



CanWel Building Materials Group Ltd. First Quarter 2019



CanWel Building Materials Group Ltd.

Management's Discussion and Analysis

May 9, 2019

This Management's Discussion and Analysis ("MD&A") provides a review of the significant developments that have impacted CanWel Building Materials Group Ltd. (the "Company"), in the quarter ended March 31, 2019 relative to the same quarter of 2018. This discussion of the financial condition and results of operations of the Company should be read in conjunction with the Company's audited consolidated financial statements and notes thereto for the year ended December 31, 2018 (the "2018 Consolidated Financial Statements"). The financial information in this interim MD&A has been prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards ("IFRS"), applicable to the preparation of interim financial statements.

This MD&A and the associated Unaudited Interim Condensed Consolidated Financial Statements for the period ending March 31, 2019 (the "Interim Financial Report") contains historical information, descriptions of current circumstances and statements about potential future developments and anticipated financial results, performance or achievements of the Company and its subsidiaries. The latter statements, which are forward-looking statements, are presented to provide guidance to the reader but their accuracy depends on a number of assumptions and are subject to various known and unknown risks and uncertainties. Forward-looking statements are included under the headings "Business Overview", "Outlook", "Commitments and Contingencies", "Sales and Gross Margin", "Dividend Policy" and "Liquidity and Capital Resources". When used in this MD&A, such statements may contain such words as "may," "will," "intend," "should," "expect," "believe," "outlook," "predict," "remain," "anticipate," "estimate," "potential," "continue," "plan," "could," "might," "project," "targeting" or the inverse or negative of these terms or other similar terminology. Forward-looking information in the Interim Financial Report includes, without limitation, statements regarding funding requirements, dividends, commodity pricing, interest rates, economic data and housing starts. These statements are based on management's current expectations regarding future events and operating performance, are based on information currently available to management, speak only as of the date of this Interim Financial Report and are subject to risks which are described in the Company's current Annual Information Form dated March 29, 2019 ("AIF") and the Company's public filings on the Canadian Securities Administrators' website at www.sedar.com ("SEDAR") and as updated from time to time, and would include, but are not limited to, dependence on market economic conditions, sales and margin risk, acquisition and integration risks and operational risks related thereto, competition, information system risks, availability of supply of products, risks associated with the introduction of new product lines, product design risk, product liability risk, environmental risks, volatility of commodity prices, inventory risks, customer and vendor risks, contract performance risk, availability of credit, credit risks, performance bond risk, currency risks, interest rate risks, tax risks, risks of legislative changes, international trade and tariff risks, resource industry risks, resource extraction risks, risks relating to remote operations, forestry management and silviculture, fire and natural disaster risks, key executive risk and litigation risks. These risks and uncertainties may cause actual results to differ materially from those contained in the statements. Such statements reflect management's current views and are based on certain assumptions. Some of the key assumptions include, but are not limited to, assumptions regarding the performance of the Canadian and the United States economies, interest rates, exchange rates, capital and loan availability, commodity pricing, the Canadian and the US housing and building materials markets; international trade matters; post-acquisition operation of a business; the amount of the Company's cash flow from operations; tax laws; laws and regulations relating to the protection of the environment and natural resources; and the extent of the Company's future acquisitions and capital spending requirements or planning in respect thereto, including but not limited to the performance of any such business and its operation. They are, by necessity, only estimates of future developments and actual developments may differ materially from these statements due to a number of known and unknown factors. Investors are cautioned not to place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements. All forward-looking information in this Interim Financial Report is qualified by these cautionary statements. Although the forward-looking information contained in this Interim Financial Report is based on what management believes are reasonable assumptions, there can be no assurance that actual results will be consistent with these forward-looking statements. Certain statements included in this Interim Financial Report may be considered "financial outlook" for purposes of applicable securities laws, and such financial outlook may not be appropriate for purposes other than this Interim Financial Report. In addition, there are numerous risks associated with an investment in the Company's common shares and senior unsecured notes, which are also further described in the "Risks and Uncertainties" section in this Interim Financial Report and in the "Risk Factors" section of the Company's AIF, and as updated from time to time, in the Company's other public filings on SEDAR.

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The forward-looking statements contained in this Interim Financial Report are made as of the date of this report, and should not be relied upon as representing the Company's views as of any date subsequent to the date of this report. Except as required by applicable law, the Company undertakes no obligation to publicly update or otherwise revise any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events, or otherwise.

The information in this report is as at May 9, 2019, unless otherwise indicated. All amounts are reported in Canadian dollars.

1. In the discussion, reference is made to EBITDA, which represents earnings from continuing operations before interest, including amortization of deferred financing costs, provision for income taxes, depreciation and amortization. This is not a generally accepted earnings measure under IFRS and does not have a standardized meaning under IFRS, and therefore the measure as calculated by the Company may not be comparable to similarly-titled measures reported by other companies. EBITDA is presented as management believes it is a useful indicator of a Company's ability to meet debt service and capital expenditure requirements and because the Company interprets trends in EBITDA as an indicator of relative operating performance. EBITDA should not be considered by an investor as an alternative to net earnings or cash flows as determined in accordance with IFRS. For a reconciliation of EBITDA to the most directly comparable measures calculated in accordance with IFRS refer to "Reconciliation of Net (Loss) Earnings to Earnings before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortization (EBITDA) and Adjusted EBITDA".
2. In the discussion, reference is made to Adjusted EBITDA, which is EBITDA as defined above, before certain non-recurring or unusual items. This is not a generally accepted earnings measure under IFRS and does not have a standardized meaning under IFRS. The measure as calculated by the Company may not be comparable to similarly-titled measures reported by other companies. Adjusted EBITDA is presented as management believes it is a useful indicator of the Company's ability to meet debt service and capital expenditure requirements from its regular business, before non-recurring items. Adjusted EBITDA should not be considered by an investor as an alternative to net earnings or cash flows as determined in accordance with IFRS. For a reconciliation from Adjusted EBITDA to the most directly comparable measures calculated in accordance with IFRS refer to "Reconciliation of Net (Loss) Earnings to Earnings before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortization (EBITDA) and Adjusted EBITDA".
3. Reference is also made to free cash flow of the Company. This is a non-IFRS measure generally used by Canadian companies as an indicator of financial performance. The measure as calculated by the Company might not be comparable to similarly-titled measures reported by other companies. Management believes that this measure provides investors with an indication of the cash available for distribution to shareholders of the Company. The Company defines free cash flow as cash flow from operating activities excluding changes in non-cash working capital, and after maintenance of business capital expenditures.

