

Plateau Mills Ltd. on-site chipping was not as successful as this operation close to Northwood's mill at Shelley. Citizen photo by Ric Ernst

## ON-SITE CHIPPERS

# Tests are less than big success

Experiments done with on-site chippers were far less than a resounding success, report officials of Plateau Mills Ltd.

Ernie Lawrence, general manager, said while independent tests of the chips provided by on-site operations indicated they should be acceptable, if mixed with other chips, Prince George mills were not interested. The claim is that the on-site chips are too high in bark content.

"As fibre grows tight, this could be a viable alternative," Lawrence said, referring to an existing plethora of chips.

Tests with the portable chipper were done in mid-1980, with the air being to utilize more of the wood than is now taken.

The aim is in concert with a call by Forest Minister Tom Waterland, who wants even broadleaf trees included in the

chip and lumber supply.

Lawrence said the machine used had a facility to eject bark, but not enough of it was separated from the chip supply. Therefore, he said, a separate barker might be needed.

He said if the two units were used, the energy demands to haul them around would preclude their use in many sites — therefore they would become almost permanent units in the woods.

Results of the test will be kept on hand until the time comes that chip supplies are down far enough to make the on-site supply more attractive to mills.

On-site chips is not the only area of utilization Plateau is concerned with improving. The mill has been using a wet

cell waste burner to provide heat for drying kilns and buildings.

The cell is a smokeless unit, providing 18 million BTU (British Thermal Units).

As part of a \$1.6 million expansion program, the mill is installing a 45 million BTU burner and will later upgrade the first to 25 million BTU.

Total capacity then will be able to heat six drying kilns, the sawmill and the planer mill. This should be completed this month.

Lawrence said a sorter was

installed in the planer mill, reducing the number of employees at the lowest level of skills.

Plateau, one of the companies under B.C. Resources Investment Corporation, has been moving toward being self-reliant, by assuming many facets of mill operation that had previously been done by contractors.

One of the main problems, complain company officials, is getting qualified people to keep the computer systems in top shape.

The computer system has been designed to provide peak utilization of every log cut in the mill. Log length and other cuts are determined for peak use.

The main computer keeps tally on lumber sizes, types of lumber, rejects, what was recycled and what was burned.

Large rejects are sent back to earlier stages, so usable lumber can be salvaged.

As automation increases, personnel does not necessarily drop, because people who can keep the machines running still needed.

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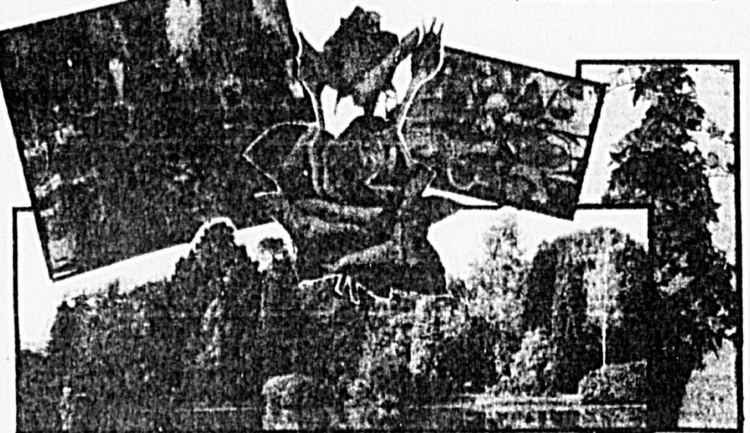
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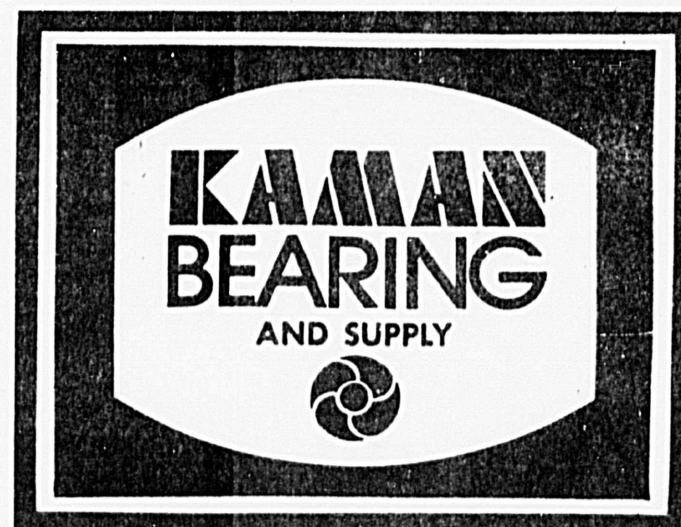


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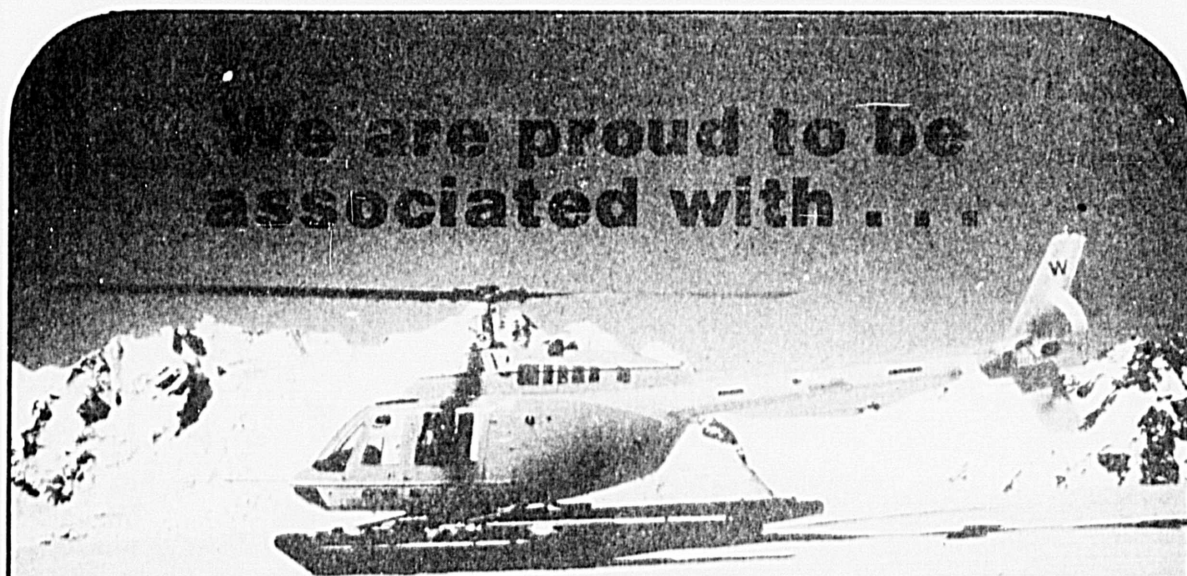
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