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DUTIES OF THE MILL FOREMAN.

I will endeavor to tell what ought to be the duties of a planing mill foreman, and in this connection say how he ought to be treated.

We should say in the first place that he *ought* to be a man of strictly temperate habits. You may say I am drawing the lines close here, but it is nevertheless true to the letter, and I emphasize it very emphatically. No man having charge of men or machines should ever step over the line of strictly temperance habits. Here is the base and foundation upon which they should stand solid and firm. One reason for this is, he wants a clear head at all times, no matter what the difficulty is; or, if there is no trouble, he wants his head always level and clear.

Granted that we have got that, the next thing we want is, that he should understand perfectly the mechanical part of his business. He should not only be able to do well every part of the work, but should be able intelligently to impart this knowledge to others in such a way that when he is not able to attend personally to any particular work he wants done, he will know that when he puts any of his men to work it will be done right. He should also know every part of his machine in detail, so that when any part is broken he shall be able to make a free hand sketch of it, and, instead of sending the broken part to the concern that made the machine, he can send the sketch of it, which will be all that is necessary.

Sometimes, of course, a new machine is introduced into the works, and for a time he may know only the general principles of it, but just as soon as possible he should post himself up on every identical piece and know its value and use. Here is where many a foreman is lacking, and I very much doubt if there is one foreman in five throughout the country who, if their machines were pulled to pieces and thrown into a pile promiscuously, could go to work and pick out each piece and tell what part of the machine it belonged to. A great many times, from this cause, a machine may run badly, and he, not knowing just where to to locate the trouble, has to do as hundreds of our M. D.'s do, guess whats the matter and try a dose of this and a dose of that, till, perhaps by accident, he hits the right place. This is a poor way to get along. The machine doctor should be able to diagnose the place at once and apply the proper remedy then and there, without delay. Oftimes a break-down occurs and by a quick foresight the foreman can fix it up for the time till the hurry is over, or perhaps run till shutting down time, when the broken parts can be repaired so you can start up on time the next morning.

We should not expect everything of a foreman. He may be a good manager and understand his work to a nicety, and yet not be able to go to the forge and weld and hammer iron or make bolts or cutters, or run a lathe to turn up shafting, or fit up machinery. This is the blacksmith's part and every concern who have their own power should have a engineer who is a practical mechanic, and able to do all this kind of machine work. A foreman's time is generally more valuable about the mill keeping things in order and pushing the work along, than in acting the part of machinist and foreman too. When too many irons are in the fire some of them are pretty sure to get burned.

The main point is to keep things moving, and he should have the tact and energy, understanding and judgment to, as the saying is, "take the bull by the horns." It certainly is no objection to have a man who can go to the forge (and certainly no mill, however small it may be, should ever do without a forge and anvil, and a few pair of tongs) and do a good job, but, as I have remarked, it costs more than it comes to generally.

A foreman should be a first-class manager of men, and ought to understand human nature. My reasons for this are, that no two men can stand exactly the same treatment. A man has to stop every minute to tell a hard twisted yarn, another is stubborn as a mule. One man must be given to understand that it is "root hog or die," and another if you rub his ears a little and say "s't boy," will do anything you want him to and more too. So every man, to get along nicely and get a fair day's work out of them, must have a little stimulant that just fits their case, and every foreman should understand this to perfection.

He should know just how to keep things moving. When one job is out another should follow it immediately and with just as little delay as possible. These lost moments soon count up into hours, and hours make days, and the time lost can never be redeemed. Machines are not like horses, we can never apply the whip and spur to make them go faster. The whip and spur come in by keeping them cutting. If we let two inches, or four inches, or a foot between the end of every board as it is fed into the machine, we soon lose a thousand feet, and many thousand feet are lost during the year in this way.

It should be a foreman's place to see that no spaces are left, and that the end of every board butts against the end of the one going out. A good reason for keeping the stuff close together is that the ends are not near as likely to chip as when space comes between them.

One thing more. A foreman should give all the men the same general treatment. While, as I have said, each man has an individuality or something peculiar to himself which we have to look out for, and take advantage of, still, we must give them all the same general treatment. Don't let one come and fill your head about some one else—never allow that by any means. If you are not smart and sharp enough to detect any irregularities, let them go, and never make a difference in your men by allowing them to tattle and act as detective.