Business Overview

The Company is a leading wholesale distributor of building materials and home renovation products and provider of wood pressure treating services in Canada, and regionally in the Western United States and Hawaii. The Company services the new home construction, home renovation and industrial markets by supplying the retail and wholesale lumber and building materials industry, hardware stores, industrial and furniture manufacturers and similar concerns. The Company's operations also include timber ownership and management of private timberlands and Crown forest licenses, full service logging and trucking operations, and post-peeling and pressure treating for the agricultural market through CanWel Fibre Corp. ("CFC"). On October 2, 2017, the Company acquired the Honsador Building Products group of companies ("Honsador"), as described below, with an incumbent position in the State of Hawaii, further expanding the Company's presence in the US building distribution and treating markets. In 2018, the Company continued with its expansion and growth plans, completing the purchase of a partially constructed lumber pressure treating plant near Portland, Oregon on June 12, 2018 and a lumber pressure treating plant in Woodland, California on December 3, 2018.

Purchase of Lignum Forest Products LLP

Subsequent to quarter-end, on April 1, 2019, the Company completed the acquisition of all issued and outstanding partnership interests of Lignum Forest Products LLP, a well-established brand in the lumber and forestry distribution market in Western Canada and the United States. This acquisition further solidifies and complements the Company's North American distribution capabilities and reach with existing and new customers.

Further information regarding this acquisition is contained in Note 30 of the Unaudited Interim Condensed Consolidated Financial Statements for the period ended March 31, 2019.

Purchase of Superior Forest Products, Inc. and Western Wood Treating, Inc.

On June 12, 2018, the Company acquired certain assets and the business of Superior Forest Products, Inc. (now doing business as Oregon Cascade Building Materials, Inc. "OCBM") (the "OCBM Acquisition"). Based in Junction City, Oregon, OCBM will provide lumber pressure treating services for customers predominantly based in Oregon and Washington. The OCBM Acquisition is expected to complement the Company's existing treated lumber and specialty wood products business in the United States. The plant is undergoing testing and completion of permitting, and is expected to commence customer shipments in 2019.

On December 3, 2018, the Company acquired certain assets and the business of Western Wood Treating, Inc. (now doing business as Woodland Wood Preservers, Ltd. "Woodland") (the "Woodland Acquisition"). Based in Woodland, California, Woodland specializes in pressure treated wood products. The Woodland Acquisition is expected to expand the Company's presence in the United States treating markets.

The foreign exchange rates used to translate purchase price consideration and fair values of assets acquired were based on the exchange rates as at the date of the above noted acquisitions (collectively, "2018 Acquisitions").

Further information regarding the preliminary purchase price allocation is contained in Note 7 of the 2018 Consolidated Financial Statements.

Temporary Increase of Revolving Loan Facility

Subsequent to quarter-end, on April 3, 2019, the maximum credit available under the Company's revolving loan facility was temporarily increased from \$300.0 million to \$325.0 million, with an additional \$25.0 million accordion facility, for a total loan limit of \$350.0 million, in order to address seasonal working capital requirements and the Company's ongoing growth and expansion. This loan limit is in effect for a period of 120 days commencing on April 3, 2019. All other material terms under the facility remained consistent with those described in Note 16 to the 2018 Consolidated Financial Statements.

Normal Course Issuer Bid

On November 22, 2018, the Company commenced a Normal Course Issuer Bid ("NCIB") with respect to its common shares. Under the terms of the NCIB, the Company may purchase for cancellation up to 6,085,605 of its common shares at market prices. Since commencement, the Company had repurchased and cancelled 142,200 of its common shares pursuant to the NCIB.

Offering of Senior Unsecured Notes

On October 9, 2018, the Company completed a bought deal prospectus offering of senior unsecured notes (the "Unsecured Notes") denominated in principal amounts of one thousand dollars, resulting in gross proceeds of \$60.0 million. The offering was underwritten by a syndicate of underwriters led by National Bank Financial Inc., and including GMP Securities L.P., Canaccord Genuity Corp., CIBC World Markets Inc., Raymond James Ltd., RBC Dominion Securities Inc., and Haywood Securities Inc. The Unsecured Notes trade on the Toronto Stock Exchange under the symbol CWX.NT.A.

The Unsecured Notes accrue interest at the rate of 6.375% per annum, payable on a semi-annual basis, maturing on October 9, 2023. While the net proceeds of the offering were initially used for the repayment of bank debt, the Unsecured Notes provide the Company with readily available growth capital at an attractive locked-in cost, in a rising interest rate environment.

Seasonality

The Company's sales are subject to seasonal variances that fluctuate in accordance with the normal home building season, particularly in the Canadian market. The Company generally experiences higher sales in the second and third quarters compared to the first and fourth quarters. In addition, forestry operations and harvesting activities can be compromised by inaccessibility to some sites during wet seasons and extreme winter weather conditions, resulting in decreased harvest and customer delivery levels. This creates a timing difference between free cash flow earned and dividends paid. While the Company has leveled dividends to provide a regular income stream to shareholders over the course of a year, the second and third quarters have historically been the Company's most profitable.

Housing Starts

The seasonally adjusted annualized rate for overall Canadian housing starts for the quarter was 193,489 in the first quarter of 2019 versus 222,487 in the same period in 2018, a decrease of 13.0%. The seasonally adjusted annualized rate for single detached units, a more relevant indicator for the Company, amounted to 41,082 for the first quarter of 2019 versus 61,439 in the same period of 2018, a decrease of 33.1%⁽¹⁾.

The seasonally adjusted annualized rate for overall US housing starts was 1,298,000 units in the first quarter of 2019 versus 1,334,000 in 2018⁽²⁾, a decrease of 2.7%.

Construction Materials Pricing

The following table provides average quarterly pricing for lumber, plywood and oriented strand board ("OSB")⁽³⁾:

(In Canadian \$)	2019		2018		2017			
	31 - Mar	31 - Dec	30 - Sep	30 - Jun	31 - Mar	31 - Dec	30 - Sep	30 - Jun
Lumber	513	481	697	788	685	640	587	556
Plywood	507	464	527	632	569	473	643	487
OSB	285	323	464	529	465	520	495	430

After experiencing approximately eighteen months of generally increasing pricing trends since the beginning of 2017, lumber, plywood and OSB prices peaked in June 2018, then experienced significant declines towards the end of 2018. Prices for all three construction materials categories continued to decline during the first quarter of 2019, with lumber and plywood seeing a modest recovery towards the end of the quarter. All three categories, however, remained well below average 2018 pricing levels.

The Company generally prices its products in the competitive construction materials market so that the Company's profitability is based on cost plus value-added services such as wood pressure treating, distribution and other services provided. As a result, the Company's sales levels are impacted by the construction materials costs of its products.

