

finish that part of the process effectually, and save undue accumulation in the bleaching ground. I am, however, still of opinion that unless an entirely new method of cleansing be speedily adopted, bleaching by solvents will ere long come to pass. In this case rollers for squeezing out the moisture, and the drying machine, would mainly take the place of the bleaching ground, effecting a saving of labour about equal to the cost of the solvents, and saving some time in making the fibre ready for market.

The mode of cutting the flax is also worthy of some notice. Instead of cutting below the fan (or upper part of the root), it should be cut well up the leaf above the red stain, and only such leaves cut as are fit for stripping. In the North this is particularly observed by persons when cutting from their own lands, for which labour they pay as high as 12s. 6d. per ton; and I have seen flax roots thus cut from (not cut down) three times during twelve months, which were larger in circumference, and in every way more luxuriant than ever.

To cut all down, as I have witnessed here, working up leaves of all ages together, must reduce the value of the fibre, and destroy tons of produce per acre, rendering a little more expense in cutting well spent money. Sometimes, however, flax-dressers have to clear ground entirely, in which case it would be well to adopt a system of classification. A cask, with a standard affixed, would answer the purpose, putting in a sheaf at a time, the sorter could grasp all above a certain length first, and descending each grasp, a sheaf would be assorted in about a couple of minutes, then putting each length through the mill separately, they can be kept apart throughout.

With respect to the quantity of green flax which an acre of land is capable of producing, there are patches which may fairly be estimated at thirty tons, or even upwards, while the general run of well planted ground may yield fifteen to twenty tons per acre.

The cultivation of this now valuable plant will, ere long, claim some attention. No doubt some of the first attempts will be to fill up vacant patches in land set apart for the purpose of flax-dressing; and, considering the nature of the plant, I should in such case recommend transplanting, digging the holes two spits deep, and pulverizing the soil with the back of the spade, taking up the roots as deep as possible with a little earth adhering, and cutting down just above the fan part, leaving young leaves just peeping. Two or three fans, or roots, should be planted together. I believe that in moist ground it might be planted nearly all the year round, but certainly with success during the season for planting trees and shrubs. During my peregrinations in search of knowledge on the subject of flax dressing, &c., in the North, (wherein I traversed hundreds of miles to and fro,) I noticed a patch of 40 acres at the base of a scoria volcanic hill, which had been transplanted late in the spring, and yet was thriving nicely.

In planting unflaxed land, I should say that the rows should be 6 to 8 feet apart, according to nature of soil, and in order to get as early a return as possible, the plants might be placed 3 feet apart in the rows, and thinned out when full grown, which, if well planted with good roots, I imagine may be likely to yield five tons or more of leaf during the first year.

Producing from seed will no doubt be found to require very considerable attention, and probably will be best raised in pots or boxes, and carefully transplanted therefrom, care being taken to shield the young plant from a powerful sun. In fact, I believe they need cover generally, although undoubtedly, like most other plants, when once fairly rooted they will be the better for cultivation and earthing. I think that even a cereal crop, occupying about 4 or 5 feet between the rows, would shelter and benefit the young plants. However, I do not profess practical knowledge of this part of our subject. I am indebted for what little I do know to our friend Mr. W. Hislop, of the Woodburn Nursery, who has devoted some attention to it, and will be better able to advise thereon. Whether sown, planted from seedlings, old roots, or natural grown flax, intended for market, it should be carefully kept clear of live stock, particularly of horned cattle and horses.

With reference to the prospects which this new industry holds out to our present and future fellow-colonists, we may just glance at what twelve months are likely to bring forth. At the present time there are upwards of 100 machines being prepared for work in this Province, all of which will no doubt be in operation before the end of two months, and turning out about 100 tons of marketable material per week, employing about 600 hands, and producing, at £20 per ton only, a weekly value of £2,000. This number is, however, likely to be more than doubled by the end of six months, and (including the Timaru District) I feel confident that in twelve months from date, Canterbury alone will possess 500, but say at least 400, machines, yielding about 400 tons of fibre per week, or for fifty working weeks during the year, 20,000 tons, which, taken at the same value, will give us £400,000 per annum; but I am convinced that £25 per ton will prove within the mark, which gives Canterbury a fine lift of £500,000 of export from an entirely new source; and instead of retarding any other industry, it will prove of the utmost help, for these 400 mills will be employing about 2,400 hands, in a position to buy all they need. It is, moreover, a calling that can be performed by that class of labour which is of no use to our farming community, and a business just adapted for many of those occupants of our towns who try to eke out a miserable existence by small trading, by which they create a most unhealthy competition. Such persons could, by joining in the co-operative principle, profitably employ themselves and families in flax-dressing. Even the pastoral tenants of the Crown, who have unfortunately lately suffered much depression, will find a wonderfully beneficial auxiliary; and I consider that my calculations are very far beneath what may be expected before two years more are over our heads. Let us, however, see what the result may likely be to this Island as a whole. We may safely put Otago at the same number as ourselves; with Southland, Marlborough, and Nelson at 200 each, giving an aggregate of 1,400, equal to 70,000 tons per annum, which, at £25, would give an export of £1,750,000, employing labour to the extent of 8,400; and if the North Island could be at peace they would considerably outstrip us, so that in two or three years hence New Zealand has an export before her, in flax alone, of four or five millions sterling per annum; and be it remembered it may be calculated to yield so handsome a return for the money invested in it, that a very large amount of capital will be produced for re-investment in other reproductive channels. But as usual, even this new means of reviving the state of our country has its enemies. There are always some classes of society who cannot give up their ideas without a struggle—among these will be found the scientific, who, when forming opinions or making mistakes, cannot endure to have their visions