

# Madison's Lumber Retrospective

A 60-year walk down  
forestry's Memory Lane

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## AN INDEPENDENT MARKET SURVEY COVERING FIR, HEMLOCK, CEDAR, WESTERN WHITE SPRUCE

Sept. 28, 1957. MADISON'S CANADIAN LUMBER REPORTER

So far this year B.C. sales to U.K. have amounted to 11.4% or 305,246 M of total U.K. purchases. Sweden is in the lead having sold 31%; Russia next at 21%; Finland 18% with B.C. in fourth place.

Small mills are complaining about pressure from banks, who are forcing them to sell stock. Claims remain high. Many are marginal and simply the result of the weak market. They are often without valid justification. In a normal market many of these claims would never stand investigation.

MADISON'S CANADIAN LUMBER REPORTER Oct. 28, 1957.

Since our last report of plywood mills shutting down to cut back production, more producers have announced shutdowns. Another big B.C. plywood producer has shut down one unit completely for a two week period. Some 1800 employees were laid off.

October 12, 1957.

For the fifth consecutive month shipments from Pacific Great Eastern green Fir mills have declined. P.G.E. September loadings totalled 1530 cars of lumber, down 149 cars from September 1956 and a drop of 353 cars or 18.8% from August shipments of 1883 cars.

November 15, 1957.

B.C.'s first pulp mill strike started Thursday when the union spurned a Conciliation Board offer of 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ % an hour wage increase. October P.G.E. shipments totalled 1627 cars; an increase of 97 cars over September, but a decrease of 203 cars from October 1956 when 1830 cars were shipped. Credit is still very bad in many parts of Canada. Some accounts are now taking 90 days on shipments which were formerly paid for in 30 days. More layoffs are reported by the major B.C. producers due to market weakness. Big mill production cutbacks out here are more severe than they have been in the Vancouver area for many years.

December 14, 1957.

Western White Spruce car loadings from Prince George area mills declined to 548 cars in November reports the C.N.R. This is 115 cars less than October. On the B.C. coast the pulp strike continues, without any immediate sign of conciliation. More loggers have been laid off because they were in log stands of pulp wood.

December 31, 1957.

Annual report of MacMillan and Bloedel Limited showed a 45% drop in net profit for their year ending September 30. Net this year was \$10,223,749 compared with \$18,685,615 in 1956. Higher wage and operating costs against lower sales prices were cited as chief reasons for the profit drop.

MADISON'S CANADIAN LUMBER REPORTER Jan. 11, 1958.

Current CPR rail strike which has halted shipments from more than 90 mills in B.C. may end this weekend. Federal Government has told railway and union to get together. The Cabinet has offered a plan for settling the dispute.

June 28, 1958.

When IWA announced Thursday that 87% of their membership on the B.C. Coast had voted in favor of a strike, price of green Fir at some Interior mills started to rise. Results of the Government supervised strike vote, which must be held before a walkout can be called, will be known by Monday, June 30.

July 12, 1958.

Both Northern Interior Lumber Manufacturers Association, representing 41 mills in the Prince George area and Interior Lumber Manufacturers Association representing mills in the Fir and Larch areas of Southern Interior are now in Conciliation with IWA over new wage contracts. NILMA contract expires August 31.

July 31, 1958.

The worst forest fire outbreak in the history of B.C. will result in a shortage of logs in all sections of the Province this Fall. All logging has stopped in the Vancouver Forest District. Many logging operations in the Interior are also shut down.

The closure of Vancouver Forest District because of a long fire season is limiting production by logging camps. There are rafts in cold decks around the B.C. Coast, but the number of rafts is down. It is making specified lengths very difficult to buy.

July 30, 1958.

The shingle mill strike in Washington has resulted in some B.C. mills withdrawing from the market, until they can see just what will happen.

August 15, 1958.

Shingle strike in Oregon and Washington was settled for a 5¢ an hour increase.

August 30, 1958.

