. was appointed Secretary. The speakers all regarded this attempt to levy stumpage dues as made in the interest of the Rivière-du-Loup ring, and asserted that it would practically put an end to the lumber business in several districts. They resolved to buy no timber berths subject to these conditions, and to saw no lumber of any one who did buy. Next day they firmly adhered to their resolve, and only three berths were sold, and these to an outsider. The lumbermen who subsequently arrived in Fredericton readily united with those who were there on the first day and signed the pledge, and on yesterday, Wednesday, only a few lots were sold, and these to outsiders who probably will not attempt to operate. The members of the government, with the exception of the Surveyor General, who must attend the sales, are all away from Fredericton, and Mr. Stephenson, it is said, is determined not to give way. Indeed, having been elected by the great landed proprietors of Charlotte, it is not to be expected that he would give way even if he had the power to rescind or alter what the government have done. It is said that the lumberers, or some of them proposed that the stumpage should be reduced to 25 cents, and that they should get ten year leases. In making such a proposal they did much to destroy such public sympathy as they previously had, as this was a proposition to create a new monopoly, an outer concentric ring which would guard and preserve the smaller rings now so obnoxious to the public.

If no sales are made some of the lumberers will be content to remain idle for a time in the present state of the lumber business; others will work up the stocks on hand by degrees, and several will probably go in and cut on the public lands and run all risks. It is a bad state of things.

Freeman

Aug 22, 1874

The Stumpage Question

We perceive that an ingenious but a very disingenuous effort is made to represent what was said by some of the speakers at the meeting of the Lumber Exchange, as an expression of the opinions of all who are engaged in the lumber business in Saint John. We were surprised to find that the Saint John people took no part whatever in the proceedings. The Americans who do business in Saint John, were, indeed, so far as we could learn, all in favour of the imposition of stumpage, and all thought that the government should charge at least a dollar a thousand on spruce, but alas was to have been expected. Some of them own large tracts in the Aroostook territory, and have the same reason to desire the imposition of stumpage on the lumber cut on our crown lands that our own large landowners have and those who do not own lands, but are obliged to pay stumpage, naturally desire that the New Brunswickers who now compete with them in the American markets should be compelled to pay 80 cents a thousand at home in addition to the 20 per cent they have to pay in the United States. Burdened at both ends they may be less able to compete with the Americans than they have been, and all who are engaged in trade of any kind, desire to avoid or prevent competition as far as possible. Mr. Snowball said that the imposition of the stumpage would prevent the manufacture of lumber in a large part of the province, and Mr. S. T. King was frank enough to say that this is precisely what is wanted, and that the New Brunswick Government is accomplishing this, surpass all who have attempted to devise a mode of reducing the production of lumber. It would, no doubt, be very satisfactory to those gentlemen, if, while they talked of the reducing the supply your manufacturers were forced by the action of the government to curtail their operations. Mr. Beveridge, who also commended the action of the government so often, and so highly admitted that he is interested in as a large landowner in enhancing the market price of the standing lumber. He did not inform the meeting that he is a member of the Rivière-du-Loup Ring, which is said to control the government in this matter.

Besides the Rivière-du-Loup Ring, and the Charlotte County Ring, and the owners of large tracts of land in others parts of the Province, those who lumber on the Crown lands must also calculate on the support which the Americans, engaged in the lumber trade, will naturally give to a policy which tends to enhance the value of the Aroostook lumber lands, and to diminish the competition they now encounter in the American markets. That manifested itself at the meeting of Wednesday night.

The lumberers must also guard against the attempt which is made to place the North Shore lumberers and the lumberers on this side of the Province in antagonism

North Shore lumberers and the lumberers on this side of the Province in antagonism. If they could be led into a quarrel the work of the rings and of the government, the agents of the rings would be easy. At the meeting of Wednesday night this policy also developed itself. Several of the speakers endeavoured to create the impression that the operators on the North Shore are unduly favoured because the stumpage there is but 60 cents, while on this side it is 80 cents, and they were called unreasonable, and were ridiculed for objecting to what was thought an arrangement so favourable to them. Mr. Snowball explained why the charge, though nominally lower, is in reality as high on the North Shore as it is on this side. The logs are essentially less valuable there, and therefore the tax is, when regarded as an ad valorem tax, quite as high as on this side. The small lumber cannot be used there owing to the distance from the American market. Freights have usually been higher although, owing to exceptional circumstances, they are not higher at present. On the Miramichi and in Kent the land has been repeatedly "culled," and the lumber now cut on any but the lands held by companies is small and hard to be got. What is even more conclusive is the statement that the survey is different, so that what is called a thousand, of lumber on the Miramichi, would be but 600 or 700 feet in Saint John. This he said could possibly be cured by compelling the adoption of the same system of surveying all over the province.

