

Minto Mill Produces \$1,000 in Lumber

Minto has already made around \$1,000 with their new sawmill, and although the mill has closed down again it's not because of "mechanical failure."

It's because the mill's six-man crew wanted to take a week off to go moose hunting.

Minto men, who had a summer plagued with trouble because of mechanical trouble on the mill, completed a log-cutting contract for the village's new Episcopal Church. The mill crew then went ahead and cut up the rest of logs left nearby, and now stacks of freshly-cut lumber is ready for shipment when a customer can be found.

Reports are reaching here that Nenana Lumber Company may purchase some of the boards, and cabin-builders working on structures out in the Minto flats may be making purchases.

Meanwhile, Richard Lewis BIA contract mechanic with the bureau who repaired the mill, is off for Noorvik to rectify the situation there.

Noorvik villagers recently complained that their mill was installed improperly and inoperable.

At Minto, another BIA sawmill project, the saw-blade had somehow come out of alignment.

Lewis, from Auke Bay, said: "I found the sawmill set up straight and solid, and lined up well. The saw-blade itself was badly out of alignment and it also had a broken shank. I put the saw into alignment and replaced the broken shank and made a few minor adjustments in the mill itself and it runs perfectly. How it got out of alignment and adjustment I can only guess."

"I have never seen one quite like that. I did not even start it up in that condition because it would have been too dangerous. It could have caused great damage."

Of the Minto workmen, Lewis said, "I would say they were cooperative and took to the training rather well. Mechanically they did well, and are a little on the "hep" side."

The Minto mill went out of operation this summer when workmen noticed the blade out of alignment.

Noorvik, where Lewis is headed now, is a different story. There, apparently, a hurried job left the mill on unstable foundations and completely, according to the villagers, out of adjustment.

Wilson Titus is overseeing mill operation in Minto, but the plant itself is owner and operated by a non-profit corporation set up by Minto villagers.