

## National Defense Program Called For Two Billion Feet Lumber In Six Months

The average price per thousand board feet received by the West Coast lumber industry in 1940 was no more than the average price received in 1937 and was within \$2.00 of the average cost of production, Col. W. B. Greeley, secretary-manager of the West Coast Lumbermen's Association, declared last Saturday at the W. C. L. A. annual meeting in Tacoma. Col. Greeley presented "The West Coast Lumber Picture: 1940-1941," as follows:

The West Coast lumber picture of today is certainly a movie; and a fast one. Of its many changing scenes, there are just three I want to talk about.

The first is the dramatic entry of national defense into the lumber market. In the last six months of 1940, the Government bought around two billion board feet of lumber. From 600 to 850 million feet, of this amount, was placed on the West Coast. These purchases started when the industry was running on low inventories and selling its cut to its usual trade. The widely publicized requirements of the government brought an avalanche of orders from regular customers who sensed a coming lumber shortage. And soon there was a lumber shortage. In the six months, although the mills were running as hard as they could under the handicap of numerous strikes, there was a deficit of over 500 million feet in production against the intake of new business.

Purchases by the government and its contractors took 20 per cent of the West Coast production. A rise in prices was forced by mass buying; by the pressure for quick service; by specifications and deliveries which could be filled only through shipping a large percentage of higher grades. The free play of competition among eight hundred independent and uncontrolled sawmills forces prices up in storage just as it drags them down

in surplus. The unsteady law of supply and demand has run its course.

The over-all average price of West Coast lumber was a little under \$21.00 in June and but little over the average cost of production. In November, the over-all price reached \$26.00. Then, with the passing of the peak load of defense purchases, the upward movement in prices stopped.

While a few of the items demanded in prodigious volumes for Army cantonments increased somewhat more, the truth of the situation is that the impact of national defense and the frenzied methods of government buying raised the average mill price of West Coast lumber about 25 per cent in the space of six months. The average price received by this industry, through 1940, was about \$22.00 per M feet; no more than the average price received in 1937. It was a price certainly within \$2.00 of the average cost of production.

There has been much unmerited criticism of lumber prices, in connection with the emergency purchases of the government. But West Coast lumbermen need no apologies for their part in national defense. They gave government orders preference; put them through on time; crowded production as far as they could; and in many cases took less for their lumber than the prevailing market.

Under the defense program as to today, the government still requires roughly 1 1/2 billion feet of lumber. This is needed for enlargement of the Army camps; for the housing of munitions workers; for airport improvements; for new factories; and for the offshore naval bases. These requirements will be spread over two years at least and many relatively small purchases. They should not again throw the lumber market out of gear. Our industry, like many others important to national defense, must, of course, keep in mind its own situation and its obligations in the event of war. What that may necessitate in control of prices or priorities cannot be foreseen. We have a strong Committee on National De-

fense, organized and ready to deal with any phase of this situation that may come to pass.

The second shot in the lumber picture that I want to mention is the indictment of the association and many of its members and trustees for restraint of trade. We are now doing our utmost to reach an understanding with the Department of Justice—as to what specific forms of industry cooperation are within and without the pale of the law as they read it.

We all resent the charges of monopoly through curtailment of production, through price-fixing, the grade-mark and so on. We know how thoroughly and completely competitive the West Coast lumber industry is. It seems absurd that many cooperative activities, long conducted in the open, by groups of lumbermen all over the United States, should now be challenged.

We have got to realize that many of the old terms and conceptions in the conduct of business have a new meaning today. That meaning has been given them by the Supreme Court of the United States, especially in the so-called Madison Oil Case. This new meaning of old business terms and procedures has been incorporated into our present philosophy of government. It is part of the New Deal—the socialized structure in government and business toward which the United States appears definitely headed. The fundamental fact which we cannot ignore is that these restraints upon the activities and liberties of business men are what the American public—broadly speaking—wants. It is part of the "New Order," and like many another business group in the United States, we have got to adjust ourselves to it.

One of the wisest of the old proverbs, whether it came from the mouth of Confucius or some other sage, runs to the effect that an opportunity lurks in every obstacle. We must find the opportunity that lies within this changed attitude of the government toward industry. We must make the most of the fields for industry co-operation, like trade promotion and standard qualities of product, that remain open to us. In plain terms, I hope that the West Coast lumber industry will take the

federal indictment in its stride and go right on.

Just one other phase of the lumber picture. Let us not forget that 90 per cent of our business in 1940 was still the building of homes and farms and the other established lines of yard and industrial trade. Emergency needs come and go, but to the home and the farm, and the retail yard which supplies them, lumber must look for its daily bread.

We are likely to have fresh realization of this truth in the years ahead. What will happen when the war emergency has passed and we may again face the stark realities of world-wide depression?

I think this much is clear: that the survival of the lumber industry will depend mainly upon our ability to keep going low-cost housing and low-cost farm building, whether through private financing or public financing; or by virtue of programs of Federal aid—to keep these simple and essential forms of construction going!

Through its Homes Foundations and other means of cooperation with retail lumber dealers, the Association has learned how to help most effectively in keeping home and farm building going. Whatever the call may be for national defense or for rehabilitation of war-torn countries, we should not permit these co-operative tools for home and farm building to get rusty. We would keep them at work with all the more energy, because hard days may be coming when the home and farm market is all that will carry us through.

Theodore Roosevelt once said that he was only an average man; but that he worked everlastingly at it. That should be the slogan of the West Coast Lumbermen's Association in its trade promotion.

### "Spirit" Subject At Christian Science Church Last Sunday

"Spirit" was the subject of the Lesson-Sermon in all Churches of Christ, Scientist, on Sunday, February 9.

The Golden Text was, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Gal. 5:25).

Among the citations which comprised the Lesson-Sermon was the

following from the Bible: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24).

The Lesson-Sermon also included the following correlative passages from the Christian Science textbook, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" by Mary Baker Eddy: "Spirit being God, there is but one Spirit, for there can be but one infinite and therefor one God. There are neither spirits many nor gods many. There is no evil in Spirit, because God is Spirit. The theory, that Spirit is distinct from matter but must pass through it, or into it, to be individualized, would reduce God to

dependency on matter, and establish a basis for pantheism." p. 334).

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