But this, although the discussion was forced upon the gentlemen from the North is as Mr. Snowball said entirely beside the question now at issue. No part of the Province should be unduly favoured or exempted from its fair share of the public burdens. Whether more than 60 cents should not be charged on the Miramichi or at Richibucto would be a very proper matter for consideration when it was settled that 80 cents, or 60 cents should be imposed on the lumber cut on the river Saint John; but until this is settled the parties interested should not allow themselves to be involved in a dispute which may cause them to lose sight of the question they now should deal with.

If all Canada and the United States reduced the production of lumber one half, or even one quarter, prices would necessarily advance in a short time; but united action over so large an area is scarcely to be expected, and any reduction enforced upon a portion of the lumberers of this province, though it may cause much loss and suffering here, would do little to enhance the value of lumber in the markets of the world. Even though it did . . . it will scarcely be asserted that our government should compel our people to suffer greatly that others may prosper. Individuals indeed may be justified in discontinuing their operations and allowing the lumber on their lands to stand and grow in the hope of obtaining a higher price or making a great profit at some future day, but a government has other duties than increasing its revenue. A very large portion of the people of this province depend upon the lumber business for their daily bread, and a diminution in that business from any cause means privation to them; and if the diminution be very great, and thousands be thrown entirely out of employment, a wholesale emigration would naturally follow, and the loss thus sustained by the country would be vastly greater than the benefit derived from the increase of revenue.

It is said the lumberers, who are sometimes willing to pay stumpage to private proprietors, should be compelled to pay the government also for the lumber they cut on crown lands, This would be a very conclusive argument if the lumber on the crown lands were as abundant and as good, and if the state of the business were such that this amount so paid came out of the profits of the merchant or the large operator. But as Mr. Snowball stated, the merchant pays the market price for logs, no matter what the production of them costs, and anything taken out of that price must be borne in the end not by the man who buys the logs, but by those who get them out. Neither the shippers of lumber nor the large lumberers nor the small operators have grown so rich hitherto as to prove that their profits are excessive.

Freeman

August 27, 1874

The lumberers are "catching it" all round. The Newcastle Advocate, the Moncton Times, the Chignecto Post, the Fredericton Reporter, and of course the St. Stephen papers, commend the action of the government and deride the vain efforts of the

papers, commend the action of the government and deride the vain efforts of the lumberers to resist the power themselves so materially helped to create. These papers all assert that the contest is between the people and the more powerful lumberers, who have hitherto controlled the public lands as they pleased and for their own profit; that the money to be exacted must be paid by these large operators for the benefit of the people, and that even the small operators must rejoice because the imposition of this stumpage, which really will affect them most seriously, is calculated to break down the monopoly under which it is asserted they have hitherto groaned. Nearly all those papers pretend that the opposition to the stumpage comes exclusively or mainly from the North Shore lumberers, and they try to create the impression that the government are working for the people against the lumberers and for the South of the province against the North.

The News can see farther into a mill stone than any of its colleagues, and it has discovered that the opposition to the stumpage is in some way or other allied with the opposition to Godless Common Schools; but rejoices to think that the lumberers' insurrection "cannot be turned to Separate School account; cannot be used as a lever for the overthrow of the Non Sectarian Free School Government," which now rejoices in the prospect of pastures new and rich. The News even asserts that the Freeman expressed its long entertained and often expressed opinions on this subject with a view to overthrow the government and their School system, although from the first we stated that the combination of the Rings would prove too power for the lumberers, whose own money will be used to render their efforts fruitless.

The St. Stephen journal ventures to argue the matter. It says:
The fact is the North Shore Ring have got to come to terms right away, unless the members of the government prove the greatest imbeciles imaginable. The rate of 60 to 80 cents a thousand is not too high; but on the contrary too low, and were the government not very anxious to hold on to office, and in dread of the consequences, it would no doubt have been fixed on an average of not less than \$1.75 per thousand. On the St. Croix, the stumpage on private lands for pine is \$4 per thousand, for spruce \$3, and for hemlock \$2. On these terms intelligent lumber operators get wealthy, and why therefore should stumpage be so much lower in the northern counties? Why should public lands pay so much less than private lands? It cost less we understand to get out lumber and manufacture it in the North than in any other part of the province. The man who goes a logging, the chipper, the teamster and the millworker, get smaller pay there than elsewhere. Why then should these North Shore tyrants object to pay 60 or 80 cents stumpage per thousand. Do they expect to grind the government (they have frightened the present imbeciles long enough) and the whole people of New Brunswick as they grind their operatives? They may intimidate the government, whose members have in the past sacrificed principle, justice, honor, everything, and clung to office like limpets to a rock; but the press and the people are assuredly determined that a fair revenue shall henceforth be derived from the Crown Lands of this Province.

