

whose attractive appearance is almost wholly due to the beauty of the material of which their buildings are composed. The quantity obtainable in the neighbourhood of Oamaru and Kakanui is practically unlimited—for miles and miles of country there being but a few inches of soil superposed upon a bed or mass of limestone of immense depth; indeed, the stone in many cases crops out above the surface.

With the construction of the Waitaki-Moeraki Railway, and the branches to the port of Kakanui, and from Cave Valley to Oamaru, the stone can be brought to a place of shipment at a minimum expense; and in view of the early construction of these works, which may now be regarded as a certainty, it is desirable that means be taken to open up a market for what must eventually prove a very large and valuable export.

The Bank of New South Wales, Christchurch; the Bank of Otago and Masonic Hall, Oamaru; the Bank of New South Wales, and the buildings known as the New Post Office (now used by the Otago University), and the first Church, Dunedin; may be pointed to as a few of many examples of the suitability of the material for buildings of the highest order of architecture.

It is to be regretted that I cannot also adduce as an additional instance the New Town Hall, Melbourne (which I believe cost upwards of £100,000), the Committee which selected the stone used for that building having chosen stone procured from Tasmania, in preference to the Oamaru and other stone inspected by them, under the belief that the Oamaru stone was less durable than that adopted. They were guided by the appearance of certain stone procured from Oamaru and used for some buildings in Melbourne, and which showed symptoms of decay; but I may be allowed to point out that among the numerous quarries already opened up in the neighbourhood of Oamaru, there is a wide difference as to the quality of the stone; and that had the stone sent to Victoria been of the best procurable and sent in “dry bottoms” (the fact being that there is every reason to believe that much of that sent was damaged *in transitu* or during shipment by salt water), there can be no doubt that Oamaru stone would have been already in high repute and extensive demand in that Colony.

I may add that the stone (Tasmanian) actually used for the Melbourne Town Hall appears by no means to have realized expectations, but already to have shown symptoms of decay.

With the improved shipping facilities which will shortly be provided at the Port of Oamaru, the stone could be supplied at from 10d. to 1s. per cubic foot, free on board; and, taking into consideration the minimum cost of working, it would pay Victoria to import it for building purposes.

With a large demand for this commodity would of course follow the payment to this Colony of a large sum of money in exchange for the same, and the employment of a large number of persons in quarrying, &c. Under these circumstances I venture to submit, for the consideration of the Committee, the desirability, in order to the promotion of the end in view, that the Government should send samples of the best quality of the stone, in the rough and worked, to Melbourne and other places where building stone is in demand, to be deposited at some place or places where they might be inspected by builders, contractors, and others, accompanied by information as to first cost, freight, &c. Similar samples might with advantage be sent to England, as the agents or charterers of vessels homeward bound from this Colony, and requiring deadweight, might be glad, if a sale could be obtained for it at home, to ship the stone either free of cost or at a minimum charge. I may point out, in this connection, that there is an institution in London known as “The Museum of Economic Geology” (Jermyn Street), of which Sir Roderick Murchison was the late and Sir Henry Rawlinson is the present President; whereat, among a large quantity of specimens of materials available for manufacturing, building, and other purposes, are exhibited small blocks of stone of all the kinds found in the United Kingdom, and I believe specimens from elsewhere, and information is given as to the locality where each is found, the cost of the material, freight, &c.; so that it is easy to ascertain what is the best and cheapest material for any proposed work. I would suggest the forwarding of specimens of the Oamaru stone to this institution, accompanied by such information as might be necessary.

Lastly, I venture to suggest that from time to time samples of the stone, in the rough and worked, should be forwarded to the various Exhibitions of Industry, Products, and Art now so frequently held, as I have reason to believe that when its qualities are known a large demand will arise in hitherto unexpected directions.

Wellington, 7th October, 1871.

I have, &c.,

WM. J. STEWARD.

P.S.—I append, for the information of the Committee, the following copy of a certificate by the Colonial Architect as to the qualities of the stone referred to, addressed by him to Mr. D. Hunter, of the firm of Hunter and Goodfellow, Dunedin:—

Colonial Architect's Office, New Zealand, 12th December, 1870.

THIS is to certify that I have introduced a large quantity of Oamaru stone into public and private buildings; and, all things considered, I have no hesitation in saying that the stone from the best Kakanui quarries is superior to any other building stone I have met with in the Colonies during a practice of twenty years.

Mr. D. Hunter, Dunedin.

W. H. CLAYTON,

Colonial Architect.

#### MEMORANDUM No. II.

SINCE laying before the Committee the memorandum which I had the honor to submit this day with reference to the Oamaru limestone, I have received the telegram appended, which shows that the stone can be delivered free on board in the roadstead at even a lower price per cubic foot than that stated in the memorandum.

10th October, 1871.

WM. J. STEWARD.

[Telegram.]

Oamaru, 10th October, 1871, 11.30 a.m.

Cannot ship stone now under 1s. 6d. per foot, in blocks not exceeding 5 cwt. With harbour works 9d., and railway 7d. per foot.

S. GIBBS.