

Important Part Timber Plays in Production of Mineral Wealth.

"Few persons not directly interested in mining realize the extent to which timber is used in this very important industry," said a Government expert in preservation of mine timber who has just returned to Washington from the West. "The average man has only a vague understanding of the importance of the part that timber plays in the mining industry, and seldom thinks of the enormous quantities required each year to prevent the caving of the over-hanging ground and to keep clear the main working passages of mines.

"There are two general classes of such timbers," he continued, "the first is used in bracing the 'stopes' as they are called where the ore is being taken out. As the ore is mined, the surrounding rock is held in place by bracing it with heavy timbers, 'framed' into rectangular 'sets'. When ore directly above the first set is removed, a second set is built on top, and so on. The service of these timbers ends when the ore is exhausted and the active mining transferred to another vein or ore-body.

"After a time these timbers decay, to a point where the pressure of the rock walls crushes them, and a 'cave-in' occurs. This causes no damage if, as I have said, the mining work has been finished; but it sometimes happens that decay has weakened the timbers to such an extent that the cave-in occurs prematurely, and then lives are sacrificed. In such cases the remaining ore is also a loss, for when the ground has once commenced to move or 'work,' as the miners call it, it is almost impossible to clean it out and hold back the rock so that the remaining ore may be obtained.

"But of still greater importance is the second class of timbers used in the main working openings, tunnels, shafts, etc., which are to be maintained for as long a time as possible. Timbers for this service are chosen not only for their strength and firmness, but also for their ability to resist decay.

"In nine cases out of ten, when timbers are crushed, the indirect cause is decay produced by low forms of plant life. The dwindling of our timber supply has driven consumers of wood all over the country to study decay and its prevention, and it is safe to say that in the very near future we shall see many more mines putting in small plants for the treatment of their timbers, after the pattern of the plants that have been designed and installed for this purpose by the United States Forest Service. By treating the permanent timbers with some one of the various preservatives, they may be made to resist decay almost indefinitely. The additional cost is slight.

"Not only this, but since timber when it is once treated retains its original strength, many of the so-called 'inferior timbers,' which have hitherto been considered almost valueless because they decay rapidly will find wide use in many localities. Such species are loblolly pine and, to a certain extent, shortleaf pine, Engelmann spruce fire-killed lodgepole pine, white fir and many other more local timbers.

"The first of the treating plants for mine timbers was put up by an eastern coal company, after extensive experiments in

cooperation with the Forest Service which demonstrated the practical value of the treatments. Since then, other plants have been installed in different parts of the country, two of the latest being in the Coeur d'Alene lead district of northern Idaho, where, while there is an ample timber supply for some time to come, the treatment is warranted by the high labor cost of replacing timber sets. The added cost of treating timbers is from 10 to 25 per cent of the original cost.

"An interesting point in the problem of wood preservation is the spread of decay in old workings, caused by infection from nearby timbers. A fresh green post, placed between two sticks that are already 'sick,' will become infected and decay much more rapidly than if it were isolated. The contagion is similar to that of the ills that man is heir to, although it usually works more slowly. In one large mine a two-mile tunnel was completed eight years ago and during the first four years the timber stood up in fine shape. Then signs of decay began to creep in here and there, and since then the disease has extended throughout the entire length of the tunnel, necessitating an annual expenditure of between four and five thousand dollars for replacing timbers rendered useless through decay. Less than one-fourth of this sum goes for timber, the remainder representing the cost of framing and installing. Unquestionably many of the cave-ins which crush the timbers and block the mine tunnels, often causing many deaths, are due to nothing but wood decay.

"The work of treating mine timbers is considered of such importance that one group of men in the Forest Service gives its entire attention to this subject. Investigative work carried on by this branch of the Service since it was organized has demonstrated that treating with an efficient preservative will prolong the life of timber indefinitely in places where before it was subject to a rapid decay, and the interest shown by the large consumers of timber and their eagerness to supply the information that has been obtained to their own particular problems has been widespread and indicative of the benefits of wood preservation."

