

ON OREGON TIMBER.

Interesting Facts Given by the Forestry Commissioner.

A. J. Johnson, of Astoria, forestry commissioner, has given an interesting interview in some paper not credited by the publication from which THE MINER clips it, on the timber lands of Oregon. He says:

Roughly speaking, the total consumption of timber in the state for the present year will amount to 900,000,000 feet. Of this quantity the mills are credited with 500,000,000, and the remaining 400,000,000 covers that which will be used for fuel, fence posts, fence rails, railroad ties and such miscellanies.

It is interesting to note that the mills will consume 100,000,000 more this year than was consumed last year. This is proof that not only have many new mills been established, but that all the old mills, some of which have been closed, have been kept running full blast. Another interesting fact to note is that the fuel consumption nearly equals that of the mills.

Last year the fuel consumption was the same and upon former years larger. It is only within the last year that the mill supply exceeds that of the fuel supply. Lack of cheap coal causes 400,000,000 feet of timber to be consumed for fuel every year. Nearly all the steamboats running on the rivers, many of the engines running out of the city, and the principal factories and industries in Oregon use wood for steam purposes. As soon as a cheap grade coal is placed upon the market, as is promised in the near future, the consumption will be cut down to a nominal figure.

The most destructive agency in destroying timber is the forest fires. Mr. Johnson estimates that six times more timber has been destroyed by fires than has been cut altogether by the mills and used for other purposes. Possibly as much as 1,000,000,000 feet have been destroyed by forest fires this year, and this year has been exceptionally free from forest fires. In fact, because of favorable climate conditions, together with the excellent system covering the timber sections with forestry rangers, there has been less timber destroyed by fire this year than during any previous year in the history of the state, since it became known to civilization.

There are generally periods of from five to ten years between very destructive fires. The explanation is simple. One good forest fire cleans out all the "dead" timber and it takes that length of time for enough more "dead" timber to accumulate with which to furnish material for the fires to feed upon. If a few small fires like those that blazed last year will destroy so much timber, one can readily understand the vast quantities rendered useless by one good sized fire. That is the reason the government and the state exercise so much care in providing a system for protecting the timber against fire, through the patrol of forest rangers who make it their business to post notices, warn campers, caution settlers and put out fires which may have been started by careless hands. Mr. Johnson found, in his rambles over the state, that the people generally have become educated up to the protective system, its advantages and co-operation with the rangers in protecting the forests.

In various districts of the state are vast "boneyards" of dead timber; acres and miles of skeleton trees, shorn of their green foliage by withering fires, which left behind a trail of desolation. Mr. Johnson says he knows of nothing so sad as to stand among these stumps of trees, hear

them rattle their "dry bones," and speculate upon the great waste of commerce.

The timber of eastern Oregon, Mr. Johnson says, is very interestingly distributed. He says he means by that the timber appears in the form of ragged "islands" surrounded by semi-arid deserts, sage brush plains, alkali flats, meadows, open valleys, etc. These peculiar formations, he said, are grouped about the Blue mountains, and the different spurs belonging to the main chain.

The timber is mostly of the pine variety. Malheur county, one of the largest counties in the Union, is almost treeless, from what particular reason Mr. Johnson was not prepared to say. A good part of the country is mountainous and, according to the natural order of things, should be covered with considerable timber.

When asked how long it would take to exhaust the timber supply at the present rate of consumption, Mr. Johnson replied he did not know, as he had not the figures at hand regarding the quantity of standing timber there is in the state, but one thing was certain—inside of twenty years the mills would be using timber which they would not look at now.

GREEK MINING REVIVAL.

Worked 3,000 Years Ago—Small Inducements Now Offered.

An alleged effort is being made to revive the mineral industry in Greece, and the isles of the Grecian archipelago, which stretch away to the southeast towards the coast of Asia Minor. Twenty-five hundred to 3,000 years ago this region was then in its prime. The best known of the ancient mines were those of Laurium on the mainland, where for several centuries fully 10,000 men (slaves) were continually engaged in the working of the argenteous galena deposits and veins. At other points gold, copper and iron was produced.

At the present time, the principal metals and minerals produced are lead, zinc, iron, manganese and silver. But there are deposits of copper, chromium and sulphur, while among the rarer substances known are tungsten, platinum, emery and gold. Petroleum has been noted at several places.

The Grecian government has recently enacted a number of mining laws which are probably considered by the Greeks to be liberal, and liable to encourage the industry; but will hardly attract the American miner. Prospecting is free and there the freedom ends. Deposits of gold, silver, barytes, emery, sulphur, chromium and platinum, are declared to be the sole property of the government; and the right to work can only be obtained by a special act of the chamber of deputies, which of course means that only those who will pay to the government, or its officials, a liberal percentage of their profits, can obtain mining rights to such.

For other minerals there is provided a special act of concession, covering the payment of preliminary fees amounting to \$50 to \$80, and the furnishing of plans and maps of proposed work, analysis of the ore and minerals, and a certificate of the financial ability of the applicant to pay his bills. After two months—during which there is a publication in local papers, at the cost of the applicant, of most of his documents and petitions—the papers go to the minister of the interior; who in due time forwards them to the chief superintendent for verification. The latter then collects about \$75 in further fees, and passes the petitioner and his literature over to the commissioner of finance, in whose department there is a four months wait, and no doubt a further passing around of the hat to gather in any balance of loose change the would-be operator may have about him. Finally, if the applicant still has any desire to operate, a mining committee composed of nine members, issue an ordinance, which goes to the king for signature, and when the latter finds it convenient to approve, the concessionaire is at last in a position to go to work. It is safe to say that under these conditions the mining industry of Greece will not develop with any startling rapidity. The exports of metal and metallic ores of the nation for the year 1899 were as follows: Iron ore, 448,000 tons; manganese ore, 22,400 tons; lead ore, 6,720 tons; zinc, 22,500 tons; lead bars, 20,160 tons.—Exchange.

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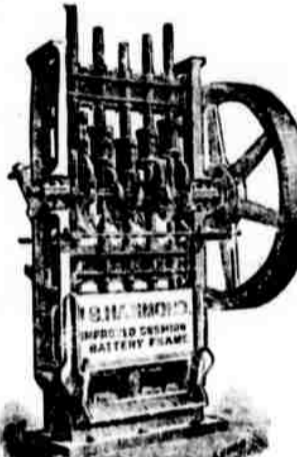
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ABSTRACTS

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