

Dec. 10, 1921.

MEMORANDUM RE QUESTION OF USING
PRESERVATIVE ON BUTTS OF REDWOOD FENCE POSTS.

Southern Pacific Railway engineers, with extensive data over a long period of years, find that the average life of a redwood cross tie is fifteen years, and that they usually fail from mechanical wear rather than deterioration. They believe we should expect a life of at least 15 years from the posts used. U.S. Forest service engineers hold about the same view.

All authorities agree that the only practicable treatment, (if any) for redwood would be an application of creosote oil, applied by a method which would give a penetration of at least 1/4". Inasmuch as in this case only the butts would be treated, pressure could not be used, and a method of boiling in creosote oil for a period of 12 hours or more, and then dipping in a cold solution of the same, would have to be used. No so-called "asphalt paints" have been found to be of any value under conditions in question, and none are recommended by either the U.S. Forest service or testing engineers who have been consulted.

Considering the preservative itself, it is doubtful if any preservative used would have a longer life than the natural life of the untreated redwood.

If, however, the locality should become infested with the South American ants, which are now a serious problem around Los Angeles, but which are not reported above the Tehachapi, then complete creosoting at most any cost would be advisable, creosoting being the only successful method now known for combating this pest.

All things considered, it seems advisable to use untreated posts in the present case.