

(No. 102.)—CHAIRMAN to R. W. WOON, Esq., R.M., Wanganui.—13th June, 1871.

The Natives are very troublesome about flax dressing, and I am sorry to hear of your not being able to procure the promised half-ton. If you can still persuade them I shall be glad to get the flax, as we must have some to send to England.

(No. 128.)—R. W. WOON, Esq., R.M., Wanganui, to CHAIRMAN.—12th August, 1871.

With regard to the half-ton of flax, I find it impossible to get the Natives to scrape so large a quantity on account of the trouble, and I am afraid there is very little chance of procuring the quantity required.

If I see any prospect of getting that quantity, or less,—say a quarter of a ton,—on my next up river trip at the end of this month, I will let you know.

V.—CULTIVATION OF FLAX.

(No. 22.)—Mr. W. K. HULKE to CHAIRMAN.—New Plymouth, 16th January, 1871.

Believing that the establishment in the various Provinces of nurseries on a small scale for the experimental culture of flax would be of the greatest benefit to all engaged in its manufacture or cultivation, as it would enable them to select only those varieties found after trial to be especially adapted to their respective requirements,—and as the names at the present vary in almost all localities, a classification is absolutely necessary,—I have the honor to submit, for the consideration of the Flax Commissioners, the following:—

1. The establishment of a nursery, on a limited scale, in the Province of New Plymouth, for the experimental culture of the *Phormium tenax*.

2. I offer to place at the disposal of the Commissioners, rent free, the nursery, about three-quarters of an acre, adjoining my residence in the town of New Plymouth, now used for the culture of flax. It contains 2,000 three to four year old plants of the best varieties of flax procurable. Also, several thousand seedlings, from seeds selected in the Taranaki and other districts.

3. I will superintend the cultivation, and carry out any experiments that the Commissioners may suggest, gratuitously.

4. That the expense of the nursery, such as for rates, manual labour, purchase of new varieties, stationery, &c., shall not exceed £20 per year. The greater portion of which will, after another year, be reduced by the sale of plants to those cultivating, should they be required.

5. That the Government allows me the actual cost (money paid) of the present plantation, say about £43 10s.

(No. 49.)—CHAIRMAN to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.—13th March, 1871.

I have the honor to forward to you the copy of a letter which has been received by the Flax Commissioners from Mr. Hulke, of New Plymouth, offering to place at their disposal a nursery of flax plants, and gratuitously to superintend its management, on condition that a sum not exceeding £20 a-year be allowed for rates, labour, &c., and that he be repaid for the outlay he has already incurred in preparing and planting it. The Commissioners being of opinion that the establishment of nurseries in different parts of the Colony for the experimental cultivation and distribution of the finer varieties of the *Phormium* is necessary for the investigation of the growth, structure, and capabilities of the plant, and would be of advantage to all concerned in the industry, are desirous of accepting Mr. Hulke's liberal offer, and are willing to defray from the funds placed at their disposal the amount he claims in reimbursement of his outlay; but as it is beyond their power to undertake any annual payment, they recommend the Government to conclude the arrangement by leasing the land at a nominal rent, and by authorizing the necessary payment for the maintenance of the nursery.

(No. 71.)—CHAIRMAN to Mr. W. K. HULKE.—27th March, 1871.

In replying to your letter of the 16th January, 1871, I have, in the first instance, to apologize to you for the delay that has taken place in acknowledging it, but you have already been informed by Colonel Haultain that this was owing partly to a misapprehension, and chiefly to the absence of the Commissioners from Wellington. I now beg to thank you, on behalf of the Commissioners, for the very liberal offer you have made of placing at their disposal, on certain conditions, your nursery of flax plants adjoining your residence at New Plymouth, and of gratuitously superintending its cultivation and management.

The Commissioners at once accept your proposal, and will reimburse you for the outlay you have incurred in making the plantation; and as they could not themselves undertake to guarantee any annual payment they have recommended the Government to conclude the arrangement with you by leasing the land (say for a period of ten years) at a nominal rent, and by authorizing the necessary payment for the maintenance of the nursery. This they have consented to do; and I now beg that you will furnish me with a description and plan of the land, and with your own christian names and description, in order that a lease and agreement may be prepared.