The Company's gross margins are impacted by the relative **level** of construction materials pricing (such as whether prices are higher or lower compared to other periods), as well as the **trend** in pricing (such as whether the price is increasing or decreasing within a period). Depending on whether the product is sold at a fixed price or is tied to the current market, the impact of pricing **levels** and pricing **trends** will have differing effects on each category of product.

Management employs mitigation strategies to minimize the potential impacts of future construction materials price volatility. These strategies include the use of vendor managed inventories, direct shipments from the manufacturer to the customer, and the Company's internal policy of matching inventory levels to maintain its high standard of customer service levels, minimizing excess inventory otherwise exposed to market fluctuations.

1. As reported by CMHC. For further information, see "Outlook".

2. As reported by the US Census Bureau.

3. Per thousand FBM, as reported by Natural Resources Canada.

Results of Operations

Comparison of the Quarter Ended March 31, 2019 and March 31, 2018

Overall Performance

The following table shows the Company's segmented results for the quarters ended March 31:

(in thousands of dollars)	Three months ended March 31, 2019				Three months ended March 31, 2018 ⁽¹⁾			
	Distribution \$	Forestry \$	Adjustments and eliminations ⁽²⁾ \$	Consolidated \$	Distribution \$	Forestry \$	Adjustments and eliminations ⁽²⁾ \$	Consolidated \$
Revenue								
External customers	266,310	15,636	-	281,946	281,313	13,655	-	294,968
Inter-segment	-	404	(404)	-	-	306	(306)	-
	266,310	16,040	(404)	281,946	281,313	13,961	(306)	294,968
Specified expenses (income)								
Depreciation and amortization	8,576	1,883	-	10,459	3,221	1,119	-	4,340
Finance costs	4,460	656	-	5,116	1,804	623	-	2,427
Fair value adjustments	-	329	-	329	-	(6)	-	(6)
Net (loss) earnings	(118)	(238)	-	(356)	6,674	(181)	-	6,493

1. Effective January 1, 2019, the Company adopted IFRS 16, *Leases*, with the ongoing impact of this standard included in the Company's results prospectively from that date. The Company's comparative 2018 results have not been restated. See "Changes in Accounting Standards" section in this MD&A.
2. Includes inter-segment eliminations and income and expenses that are not allocated to reportable business segments.

Management's Discussion and Analysis

The Company adopted IFRS 16, *Leases* ("IFRS 16") effective January 1, 2019, and prior year comparative results have not been restated. The adoption of IFRS 16 resulted in the following estimated variances relative to the prior year comparative period:

(in thousands of dollars)	Increase (Decrease)		
	Distribution \$	Forestry \$	Consolidated \$
Distribution, selling and administration expenses	(5,017)	(25)	(5,042)
EBITDA and Adjusted EBITDA	5,017	25	5,042
Amortization of right-of-use assets	5,180	246	5,426
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment	(79)	(60)	(139)
Finance costs	1,138	4	1,142
Net earnings before tax	(1,223)	(164)	(1,387)

Sales and Gross Margin

Sales for the quarter ended March 31, 2019 were \$281.9 million compared to \$295.0 million in the same period in 2018, representing a decrease of \$13.0 million or 4.4%, due to the factors discussed below.

Sales for the Distribution segment decreased by \$15.0 million or 5.3%, largely due to the impact of the construction materials market on the Company's operating results, as pricing generally continued on a downward trend throughout the quarter, as well as adverse weather conditions throughout Eastern Canada and Northern California. These negative impacts were partially offset by the inclusion of the results from the 2018 Acquisitions and the Company's continuing focus on its product mix strategies and target customer base.

Sales for the Forestry segment increased by \$2.1 million or 14.9%. The increase in sales relative to the same quarter of 2018 was largely driven by increased demand for agricultural posts, as well as more timber harvested and sold.

The seasonally adjusted annual housing start rate for the quarter was approximately 13% lower than the same period last year⁽¹⁾. The Company's sales in the quarter were made up of 56% of construction materials, compared to 59% during the same quarter last year, with the remaining balance of sales resulting from specialty and allied products of 35% (2018 - 33%) and forestry and other of 9% (2018 - 8%).

Gross margin dollars decreased to \$41.0 million in the quarter compared to \$45.7 million in the same quarter of 2018, a decrease of \$4.7 million or 10.3%. Gross margin percentage was 14.6% in the quarter, a decrease from the 15.5% achieved in the same quarter of 2018. This decrease in margin dollars and margin percentage is mainly attributable to the aforementioned downward trend in construction material pricing, which was partially offset by the inclusion of the results from the 2018 Acquisitions.

1. As reported by CMHC. For further information, see "Outlook".

Expenses

Expenses for the quarter ended March 31, 2019 were \$36.4 million as compared to \$34.4 million for the same quarter in 2018, an increase of \$2.0 million or 5.8%. Total expenses were impacted by the adoption of IFRS 16, in the amount of \$1.4 million. Excluding the impact of the IFRS 16 adoption, expenses increased by \$574,000 or 1.7% compared to 2018, due to the factors discussed below. As a percentage of sales, expenses were 12.9% in the quarter, compared to 11.7% during the same quarter in 2018.

Distribution, selling and administration expenses decreased by \$4.2 million, or 13.8%, to \$25.9 million in the first quarter of 2019, from \$30.1 million in the same period of 2018. Excluding the impact of the IFRS 16 adoption, distribution selling and administration expenses increased by \$884,000 or 2.9%, largely due to additional expenses relating to the 2018 Acquisitions' operations. As a percentage of sales, these expenses were 9.2% in the quarter, compared to 10.2% in the same quarter in 2018.

Depreciation and amortization expenses increased by \$6.1 million, from \$4.3 million to \$10.5 million. Depreciation and amortization expenses for the Distribution segment increased by \$5.4 million or 166.3%, largely due to the impact of the adoption of IFRS 16. Depreciation and amortization expense for the Forestry segment increased by \$764,000.

Fair Value Adjustments

Fair value adjustments recognized for the quarter ended March 31, 2019 and the comparative period in 2018 relate to standing timber, which is carried at fair value less cost to sell, and is a function of estimated growth and harvest rates, costs of sustainable forest management, log pricing assumptions, timing of harvest and the discount rate used.

Operating Earnings

For the quarter ended March 31, 2019, operating earnings were \$4.6 million compared to \$11.2 million in the same quarter of 2018, a decrease of \$6.6 million or 58.9%, due to the foregoing factors.

Finance Costs

Finance costs for the first quarter of 2019 were \$5.1 million, compared to \$2.4 million for the same quarter in 2018, an increase of \$2.7 million. Finance costs for the Distribution segment were \$2.7 million higher than the same quarter in 2018, partly due to the impact of the adoption of IFRS 16, and partly due to higher average borrowings in order to finance the Company's working capital requirements. Finance costs for the Forestry segment remained largely in line with the first quarter of 2018.

