CLASSIFICATION AND SEASONING OF STRUCTURAL TIMBER

M.N.V.K. Perera, C.I. Mathew
National Building Research Organisation, Colombo 5.

A study of the availability and demand of timber has revealed that the timber species classified as Class I is fast becoming extinct due to the non existence of a planned re-forestation program.

The re-forestation program hastily introduced caters for the cultivation of plantation timber which has a relatively fast yield compared to the natural forest timbers.

Further studies have revealed that the class classification system does not have a proper basis. Certain Class II species have higher strengths than Class I species, indicating that strength has not been a criteria for the classification. It appears to all intents and purposes that demand and usage have played a major part on the classification of timber in Sri Lanka.

With the dwindling supplies of Class I timbers it has become necessary to identify suitable secondary species of timber for promotion as Class I for a classification system related to the building trade. The identified species need to be kiln seasoned to turn the product into an ideal building material devoid of tendencies to split and warp during use.

At present structural timbers are only air seasoned, which from bad experiences is insufficient. The seasoning system used should be such, that the final costs of the timbers would make it a viable and competitive building material. The most suitable kiln seasoning system uses solar energy as a source of energy. Kiln seasoning of structural timbers is a practice that should be made compul-