

Early Days in the Lumber Camps

By Capt. Robert Dollar

Ed. Note:—Captain Robert Dollar began life as a camp boy on the Upper Ottawa in the employ of Mr. Hiram Robinson of Ottawa, a Director of the Canadian Forestry Association. He rose to a commanding position as a lumber exporter and ship owner.

In passing through Western Ontario in a comfortable Pullman with dining car attached and in crossing to Spanish and Serpent Rivers, it brought back very vividly to my recollection the tremendous changes that have taken place in this part of the country in the last 35 years when there was hardly a white man on the shore of Lake Huron at Kil-larney and Spanish River Mills.

At this time I was lumbering on the Serpent River some 30 miles from Lake Huron. We sent in the men and supplies in a steamer in the fall of 1881 and built a warehouse at the mouth of the river to hold our year's supplies. We boated supplies up the river to where the camp was to be built, sufficient to last until the snow and ice made it possible to haul with teams. The men were then cut off from all communication with the outer world. On February 21, 1882, I started with a team of horses to visit the camp. The entire distance of 250 miles was made on the trackless ice from Parry Sound, Ont. The time occupied was eight days. We

slept out every night. The weather was intensely cold, being below zero the first three days, while on the last day it rained. Not being prepared for such a change in the weather, we had a miserable time of it. Sleeping out in winter in a heavy rain storm is anything but comfortable to say the least.

A 35-Mile Tramp.

The weather was so bad, I left the team and teamster at our warehouse at the mouth of the river and made the last thirty-five miles on foot in the soft, slushy snow. It was hard walking and I was glad to get to the camp, and the men were delighted to get news from the outside world. I found the work had gone on successfully, and we had a lot of fine timber on the ice ready to be floated to Lake Huron, where it was to be loaded on vessels and taken to Kingston at the foot of Lake Ontario. There it was rafted and run down the rapids of the St. Lawrence, then towed to Quebec to be again loaded into ocean going ships for Liverpool where it was again formed into small rafts and taken up the canal to Manchester. Here it was sawn up into sizes for making cotton spinning machinery.

I spent three weeks looking over various tracts of timber, but could not find the sized timber required for this trade, namely, 20 inches average diameter. On this account I decided

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