(Loss) Earnings before Income Taxes

For the quarter ended March 31, 2019, loss before income taxes was \$484,000, compared to earnings of \$8.8 million in the same quarter of 2018, a decrease in earnings of \$9.3 million or 105.5% due to the foregoing factors.

(Recovery of) Provision for Income Taxes

For the quarter ended March 31, 2019, recovery of income taxes was \$128,000 compared to a provision of \$2.3 million in the same quarter of 2018, a decrease of \$2.4 million or 105.5%. This amount is a function of the pre-tax (losses) earnings generated in the quarter and the expected taxes payable on these earnings.

Net (Loss) Earnings

As a result of the foregoing factors, net loss for the quarter ended March 31, 2019 was \$356,000 compared to net earnings of \$6.5 million in the same quarter of 2018, a decrease of \$6.8 million or 105.5%, due to the foregoing factors impacting the overall financial performance of the Company.

Summary of Quarterly Results

For the Quarters ended:

(\$ and shares millions, per share in dollars)	2019		2018			2017		
	31 - Mar	31 - Dec	30 - Sep	30 - Jun	31 - Mar	31 - Dec	30 - Sep	30 - Jun
Sales	281.9	264.0	350.2	382.1	295.0	276.2	316.8	320.0
EBITDA	15.1	8.1	20.1	27.5	15.6	10.5	21.3	18.9
Adjusted EBITDA ⁽¹⁾	15.1	8.9	20.1	27.5	15.6	13.4	21.7	20.4
Adjusted EBITDA % of sales ⁽¹⁾	5.4	3.4	5.7	7.2	5.3	4.8	6.9	6.4
(Loss) Earnings before income taxes	(0.5)	(0.1)	12.5	19.9	8.8	3.5	16.0	13.8
Net (loss) earnings	(0.4)	0.4	8.5	14.7	6.5	5.8	11.6	9.8
Net (loss) earnings before non-recurring items ⁽²⁾	(0.4)	0.9	8.5	14.7	6.5	7.8	12.0	11.0
Net (loss) earnings per share ⁽³⁾	(0.0)	0.00	0.11	0.19	0.08	0.07	0.17	0.15
Net earnings per share, before non-recurring items ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾	(0.0)	0.01	0.11	0.19	0.08	0.09	0.17	0.17
Dividends declared per share	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14
Outstanding shares ⁽³⁾	77.7	77.7	77.7	77.7	77.7	77.4	67.8	66.5

- Adjusted EBITDA refers to EBITDA before the following non-recurring items: restructuring costs, directly attributable acquisition related costs and impairment loss on property, plant and equipment.
- Net earnings before restructuring costs, directly attributable acquisition related costs and impairment loss on property, plant and equipment.
- Weighted average basic shares outstanding in the period.

Reconciliation of Net (Loss) Earnings to Earnings before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortization (EBITDA) and Adjusted EBITDA:

(in thousands of dollars)	Three months ended March 31,	
	2019	2018
Net (loss) earnings	(356)	\$6,493
(Recovery of) Provision for income taxes	(128)	2,314
Finance costs	5,116	2,427
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment	3,325	2,691
Amortization of right-of-use assets	5,426	-
Amortization of intangible assets	1,708	1,649
EBITDA and Adjusted EBITDA	\$15,091	\$15,574

EBITDA and Adjusted EBITDA

EBITDA and adjusted EBITDA for the three-month period ended March 31, 2019 were \$15.1 million versus \$15.6 million in the comparative quarter of 2018, a decrease of \$483,000 or 3.1%. Current year EBITDA was impacted by the adoption of IFRS 16. Excluding the impact of IFRS 16 adoption, EBITDA decreased by \$5.5 million or 35.5%, largely due to the aforementioned downward trend in construction materials pricing throughout the quarter and weather conditions impacting construction activities relative to same quarter in 2018, which was partially offset by the inclusion of the results from the 2018 Acquisitions.

Financial Condition

Liquidity and Capital Resources

During the quarter ended March 31, 2019, the Company generated \$4.0 million in cash, versus consuming \$13.3 million in the same period of 2018. The following activities during the period were responsible for the change in cash.

Operating activities generated \$11.5 million in cash, before non-cash working capital changes, compared to \$12.5 million in the same quarter of 2018. This decrease in cash generated is primarily the result of the aforementioned year-over-year decrease in net earnings, and partially offset by the impact of adopting IFRS 16 which resulted in an increase in cash generated from operating activities and a corresponding decrease in cash provided by financing activities.

During the quarter ended March 31, 2019, changes in non-cash working capital items used \$81.9 million in cash, compared to \$119.2 million in the same period in 2018. The Company experienced a significant increase in inventory towards the end of the fourth quarter of 2018, built up to address a strong order backlog with treated lumber customers and to take advantage of favourable buying conditions. This resulted in reduced inventory stocking required during the first quarter of 2019 and the year-over-year \$37.3 million variance in cash consumed.

The Company generally experiences higher levels of non-cash working capital during the first and second quarters, and a decrease in non-cash working capital during the third and fourth quarters, due to ordinary seasonal factors relating to the Company's business cycle. The change in working capital in the quarter was comprised of an increase in trade and other receivables of \$70.7 million, an increase in inventory of \$40.3 million, an increase in prepaid expenses and deposits of \$846,000, and a net increase in trade and other payables and performance bond obligations of \$30.0 million.

In the quarter ended March 31, 2019, financing activities generated \$76.2 million of cash, compared to \$95.3 million in the same period in 2018. Shares issued during the quarter generated \$317,000 of cash compared to \$210,000 in 2018. Repurchase of common shares pursuant to the NCIB consumed \$616,000 of cash compared to \$nil in 2018. Scheduled repayments related to the non-revolving term loan consumed \$667,000, consistent with 2018. Payment of lease liabilities, including interest, consumed \$5.6 million of cash compared to \$326,000 in 2018, mainly due to the impact of adopting IFRS 16, which is offset by a corresponding increase in cash from operating activities. Net funds drawn on the equipment line amounted to \$287,000 compared to \$226,000 in 2018, in order to finance certain equipment purchases.

Dividends paid to shareholders amounted to \$10.9 million, consistent with the same period in 2018.

The revolving loan facility increased by \$94.0 million, compared to \$107.3 million in the same quarter in 2018. The Company was not in breach of any of its covenants during the three months ended March 31, 2019.

Investing activities consumed \$1.9 million of cash, consistent with 2018. Cash purchases of property, plant and equipment relating to the Distribution segment were \$652,000, compared to \$732,000 in 2018. Cash purchases of property, plant and equipment relating to the Forestry segment were \$1.2 million, compared to \$1.1 million in 2018. Proceeds from disposition of property, plant and equipment were \$35,000, compared to \$28,000 in the comparative quarter.

