

Aug 9/92

Firm will remove log booms from Ottawa River

By JIM DAY

Special to the News

The last remnants of a 120-year-old river logging operation should be rolled out of the Ottawa River within months.

ICO Inc., formed in 1870 as the Upper Ottawa Improvement Company, is clearing from the Ottawa River all its boom timber used in the past to keep logs flowing in line for transportation, said company president Guy Cote.

ICO started its cleanup three

years ago, after bringing its log shipping business to a close, and now has 10 people working on cleaning up the river.

Since spring the company has pulled between 2,000 and 3,000 logs from the river between Deep River and Arnprior. They were taken to Chapleau and then trucked to saw mills.

The last of the boom timber should be dragged from the river by November, predicted Mr. Cote.

A sawmill in Braeside was the

last to use the Ottawa River to transport logs. The historical sawmill, which began operation in 1869, was forced to close earlier this year.

Transportation of wood on the Ottawa River began in 1806 when a raft of squared timber was floated from the mouth of the Gatineau River to Quebec City for shipment and remanufacturing in England.

The rafting of squared timber from various sites along the Upper Ottawa River continued for a time,

but Canadians — then as now — preferred to export the finished product (lumber) rather than the raw

material (square timber) so various sawmills were constructed along the Ottawa River.

Last logs leave Gillies 1992

by Lauri Loosemore
Special to the Mercury

The last load of lumber from Gillies lumber mill was shipped out of Arnprior August 26, the last load of lumber the mill will produce unless it is sold.

The mill, which employed area residents for the last 150 years, now sits in complete silence. The machinery shut down July 16 and since then trucks have been coming for the dwindling supply of lumber.

The last load of lumber was sold by Leak and Company in Don Mills, Ontario, a

wholesale company that has been dealing with Gillies for the past 50 years.

"At one time Leak and Company was one of Gillies' largest accounts," said Paul Lawson, who worked with Gillies for 17 years before going to Leak and Company.

The final destination of the lumber will be Butler and Baird in Aurora, Ontario.

"They manufacture boxes and pallets for places all over the world, so who knows where the finished product will end up," said Lawson. "Butler and Baird have been dealing with Gillies through

various wholesalers for over 20 years."

The load, which consisted of 36 packages, 42,000 fbm (foot board measure) of lumber was shipped by a local trucking company. Keatley Cartarge Limited loaded one of its trucks with the load on Wednesday afternoon.

"I just think it's ironic that a company that has dealt with Gillies for 50 years sold the last load of lumber to a company that has dealt with Gillies for the last 20 years and was shipped by a local company," said Lawson.