

FUTURE OF PACIFIC COAST WOOD IN EUROPE

A. E. Stokes, of the Douglas Fir Exploitation & Export Co., writing in the August issue of *The Lumberman* (Portland) says with regard to the Pacific coast market for lumber in Europe as follows:

The prospects in Europe for Pacific Coast lumber are quite bright, and although the boom we were encouraged to expect has not materialized and is not likely to, there is certain to be during the coming three to five years a steadily increasing demand for our product. The United Kingdom alone, prior to the war, drew approximately 60 per cent of her total timber imports from Russia, and that supply is practically cut off with little probability under the most favorable conditions of being available again for a considerable time. It is true Scandinavia is awake to her opportunity, and has been steadily increasing her output the last year or so, thus replacing a portion of her shortage, and in addition Finland and Poland, also Switzerland, are now beginning to make offers and shipments. However, these combined factors do not anything like replace the Russian supply, and moreover Scandinavia has no wide or long material worth mentioning. Also the increased demand due to the five or six years cessation of all building operations, has to be taken into account. Europe has to be housed, to say nothing of the demands of labor for the removal of the worst of the slums, and to say nothing of the crying need for repairs and renovations of all kinds, and the most pessimistic cannot but be forced to admit that there is at least a bright prospect for the entire lumber industry.

The demand can only be a gradually increasing one for a variety of reasons. To take the United Kingdom alone, in the five years prior to the war the building trade was in a very demoralized state. Innumerable houses were empty and practically no building has been in progress during such period, causing considerable unemployment in the building trade. To avoid a repetition of this state of affairs, labor unions are now taking very extreme measures and are adopting what is termed over here "ca' canny" methods equivalent to the "loafing on the job," of the I.W.W., excepting that the system is adopted here openly and not covertly. In pre-war days a bricklayer's average day's work was the laying of about 1,000 brick, whereas today the unions do not permit their members to lay more than two to three hundred per day, in order to spread the accumulated arrears of work over a longer period and so avoid a repetition of the unemployment so vividly remembered by this particular trade prior to the war. This insane policy can only in the long run defeat its own end, and drastic as my view may sound, I predict that there is liable to be soon, over here, a decisive struggle not between capital and labor, but between labor employed and labor unemployed, to settle whether labor employed has the right and ability to permanently deprive labor unemployed of its liberty in a free country. History will repeat itself, and the trade union movement, which has done so much for labor, may be destined to follow the steps of the old trade guilds of the United Kingdom into oblivion. Men who want work will insist on working, and no union will keep up the fence indefinitely.

There is an actual shortage in the United Kingdom of three-quarters to one million homes. This shortage is increasing at the rate of one hundred thousand houses per annum. During the present year of 1920 the authorities are making an immense effort to commence to "catch up" and plans have been approved and it is hoped to erect 200,000 houses. In my judgment, after a careful survey of the situation, this programme will not be carried out on account of limited labor (there are 200,000 less men in the building trade than in pre-war days), also the restricted efforts of the workers under the instructions of the unions, and the financial difficulties. To explain the financial handicap, individual home owning is not encouraged nor is it as popular over here as in the States. It is a matter for the speculative builder, and under present conditions he cannot

South Vancouver

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September 10th

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It is right beside the City of Vancouver.

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F. J. GILLESPIE,
Commissioner.