

Government might be furnished with an approximate estimate of the area of flax-bearing land in Otago, &c.; and in reply, to forward a map of the Province, with copy of a memorandum from the Chief Surveyor, supplying the information as far as it can be obtained.

I have, &c.,

J. MACANDREW,

Superintendent.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

Enclosure in No. 15.

Mr. J. T. THOMSON to the PROVINCIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Department of Land and Survey, Dunedin, 6th December, 1872.

I have the honor to forward to you a map of the Province, showing approximately the flax-growing areas. The total acreage is about 307,000 acres, and of which 250,000 have passed into private hand. In the plans, that sold is coloured red; that unsold, blue.

There may be small patches of flax in other parts, but to no great extent.

I have, &c.,

J. T. THOMSON,

Chief Surveyor.

To the Provincial Secretary.

P.S.—I have not much personal information as to the destruction of growing flax by burning, not having, for some years, been much out over these special districts; but I do not think it has occurred to any extent.

No. 16.

Mr. C. WEBER to His Honor J. D. ORMOND.

SIR,—

Survey Office, Napier, 18th, December, 1872.

In reply to circular No. 56, from the Colonial Secretary's Office, 23rd November, 1872, referring to the area of flax-bearing land in this Province, I have the honor to state, that as the plans in this office afford only meagre information upon this subject, I have been compelled to supplement this with estimates based upon local knowledge. These estimates can be only roughly approximated, however extensive the local knowledge of the framer may be. In estimating the area of flax-bearing land, I have only taken into account lands that do bear at present at least six tons of serviceable green fibre per acre. This I estimate at 26,000 acres, spread principally over the districts of Mohaka, Wakaki, Poukawa, Te Auti, Ruataniwha, Porangahau, Okawa, Ngatarawa:—In addition to these there are large patches thinly covered with *Phormium* all over the Province, which, as stated above, have not been brought to account here.

Of the above area, about 20,000 acres are in the hands of Europeans as freehold, or leasehold from Natives, and 6,000 acres in the hands of Natives.

Concerning the area destroyed by burning, I feel not in the position for quoting figures, but I may state that a large aggregate area of flax has disappeared during the last thirteen years, the result of burning, stocking, and drying up of small swamps.

The effects of these agencies combined has probably been more destructive in this Province to *Phormium* than in other parts of the Colony, owing to the relative dryness of the climate.

I have, &c.,

CHARLES WEBER,

Provincial Surveyor.

His Honor the Superintendent, Hawke's Bay.

No. 17.

Mr. S. HAWLINGS to the SECRETARY for PUBLIC WORKS.

THE closest approximate estimate that I can give of the area of flax-bearing land in the Province is from testimony of Mr. E. P. Sealy for the portion of the Province north of the Rangitata, and from the maps of the contract surveys on which the growth of vegetation is described, south of that river, making a total of 22,000 acres, of which about 17,000 acres have been sold and appropriated.

In the progress of cultivation and drainage a large area of wet land and swamps, formerly carrying a heavy growth of flax, has been reclaimed so far as to allow cattle to depasture. Grass fires also, by clearing the vegetation, aid in changing the former retentive nature of the soil most favourable to the growth of flax, and as the young shoots appear they are eaten off by cattle. To these causes conjointly the gradual extinction of the plant is attributable.

20th December, 1872.

SAMUEL HAWLINGS.

No. 18.

His Honor F. A. CARRINGTON to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Superintendent's Office, New Plymouth, 17th December, 1872.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your circular No. 56, 23rd November, 1872, together with a printed copy of the Report of both Houses of Parliament presenting during its last Session, on Colonial Industries, and you ask for an approximate estimate of flax-bearing land in the Province, &c.