

Some very erroneous views of what the Commissioners' practice has been are evidently in circulation. The total expenditure during the last two financial years on all classes of imported timber, whether for sleepers, piles, or other special purposes, has been only about £11,000, while the expenditure on local timbers has been £54,000.

When these facts are made known the Commissioners think that it will be admitted that they have done no more than would be reasonably expected of them to fulfil the duties and responsibilities imposed upon them by the Government of the colony, through the Government Railways Act; and they think that it will also be agreed that it would be injudicious to curtail the responsibility for the safe and proper control of life and property upon the Government railways by adopting any measures which might hinder or deter persons having charge of them from maintaining and keeping them in the safest and most efficient condition which can reasonably be done. The Commissioners would respectfully suggest that this letter may be made a parliamentary paper.

JAMES MCKERROW, Chief Commissioner.

### Enclosure.

#### RETURN of SLEEPERS RELAID—all Sections.

	1884-85.	1885-86.	1886-87.	1887-88.	1888-89.	1890-90.	1890-91.	Total.
Black-pine ... ..	55,490	47,143	41,670	22,732	13,408	9,426	6,728	196,147
Totara ... ..	13,314	17,560	18,347	8,043	6,652	6,935	22,025	92,876
Black-birch ... ..	44,960	37,178	47,271	50,914	52,018	73,379	52,540	358,260
Oregon ... ..	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Kauri ... ..	2,508	698	2,969	1,792	287	191	176	8,631
Blue-gum ... ..	40	32	12	94	43	...	...	221
Jarraha ... ..	21,272	24,907	10,186	3,712	1,844	1,321	947	64,189
Ped-pine ... ..	1,636	189	113	2,875	...	...	...	4,813
Puriri ... ..	6,064	6,899	12,753	26,328	24,205	24,082	16,843	117,174
Silver-pine ... ..	1,143	2,560	2,711	5,429	6,257	5,463	6,809	30,372
Manuka ... ..	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Rata ... ..	...	721	2,917	137	113	251	1,354	5,493
Kamai ... ..	...	...	1,683	481	2,338	7,104	22,954	34,560
White-pine ... ..	...	...	...	100	...	...	...	100
Creosoted ... ..	...	...	...	...	113	...	...	113
Ironbark ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	266	1,634	1,900
Creosoted red-pine ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	4
	146,440	137,887	140,632	122,637	107,278	128,418	131,564	914,856

3rd July, 1891.

### No. 2.

The Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS to the RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS.

Railway Commissioners.

Public Works Department, Wellington, 20th July, 1891.

RE importation of sleepers for railway-maintenance purposes: Referring to your memorandum of the 14th instant, on the above-mentioned subject, the Minister is much gratified to notice from the return of sleepers relaid on all sections of the New Zealand railways, which accompanied your memorandum, that the number of foreign sleepers used has fallen from 24,938 in 1885-86 to 4,168 for the two years 1889-90 and 1890-91.

The numbers having been steadily decreasing for years, and having now got down to about 2,000 a year, it would appear that the 10,000 foreign sleepers, which the Hon. Mr. Seddon understands the Commissioners contemplate obtaining, will be sufficient for five years, or if diminution in the numbers used goes on increasing, possibly for seven or eight years' requirements.

The Public Works Department has not imported any foreign sleepers for some years, but we have some 6,000 in stock in Dunedin, which, if the Commissioners are particularly in want of sleepers of this class, the Minister will be happy to transfer at the price they cost the department.

Under all the circumstances of the case, therefore, the Minister trusts that the Commissioners will abstain from entering into new engagements for the supply of any large number of imported sleepers.

H. J. H. BLOW,

Acting Under-Secretary for Public Works.

### No. 3.

The RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

The Acting Under-Secretary for Public Works.

11th August, 1891.

YOUR memorandum of the 20th ultimo: The Railway Commissioners desire to thank the Hon. the Minister for Public Works for the offer of 6,000 jarraha sleepers, which they accept, and they have arranged to take over the sleepers. This will do away with the necessity for importing from Australia.

E. G. PILCHER, Secretary.

[Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, nil; printing (1,300 copies), £1 7s 6d.]

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBURY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1891.

Price, 3d.]