This coming from St. Stephen is cool. The large land owners in that part of the province obtained possession of hundred of thousands of acres for which the province get very little in return. They have managed their lands carefully--more carefully than it is possible for a government to manage its lands--and as in other parts of the Province operators can afford to pay stumpage on lands so managed. These lands are within a comparatively short distance of the place of shipment, and the cost of driving is not so great as when logs are cut hundreds of miles from the sea. The lumber manufactured on the St. Croix is for the greater part sent to the American market, and freights to that market are low. But in addition to all these legitimate advantages there are some important illegitimate advantages which no other part of the Province now enjoy. the public accounts show that the lumber shipped from the St. Croix paid little export duty to this province, and unless the public are greatly mistaken little that is sent from the St. Croix to the American markets pays the 20 per cent American duty.

Under these circumstance operators can afford to pay stumpage to the great land owners; but they are not satisfied even with the high rates they now levy. They think the lumber cut on the public lands comes into competition with theirs. They think that if a stumpage were levied on the lumber cut on the public lands they could get even more than they now get for the lumber cut on their lands. They have long

endeavoured to procure a change in the management of the Crown Lands, but they never were strong enough until the Rivière-du-Loup Ring came into existence to assist them. Now these Rings combined are omnipotent while they can use the influence of the Pope to blind the eyes of the ignorant constituencies to their own true interests.

It is amusing to find the organs of the government now denounce the imaginary lumberers' ring, the existence of which they say has just been discovered. "Stop Thief," has before now been the cry of a runaway shoplifter.

The News has discovered too that we have little sympathy for the insurgent lumbermen. We never professed to have any. The majority of them richly deserve all that the corrupt government which they supported has in store for them. Our concern is only for the public whose trade and business will be seriously injured for the benefit of the rings which now control the government of this province.

Freeman

Sept 1, 1874

The Lumber Question

The next Gazette, we are informed, will contain applications for over a thousand miles of lumber berths on the North Shore, the applicants being parties who desire to assist the government in forcing the stumpage imposed on the Province. It is calculated that this proceeding will force the North Shore operators to bid for the lands. If they still refuse to bid, the applicants, it is said, are prepared to buy at the upset price and to take active measures to compel all who want to lumber on those tracts to pay even more than the stumpage the government desire to exact. The regulations are so framed that the purchasers are not bound to operate or to pay, if they do not operate, more than the mileage. They were so framed to enable the Rivière-du-Loup Ring to get possession of and hold such lands selected by them as they are not yet entitled to receive under the Facility Act, and the government can not find a pretext for locking up in their interest as we believe they have locked up four hundred thousand acres which are to be transferred to the Company whenever the bridge at Woodstock is built. This peculiarity in the regulations will now be made to serve another turn. If the members of the Company can spare a few thousand dollars, and although the times are hard they will probably be able to raise sufficient for this purpose--they can help the government to carry out the policy devised in their interest.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that all the money which the imposition of the stumpage would abstract from the pockets of the working people would go into the provincial treasury to be used for the benefit of the whole people. Under the old export duty, which was exacted on all the lumber exported that was not smuggled, the province received about \$70,000 a year. The stumpage at 80 cents for some qualities and 60 cents for others on our side of the province, and lower rates on the North Shore, would amount to at least three times as much, or \$210,000 a year; but of this a very large portion--how much it would be impossible to tell but at least \$70,000 to \$80,000--would go into the pockets of the Rings and of the great land holders, and of the rest much would be required to pay the cost of collection. Probably we would be nearer the truth if we stated that the export trade of the country would be burdened to the extent of \$300,000 a year, of which at least \$120,000 would go directly into the pockets of the persons in whose interests the government are really acting and the newspapers are clamouring, and another portion would be embezzled by smugglers, and another large portion would go to pay a legion of surveyors, etc.

Freeman

Sept 5, 1874

The war of the lumberers still rages violently. Mr. F. Woods, M. P., has published a letter in one of the papers which seems to say that he has not violated the compact into which he entered with the other discontented lumbermen, and that he has not changed his opinion on the stumpage question. The Fredericton Reporter, like the other papers which support the government, pretends that the stumpage affects only the large operators, and that it is for the advantage of the people generally that they should be compelled to pay stumpage, and like the rest, it professes to speak for the

people in support of the government and against the lumbermen. It says this week: Public sentiment is thoroughly aroused on this question, and the government dare not, even if they felt so disposed, retire from their position. The "Ring" of lumbermen has no vitality in it. It was forced principally by selfish individuals who succeeded in hoodwinking their associates in the protest, and by men who have themselves been in the habit of buying up large blocks of land and charging a stumpage duty to the smaller operators. These very men are now coming quietly to the Crown Lands office and secretly reading their recantations, and we have little doubt that within ten days from the present date application will be made for not less than twelve hundred square miles on the North Shore alone. The "Ring" in fact is already broken, and the position of the government fully justified and sustained by the voice of the people.

