

LOGGING FOR BEGINNERS

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Every year the logging industry chops down so many trees that in some places there are mountains naked as the day they were born, or wearing nothing but a G-string of Scotch pine. Nevertheless we should admire the log-

ging industry and help to prevent forest fires, which annoy it very much.

The first thing needed for a logging industry is a forest, preferably a forest of trees. Trees have, on the whole, been found to make the best lumber, and every effort should be made to start a logging industry in a region where there are trees.

Trees are usually found by a

man called a cruiser, who goes with his dog and finds all the trees you want, simply by cruising away from cities and main highways. Naturally, these trees can't be just any old trees (plum for example); they must be Giants of the Forest that have been standing around since Columbus discovered America. The cruiser checks this by cutting down a sample tree and count-

ing the rings. Trees are like women: you can't discover their age until after they are dead (but dead trees make better end tables).

Once a tree has been found, a man with a Swedish accent is sent out to chop it down. This man, known as a faller, can easily be identified by the fact that he yells "Timber!" just before the tree falls down. Unfortunately, if you are close enough to a faller to hear him yell "Timber!" you will probably be killed by the tree when it falls down. This is known as workman's compensation and is quite popular.

Besides his axe and his Swedish accent, the faller must take along a friend who is a buckler. The buckler sees the big tree, once it is felled, into a lot of little trees, making it look like more and fooling the company. Many fallers and bucklers now use the fast chainsaws, although some fallers complain of a tendency to saw through both the tree and the faller standing on the opposite side.

Wherever the faller and buckler go they are followed by a donkey. This donkey pulls itself along by means of a line attached to a winch which revolves noisily, shortening the line and dragging the donkey fairly close to a felled tree. Then some men called chokermen approach the tree and choke it with a line attached to another winch on the donkey. When they think they have choked the tree enough, the chokermen shout at a little man sitting on a stump nearby. This little man is the whistle punk, and when the chokermen shout at him he hoots his whistle at the donkey, infuriating it and causing the winch to revolve furiously, hauling the tree closer to the donkey, and probably rolling it over one of the chokermen, providing more workman's compensation, which is appreciated by all concerned.

The donkey heaps as many trees as it can onto what is called a colddeck pile. As soon as it drags itself away, however, another larger donkey comes along and takes them all away, a pretty dirty trick. This donkey is operated by a stationary engineer, who is not permitted to move unless the donkey's boiler bursts, whereupon the stationary engineer may hurtle into the air.

With this donkey, each tree is loaded onto a flatcar by the first loader and the second loader. The first loader is the loader who gets killed first when the winches toss around the logs. The

second loader is allowed to get killed only after the first loader, and therefore receives less money.

During loading, the donkey becomes so excited turning its winches that it gives off sparks. To counteract this, it is necessary to have a spark-chaser, usually a college boy earning his fees, who chases the spark into the woods until one or the other is extinguished.

