

ALASKA TIMBER.

SHIP BUILDING ON THE PACIFIC COAST—
MEMORIAL OF SAN FRANCISCO CAPITALISTS TO CONGRESS FOR AN EXTENSIVE RENT OF TIMBER LANDS.

Senator Hager of California has presented to congress the following memorial, in furtherance of the scheme of certain capitalists of San Francisco for a grant of timber land in Alaska for ship-building purposes.

To the Congress of the United States in senate and assembly convened; petitioners most respectfully present to your honorable body the following, viz: Alaska was purchased by the United States in 1865. At that time the territory was supposed to have little value except for its proximity to our possessions on the Pacific, and the possible danger that it might come under the control of some nation less friendly than Russia to us, and our extension in that direction should it be deemed a national necessity at a later period. It is true it was known that the outlying Aleutian Isles had some value for furs (since the important concession has been granted to a commercial company engaged in the fur trades) and that its shores and inlets abounded in fish; but otherwise it was regarded as comparatively valueless. The climate is unfriendly to white population; the larger part of the year it is deluged in rains and enveloped in fogs. Though the temperature is much milder than in the same latitude on the Atlantic, it is so far advanced into the Arctic region that for several months out-door labor would be much embarrassed.

Explorations of the interior of the territory have been so limited that very little can be said of a definite nature of it; but so much is known of the general character of its climate that it is reasonably safe to conclude that for agricultural or pastoral pursuits it has little to invite settlement. The tribes of Indians inhabiting its shores and streams are esteemed the most wretched of any on the continent, and very little disposed to cultivate friendly relations with the whites who have visited them. At considerable expense an exploring party has been sent, during the past season, to examine the shores of the mainland and some of the islands; to ascertain if good material for ship building could be obtained, and in quantities to justify an effort to re-establish a branch of industry which has so long languished in the United

States that an American ship is to be rarely seen, either in our own or foreign ports. This exploration has revealed the existence of considerable bodies of timber which are regarded as particularly well adapted to the construction of ships. The question to be considered is: Can capital be induced to go into such a country and engage in the important industry of ship-building? Two things are indispensable requisite to it, which are—first, that the government shall establish a military post within a convenient and protecting distance of where the ship-building enterprise is located, to protect laborers against the hostilities of the savages; and second, that a portion of the territory, within a radius of say twenty-five miles shall be set apart to a corporation formed under the laws of California, to be called the Alaska Ship-building and Lumber company. Its successors and assigns (or an equal area, exclusive of all ocean navigable waters,) to be selected by said corporation; authorizing it to make use of the timber thereon, and to purchase the whole or any portion of said area at any time within the next ten years by the payment to the government of one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre. And also granting further right to said corporation to take any other timber-land outside the reservation, by paying to the government as aforesaid; the right to cut the timber to date from the time said corporation notifies the government of its purpose to take and use land as aforesaid and tenders payment therefor. Provided and upon the express condition that said company shall within two years of such grant by congress, the establishment of a military post, establish a ship yard and build at least one ship of not less than 1,200 tons burden, and shall thereafter maintain said ship-yard and continue the vigorous prosecution of ship-building. On the presentation herein named, your petitioners humbly pray your honorable body will take this matter into serious consideration, and pass a bill enacting provisions which will secure to your petitioners the objects of their foregoing petition.

[Signed] H. C. Tichenor, William T. Coleman, William Burling, Mathias Turner, Thomas H. Selby, Calvin Paige, W. F. Babcock, H. D. Bacon, John Parrott.

In presenting this memorial Senator Hager said: "I present the memorial of certain citizens of California in regard to Alaska. These memorialists have been to considerable expense in fitting

out an exploring party to examine timber lands in the territory, so far as it may be adapted to ship-building. They have obtained valuable statistics from the explorations that have been made, and they now memorialize congress for the privilege of buying a tract of timber land with a view to establishing ship-yards there for the construction of ships. In California there has been great difficulty hitherto in getting sufficient ships to carry our grain to the markets of the world, and the idea is that if our people engage in ship-building a great many of the farmers there will unite to buy the ships in order to transport the grain. I move that the memorial be printed and referred to the committee on public lands, as it relates to the purchase of a tract of land, and I think should more properly go to that committee than any other."

AN OUTSIDE VIEW.

INFORMATION CONCERNING THE WINTER'S WORK IN THE PINERIES—ESTIMATES FROM EACH DISTRICT IN WISCONSIN—THE BUSINESS OUT-LOOK.

A lumberman of much experience, well known to the trade along the Mississippi, and who keeps pretty well posted as to the progress of the lumber trade, writes to *The Gazette* from Milwaukee, giving some interesting information concerning the winter's work in the pineries. He says that estimates are fully made on the winter's cut of logs in the pineries of Wisconsin, resulting in the following figures and prospects for the coming business season:

The Green Bay district, which last year cut about 25,000,000 feet and run off, in addition, about 11,000,000 feet left over from the preceding year, will have about 31,000,000 this year.

The Wolf river district will yield 121,000,000, to which may be added 30,000,000 feet of logs now on hand at Oshkosh, making the total for the district 151,000,000 feet, or about 26,000,000 more than last year and 124,000,000 less than the season of 1873.

The Wisconsin river will have on the market only about 65,000,000, being about half its yield of 1873, but nearly double that of last year. The Wisconsin last year suffered a greater falling off than almost any other district in the state.

Black river district will yield this year, as now estimated from work done in the logging camps, about 120,000,000, being

from 5,000,000 to 7,000,000 more than last year, and 20,000,000 less than the season of 1873.

On the St. Croix the cut is estimated at 118,000,000 feet, or about 3,000,000 more than last year.

The Chippewa and Eau Claire rivers will yield about 295,000,000, and the Yellow river about 40,000,000.

Some effort has been made to estimate the amount that will be produced by the millers and lumber camps on the lines of railroads penetrating the pine regions, but no satisfactory results have been reached. This product has become important enough to cut a conspicuous figure in the lumber operations of the state, and being exempt from hindrances by ice or low water, is more reliable as a source of profit than any other branch of the lumber manufacture in the state.

Our correspondent adds that lumbermen generally are somewhat discouraged at the prospect. They have earnestly striven to reduce the amount of production until prices should advance, but their efforts have only been partially successful. The crop of the present year is considerably above that of last year, and the out-look is thought to be but little improved.

WOOD MANUFACTURES IN RUSSIA.

According to recent statistics the extent of the forests of Russia in Europe is about 442,897,500 acres, or 40 per cent. of the whole area. The forests are very unequally distributed, and altogether cultivation and communication are thus rendered impracticable, the facilities are becoming every year increased. Nearly 65 per cent. of the forest land is situated in the four governments of the north—in Archangel, Vologda, Olenetz and Perm. Between 1866 and 1870 upwards of 20,000 acres were planted, exclusive of the action of private owners. The principle trees are the Scotch pine, spruce fir, larch, birch, lime aspen and oak. The value of forest products exported in 1871 amounted to 16,926,553 roubles. But the internal consumption gives a better idea of the immense wealth of these forests. The approximate value as stated by Mr. Werckhn must be at least 265,450,000 roubles per annum. Wood is the only fuel used in Russia, and the railroads consume wood to the annual value of 7,200,000 roubles. It is estimated that 40,000,000 wooden spoons are manufactured every year.