

## QUALITY, CONDITION AND END USES OF LUMBER IN VARIOUS MARKET AREAS IN CONTINENTAL EUROPE

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When I was first asked to give a slide presentation on my activities in Continental Europe for the past three years, I seriously considered the title "Continental Capers." However, I thought it may leave some people with the wrong impression as a few already think a three year term overseas is just that. I can assure you it's anything but that. However, it was interesting and educational.

In June, 1972 I was transferred, along with my family, to Brussels, Belgium for a period of three years. My territory was Western Europe including Norway and Sweden and also a work assignment in Israel.

When we are transferred from Vancouver, B. C. for overseas duties, the main reason is to conduct reinspections for our lumber industry and also for our neighbours south of the 49th parallel.

Reinspections do not take up all our time so consequently we get involved in many other activities relevant to the lumber industry. These activities include:

1. Technical assistance to end users re maximum utilization of our products, proper use of species and grades and assist in the development of new end uses.
2. Investigate complaints on our lumber products re condition, size and moisture content.
3. Lectures to various organizations such as: importers' association, wood testing laboratories, vocational schools, wood institutions, etc. on various aspects of our industry.
4. Assist with training and education programs.
5. Conduct market studies to ascertain potential for our products and to inform our industry of inroads made by competitive or new products.
6. Technical assistance to other countries and participate in the development of grading standards.
7. Promote international acceptance of Standard NLGA grades and sizes.
8. Provide technical information to our own Technical Counselors located in various areas in Europe.

Reinspections on lumber produced in North America are generally done for 5 main reasons:

1. Moisture content
2. Condition
3. Size
4. Tally
5. Quality

A breakdown of the various categories is as follows:

Moisture Content

Pertains to moisture content on kiln dried stock at time of arrival.

Condition

A claim on condition could entail discolouration due to mold and stain, oil and grease marks, dust, dirt, mycelium and deterioration, checking and splits.

Size

This pertains to under and over in thickness and width (claim for size only).

Tally

Pertains to percentages of the various grades and lengths, volume, shortages according to contract or excess overshipment.

Quality (Grade)

This would include assessing all natural and/or manufacturing characteristics according to the various grades and in relation to the grades ordered. Claims for grade would also take into account variation in size according to the limits laid down in the grading rule.

While conducting reinspections in the various European countries and Israel, it is an excellent opportunity to educate the importer and end users re grades, grading rules, suitability of species, size, etc. for specific end uses. It also offers opportunities to our industry in obtaining information re the end users' needs and may present new opportunities for certain size and species. It also gives the importer and end users the chance to express their views on various problems they may have encountered with our species. It also gives us the opportunity to assist in solving their problems.

Activities, other than reinspections, we get involved in relevant to the lumber industry are many and have been mentioned and broken down into 8 main areas. However, an explanation of each area may be beneficial.

1. There are times when end users require assistance in remanufacturing our lumber for maximum utilization, i.e. when buying Shop and Better grades for remanufacture: Does one rip each piece through the thickness or cross-cut a portion first and then rip the balance of the piece? How can vertical grain be obtained as opposed to flat grain items? Involvement with end users also deals with proper use of species and grades in the development of new end uses.
2. Aside from reinspections for grade, condition, etc. we also get requests to investigate complaints on grade, condition and size, etc. These are usually complaints by the manufacturer where quality and size may be noticed more readily when remanufacturing the lumber to certain sizes and specified end uses.
3. Lectures given include information on our forests, logging, saw-milling, planing, grading, packaging and shipping. The educational system re the training of graders, supervisors and mill personnel is also covered.

4. Assistance to importer/remanufacturing firms re training and education programs is also given.
5. Market studies are conducted in the Western European countries to ascertain potential for lumber produced on the North American continent. End users are visited and contacted to determine species, sizes, lengths and grades currently used and how the various sizes are remanufactured, dried and dressed for various end uses. Knowing end use requirements enables the industry to better supply the various market areas. Conducting market studies also supplies the industry of inroads made by competitive or new products.
6. Technical assistance is given to Western European countries including Nordic countries in the development of grading standards and acceptability tests of species and grades. Time and effort has gone into assisting Nordic countries in the development of their new stress grading standard as well as participation in the development of a stress grading standard for coniferous timber for Europe.
7. Involvement in Europe also includes promoting the international acceptance of Standard NLGA grades and sizes currently used in North America.
8. Time is also spent providing technical information re species, grades, sizes, specifications, grading rules to our own Technical Counselors located in various areas in Europe.

Up to now I have only covered the activities and involvements of the timber specialists and have not covered end uses.

I think at this point it may be of interest to briefly talk about the various species and products and respective end uses in various European countries.

#### Western Red Cedar (also Redwood from the U. S. A.)

Shop and Better grades: generally remanufactured for interior decorative panelling. Exterior sidings are also made but to a much lesser extent than panelling. Small amounts are used in the making of doors and windows.

Knotty Type Cedar: is also imported by some European countries and is used for exterior siding and structural members in vacation-type homes.

#### Douglas Fir

Used for a number of end uses:

Clears: ladders, doors, windows, roller blinds, scaffolds, panelling.

Merch grades: generally used for perkins and rafters for the roof structure of traditional type homes, particularly in France and Belgium. A portion of the original sizes imported by the European countries is remanufactured to smaller sizes for roof rafters and floor and ceiling joists.

#### Hemlock

Clears: used in the making of decorative panelling, ladders, roller blinds and at times for doors and windows.

Merch: used for structural members such as perlins and rafters in traditional house construction, particularly in France and Belgium.

#### Sitka Spruce

Clears: used for ladders and decorative panelling.

Merch: same use as Douglas Fir and Hemlock merch.

The species and sizes graded to NLGA Rules for structural use are imported by the European countries and used for timber frame construction. A good portion of the narrow widths is used in the making of trusses.

The aforementioned re species from North America and their use in Continental Europe is but a brief outline as to their general use.

#### Conclusion

In order to keep claims and complaints to a minimum on lumber produced in North America it is imperative that the producing mills ensure that their products are: adequately anti-stain treated, properly seasoned, correctly graded, manufactured on size, properly packaged, tallied and stencilled. This results in satisfied customers and ensures the continued use of our products. Further, in an age where competition is keen and consumer demands are increasingly critical, a well merchandized or better product is also a more profitable product.