

THE IMPORTANCE OF LUMBER SEASONING IN THE FUTURE^{1/}

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The preliminary draft of the Timber Resource Review, recently released, gives an up-to-date appraisal of the national timber situation. One level of estimate shows that demand for lumber will increase from 41.5 billion board feet in 1952 to 46 billion board feet in 1975, even though the per capita consumption may drop 17 percent during the same period. This period will likely see general increased demands for all structural raw materials and a steady increase in our standard of living.

Although the western United States contains almost 70 percent of the commercial sawtimber volume, there are two obvious changes taking place in the general timber supply that are significant and of direct interest to the group assembled here. First, as we harvest the best of our accessible old-growth timber, size and quality of the material going through the sawmills is decreasing. Second, we are necessarily turning more and more to less desirable species or to species not heretofore commonly marketed. Both of these situations call for greater attention to manufacture and the efficient and skillful processing of lumber. There is no question that in the future there will be a premium on stable lumber, properly manufactured and properly dried to the desired final moisture content.

Another trend will lend importance to technical proficiency in handling lumber and to improvement of methods for drying the poorer, less-stable products and little known species. This trend is the rather sharp, continuing increase

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in the competitive atmosphere surrounding the marketing of physical structure raw materials. Keen competition will add to the premium on any well prepared product.

You people, primarily lumber seasoning specialists, have an important job in protecting and broadening the future markets for lumber throughout the country. Your program to follow, drawing widely on technical experiences and know-how from all over the West, indicates the serious interest going into the dry kiln club program. I know you will have a successful meeting, and I want to wish you well in the job ahead.