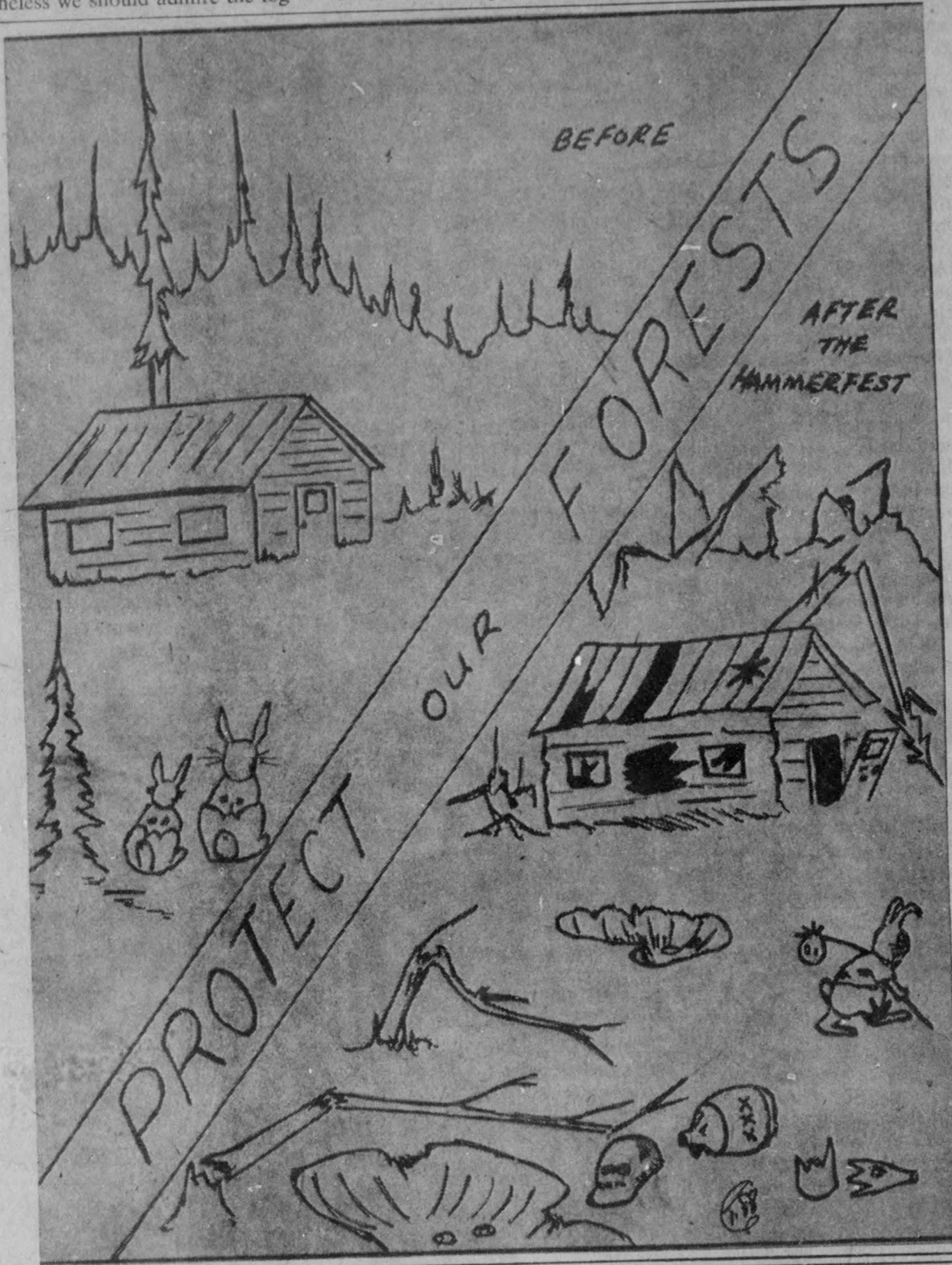
When the tree has been placed on the flatcar, it becomes a log. This is made official by a scaler, a man who climbs on the loads and measures the logs in bored feet. When the locomotive engineer (who can move when he feels like it doesn't have to wait for his boiler to burst, and is therefore pretty cocky) thinks the scaler has measured enough bored feet, he starts the train, throwing the scaler off the loads and thereby usually killing him. Besides the workman's compensation involved, this helps to amuse the locomotive engineer and brighten up the arduous journey ahead.

During this trip, the logs depend for their welfare on two men, who sit on top of the last load of logs with their knees crossed. These are known as brakemen, or brakies, and it is their function to annoy the locomotive as much as possible. They do this by jumping off the train, seizing switches, and forcing the locomotive into a siding. Then they wave their arms at one another until the locomotive is obliged to go to the back of the train in disgrace. The train then starts off again with the locomotive tamely pushing instead of pulling, fuming at the sight of the two brakies, now sitting on top of the front load with their legs crossed.

Thus, when the locomotive reaches the sea, it is in an excellent mood to hurl all the logs into the water, and stalk back into the woods in a huff. What the locomotive doesn't know, of course, is that this is exactly what the company wants it to do. For, as soon as the locomotive has disappeared, a number of men appear on the logs and start sticking them with sharp poles to see if they are ripe. These are boommen, whose job consists chiefly of staying on the logs without falling into the water. Boommen who persists in falling into the water are worse than useless, especially if they drown.

At this point another scaler shows up to see whether the dead scaler up in the woods has counted correctly the number of bored feet in the logs. Unfortunately, this scaler is maintained by the government, so that the company cannot kill him off. Unless, of course, there is a change in the government, in which case the company can obtain permission without too much difficulty.

Finally, a tug comes into the bay to take away all the logs that have been found ripe and showing the proper number of feet. When it is a suitable distance out to sea, the tug is struck by a sharp storm, losing most of its logs, which are washed up on the shore to provide fuel for beach parties. Anybody who has tasted a wienie roasted over an open beach-fire will tell you that logging is one of the nicest industries you'd want to meet.



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