Management's Discussion and Analysis

The Company's cash flows from operations, the aforementioned temporary increase in revolving loan facility and its other credit facilities are expected to be sufficient to meet operating requirements, capital expenditures and anticipated dividends. The Company's lease obligations require monthly installments and these payments are all current.

Total Assets

Total assets of the Company were \$1,024.8 million as at March 31, 2019, versus \$803.8 million as at December 31, 2018, an increase of \$221.0 million. Current assets increased by \$116.3 million, mainly due to seasonal increases of \$70.0 million in trade and other receivables, \$38.5 million in inventory, \$6.1 million in income taxes receivable, with the remainder in prepaid expenses and deposits and cash, for a total increase of \$1.7 million.

Long-term assets within the Distribution segment were \$381.7 million as March 31, 2019, compared to \$274.8 million as at December 31, 2018, an increase of \$106.9 million, mainly due to the recognition of right-of-use assets in accordance with IFRS 16 on January 1, 2019 in the amount of \$119.0 million. Long-term assets within the Forestry segment were \$129.6 million as at March 31, 2019, compared to \$131.7 million as at December 31, 2018, a decrease of \$2.1 million, mainly due to depreciation taken on property, plant and equipment. IFRS 16 implementation had minimal impact on the Forestry segment, as the majority of its lease arrangements were already classified as finance leases under the previous standard.

Total Liabilities

Total liabilities were \$677.3 million as at March 31, 2019, versus \$440.6 million at December 31, 2018, an increase of \$236.7 million. This increase was mainly as a result of the recognition of lease liabilities in accordance with IFRS 16 on January 1, 2019 in the amount of \$119.0 million, as well as a seasonal increase in trade and other payables of \$31.1 million, and increases in the revolving loan facility of \$93.5 million in order to finance the working capital requirements of the Company.

Outstanding Share Data

As at May 9, 2019, there were 77,686,260 common shares issued and outstanding.

Dividends

The following dividends were declared and paid by the Company:

(\$ thousands, per share in dollars)	2019				2018			
	Declared				Declared			
	Record date	Per share	Amount	Paid	Record date	Per share	Amount	Paid
Quarter 1 dividend	March 29, 2019	0.14	10,876	April 15, 2019	March 29, 2018	0.14	10,877	April 13, 2018
	March 31, 2019	0.14	10,876		March 31, 2018	0.14	10,877	
Quarter 2 dividend					June 29, 2018	0.14	10,878	July 13, 2018
Quarter 3 dividend					September 28, 2018	0.14	10,884	October 15, 2018
Quarter 4 dividend					December 31, 2018	0.14	10,884	January 15, 2019
						0.56	38,424	

Dividend Policy

The Board of Directors reviews the Company's dividend policy periodically in the context of the Company's overall profitability, free cash flow, capital requirements and other business needs.

Looking forward, the Company is continually assessing its dividend policy based on the considerations outlined above as well as other possible factors that may become relevant in the future and, accordingly, there can be no assurance that the current quarterly dividend of \$0.14 per share will be maintained. Furthermore, the Company may not choose to use future growth in its profitability or free cash flow, if any, to increase its dividend in the near or medium term, but may focus on reducing the ratio of its dividends paid to its net earnings or free cash flow and using any additional cash to pay down debt, fund business acquisitions, capital projects or such other uses as determined by the Board of Directors.

Hedging

The Company undertakes sale and purchase transactions in foreign currency as part of its Canadian operations and therefore, is subject to gains and losses due to fluctuations in foreign exchange rates.

The Company at times uses derivative financial instruments for economic hedging purposes in managing lumber price risk and foreign currency risk through the use of futures contracts and options. These derivative financial instruments are designated as fair value through profit and loss, with changes in fair value being recorded in Other income (loss) in net earnings.

As at March 31, 2019 the Company held various outstanding foreign exchange contracts to purchase an aggregate of US\$7.6 million at exchange rates ranging between 1.3175 and 1.3225 (December 31, 2018 - US\$9.0 million) for economic hedging purposes, and unrealized gains totaling \$128,000 (2018 - \$62,000) recorded in net (loss) earnings.

Management's Discussion and Analysis

When held by the Company, foreign currency and lumber derivative instruments are traded through well-established financial services firms with a long history of providing trading, exchange and clearing services for commodities and currencies. As trading activities are closely monitored by senior management, the risk of credit loss on these financial instruments is considered low.

Related Party Transactions

The Company has transactions with related parties in the normal course of operations at agreed amounts between the related parties.

Certain distribution facilities used by the Company to store and process inventory are leased from a company in which Amar Doman, a director and officer, and Rob Doman, an officer of the Company, have a minority interest and the land and buildings of certain of the treatment plants are leased from entities solely controlled by Amar Doman. All lease rates were market tested in advance of the signing of the lease agreements and were determined to be at market rates. Lease payments to such related parties were \$909,000 in the quarter ended March 31, 2019, versus \$806,000 in 2018. The minimum payments under the terms of these leases are as follows: \$2.4 million for the remainder of 2019, \$2.3 million in 2020, \$1.9 million in 2021, \$1.6 million in 2022, \$1.6 million in 2023 and \$14.1 million thereafter.

During the quarter ended March 31, 2019, the Company was charged professional fees in relation to regulatory, corporate finance and compliance consulting services of \$134,000 (2018 - \$209,000) by a company owned by Rob Doman. As at March 31, 2019, payables to this related party were \$156,000 (December 31, 2018 - \$282,000). Additionally, fees of \$246,000 (2018 - \$222,000) were paid for services related to strategic and financial advice to a company solely controlled by Amar Doman. As at March 31, 2019, payables to this related party were \$37,000 (December 31, 2018 - \$59,000).

During the quarter the Company purchased \$1.0 million (2018 - \$1.1 million) of product from a public company in which Amar Doman has an ownership interest and is also a director and officer. These purchases are in the normal course of operations and are recorded at exchange amounts. As at March 31, 2019, payables to this related party were \$467,000 (December 31, 2018 - \$38,000).

During the quarter ended March 31, 2019, the Company purchased \$395,000 (2018 - \$nil) of product from a company controlled by Siegfried Thoma, a director of the Company. These purchases were made in the normal course of operations and are recorded at exchange amounts.

Additional information regarding these related party transactions is contained in Note 21 of the Unaudited Interim Condensed Consolidated Financial Statements for the period ended March 31, 2019 and Note 26 of the 2018 Consolidated Financial Statements.

In addition to the aforementioned related party transactions, certain subsidiaries of the Company had entered into a facilities lease with entities affiliated with individuals who are directors or officers of such subsidiaries, in connection with prior acquisitions. During the three month period ended March 31, 2019, such lease payments totaled \$66,000 (2018 - \$nil).