The Morning News made a similar statement. The Gazette received yesterday shows how untruthful both statements are. Applications indeed have been made for some twelve hundred square miles of lumber lands, but not by the men who resolved at that Fredericton meeting to resist the imposition. It is refreshingly cool to find the papers which are working in the interest of the Rings that now control the government of the province designate this temporary association of lumbermen, compelled to unite in self defence, a "Ring."

Notice of one hundred and ninety-eight applications is given in the Gazette. of these seven are in the name of T. G. O'Connor, an officer in the Crown Lands department, whose name is so used when there are more than one application for any berth; 21 are in the names of 15 other persons, and all the rest--170 applications for some ten or twelve hundred square miles are in the name of Alexander Gibson!! The applications are for lands on the Miramichi and its tributaries, and on rivers debouching on Miramichi Bay, and for berths in Co. Kent, on the Kouchibouguac, Kouchibouguacis, the Richibucto, etc.

There is at least an appearance of manliness in this open proceeding. Perhaps it is so open because disguise or concealment is no longer thought necessary: the government being completely in the hands of its masters, and the legislature being deemed safe and reliable. it is a bold proceeding for any one man thus to attempt to get control of the whole lumber business, on both sides of the province. it surely deserve the most careful thoughtful consideration of three people when such an attempt is found possible. No One can blame Mister Gibson and those who are working with him for doing what seems to promise them profit, and unfortunately, it is of little use to blame the government of the province, which is but the slave of the Rings, that are working to create a monopoly, and make the whole people their serfs and . . . compelled to work and buy and sell

We heard yesterday, for the first time, a construction of the rules recently made which is rather startling. it is that after the first of the three years for which the government now offer the berths only the upset price of 8 an acre will be charged. If this is correct the Rings could hold immense tracts at comparatively small outlay, as the regulations do not require that any quantity shall be cut, or that, if no lumber be cut on any berths, any stumpage shall be paid. The regulations were manifestly framed in the interests of the monopolists, but we did not suspect that they went quite so far in that direction.

One of the street rumours is that Mister Gibson is determined to obtain all those lands for which he has now applied, and to compel the operators in those counties to pay a stumpage of at least a dollar. It is said that he would almost prefer that they did not operate at all, as he has now an immense stock of lumber in the market, and if the competition from the North Shore were stopped there would probably be an advance in price which would more than compensate him for what he will pay for the mileage of the lands. We can hardly suppose that the quantity sent from the North Shore affects the market price to so great an extent, but men in the trade to calculate in this way.

This sale is fixed for Sept 16th. The real object may be to frighten or coerce the lumberers of the Northumberland and Kent into purchasing from the government. If the object really be to get control of all the lumber lands into the hands of the Ring other applications will probably follow. A correspondent whom we have always found well informed writes that a great combination has been formed for this purpose amongst those interests in increasing the stumpage; that ---- of St. Stephen, has put

\$100,000, and ----- of St. Stephen, \$50,000, and others sums proportionately large into the fund to be used for this purpose, and that they are willing to keep the land idle for a year or more if necessary.

If these big projects be carried out, what is to become of the people who depend on the production, manufacture and shipping of lumber for a living? We find that already it is proposed to force down the wages of the workingmen of Saint John; but if these Rings be allowed to control the lands and the lumber trade of the province, not only will wages be reduced but thousands will not be allowed an opportunity of earning any wages at all.

Some say will Mr. Young and Mr. Kelly not resist this attempt to paralyze the business of their part of the province. What cares Mr. Young if he be allowed to dispose of the public money allotted to Gloucester as he pleases? What care Mr. Kelly if a four years' lease of the Public Works department be secured to him?

The Province, we are afraid, will pay dearly for its No Popery whistle.

