

Packages for the Palm Oil Trade

American Red Oak Preferred by British Handlers of African Commodity.

READERS of OIL & FAT INDUSTRIES will be interested in the following extracts from an article in Commerce Trade Bulletin No. 486, describing the packaging and handling methods of the palm oil trade between West Africa and Great Britain. In this connection, it may be noted here that in recent years a large quantity of the palm oil imported into the United States has been brought in bulk in the "deep" tanks of steamships.

strong construction in order to stand rough handling by native African labor. When full of oil, it weighs between 1,600 and 1,700 pounds; the barrels are rolled for many miles on the rough roads, and it is essential that they can stand this treatment without leakage. The palm oil cask of today is the outcome of many years' experience. It is large, carries a heavy weight under varying conditions, has to stand recoopering, make many long voyages, and be strong enough at



*Assembling Palm Oil Casks from Shooks
at Liverpool*

Ninety Per Cent. of Palm Oil Imports Come Through Liverpool

Liverpool is the center of the United Kingdom palm oil trade, it being estimated that over 90 per cent of the palm oil imported into Great Britain from West Africa comes through this port. The palm oil cask must be of exceedingly

the head to be slung with hooks when filled, and also be of sufficient unlisted; 44 by 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches, second without damage.

American Staves Superior for Palm Oil Casks

The materials now used for the manufacture of these palm oil casks are the best that can be procured,

and for this purpose American staves have been found superior to all others and are used exclusively by coopers supplying this trade.

Palm oil staves are shipped to Great Britain principally from New Orleans and Galveston, and are chiefly of red oak. They may be either flat or circle bucked, and are imported both listed and unlisted. Listed staves are those which have square edges, while the unlisted are shipped as they leave the bucking machine without any dressing of the edges.

The following stave specifications are used for the manufacture of palm oil casks: 44 by $1\frac{1}{8}$ inches, prime white and/or red oak, flat or circle dressed, listed 5 inches, average; 44 by $1\frac{1}{8}$ inches, prime white or red oak, flat or circle dressed, unlisted; 44 by $1\frac{1}{8}$ inches, second quality, white or red oak.

Second Quality Staves Seldom Used

The second quality staves are used in small quantities only. Heading for the casks is manufactured by local coopers out of third or fourth quality Canadian white or red pine lumber. The heading is finished to 38 and 40 inches diameter, principally the former, by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick. At opposite sides of the heading is inserted a small piece called a "cantel," which is made of oak, to strengthen the heading and to allow for the binding by the hoops.

Efforts have been made to introduce American palm oil shooks into Liverpool, but so far they have made little headway.

Palm Oil Casks Make Many Trips

The casks are sold by the coopers to firms engaged in the palm oil trade, and shipped to West Africa in shook form, whence they are re-

turned filled with oil, and distributed to the soap and tinplate manufacturers, who are the largest consumers of palm oil. After being emptied they are resold to the coopers, who repair those that are damaged, and after cleaning and shaking they are sold again to the operators, and reshipped to West Africa.

Good Demand for Second Hand Casks

There is also a considerable demand for second hand casks—in fact, they are preferred to new ones by some palm oil operators on account of their absorbing less oil. While a sufficiently low ocean freight obtained in recent years, quantities of emptied palm oil casks were shipped to Liverpool from America and sold to the coopers. These casks, after being cleaned and repaired if necessary, were converted into shooks, and resold to the palm oil operators for shipment to West Africa again.

Palm Oil Cask Specifications

The Liverpool Produce Association specification for regular palm oil casks (the regular size of a Liverpool palm oil cask is 38 inches and is known as a 38-inch cask), November, 1920, new or second hand, follows:

Staves.—The staves shall be of oak, of a minimum length of 42 inches, with an allowance of 1 inch for wear and tear, and of a thickness of 1 to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

Heads.—The heads shall be of white or red pine, with two oak cantels, and of a thickness of $1\frac{3}{8}$ to $1\frac{5}{8}$ inches.

Hoops.—The hoops shall be 10 in number, and of 2 inches by 14 Birmingham wire gauge.

Width.—The outside diameter at ends shall be from 38 to 44 inches.