Commitments and Contingencies

Future and Contractual Obligations

In addition to various debt facilities, an earn-out commitment and finance leases covering certain transportation equipment, the Company has operating lease commitments for the rental of most of its distribution centres and treatment plant properties in Canada and the United States, and for vehicles, warehouse equipment, and a computer hosting contract.

Management's Discussion and Analysis

The following table shows, as at March 31, 2019, the Company's contractual obligations, including estimated interest, within the periods indicated:

Contractual Obligations (in thousands of dollars)	Remainder				
	Total	of 2019	2020-2021	2022-2023	Thereafter
Revolving loan facility ⁽¹⁾	299,846	8,176	291,670	-	-
Non-revolving term loan ⁽²⁾	37,077	3,288	33,789	-	-
Unsecured notes ⁽³⁾	79,145	3,835	7,660	67,650	-
Promissory notes ⁽⁴⁾	6,094	2,662	3,432	-	-
Equipment term loan and line ⁽⁵⁾	12,815	3,246	9,569	-	-
Earn-out commitment ⁽⁶⁾	2,065	-	2,065	-	-
Leases ⁽⁷⁾	145,780	18,186	37,355	27,323	62,916
Total contractual obligations	582,822	39,393	385,540	94,973	62,916

1. Interest has been calculated based on the average borrowing under the facility for the quarter ended March 31, 2019 utilizing the interest rate payable under the terms of the facility at March 31, 2019. This facility matures on July 10, 2021.
2. Annual principal payments are amortized over 15 years, with interest payable quarterly.
3. Interest has been calculated at 6.375%, payable semi-annually. The notes mature on October 9, 2023.
4. Additional information is contained in Note 13 of the Unaudited Interim Condensed Consolidated Financial Statements for the period ending March 31, 2019.
5. Monthly principal repayments amortize over 5 years, interest is payable monthly. Equipment line principal repayments commence on August 1, 2019, with maturity on December 1, 2021.
6. Additional information is contained in Note 15 of the Unaudited Interim Condensed Consolidated Financial Statements for the period ending March 31, 2019.
7. Additional information is contained in Note 8 of the Unaudited Interim Condensed Consolidated Financial Statements for the period ending March 31, 2019.

Claims

During the normal course of business, certain product liability and other claims have been brought against the Company and, where applicable, its suppliers. While there is inherent difficulty in predicting the outcome of such matters, management has vigorously contested the validity of these claims, where applicable, and, based on current knowledge, believes that they are without merit and does not expect that the outcome of any of these matters, in consideration of insurance coverage maintained, or the nature of the claims, individually or in the aggregate, would have a material adverse effect on the consolidated financial position, results of operations or future earnings of the Company.

Guarantees

The Company has issued letters of credit totaling \$1.4 million as at March 31, 2019 (December 31, 2018 - \$1.4 million) in respect of historical obligations, pre-dating 1999, for a non-registered executive pension plan for former executives.

Significant Accounting Judgments and Estimates

The preparation of these financial statements requires management to make judgments and estimates and form assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. On an ongoing basis, management evaluates its judgments and estimates in relation to assets, liabilities, revenue and expenses. Management uses historical experience and various other factors it believes to be reasonable under the given circumstances as the basis for its judgments and estimates. Actual outcomes may differ from these estimates under different assumptions and conditions. Significant areas requiring estimates are goodwill and related impairment testing, inventory valuation and obsolescence, deferred tax assets and liabilities valuation, recoverability of trade and other receivables, certain actuarial and economic assumptions used in the determination for the cost and accrued benefit obligations of employee future benefits, assessing whether an arrangement contains a lease, determining the lease term, determining the discount rate to value the lease, valuation of timber, determination of reforestation provision and judgments regarding aggregation of reportable segments.

Goodwill

Management uses judgment in determining the fair value of the acquired net identifiable tangible and intangible assets at the date of a business combination. Any resulting goodwill is an asset representing the future economic benefits arising from other assets acquired in a business combination that are not individually identified and separately recognized. Goodwill at March 31, 2019 relates to the Company's acquisitions of various businesses. Goodwill is not amortized, but is tested for impairment annually or more frequently if changes in circumstances indicate a potential impairment. Goodwill impairment is assessed based on a comparison of the value in-use of a cash-generating unit to the underlying carrying value of that cash-generating unit's net assets, including goodwill. Significant estimates are required in determining the fair value of each cash-generating unit, including a discount rate, a growth rate and after-tax cash flows. When the carrying amount of the cash-generating unit exceeds its value in-use, the value in-use of goodwill related to the cash-generating unit is reduced by the excess of this carrying value and recognized as an impairment loss.

Timber

At each reporting date, timber is valued at fair value less costs to sell with any change therein, including the impact of growth and harvest, recognized in net earnings for the period. Significant judgment is used in determining the fair value with reference to independent third party valuers and recent comparatives of standing timber sales, costs of sustainable forest management, log pricing, timing of harvest and harvest volume assumptions, the discount rate used, and the resulting net present value of future cash flows for standing timber.

Reforestation Provision

Management uses judgment in determining the value of the reforestation provision. Due to the general long-term nature of the liability, the most significant areas of uncertainty in estimating the provision are the future costs that will be incurred, the inflation rate, and the risk-adjusted discount rate.

Employee Future Benefits

The cost of defined benefit pension plans and other post-employment medical benefits and the present value of the pension obligation are determined using actuarial valuations. An actuarial valuation involves making various assumptions that may differ from actual developments in the future.

i. **Discount rate**

The present value of the defined benefit obligation is determined by discounting the estimated future cash outflows using interest rates of high-quality corporate bonds that are denominated in the currency in which the benefits will be paid and that have maturity profiles that are similar to the underlying cash flows of the defined benefit obligation.

ii. Other assumptions

The mortality rate is based on publicly available mortality tables. Future salary increases are based on expected future inflation rates.

Inventory Valuation

Under IFRS, inventories must be recognized at the lower of cost or their Net Realizable Value ("NRV"), which is the estimated selling price in the ordinary course of business less the estimated costs of completion and estimated costs necessary to make the sale. IFRS requires that the estimated NRV be based on the most reliable evidence available at the time the estimates are made of the amounts that inventories are expected to realize. The measurement of an inventory write-down to NRV is based on the Company's best estimate of the NRV and of the Company's expected future sale or consumption of the Company's inventories. Due to the economic environment and continued volatility in the homebuilding market, there is uncertainty as to whether the NRV of the inventories will remain consistent with those used in the Company's assessment of NRV at period end. As a result there is the risk that a write-down of on hand and unconsumed inventories could occur in future periods. Also, a certain portion of inventory may become damaged or obsolete. A slow moving reserve is recorded, as required, based on an analysis of the length of time product has been in inventory and historical rates of damage and obsolescence.

