

circular saw. The head sawyer in front of the saw is the most skilled man in the mill, for he has to decide, with due regard to the order requirements, how to use each flitch to the greatest advantage. In other words, he must decide whether the flitch will best provide 4 x 2's or 6 x 1's or 4 x 4's, bearing in mind the quality of the timber he is handling. And, like the sawyer on the breaking-down bench, he must decide in a hurry. There is no time to measure and mark the flitch, and there is no point in finishing up with a size of timber of no use to any one.

So with a confidence born of long experience he seizes a flitch, measures it with his eye, knocks his gauge over a peg or two, and runs the flitch through the saw to his mate on the other side. This man, the tailer-out, throws the sawn length behind him with his left hand and slides the rest of the flitch along the table back to the sawyer with his right. This is run through again and again until sawn into the required sizes.

There may be an odd piece of timber over, perhaps a piece near the bark which is of no use except as firewood. This slab is thrown to one side and in the smaller mills cut into short lengths to be used by the locals to fire the family copper. Where the mill is steam-powered most of these pieces are used to feed the mill boilers.

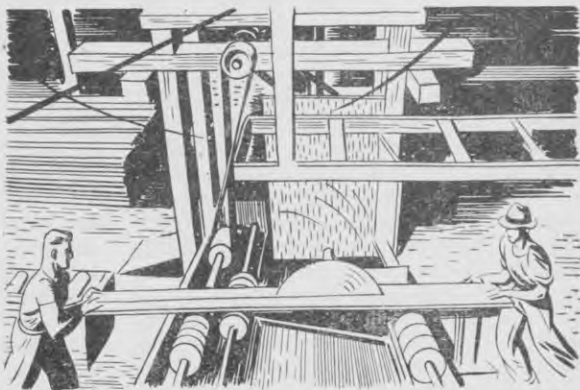
In the larger modern mills many of the pieces are used as "hoggings." They are thrown into a chute called a "hog," in the bottom of which are a number of knives revolving at high speed. These chew the timber into small pieces, and it is taken away on a form of conveyer belt to be fed into the boilers.

The system of delivery-line which feeds the flitches to the breast benches is duplicated in another carrying the sawn lengths down from the breast benches to what is called the "docking" table. All rollers lead ultimately to this table, where the sawn lengths are deposited on a large portion of the floor of the mill into

which thin conveyer belts are set. These belts carry the lengths up to stops where they are automatically trued up against one side. Then off they go over two saws set in the floor. One saw chops off pieces too long at one end, and then, by reversing the rollers, the lengths are trued against the other side and passed over the other saw. Thus the lengths are trimmed to four sizes and pass on until they come to their appropriate bin, into which they fall on the shortest-first-the-longest-last principle.

The modern mills are set up on 12 ft. stilts in order to give the necessary fall to the timber and get it away from the mill-floor quickly. Hoggings, slabs, and sawn lengths all disappear below the mill-floor and are despatched quickly to their various places. The sawn lengths are stacked outside the mill to await delivery by rail to the customer.

One of the smaller mills, unusual in that it is electrically powered, possesses a dressing-mill which dresses the sawn timber. This mill is as quiet as a country road after a city street when compared with the main mill. Here individual lengths are run through planing-machines to emerge smooth and trim. One machine planes only one side at a time; another dresses all four. A suction pump above each machine draws off the shavings along a pipe-line to a furnace some fifty yards away. Since fire is a big hazard in these mills the plan is to separate buildings as much as possible so as to avoid the danger of a fire spreading.



The breast bench.