A conciliation board will hear current wage dispute between Interior Lumber Manufacturers Association and IWA. Thirty two mills in Southern Interior of B.C. have countered an IWA demand for 15% wage increase by offering the same wage as now being received. Contract expires August 31.

All B.C. Coast mills are shut down again by Forest Fire ban. This applies to the Coast only. IWA have agreed to renew their contract with Coast operators at the same rate of pay as the old contract. There are minor changes in the new contract.

Longshoremen's strike has shut down all B.C. ports for lumber export. Not many Coast mills are able to switch more than 15% of their production to rail shipments, because mills are designed for cargo. Many of them only cut green Hemlock (see Cargo Report).

The Federal Government rejected a plea to intervene in the current longshoremen's strike which has tied up the B.C. waterfront. Government authorities say there is sufficient existing labor law machinery to take care of the dispute.

September 15, 1958.

Shipments of green Fir dimension from mills on P.G.E. broke all previous monthly records in August when 2686 cars of lumber were shipped. Bulk of these shipments went to United States. This August figure exceeded the previous record of 2362 cars in July by 324 cars. Spruce shipments from Prince George are still down.

Federal Government has appointed a mediator for the B.C. Longshore strike, now in its 22nd day. Talks start this week.

Wage negotiations between B.C. Coast manufacturers and IWA open March 16. Current contract expires June 14. IWA have gone on record for a 10% wage boost this year.

Another matter also causing B.C. manufacturers anxiety is a custom officers boosting of the tariff on some Ponderosa Pine shiplap which came from the U.S. into St. Catharines, Ontario. Pine has been coming in under a 5% tariff. The Canadian customs officer claimed it should be 20% because the shipment was manufactured. Fearing retaliation from the U.S. on lumber shipments, officials of B.C. Lumber Manufacturers Association are fighting the increased tariff on the Pine shiplap.

India is interested in buying ties from B.C. According to one large exporter here, this business is contingent on India being able to get dollars. It is not known if Canada will make this money available through the Colombo Plan aid.

March 15, 1958.

MADISON'S CANADIAN LUMBER REPORTER

According to Martin Caine, well known Prince George lumberman, inventories on planer mill row are now about 75,000,000 b.f.m. - down from 15% to 20% from this time last year.

MADISON'S CANADIAN LUMBER REPORTER April 12, 1958.

In Vancouver wage negotiations between IWA and FIR have broken down. Union wants 10% more; operators say the present market outlook does not warrant any increase. A conciliator will be appointed to hear the dispute. Contract expires June 14.

MADISON'S CANADIAN LUMBER REPORTER April 28, 1958.

A conciliation officer failed to settle the contract dispute between 28,000 workers represented by International Woodworkers of America and B.C. Coast lumber operators.

IWA is asking for a 10% pay boost. Basic rate is now \$1.72 an hour. Current contract expires June 14.

The six major producers of Cedar on the B.C. Coast, report they are sold out for the next 30 to 45 days on common Cedar boards. This resulted from a spurt of buying from Ontario and some offshore business.

MADISON'S CANADIAN LUMBER REPORTER May 12, 1958.

IWA demand for a 10% increase in B.C. got a sharp setback last week. In Portland, Oregon, the IWA regional negotiating committee, representing 45,000 workers in five Western States announced they have agreed to no wage increases for the coming contract

May 28, 1958.

Western White Spruce production at Prince George is almost at a standstill following a month long heat wave which resulted in 50 forest fires in Prince George district. Wednesday morning manufacturers reported practically all planers at a standstill as crews battled forest fires in the area. Supplies of rough Spruce to planer mills have stopped.

Plywood is still very weak across Canada. This industry is suffering from over supply. Some producers are now giving 25% off published lists on certain items. This industry weakness has not prevented the IWA at Quesnel from asking for a 15% wage increase, plus fringe benefits at Western Plywood's plant.

June 14, 1958.

MADISON'S CANADIAN LUMBER REPORTER

Forest fires still continue to keep sawmill production in Prince George Forest district at a low level. Some rough mills are operating during the night, but many without burners are still shut down. Crews are still being used to fight fires.