

GENERAL REMARKS.

There is some diversity of opinion as to the relative merits of totara and silver-pine timbers. Although silver-pine has its advocates, the fact that it is practically unobtainable in longer lengths than 20 ft. renders it less useful than totara. Silver-pine, though a short-grained wood, lasts well in the ground; but, generally speaking, the experience of the Post and Telegraph Department is that totara is the best New Zealand timber for telegraph-poles, and it is almost exclusively used. If the pole, to begin with, is free from symptoms of dry-rot, and the sap entirely removed, its life is a very long one—say, up to thirty years in the ground. It is, however, a very weak timber for standing a strain, and unless the pole is a very large one it is liable to snap in a gale of wind or by a sudden jar of any kind. This weakness requires that for a line carrying a few wires a fairly large pole must be used. The quality of the soil is a factor in the durability of a totara pole, and probably of any other class of pole. In the Otago District limestone country is the worst.

Kawaka (New Zealand cedar) is also a very good timber, having an advantage peculiarly its own, in that it will not burn.

Black-pine has been found durable in some cases; but it is liable, in certain soils, to be eaten into by a large worm.

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Electric Telegraph Commissioner.

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