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Timbering on Vancouver Island

VANCOUVER ISLAND'S shaggy mane is being tugged at by numberless sawmills, but the sum total of their efforts has hardly touched her forest covering. East and west, north and south the timber rises, magnificent Titans of fir and cedar, hemlock and spruce, enough to furnish of merchantable wood at least one billion feet a year for a hundred years to come. Outside of the agricultural land under cultivation, or as yet uncultivated, there are thousands of acres of the finest timber imaginable on the Island, and as a source of potential wealth it is immensely suggestive.

Timbering is a scientific calling, but in a country where the trees are as plentiful as on Vancouver Island there is a great deal of waste permitted. This goes on from the first step in the manufacture to the last; from the carelessness which allows of forest fires in the wake of the hunter or angler, or even the careless "cruiser," to the final burning-up of tons of waste yearly at the sawmills. Other countries have regretted this enormous waste, and it behoves Canada, and especially her heaviest timbered provinces, to provide for less destruction in the future.

The story of a bridge timber is a succession of regular gradations from the standing tree to the finished slab. The first inkling the forest has of the inten-

tions of man is when the "timber cruiser" appears, mousing about the hills and valleys, measuring the trees with practiced eye, thumbing his little book and marking down his figures—numerals most potent in the coming unfolding of the forest's possibilities—

"A chiel's amang ye takin' notes;
An' faith, he'll print 'em."

With pack on back and trusty compass handy, with dawn and starlight to guide his wandering footsteps, the "cruiser" is a weird pilgrim of the wilderness, serene, indifferent and absolutely self-reliant. He reads the story of the ranked and enfiladed tree trunks as a child cons his primer. The secrets of waste places are his and what the veil of Isis hides.

With the timber "cruised" and possibly "re-cruised" to make assurance doubly sure, the advent of the logging "crews" and the building of logging railways to bring the timber into the mills follow on in regular course. A logging camp and crew presents one of the most interesting and instructive sights in industrial enterprises. Every phase of its workings is carried on with almost military precision and decision. The "heavy artillery" is the powerful "donkey" engine, set firmly on its log foundation, run by steam power, and the keystone to the entire situation. With it are the cables, huge steel strands reaching out in many directions, like a