Inventory includes harvested timber, the cost of which is based on its fair value less costs to sell, and forms a component of the carrying value of log inventory. Harvested timber is subsequently processed into logs and carried at the lower of cost or NRV. Significant judgment is used in determining the fair value of timber with reference to independent third party valuers and recent comparatives of standing timber sales.

Allowance for Doubtful Accounts

It is possible that certain trade receivables may become uncollectible, and as such an allowance for these doubtful accounts is maintained. The allowance is based on the estimated recovery of trade receivables and incorporates current and expected collection trends. These estimates will change, as necessary, to reflect market or specific industry risks, as well as known or expected changes in the customers' financial position.

Income Taxes

At each reporting date, a deferred income tax asset may be recognized for all tax deductible temporary differences, unused tax losses and income tax reductions, to the extent that their realization is probable. The determination of this requires significant judgment. This evaluation includes review of the ability to carry-back operating losses to offset taxes paid in prior years; the carry-forward periods of the losses; and an assessment of the excess of fair value over the tax basis of the Company's net assets. If based on this review, it is not probable such assets will be realized then no deferred income tax asset is recognized.

Management believes the estimates utilized in preparing its financial statements are reasonable and prudent. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Segment Reporting

Operating segments are reported in a manner consistent with the internal reporting provided to the chief operating decision maker. The chief operating decision maker, who is responsible for allocating resources and assessing performance of operations, has been identified as the Chief Executive Officer.

The Company is managed as two reportable business segments which offer different products, require different production processes, and are based on how financial information is produced internally for the purposes of making operating decisions. The following summary describes the operations of each of the Company's reportable segments:

- a) *Distribution* – wholesale distribution of building materials and home renovation products, including value-added services such as lumber pressure treating; and
- b) *Forestry* – timber ownership and management of private timberlands and Crown forest licenses, logging and trucking operations, and value-added services such as post-peeling and post and pole pressure treating operations.

Changes in Accounting Standards

The significant accounting policies as disclosed in Note 3 of the 2018 Consolidated Financial Statements have been applied consistently in the preparation of these financial statements, except as stated below.

IFRS 16 – Leases

Effective January 1, 2019, the Company adopted IFRS 16, replacing IAS 17, *Leases* ("IAS 17") and related interpretations. IFRS 16 sets out principles of recognition, measurement, presentation and disclosure of leases for both parties to a contract, the lessee and the lessor. IFRS 16 was applied using the modified retrospective approach, under which the cumulative effect of initial application is recognized in retained earnings on January 1, 2019, with no restatement of comparative figures, which continue to be reported under IAS 17. The Company elected to measure its right-of-use assets at amounts equal to the corresponding lease liabilities, which resulted in no adjustment to retained earnings on transition.

As a Lessee

The Company identified agreements in both the United States and Canada related to the rental of distribution and wood treatment facilities, forklifts, light vehicles and other equipment, which were previously treated as operating leases under IAS 17.

Judgement was applied adopting IFRS 16 to determine contracts within the scope of IFRS 16, evaluating lease renewal terms and determining the discount (incremental borrowing rate) used to present value the lease arrangements. At transition, lease liabilities were measured at the present value of the remaining lease payments under the agreement term. Right-of-use assets are measured at an amount equal to the lease liability, adjusted by the amount of any prepaid or accrued lease payments and this approach was applied to all leases.

The Company applied the following practical expedients when applying IFRS 16 to leases, which had been classified as operating leases under IAS 17:

- a. recognition exemptions under IFRS 16 (5a) and (5b) for short-term and low-value leases;
- b. an election under IFRS 16 (C11), which allows a Company the choice to not reassess contracts which were previously identified as leases under IAS 17; and
- c. an option under IFRS 16 (B1) to apply a single discount rate to a portfolio of leases with reasonably similar characteristics. Forklifts, light vehicle leases and computer equipment were identified as separate portfolios, having similar characteristics.

As a Lessor

The Company was not impacted by the adoption of IFRS 16 for transactions in which it acts as a lessor, as the treatment is the same as under the previous standard. These transactions primarily occur in the Company's Forestry segment and relate to access to and use of Company owned lands by third parties and are not a significant source of revenue. The Company applies IFRS 15, *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* to allocate consideration in the contract to each lease and non-lease component.

Management's Discussion and Analysis

Summary of the financial statement impact of the adoption of IFRS 16

The new leasing standard had a significant impact on the financial statements of the Company and how lease related transactions are accounted for; however, there has been no change to how the Company conducts its business.

Area	Summarized impact
Statement of financial position	<p>The new leasing standard resulted in an increase in the value of both right-of-use assets and lease liabilities of approximately \$119.0 million and the reclassification of approximately \$5.8 million of lease liabilities that were accounted for as finance leases under the previous standard and were included in property, plant and equipment. The finance leases previously included in property, plant and equipment are now included as part of the new financial statement line item, right-of-use assets.</p> <p>Note 3 of the Unaudited Interim Condensed Consolidated Financial Statements for the period ended March 31, 2019 summarizes the overall impact of adoption of IFRS 16, and Note 8 summarizes the activity related to the leasing transactions that occurred during the period.</p>
Statement of (loss) earnings and comprehensive (loss) earnings	<p>The new leasing standard resulted in a change in the amount, presentation and timing related to the recognition of lease related expenses.</p> <p>Under the previous lease standard (IAS 17), certain rental and lease payments were included in distribution, selling and administration expenses as incurred (approximately \$5.0 million for the three month period ended March 31, 2018); whereas the new standard replaces these expenses with an amortization expense on the right-of-use assets and a finance cost based on the Company's incremental borrowing rate (\$5.4 million and \$1.2 million, respectively, for the three month period ended March 31, 2019). When payments are made, this is reflected as a reduction in the lease liabilities on the statement of financial position.</p> <p>The total expense over the lifetime of a lease has not changed under the new leasing standard. However, the expense associated with the lease is front-loaded due to the finance costs on the lease liability, compared to the previous straight-line methodology for recording rent expenses. The result is higher overall expenses and lower net earnings in the year of adoption of IFRS 16 or upon entering into a new lease. Depreciation on the right-of-use assets is straight-line over the term of the lease, and finance costs on lease liabilities decline over the life of the lease as the liability is repaid.</p>
Statement of cash flows	<p>Under the previous leasing standard, payments related to operating leases with respect to rental and leasing arrangements were presented as part of net cash flows provided by operating activities (approximately \$5.0 million for the three month period ended March 31, 2018), and payments related to finance leases were presented as part of net cash flows provided by financing activities (\$326,000 for the three month period ended March 31, 2018).</p> <p>Under IFRS 16, lease payments include cash payments for the interest portion of lease liabilities and repayment of principal, and are all presented within net cash flows provided by financing activities (\$5.6 million for the three month period ended March 31, 2019).</p>
EBITDA and Adjusted EBITDA	<p>Amortization charges on the newly recorded right-of-use assets are excluded from EBITDA and Adjusted EBITDA, along with the finance cost on lease liabilities. Previously, expenses related to these leasing and rental activities were included in distribution, selling and administration expenses and were included in the calculation of EBITDA.</p> <p>For the three month period ended March 31, 2019, approximately \$5.0 million of distribution, selling and administration expenses were excluded from EBITDA, and were instead re-categorized as \$5.4 million of amortization and \$1.2 million of interest, with the difference applied against the right-of-use assets and lease liabilities, as applicable.</p>