NEW RAILROAD FOR OCALA.

Times-Union Bureau, Ocala, Jan. 12.—It was rumored here this morning that in the near future a railroad would be built from this city to Silver Springs, a distance of six miles, connecting there with the E. P. Pentz Company's line, which runs from Silver Springs to Fort McCoy, a distance of seventeen miles, and which is now being extended to Palatka. It was impossible to find out who the promoter or promoters are, but the news was received from good authority.

This connection will mean a great deal to Ocala in a commercial way, and will be good news to the citizens of this section, who have been working to secure this connecting link for some time. Silver Springs is one of the most beautiful spots in this country, and is very popular with the tourists. With a line to the Springs it will enable the traveler to journey there without loss of time, and will prove a big drawing card.

BIG STEAMSHIP LINE FOR JACKSONVILLE.

Rumored that Merchants and Miners Company Will Come Here. Have Large Local Real Estate Holdings.

Persistent rumors are being circulated to the effect that the Merchants and Miners Transportation Company of Baltimore is going to make Jacksonville a port of entry for its magnificent fleet of ships.

These rumors cannot be confirmed or denied for reason that there are no representative officials of the company in Jacksonville, other than the employees of the freight and passenger office and, of course, they know nothing of the intention of the officers and directors of the concern.

No official information has been received in Jacksonville that the company intends to establish a line of steamers between this port and Baltimore, though it is taken that the news sent out from the latter city in the shape of a dispatch is authentic.

Purchased Property.

There certainly must be something to the report as in the summer of 1905 the Merchants and Miners Company purchased the old Henry Clark property on the South Side, between Marsh street on the west and Hogans creek on the east, and also an immense tract on the north side of Bay street, between the points mentioned. The purchase price of the property was said to be \$180,000 and the deal was negotiated by Mr. J. C. Whitney, president of the Merchants and Miners Company. The fact that the company owns this valuable river front property, which would afford ample docking facilities, is unquestionably the best indication that, sooner or later, Jacksonville is to be made a port of entry. Since this property was purchased the business of Florida has increased wonderfully and as there are many advantages in the shipment of freight by water, there is every reason to believe that the line is to be inaugurated.

Conference with Merchants.

The Baltimore American in its issue of several days ago states that it is understood that President J. G. Whitney of the Merchants and Miners has had a number of conferences with leading wholesalers of Baltimore with a view of finding out the amount of freight that could be expected if the line was established. The operation of the line would be accomplished by extending the present Savannah line to Jacksonville. It is estimated that this arrangement would be more desirable for the company as it would insure more frequent service and would also provide for the carrying of freight between Savannah and Jacksonville. It is stated that the additional cost to the company in operating tri-weekly service out of each port mentioned would be \$250,000 annually.

There is hardly any probability that the service will be put on for some months to come, as the property of the company here would have to be improved in the erection of docks and other facilities incident to such business.

In Favor of Line.

There is a strong sentiment in favor of establishing the line and the matter is being agitated by the trade and commercial bodies in Baltimore. At a meeting of the Travelers' and Merchants' Association held in that city recently, the matter came up for discussion and the determination of the members of the association seemed

bent on the establishment of a line of steamers between Baltimore and Jacksonville. The association decided to begin this week the circulation of a petition addressed to the Merchants and Miners' Transportation Company, asking it to extend its present Savannah line to this city or to establish a separate line of steamers direct. It is understood in Baltimore that the company regards the proposition favorably and will probably in the near future announce its intention.

At this meeting in Baltimore the advantages of such a line to that city and the North were clearly defined as Florida is fast becoming recognized as an excellent market, in view of the remarkable increase in business of this state within the past few years. It is believed that conditions are favorable for the inauguration of the line and every indication seems to point to its establishment in the early future.

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