Wire Rope Education.

Probably no single article entering into logging operations is as badly misused as wire rope. The subject is particularly vital at this time, as rope costs are heavy, with little likelihood of immediate reduction.

Wire rope is not always the victim of careless or intentional misuse, but it is frequently put to such tests, from sheer ignorance of its construction, that would give its manufacturers the "cold shivers." Education is the only plan by which men can be taught how to use a piece of rope properly. It is even unnecessary to cite some of the practices in vogue in some camps to make one wonder how wire rope lasts half its intended life.

As a suggestion for wire rope education, it might prove beneficial for the wire rope manufacturers to get together a series of motion pictures showing rope construction, which could be displayed in the larger logging camps. These films should be accompanied by a factory representative familiar with rope construction and its proper use. In this way they could demonstrate the right and wrong ways of handling lines. The pictures could well be supplemented with practical demonstrations of proper methods in the woods. Other manufacturers have found these methods productive of excellent results.

A very large proportion of the logs produced in the West are handled by wire rope. If it were possible to effect a saving of five cents per thousand feet in rope costs, by virtue of education, it would aggregate nearly a half million dollars annually. This estimate is made on the normal log production in the West of ten billion feet of logs annually.

The education of the logger in the proper care and handling of wire rope would bring to his mind an appreciation of the value of all other tools and materials with which he is entrusted, thus effecting an appreciable saving in other lines as well.

Export Trade.

The comprehensive report made by Roger E. Simmons, foreign trade expert, who recently spoke to Pacific Coast lumbermen, has given the trade generally much encouragement. Mr Simmons' review of the foreign markets indicates that much of the world's demand for lumber must be filled by the Pacific Northwest within the next five years. In view of this, lumbermen believe that Mr. Simmons voiced a basic truth when he said there is no reason why manufacturers should invade the foreign fields as individuals and compete with one another. Likewise they agree with him that the only wise course is to have the business placed at figures that will insure reasonable profits since a good percentage of the orders must be filled in this district.

Prices will rule high in Great Britain for timber and timber products. It is estimated that well over 1,000,000 new homes will be required, and the trade papers are full of the records of high prices being paid for standing and sawn timber. Plywoods and veneers are largely coming into use as against the more wasteful method of sawing timber into boards, and this has resulted in much higher prices being realised. A cable recently received by Messrs Howes and Co., states the Otago Daily Times, quotes alder three-ply at 45s per 100ft. Before the war this line was to be bought in Dunedin at 13s 6d, while similar lines now on the market are selling locally at 27s 6d. A striking instance of the increased value of timber when made into veneers is reported. An English walnut tree, grown in Nuneham Park, was sold for £200. The log eventually found its way to America after changing hands several times. Its American purchasers cut it up into 60,000 feet of veneers, which were sold for £1500.

Ships of "Puffed Brick."

Concrete ships seem unlikely enough, but how about ships built of brick? We hasten to say, for the information of scoffers, that the bricks are not laid in mortar, but are pulverised and mixed with cement. The result is a compound vastly lighter than ordinary concrete, but employed in much the same way. Says a writer in the "Scientific American" (New York, March 29th): "Two puffed-brick ships are soon to be launched at San Francisco. Bricklayers are not, however, employed in building this peculiar type of boat because with the mortar used, a trowel-wielding labourer is not required. The 'puffed-brick' used is made, like ordinary brick of a peculiar clay containing a low percentage of silica. Subjected to an intense heat, the brick puffs up like popcorn. The product looks something similar to coke and is about as light. Once puffed the bricks are ground to dust and mixed with cement. This process, it is claimed, makes for a gain of about forty per cent. in the lightness of the ship's walls without losing any of its strength. The ship's forms are built in standardised sections and are hinged with bolts so they can be forced in and put out of the way when the concrete hardens. After launching, the forms are quickly put back into place, steel reinforcing rods installed, and the pouring of another ship can be begun. According to experts in concrete shipbuilding this system makes it possible to turn out a 7,500 ton vessel every three months, and only about twenty-five per cent. of the lumber in the forms is wasted. The first two ships built of this material at San Francisco, each 7,500 ton oil tanks, are ready to be launched."

Suitable woods being scarce, a Paris firm claims to have been successful in making furniture out of reinforced concrete. The result is excellent. Almost any article can be made, and, whether desk, chair, or table, it looks like a highly lacquered piece of furniture. Moreover, it is not heavy. English manufacturers also have been experimenting, and at least one firm is opening a factory near London.