

## NOTE ON THE EXTRACTION OF FIREWOOD

By J. J. DEASY.

Foresters, fuel merchants and others faced with the task of bringing firewood to a point accessible to wheeled transport often meet with rough ground where every way out is beset with many obstacles and the going is extremely tough. They know that extraction, even of firewood, is an expensive job and while "crawler" tractors, cableways, etc. form the dream-stuff of many who interest themselves in this particular phase of forestry, all of them would welcome any practical cost-cutting ideas capable of being put into immediate effect.

Many engaged in extraction work employ the system of dragging by means of a chain looped around the logs. This method is heavy on draught and in wet weather the logs become covered with mud which greatly hampers handling, and the grit (some is picked up even in dry weather) rapidly dulls the edge of saws. Indeed, in yards where facilities are available, the sawyers think it fit to play a hose on such logs before putting them on the bench.

Some hardship can be avoided and the extraction speeded up by the use of a sled. The type described in this note is used by farmers in many parts of the country for the purpose of moving ploughs, harrows and other farm implements over hard roads. It has the merit of being simple to put together and is easily adapted for use in woods. The body is formed from an Ash fork, the main stem of which is shortened to 6" and the arms (about 4" in diam.) extending to a distance of approximately 6' being from 2½' to 3' apart at the ends. Any irregularities of the sliding surfaces are removed and, if considered desirable, they can be shod with light wheel-band iron. If this is done the iron would require to be countersunk into the timber in front where the strips of iron end. It will also be necessary to countersink the irons to receive the bolt heads. Ash battens are fixed securely across the arms, the foremost being about 2' long and the hindmost long enough to reach both arms while not projecting over the sides. The main stem is pared so as to produce a gentle upward curve or "prow" in front. A pin is passed through it horizontally to which is permanently attached a draught chain which can be connected with the "whipple-tree" or "swingles" by an "S" hook. For the purpose of binding the load, two lengths of chain are attached to the arms at opposite points; these are tightened in the usual way of securing a load by loosely hooking them and tightening with a twisting stick or "sticker."

It is advisable to have a greater number of sleds than horses so that it is possible always to have one loaded in readiness for the horse

that is bringing back an empty one. In this way very little horse time need be lost.

A sled of the type just described can also be used with advantage in difficult situations for the haulage of fence stakes, road poles, pit props and light saw-logs. In addition it can be adapted for the collection of road metal from points where the nature of the ground or tree crop does not allow of the use of wheeled vehicles.

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