

LUMBER RAFTS FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA.

JAMES ROBERTSON, owner of the patented Robertson rafts, so famous on the Nova Scotian coast, as well as on the Pacific, sailed from Vancouver recently on the Empress of India for the Orient. Mr. Robertson, the Vancouver World says, is on his way to Japan for the purpose of arranging there for the sale of several of the rafts, which are to be built in British Columbia waters near Vancouver, and sent across the Pacific in tow of some tramp steamers.

During his stay in Vancouver, the World remarks, Mr. Robertson made all the necessary arrangements at this end of the line, and now he has gone to Japan to close there for the large lumber contract that he has in hand. This will be the first of the famous lumber rafts to be made in British Columbia, although several of them have during the last two or three years been made on Puget Sound. The rafts were invented quite a number of years ago in Nova Scotia, and the first timber sent by them went to the market

along the eastern coast of the States. They were towed by large ocean tugs, and altogether the system has been a complete success. Several of the rafts have been sent from Puget Sound to San Francisco. The last one met with misfortune, but it was later picked up intact and taken to port. It appears from the statement of Mr. Robertson that the hawser between the tugboat and the raft was cut by the seamen, who are opposed to this method of ocean towing, in that it does away with the natural work of loading ships and so on. Another steamer was compelled to spend 20 days in looking up the lost lumber, but after finding it she brought it safely to San Francisco. Mr. Robertson has at the present time another raft building on Puget Sound, but lately he has conceived the idea of taking it across the Pacific, instead of to the south, and has gone over to the other side to make the final arrangements about the deal.

To take one of the rafts across the Pacific will, of course, be the longest tow that was ever

attempted, but Mr. Robertson does not think there will be any additional trouble in connection with it.

The last cargo taken to San Francisco consisted of 22,000,000 feet of lumber, the raft being 600 feet long, 40 feet wide and about 25 feet in depth. It is reported that the first one to Japan shall be of about this size, and shaped like a cigar. The principle of construction is that the logs are bound together with steel wire ropes, wrapped around the body of the raft, and through it for the entire length. The raft is made in a cradle, which, in the case of the Seattle raft, cost about \$8,000. The raft is built up on the sides higher than in the middle, and then the cables are wrapped around it. The centre is then filled in, and as it does the whole raft settles and the cable becomes tighter all the time. The raft is filled as heavily as possible, and still the cable becomes tighter. The raft is launched and the rolling motion of the sea makes the raft still stronger, and in a short time it is ready for the ocean trip.

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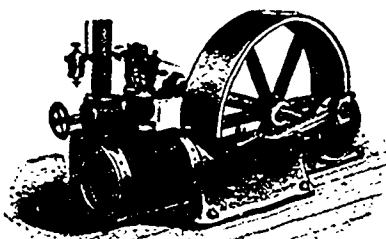
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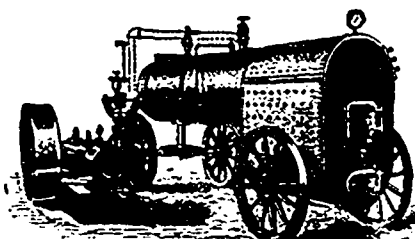
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