Reporter

Sept 2, 1874

That purely factional spirit which has characterized the Freeman during its entire political existence, is specially manifested in the course pursued by that journal in reference to the lumber question. For years it has poured out the vials of its wrath on succeeding governments for their mismanagement of the Crown Lands, and when the editor himself for a few brief weeks was allowed to hold an accidental position in the government, it was one of his first pledges that the public domain should be protected and a large revenue derived from the Crown Lands of the Province. In fact the public at large have been crying out for reform in this respect, and we prepared to hail with delight any measure calculated to recognize their interest in those lands as at least co-equal with the lumbermen. Under these circumstances is it not remarkable that a journal which declares that its "only concern is for the public" should be found violently attacking the government which makes the first step in the right direction. Had our contemporary stated that "its only concern" was for the Freeman, the public would far more readily accept its declarations. We can however assure him that he will fail in this instance, as he has failed in many others. Public sentiment is thoroughly aroused on this question, and the government dare not even if they felt so disposed, retire from their position. The "Ring" of lumbermen has no vitality left. It was formed principally by selfish individuals who succeeded in hoodwinking their associates in the protest, and by men who have themselves been in the habit of buying up large blocks of lands and charging a stumpage duty to the smaller operators. These very men are now coming quietly to the Crown Land Office, and secretly reading their recantations, and we have little doubt that within ten days from the present date, application will be made for not less than twelve hundred square miles on the North Shore alone. The "Ring" in fact is already broken, and the position of the government fully justified and sustained by the voice of the people.

Freeman

Sept 8, 1874

The News states that the Mr. O'Connor, whose name is published as an applicant for some of the lumber berths, is not an officer of the government. Of the intention to place all the lumber business of the province in the hands of a few friends it is not in the least ashamed. It says:

Well, the most important one is Mister Gibson, without question. He does not dread the operation of the government stumpage system. He proposes to go into the open market, as he has a perfect right to do, and bid against all comers for a very large amount of timber land. Mister Gibson is a man of force and foresight. The country needs a great many more such.

The province has not room for many such. it is more than doubtful whether it has room for even a second such.

The News pretends to scout the statement that a large fund has been subscribed by a few monopolists, which is to be expended in securing the control of the lumber trade for the next three years; but we have reason to rely upon the

information furnished up in this matter. It denies also that persons who leases lands at an advance price this year need only pay the upset price on the same lands for the two following years. We hope it is right in this, but the gentleman who asserts that the government intend to charge only the upset price should be well informed.

But says the News:

The postscript of the Freeman's article is the most significant part of it. Here it is: 'The Province, we are afraid, will pay dear for its No Popery Whistle.' The whistle we suppose, in the Freeman's rhetoric, is the government which the province sustained by such an immense majority. that government is endeavouring to do its duty faithfully by the people whose servant it is. It is guarding, and will guard the people's interests, in the people's lands whatever the Freeman may slanderously charge or intimate to the contrary. The people recognize that fact, and as the late proceedings of the lumberers Exchange testify, a large proportion of the lumber men approve the course the government is pursuing to accomplish the noble purpose of converting the country's forest wealth and rendering it in a reasonable degree tributary to the provincial revenue.

The News should not unnecessarily direct the attention of the public to the proceedings of the lumber Exchange, and should not quote any reports or resolutions of that body as proof that "a large proportion of lumbermen approve of the course the government is pursuing," as the public may thus be led to enquire more particularly "who are the active members of the Exchange, and what are their motives?" Americans who are not satisfied with the protection of 20 percent in the American markets which they now enjoy, and who calculate that the imposition of stumpage on the lumber cut in this province would lessen the competition they now encounter; persons holding large tracts of land, and persons who are large shareholders in the Rivière-du-Loup Railway, and who believe that the imposition of stumpage on the lands still remaining to the province would enhance the value of the lumber growing on the lands they own--these, and such as these, do unquestioningly approve of the course the government is pursuing, but these are not the people, even though they may be strong enough, to control and to sustain the government for the next four years. Not one man, we believe, who himself owns no lumber lands, and is not directly and manifestly interested in the imposition of stumpage, spoke at any meeting of the Lumber Exchange in approval of the course the government is pursuing.

The creation of monopolies such as this province is now threatened with, has never contributed to the welfare of any country. Invariably injury to the trade, commerce, and prosperity of the country has been their immediate result, although they have made individuals and corporations more wealthy and more powerful.

Reporter

Sept 9, 1874

The Stumpage War

The Freeman never will forgive New Brunswick for its "No Popery whistle" as the editor calls the support awarded the government during the recent elections. After quoting certain remarks from the Reporter to the effect that the lumber Ring was broken, and that some of those who declined to bid for these lands at the recent sales had since duplicated their applications, the Freeman unblushingly declares that this is all false, that the Gazette is just to hand, and that none of those who signed the protest are in the list of applicants.

These statements are simply untrue. It is well known in Fredericton that more than one or two of the "Ring" have made application for their lands, if not directly in their own names in the names of others, and Mr. T. G. O'Connor is not an official in the Crown Land Office, but a gentleman whose name is used when applicants do not wish their own to appear. More than this, we can inform our contemporary that the very individual who acted as Lieutenant for the Ring and travelled throughout the north shore districts working up the "protest," appeared himself at the door of the Crown Land Office with his applications in his hand only to learn, however, that he was just too late, and that another gentleman was before him.

