

prietor at Geelong. In consequence of this, his machinery is not at all times employed. Wages, too, are higher than in the neighbouring colonies. His hemp, which he imports from Manilla to Melbourne in full cargoes, is charged on the railway or lighters from Port Chalmers to Dunedin by measurement, thus increasing the cost very much. If the Government were to raise the duty on rope 50 per cent., the manufacturer would undertake that his price should remain the same as it is now; and he would be able to carry on his works successfully.

211. *By Mr. Stevens.*] There is no duty on hemp. It costs about £30 per ton laid down here. If the railway charges were changed from measurement to weight it would save 3s. 4d. per ton. The rope meets with a ready sale at £48 per ton, leaving a profit of £4 per ton—the cost of production being £44. He has not produced more than 4 tons per week on an average during the last two years. He employs only six hands at present. The works are capable of turning out 15 tons a week by the employment of three or four hands. The price of the Geelong rope is £45 per ton, less 5 per cent. discount. People buy the Dunedin rope at £48 because they want small quantities, and because they do not know that they can get the rope from Geelong cheaper. The Dunedin works do not make much flax rope; they are undersold by small makers, and the public do not sufficiently understand the difference in value between hand-laid and steam-laid rope.

212. *By Mr. Bain.*] The works produce rope, clothes-lines, any kind of small rope, except twine, and plough-lines. There is not the machinery for making twine for binding-machines. We use very little New Zealand flax. Most of our material is imported from Manilla to Melbourne. We sell Dunedin-made rope all over New Zealand. The stoppages of machinery have occurred from accumulation of stock. If the duty were raised by £2 10s. per ton the price of the imported article would be about £48, or the same price as the local manufacture. The rate of wages here is fully 25 per cent. higher than in Geelong.

BUILDING-STONE.

No. 177.

Mr. B. S. CORLETT to Mr. Commissioner T. F. S. Tinne.

SIR,—

Tauranga, 20th May, 1880.

I hope that drawing your attention to what I believe would be a great boon to this locality, and particularly to the Lake District, will be worthy of the consideration of the Royal Commission on Native Industries. Others have, I understand, given you the information that bricks are the most expensive article to the consumers, and the least remunerative to the dealers, in the building trade of Tauranga. As we shall soon have good roads between Tauranga, Lake Rotorua, and Wairoa (the tourists' last station to Rotomahana), I wish to draw the attention of the Commission to the fact that at Wairoa good building-stone is procurable at a very small cost, and most easily worked. Large blocks are dislodged from the face of the hill, and roll to the flat below (50 feet from the main road), where they are easily cut to any required size or shape with a 6-foot or 8-foot cross-cut saw, and axe or adze, as the workmen think best. I will leave you to judge of the formation of the stone, samples of which Thomas Wrigley, Esq., has kindly offered to forward by next boat south. As above stated, the stone is easily procured and worked when dry, and more so when first quarried; it contains much water, but on exposure to the weather becomes very light—so much so that a cubic foot would not weigh 30 lb.; the grain is hard and sharp, but crumbles away a little on the surface if unduly used. If the quarry could be worked, the stone would become better in quality, and would answer the purpose of building walls and chimneys, as it stands heat remarkably well. The chimneys of the Native-school buildings, Ohinemutu, erected last year (the erection of which I had the honor of superintending), are built of this stone; and I can assure you that I could not wish to see a more suitable and cheap stone used for the purpose. A double-flued chimney of this stone, 25 feet high, costs £26 at Ohinemutu; and a similar chimney, built of bricks, costs £75, or nearly three times as much; the freight of the bricks and lime alone being £55 from Tauranga to Ohinemutu. As the Lake District is likely to become of great importance, something might be done by Government to acquire possession of the said quarry, and also timber-reserves between that and Lake Taupo, so that builders and consumers need not be under and suffer through being subject to the capricious will of the Natives.

B. S. CORLETT,
Architect.

No. 178.

Evidence of Mr. B. S. CORLETT before Mr. Commissioner T. F. S. Tinne, at Tauranga,
25th May, 1880.

My name is *Benjamin Stott Corlett*. I have been seventeen years in New Zealand. During the whole of that time I have been engaged in the building trade, and in supplying designs for buildings. I have been settled for three years at Tauranga. I superintended the erection of the Native-school buildings at Ohinemutu. While there, the building-stone to which I refer in my letter was brought specially under my notice; but I had seen the stone before that time. I used it in the chimneys of those buildings in preference to brick, for its quality, its ease in working, as well as for its lower cost. The cost of bricks in Auckland at that time was 30s. per thousand; landed at Tauranga, they cost £4 per thousand; and it cost 1d. per pound to carry them from Tauranga to Ohinemutu. Each brick being taken at an average of 8 lb., a thousand bricks would cost £37 6s. 8d., delivered at Ohinemutu. Timber, and everything else, is charged at the same rate for carriage. The distance is forty-five miles. The cost of the stone, delivered at the same place, amounted to £30 for a quantity equal to 4,000 bricks—that is, £7 10s. for a quantity equal to 1,000 bricks. This stone is on Native land, and I consider it most desirable that the Government should obtain the freehold of it, as not only will it be useful for building in the Rotorua District, but it is so light that it can be easily transported; and when communication with Tauranga and other places is improved, it will be available for many uses in the building trade, building-stone being as yet unprocurable from any other known cheap source in Tauranga. As the