

**Heppner Working Circle Timber Situation Analyzed**

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The privately owned timber that supplies sawmills in the vicinity of Heppner, Hardman and Kinzua is by no means inexhaustible. Within the next five years three of the five sawmills operating in the Heppner Working Circle will have cut out all the private timber they now control. The other two mills can maintain production until about 1957 when the private timber they now control will also have been cut out. Since production from the Heppner Working Circle accelerated by the war time demand for maximum production of lumber has three times its entire sustained capacity, it appears that the private timber will be liquidated rapidly. This prediction can be made with even greater justification in view of the probable demand for building materials expected to develop during the post war period.

In order to have up to date information in the timber resources in the Heppner Working Circle, the Forest Service in 1944 made an analysis of the situation in the area which supplies Wheeler and Morrow county sawmills with timber. This study which includes all of the timbered areas in that part of the Blue mountains lying west of Potamus creek and Arbuckle mountain and north of the John Day river indicates that 1,443,000,000 board feet of ponderosa pine sawtimber and 360,000,000 board feet of Douglas fir, white fir, Engelmann spruce and western larch the so-called minor species, remain uncut in both private and public ownership. Of the ponderosa pine volume, 53 percent is on land controlled by private owners, 46 percent by the Forest service and 1 percent by other public agencies. Forty-five percent of the minor species, located mainly in the less accessible places, is found on national forest land. At first glance it appears that there should be plenty of timber for everyone. However, this is not the case. When it is considered that the five sawmills cutting timber from this unit in 1944 produced 68,200,000 board feet of lumber, the supply discloses that actually there is by begins to look small. The survey means enough for any long period.

The private and publicly owned lands which supply these five mills with logs are capable of annually supporting a cut of 20.8 million board feet of ponderosa pine and 4.3 million feet of minor species, a total of 25.1 million board feet. Operating at full capacity under war necessity, these mills in 1944, instead of adhering to this allowable annual average, cut 64 million board feet of ponderosa pine lumber and 4.2 million board feet of Douglas fir, western larch and white fir. The current annual cut of ponderosa pine alone is therefore about three times as great as would be allowable on a sustained yield basis. Since most of the cut is from privately owned timber lands, the sustained yield capacity of the private holdings is being rapidly reduced.

Keeping in mind the five sawmills and the large volume of timber they require each year, let us for the moment confine our attention to the timber now in private ownership and look more closely at what is happening there. If all of the 761 million board feet of ponderosa pine timber and all of the 151 million board feet of minor species in private ownership were equally available to the existing mills at their 1944 rate of cutting, it could all be cut in about 13 years. This is an alarming figure since, as most people realize, 13 years in terms of tree growth or in the life of an industry is but a short time.

Fifty-nine percent of the private timber is controlled by existing sawmills, the remaining 41 percent being uncontrolled. The uncontrolled timber, much of it located at low elevations on the fringe of the Forest in places difficult to log

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