IFRS 9 – Financial Instruments

Effective January 1, 2018, the Company adopted IFRS 9, *Financial Instruments* (“IFRS 9”) replacing IAS 39, *Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement*. The adoption of IFRS 9 was applied retrospectively and did not have a material impact on the Unaudited Interim Condensed Consolidated Financial Statements and did not result in any adjustments.

IFRS 15 - Revenue from Contracts with Customers

Effective January 1, 2018, the Company adopted IFRS 15, *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* (“IFRS 15”), replacing IAS 11, *Construction Contracts*, IAS 18, *Revenue*, as well as several revenue-related interpretations. The adoption of IFRS 15 did not have a material impact on the Unaudited Interim Condensed Consolidated Financial Statements and did not result in any adjustments. The adoption of this standard did; however, result in more detailed disclosure in the Company's financial statements related to the nature, amount, timing and uncertainty of revenue and cash flows arising from contracts with customers.

Further information about changes to the Company's accounting policies resulting from the adoption of these new standards can be found in Note 3 to the Company's Unaudited Interim Condensed Consolidated Financial Statements for the three month period ended March 31, 2019.

Disclosure Controls and Internal Controls over Financial Reporting

Disclosure Controls and Procedures

In accordance with the requirements of National Instrument 52-109 Certification of Disclosure in Issuers' Annual and Interim Filings, the Company's management, including the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer, acknowledges responsibility for the design and operation of disclosure controls and procedures and internal control over financial reporting, and the requirement to evaluate the effectiveness of these controls on an annual basis.

Changes in Internal Control over Financial Reporting

There were no material changes in the design of the Company's internal controls over financial reporting during the quarter ended March 31, 2019 that have affected, or are reasonably likely to materially affect, the Company's internal control over financial reporting.

Risks and Uncertainties

The Company is subject to normal business risks associated with similar firms operating within the building materials industry in Canada, which are described in greater detail in the Company's AIF dated March 29, 2019, the Company's MD&A contained in the 2018 annual consolidated financial report and the Company's public filings on www.sedar.com, which the reader is encouraged to review, and which are or may be updated from time to time, after the date therein. Except as required by applicable law, the Company undertakes no obligation to publicly update or otherwise revise any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events, or otherwise.

Outlook

Pricing for lumber, plywood and OSB experienced significant declines from June 2018 through to the end of 2018. Prices for all three categories continued to decline during the first quarter of 2019, with lumber and plywood seeing a modest recovery towards the end of the quarter. Management will continue to employ mitigation strategies to minimize the potential impacts of future construction materials price volatility. These strategies include the use of vendor managed inventories, direct shipments from the manufacturer to the customer, and the Company's internal policy of matching inventory levels to maintain its high standard of customer service levels, minimizing excess inventory otherwise exposed to market fluctuations. The Company is also continuing to execute on its strategy to increase the proportion of value added products, such as pressure treated wood, in its overall sales.

Management's Discussion and Analysis

In April 2019, The BoC reported that growth in the economy in the fourth quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2019 was weaker than anticipated, leading to downwards revised growth figures for 2019 but largely unchanged figures for 2020. The Canadian economy is forecast to grow by 1.2% in 2019, rising to 2.1% in 2020, before slowing to 2.0% in 2021, according to the most recent revised estimates published by the Bank of Canada ("BoC"). Based on this slowdown and in line with the April 2019 publication, the BoC kept its key short-term lending rate at 1.75%. The dampening effects on growth of low oil prices, changes to housing policies and the 2017–18 increases in borrowing rates should dissipate over 2019, according to the BoC.

According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (the "CMHC"), the seasonally adjusted annualized rate for Canadian housing starts in the first quarter of 2019 was 193,489 compared to 222,487 in the same period last year. CMHC forecasts annual housing starts for the years 2019 and 2020 to be in the range from 189,300 units to 204,500 units. Historically, strong housing starts have positively impacted the Company's business and the volume of building materials that it sells. The recent introduction of stricter federal mortgage rules, the introduction of British Columbia and Ontario foreign buyers' and speculation taxes, foreign exchange fluctuations and overall affordability issues, may affect the housing market, although any potential impact is not predictable.

US housing construction has experienced a slower than anticipated start to 2019. According to the US Census Bureau, seasonally-adjusted housing starts reached 1,298,000 units in the first quarter of 2019 compared to 1,334,000 units in the same period last year. According to the Federal Home Mortgage Corporation (Freddie Mac) Economic & Housing Research Group, housing starts are expected to continue the current trend and reach 1,310,000 units for 2019 and 1,370,000 units for 2020. In late April, Bloomberg reported that US economic growth accelerated by more than expected in the first quarter of 2019, with a big boost from inventories and trade that offset a slowdown in consumer spending. GDP expanded at a 3.2% annualized rate during the first quarter of 2019, according to Commerce Department data, which topped all forecasts. According to the BoC, the US economy is expected to expand about 2.0% over the 2019-2020 period.

The Company's focus in the near term remains to grow sales with its target customer base while continuing to optimize gross margins, capture synergies with recent acquisitions and maintain tight controls over expenses. The Company is committed to enhancing its offering of specialty and allied products to the Canadian and United States markets. Management's focus on cash flow, primarily consisting of the management of inventory trade receivables and trade payables, remains paramount.

Sawlog prices are expected to remain strong in 2019 as the demand from the US continues to be high due to supply shortfalls and the expectations for an increase in US housing starts. There can be no assurance, however, these pricing trends will be sustainable, which may result in potential adverse impacts on the Company's forestry segment.

Management will continue to closely monitor the Company's operations, legacy customers, and potential seasonal weather impacts, so that the Company will be appropriately positioned and be ready to work hard to translate revenue into higher earnings for the Company and its shareholders.



CORPORATE INFORMATION

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CWX, CWX.NT.A