It is quite true that the larger portion of these lands have been applied for directly in the name of Alex. Gibson, and whatever capital or comfort the Freeman can make out of this fact let it enjoy by all means. Had Mr. Gibson made application

for these lands prior to the recent sales, or sought at that date to outbid the parties hitherto lumbering on the Miramichi and its tributaries, there might be some slight pretext for an unscrupulous politician to affirm that the government had yielded to the pressure of a powerful monopolist. But when it is remembered that the parties themselves refused to buy these lands when the opportunity was afforded them, and that this refusal was openly coupled with the threat that they would coerce the government into relinquishing their stumpage policy, any fair or reasonable man must admit that no collusion with a view to ulterior effects could possibly have existed between the government and Mr. Gibson. The Ring declared the lands were not worth the money and refused to bid; Mr. Gibson declared the land were worth the money and bids accordingly. On the day of sale we shall see what we shall see.

Perhaps the Freeman will be kind enough to inform us whether or not the Ring has sent a delegation to Fredericton asking terms of the said Alexander Gibson.

The government having resolved to adhere to their lumber regulations, and the public having sustained them in their resolution, the Freeman is chagrined and disappointed. The editor was aware that the Ring was composed of influential individuals, and for a few brief days lived on the expectation that they would embarrass or perchance overpower the "godless free school government." Now that this hope is dissipated the Freeman return to their old weapons of misrepresentation and abuse.

Reporter

Sept 16, 1874

Broken

The great lumber ring is broken, and the power which sought to control the government of the country, or compel the adoption of a policy subservient to the interest of the operators, is gone forever. The history of the imbrolios familiar to the public. So soon as the stumpage policy was adopted by the government the North Shore lumbermen contrived among themselves to suppress all competitions or bidding at the general sales, declaring the stumpage duty an imposition which the trade was unable to bear, and thus leaving the lands idle and for the time being worthless upon the hands of the Executive. In this petulant state of ill-humor the operators, who had assembled in Fredericton with the full intention of buying, returned to their respective homes imagining they had dealt a death blow at the existing government. At this juncture Mr. Gibson appeared on the scene, took a survey of the lands, and made application for all that portion which the North Shore men had rejected. In less than twenty-four hours the Ring began to collapse. They saw the government would be sustained, [elections held in May and June 1874 for government which took power February] and that the lands which they must have, were about to pass into the hands of a wealthy rival. First one and then another came to the Crown Land Office reading their recantations, and failing here besieged Mr. Gibson, and were only too glad to accept of any compromise.

The sales took place today according to the notice in the Royal Gazette. Had Mr. Gibson felt so inclined he might have compelled them to pay dearly for their perverseness, but not wishing to take any advantage of the situation, he generously surrendered the lands which were all bid in today without any excitement in the name of R. Hutchison. Only one individual who was not taken into the general conference, competed for a six mile block, running up the price to \$515, thus showing the real value of the lands which the operators despised a few weeks ago.

3300 acres were originally advertised. Of these 250 were bid in at the annual sales, and 1254 at the sales today, leaving 1800 unsold and for which applications were pouring into the department all the present forenoon.

It will be thus seen that the government policy is fully sustained, and that those newspapers which predicted the speedy collapsing of the Ring have been completely borne out by the events of today.

The Freeman and Globe in connection with this affair have poured out, and will continue to pour, the viols of their wrath upon Alexander Gibson, but that gentleman can well afford to bear it all thoroughly straightforward and consistent and we are proud to find that his metropolitan County of York claims a gentleman who has thus the moral courage to interpose on behalf of the people of New Brunswick, and the revenues of the country. How can it be truthfully alleged against him, that he

and the revenues of the country. How can it be truthfully alleged against him, that he is a purely selfish speculator, since every act of his public life gives the lie to any such accusation? We have but to look across the waters of the river Saint John, and there witness the successful accomplishment of the grandest commercial enterprise ever undertaken in this province, carried on largely through his means and deriving its life and vitality from his enterprise, energy and public zeal. So long as a locomotive traverses the New Brunswick railway, so long will the name of Alexander Gibson be honored throughout the length and breadth of the land, and any attempt on the part of a factious Press to write him down on account of his present procedure in connection with the timber lands of the country, will only serve to elevate him more highly in the estimation of every fair and reasonable man in the community.

The Freeman of yesterday had not a word to say in reference to the present land sales. The fact is, it has said itself out, the evidence against both its assumptions and arguments being too conclusive to admit of further debate.