Do not seek favors for selfish ends, and give a better job to one just because he will clean the snow from your walk. He should know exactly what each man is capable of doing and set each one to that part of the work that he can do best.

I have said one more thing, but have still another to call your attention to, and that is, never, by the smallest act or word, do or say anything that shall cause you to lose one iota of the respect of the men. Here is the main hold of a foreman. You may be ever so smart, and sharp as a thistle, but if you lose the esteem and respect of your men you have lost your best hold, and no matter how much sail you may carry, or how deep the keel is, you will drift to leeward in spite of everything. I will also add here. Don't lose respect for yourself. Never do a thing that you don't care for your men to see. Never dodge round a corner nor through a door till one of your men has gone past for fear he will see you have some suspicious bundle under your arm. Nor let them see you go into any place of doubtful reputation. Don't go there, for if you don't nobody can ever see you there. You may think I am hauling down the lines of morality pretty taut. If I do, it is for the good of one of the greatest industries in the country.

A foreman should always be in his place, the first one about the mill, and enforce strictly and firmly the rule that every man should be in his place ready to take hold when the wheel starts. I am, I see, laying down the rules for those who have charge of mills of considerable size, so that the foreman does not have to put on the overalls and jumpers and feed machines and grind knives, and do much of the drugery about the mill. But the same principles should govern every case till you get down to just a single person. In a small mill a foreman must expect to do his share of the work, whether it is filing saws or grinding knives, or feeding machines, when necessary to keep work pushing along, but in no case should he be so confined to the work that he cannot properly see to other parts of the work needing his oversight and care. Many times proprietors of mills put too much such work on him, and I am free to say, that more is lost than made when such a course is pursued.

I thought I should be able to tell how a foreman should be treated in this article, but shall have to wait till next time.—*J. T. Langdon, in the Wood Worker.*

THE loss of property by the late forest fires about Newberry, upper peninsula, Mich., was from $8,000 to $10,000. Among other property destroyed was wood to the amount of 5,000 cords, and several small houses.

PROTECTING WOODEN BUILDINGS

A very simple method of rendering wood factory buildings of greater resistence to fire consists in filling the spaces between the studding with a grout made of sand, lime, and a large proportion of sawdust, mixed with sufficient water to flow slowly; it becomes quite hard, is a poor conductor of heat, and will not ignite although it is charred by exposure to an intense fire. This applies to a building already constructed, where it would be a difficult task to remove the sheathing, or lath and plaster, already on the inside walls. Where the studding is already exposed on the inner side, the space is frequently filled with brick, masonry, or large tiles made for such purposes. A new material made for such purposes in America is called terra cotta lumber, and is composed of top clay, which overlies the brebrick clay, mixed with equal or double quantities of sawdust. Every vestage of the sawdust disappears in firing, leaving the tiles very porous. Its use is not limited to filling walls, but it is applied to other purposes of construction where refractory materials are desired, as for short joists between iron floor, beams roofs, covering to iron columns and beams, sheathings for internally fired boilers and steam pipes. Small cylinders of this material are arranged with suitable coverings, filled with petroleum, and used for torches. Nails and screws can be driven into it, and it can be cut to dimension with edge tools as desired.—*Engineering.*

An Important Lumber Case.

The following appeared in Toronto *Mail* of June 15th.—

"SCOTT V. BENEDICT.—The case of Scott v. Benedict was concluded on Friday night before the Court of Appeal and judgment was reserved. The action is brought to establish a vendor's lien on 118½ square miles of timber limits in the County of Peterborough, the amount of property involved being valued at about half a million dollars. At the trial and subsequently the decision in the case was adverse to the plaintiffs, and they appealed to the Court of Appeal. Mr. T. H. A. Scott, one of the plaintiffs, conducted his own case, arguing for seven hours, and at the conclusion of his address was complimented by Mr. Justice Burton, who told him that his arguments would reflect credit on an old counsel. Mr. W. Barwick appeared for the defendants."

DURING the months of January, February, March and April, there was a marked increase in rail shipments from Muskegon, Mich. Lumber to the amount of 33,941,881 feet, lath, 11,104,688 pieces, pickets, 197,891, and shingles, 6,850,250 were shipped. If this ratio is maintained throughout the year, the aggregate will be 108,000,000, or about one-sixth the cut of the mills at that point. The shipments by rail from Muskegon last year were 50,000,000 feet.