

Through the windows of a bus



Spliyay Tymoo photo by Behrend
The Flathead Post and Pole enterprise located in Dixon employs about 300 full and part time employees. The operation produces posts, poles and fencing material. Northern Lodgepole Pine is used for all materials.

As has been traditional of the past six National Indian Timber Symposiums, a tour is conducted of the reservation nearest the symposium site. It was no different with this, the seventh annual Timber Symposium, held in Missoula, Montana. Conferees were taken by bus to the Flathead Reservation for a day-long tour of various Salish Kootenai enterprises.

The Flathead Reservation was established by treaty in 1855. The southern boarder of the reservation is approximately 20 miles north of Missoula and it is bordered on the north by Flathead Lake. The reservation itself is approximately 1.5 million acres in size with 450,000 of these acres being forested. There are about 6,000 Salish Kootenai tribal members, 3,000 of whom live on the reservation. Over 50 percent of the tribal membership is under 18 years of age. Total reservation population is about 18,000.

After boarding a small school bus at 8:30 a.m. conferees first visited the Flathead Post and Pole Yard in Dixon. This enterprise employs 15 men and women full time in the yard and 25 full time cutters. Another 275 or so seasonal workers are also employed as cutters and yard workers. The post and pole operation has a total annual payroll of about \$550,000.

The operation utilizes exclusively small-dimension Northern Lodgepole Pine which is manufactured into posts, poles and commercial and privacy fencing. These products are sold in North Dakota, Kansas, Arkansas, California and Washington.

Once the logs reach the yard, they are cut, peeled, run through a dry kiln, manufactured into specific types and sizes of posts and poles and finally treated in a pentachlorophenol and diesel solution.

The operation has been under its present management since 1978 and fiscal sales have grown from \$265,000 to the present sales of \$1 million. The plant expects to produce a net

profit this year of two to five percent.

From the post and pole yard those on the tour traveled to the Kicking Horse Job Corp Center nestled among the pine trees at the base of the beautiful Mission Mountains near Ronan. Open since 1971, Kicking Horse is one of two all-Indian job corp centers in the United States. The camp is located on 80 acres of tribal land and unlike nearly all other job corps centers in the United States, Kicking Horse is cooperatively funded and operated by the Salish Kootenai tribe and the Department of Labor. The camp is funded bi-annually receiving \$6.8 million for two years' operation. Over 70 percent of the camp staff are tribal members.

Though the center can accommodate 224 students, the camp currently has an enrollment of 184. Thirty different tribes and 13 different states are represented in this enrollment. The camp has been co-educational since 1975.

The young men and women, aged 16 to 20 years, receive training in the areas of auto machine repair, truck and heavy equipment mechanic, heavy equipment operation, carpentry, truck driving, forestry and conservation, cook's apprentice, maintenance and clerical. Training duration ranges from six months to two years with pay based on their length of stay.

According to one camp official, Kicking Horse places, on the average, 73 percent of its graduates. In addition to the vocational training the students are offered a chance to obtain their GEDs. Though acquiring their GED is not required, most students usually seek it, realizing that prospective employment relies heavily on having a diploma. In 1982, about 110 students received their GEDs.

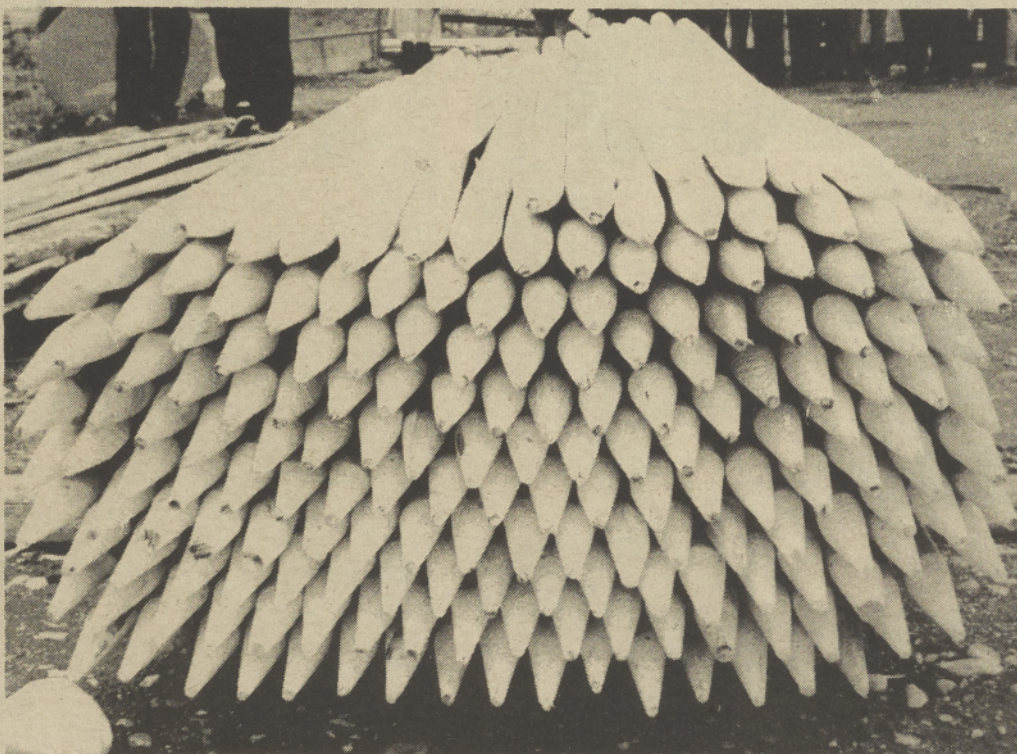
Corpmen, as they are referred to, have been involved in building projects, helping surrounding communities construct roads, improve

existing recreation areas and help with a community center. The center can not participate in any project if the community is capable of contracting a private construction company. So far, their projects have totalled over \$3 million.

After having a lunch prepared by food service trainees at the camp, the tour proceeded to the Salish Kootenai forestry and BIA fire control center. The container nursery is currently producing 200,000 seedlings per year in two different plantings. Seedlings being grown are varied, ranging from Ponderosa Pine to Englemann Spruce. One nurseryman stated that because of the low market thus low cutting, planting is down by about 100 trees per acre. The fire control center has modern dispatching equipment and economical trucks that have been designed and assembled by the fire control employees.

Next, the group visited the tribal and BIA complex in Pablo. There are approximately 450 people employed in 26 different departments. Located near this complex is the Salish Kootenai College. Of particular interest to those on the tour was the college's two-year Forest Technology course. Upon completion, each student is equipped to work as a forest technician in any aspect of the forestry field. The curriculum is designed to meet the guidelines established by the Society of American Foresters. Each student will also obtain knowledge in ecology and tree and plant identification.

Those on the tour realized that there were many similarities among the tribes. What has been successful for the Flathead Reservation may be useful on other reservations. It is this type of idea-sharing that creates the unique comaradarie among Indian reservations across the United States.



Spliyay Tymoo photo by Behrend
These grape stakes are California-bound. Before being shipped, they are treated in a solution which retards decay.