

APPENDIX.

AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES.

LINSEED, CLOVER, FLAX.

No. 1.

Mr. E. PILBROW to the Chairman of Local Industries Commission.

SIR,—

The Willows, Temuka, March, 1880.

It has been with the warmest interest that I have, during the past week or two, noted among the telegrams the wise step taken by the Government in calling the "Native Industries Commission." I was not less gratified to see your name among the chosen few, and your subsequent selection as chairman. Although I do not exactly know the purport of the Commission, I presume that it is something kindred to an old hobby of mine, which has for many years been uppermost in my mind—viz., the encouragement by the Government of new remunerative branches of industry. It is on the strength of this that I venture to trouble you with a few hurried suggestions, knowing that you are ever ready to receive the same, if for general progress, and turn them to the best account under your able pen.

It is as Chairman of Commission I address you; and if I am out of place in the following suggestions you must bring me to order. The topic I shall first touch upon is based upon agriculture, with a view to multiplying our (at present) very limited number of payable crops, and moderating our spring white straw crops, the excessive growth of which (as in oats this year) renders them valueless. For many years past I have seen that the growth of linseed and other oil-producing seeds—as rape, canary, &c., would prove remunerative to the farmer for shipping to England, instead of trusting entirely to wheat. By reference to Home papers you will see that such seeds vary less in price (taking an average of years) than corn. Speaking more particularly of linseed, as I have been a grower of small quantities for some years, I can state that it grows most luxuriantly, is the best crop I know with which to lay down clover and grasses, is fewer weeks from seed-time to harvest than any other crop—viz., twelve to thirteen weeks—and will yield an excellent return—I should say not less than 30 bushels per acre on well-farmed land. I have grown more. Its price in London varies from 56s. to 62s. per quarter, and it is principally imported from Russia. The quality of New Zealand seed compares favourably with any I ever saw. It does not end with shipping the seed at a payable price: I think that you will agree with me that the enormous amount of paint and other oils annually imported into New Zealand suggests a very legitimate investment of capital by private parties or companies in erecting mills for its production on our numerous creeks, the propelling power of which is at present wasted. For argument's sake I will name the Opahi Creek, with its enormous and never-failing driving power, where mills may be erected within very short distances of each other. The country for miles around will equal any in the world for production of quantity and quality; while our reclaimed swamps—too rich for corn—would yield enormously, and be ultimately (by judicious farming) made fit for anything.

Touching on oil-mills, no doubt great improvements have been made in machinery since I came to the colony in 1860. The old method of extracting the oil was by means of vertical beams or stampers, which fell with great force into moulds containing the seed. After the oil was quite extracted, the solid remains, with the addition of some bran, turned out the ever-needed oilcake for stock-feeding, which is continually imported here for our choice studs. Mills need not be confined to the manufacture of oils, as the same power can be utilized for corn-mills, clover-seed mills, machinery for dressing the straw of the linseed into useful fibre for the manufacture of bales, sacks, or sail-canvas here or in England, saw-mills, &c., according to the locality of the same.

On the subject of clover-seed, it is high time that the production of so important an article of commerce should interest our agriculturists, who, instead of purchasing from importers, should export considerably over their own requirements. This country is excellently adapted both in soil and climate for all kinds, except red clover and cow-grass, which must be imported until the humble-bee or other insect with sufficiently long proboscis for inoculating blossoms can be acclimatized. The apparent dilatoriness in raising these and other remunerative seed-crops is doubtless owing to the comparatively few scattered amongst us who are familiar with their growth in the Old Country, clover-seed only being grown in certain counties, where every village-mill is fitted with its clover-seed dressing machinery, as well as its stones for corn. At the season for threshing the seed-clover stacks (with the ordinary engine and combine) the pips containing the seed are caught underneath on large sheets, loaded in farmers' high-sided wagons, in which they are firmly pressed, and delivered at the mill for grinding and dressing, for which they are paid per hundredweight for clean seed returned. Having had considerable experience in its growth, I shall be most happy any time to render any information that lies in my power. In my observations *re* utilizing the straw from the linseed for the manufacture of a coarse fabric, I omitted to state that for the production of fine linen the flax crop is gathered in a green state before the seed is ripe, and is pulled up and laid out in regular rows to harvest. Our seed-crops may be cut with reaper and binder. Most of our Irish farmers are well acquainted with flax-farming.

As every fresh colonial industry is but a stepping-stone to something further ahead, so I look upon the probable establishment of meat-freezing factories as a stimulant towards our magnificent estates being formed into homesteads, convenient to work, and capable of raising as much on hundreds as is now done on thousands of acres. I refer to a regular system of tillage, with its proper propor-