Freeman

Sept 22, 1874

The Late Land Sales

The Globe thus described the scene at the late sale of timber lands in Fredericton: On Wednesday morning there were many rumours. The North Shore men held a meeting and asked Mister Gibson that he would allow them to buy in the lots which they required. This he would not consent to. He would allow them to take the whole, and subdivide it between themselves as they pleased afterwards. But they must take the whole--nothing less. In this respect Mister Gibson was just to himself. There was good and bad timber berths in the twelve hundred miles or so that he had applied for. If he now allowed them to buy in only the good lots the barren land would be left on his hands, and he would have to pay the full price. At last, unable to do better, unable to escape from the clutches of the government and Mister Gibson, the North Shore men agreed to take the whole, and Hon. Mr. Hutchinson was delegated their agent to buy it in, substituting his name for Mister Gibson's in the application. This was a few minutes before noon, the hour for the sale to commence. Mister Gibson, however, evidently did not put much confidence in the agreement; for with a fine imperious air he walked over to the Bank of British North America, looking neither to the right nor to the left as he passed through the crowds of lumber operators in his path. In a few minutes he came out with a large roll of bank notes, the end of which stuck menacingly from his pocket, like the muzzle of a gun from the port of a man-of-war. Whether all this show, preparation for war, etc., was necessary or not, it certainly had an intimidating and coercive appearance, and must have made the small, struggling operators tremble in their shoes. Finally, the crowd assembled in front of the Crown Land Office, two small tables were placed outside the window. At one Mr. Babbitt, the Receiver General, sat, to take in money and make change if necessary. On the other Mr. Inches, of the Crown Land Department, who was auctioneer, stood. he read the lots in a low monotonous voice. On a few lots outside of Mister Gibson's applications there was some sharp bidding, but coming down to the long list of lands on the North Shore the excitement subsided. it was announced that Mr. Hutchinson's name had been substituted for Mister Gibson's, and the sale went on in form "Lot No. ---, one, two, three, Richard Hutchinson's, and this was repeated with a painful lack of variation or animation to the end of the list, except in the case of one lot of 6 acres on Salmon River, which was run up by two parties to \$86 per acre. The sale being over the money was paid over, and the crowd dispersed, some to growl over the coercion to which they had been subjected, some to rejoice over the victory gained, but all to go to their hotels for dinner, and the North Shore men to divide up the lands between them. Throughout the whole the government cut a sorry figure. They were like children guided and protected by a strong guardian.

Reporter

Reporter
Sept 30, 1874

Culling of timber

The following are the questions contained in the circular sent by the Minister of Inland Revenue to the leading lumbermen:

1. It is desirable to change existing classification of square timber: if so, what classifications would you suggest and how would you describe each class?

2. Is it desirable to change the existing classification of deals; if so, state the classification you would suggest, and the manner in which you would describe each class.

3. Is it desirable to provide for the culling of sawn lumber other than deals, when exported otherwise than by sea; if so, what regulations would you suggest in reference to classification, description of class, and mode of culling?

4. Is it desirable to extend the culling of square timber and deals to such as are exported otherwise than by sea?

5. Do you think that the culling of sawn lumber would tend to raise its character in the markets of the United States?

Will you be good enough to state as to your opinion as to what would be a reasonable tariff of fee for culling in the manner suggested?

New Parliament Buildings

It will be proposed at the next session of the legislature, to sell a certain portion of our Crown Lands, and devote the proceeds toward the erection of new parliament buildings. This is "a consummation most devoutly to be wished for," as the present building is a standing disgrace to the Province, and a by-word in the mouth of every passing stranger.

Reporter
Oct 14, 1874

The Stumpage Question

We see it stated in the St. Croix Courier, as if by authority, that some alterations may be made in regulations for the collection of the stumpage by the government and while admitting that the system will probably require alteration or amendment from year to year, we hope, and have good reason to believe it will not at this early day be attempted in the manner proposed by our contemporary. The plan, for instance, of averaging the work of a team during the winter, and accepting an oath based upon this average, would be a very loose way of conducting public business and not be depended upon.

The charge also that boarding the scaler and his assistant, for a day or two, would be decidedly trivial. It has not been found at all objectionable to the operator where it has been adopted, but on the contrary has worked well in the state of Maine, on the St. Croix waters. A competent scaler and assistant will scale 10 millions during the winter, and the cost need not exceed six cents per thousand. A small operator getting out say 250 thousand, would willingly board two men two days in order to know exactly the quantity he had got out, in fact many persons would gladly pay the six cents additional in order to know the correct state of their operations. It is admitted among lumbermen that some of their heaviest losses having been occasioned through ignorance of what they were actually doing, and as it sometimes happens all the lumber is not brought to market during the first season, a settlement cannot be had with the supplier, and the man is kept in suspense, often depending upon having a larger quantity than he really has.

A great deal will depend upon the character and capacity of the scaler employed by the Government, and in this respect we agree with our contemporary that they should not be selected so much from political motives as on account of integrity and ability. Let us have the proper class of men, and as most of the operators get logs by the thousand for the party who supplies them, the measurement of the scaler would be accepted as between buyer and seller, saving any further expense to their party. This in itself is a most important consideration. Such a course has already been pursued by parties in the habit of charging stumpage, and has worked most satisfactorily.

The plan suggested by our contemporary, that the operator should average his

loads and then swear to his account accordingly, is, as stated above, a loose way of doing business; nor is the illustration of the merchant wearing to his invoice a parallel case at all. In the latter the seller, as well as the buyer, is concerned in the invoice, and we have two witnesses, but in the case suggested by our contemporary, we have only one, the contractor himself.

All that is required is for the Surveyor General to employ scalers of the right stamp, men who will discharge their duties faithfully without fear, favor or affection.

Reporter

April 21, 1875

The stumpage Fees

Newspapers in the northern section of the Province are complaining of the injustice which, they hold, has been sustained by northern lumber dealers, on account of the equalization of the stumpage. They hold that southern ports being more accessible, and railway facilities being so much greater, a preference has been established in favor of this section of the province to the detriment of the north. They forget, however, or keep out of sight the fact that lumber is much more plentiful on streams entering into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and therefore much more easily and cheaply procured and manufactured. They also forget that the expenses of shipment, a very considerable item, are much heavier at St. John than at Miramichi, an advantage which in itself gives a large bonus to the Northern dealer. Take therefore, the scarcity of lumber and the expenses of shipment and we find the southern portions of New Brunswick, in regard to the lumber trade, laboring under very great disadvantage and they if any are the localities of the stumpage regulations.

Reporter

Nov 10, 1875

Our Lumber Lands

The lumber lands of our Country today are forming the greatest national resources to our revenue if not in a direct way to our Provincial Treasury, still this article of trade is producing the greatest monetary results of any of the manufactures of our Province. The government of New Brunswick are fast awakening to the fact and the regulations put forward by them during the last year are only a commencing as to what will be done in the way of preserving the lumber supply of this Province. During the past years the figure of mileage was so low that even the poorest lumberman was induced to speculate and the result was of course an overstock in the ?, and a low price paid to the operators by their contractors. Nearly 4000 square miles of timber land were sold from the Crown Land office during the fiscal year of 1873, and only realized \$41,000. During the same term last year only 2,500 miles were sold, the stumpage of which, after deducting the mileage, amounted to over 50,000. This of course shows a great change for the better, and considering the great depression of lumber trade this year, the government of New Brunswick may consider they have done well in fostering our lumber lands, and as soon as the foreign markets are brought to a proper standard we may expect still greater benefits. In the meanwhile our lands are to a great extent being reserved in comparison with former years, the result of which will prove remunerative to the Province.

Reporter

Nov 17, 1875

The Freeman in reply to, or rather an attempt to criticize an article published in the Reporter last week regarding the policy of the government and the Stumpage Regulations pours out his usual petty revenge against the government and uses some statement which only the Freeman could be ignorant of. It would be useless we presume to tell the Freeman that the policy of the Government has nothing to do with that of the Railway Company he speaks of, and we will try and make it believe that our assertion is right. When the rate of mileage was fixed at \$8 per square mile to cut and carry away lumber without an additional stumpage, the result was a very large amount of lands sold from the Crown Land office and an additional large amount of lumber exported at a very low rate without much general good to our Revenue. The

government finding no general increase from year to year, but rather a falling off in some cases in the receipts from lumber, and that as timber was in a manner being very much diminished in quantity, resulting in an overstock in the market, concluded that if a Stumpage Bill was introduced it would have the effect of bettering the receipts of our Treasury and an establishment of a higher rate in foreign markets. Too much lumber had been cut, in fact the mileage was so low that lumbermen could make a winter's operation on 2 square miles of land which was sold at the upset price of \$16. Will the Freeman prove its statement when it says the Stumpage Regulations are obnoxious? The lumbermen are quite satisfied to pay the 60 cents per thousand. Is it not right they should give a fair return to the quantity of lumber cut? The rate of stumpage in this Province is much lower than in the other Provinces of Canada, and if the Freeman was aware of this, probably he would not make the assertion.

In reference to monopolies the Freeman is wrong in saying we are in favor of any such thing. What we meant is that the poorer lumberman would do much better by improving his farm, or other employment in winter months, than engaging in lumber pursuits where it is found in nearly every case not a paying speculation.

In regard to the \$9000 in our Revenue which the Freeman thinks a trifling fact we have to say that hardly two-thirds as much lumber was cut and hauled during the fiscal year ended 31st Oct., 1875, when the increase was made, than in the preceding year.