

a uniform weight. If all the bales exported were of a uniform weight within certain limits I think that would be a desirable thing for everybody—desirable for the merchant, for, he knows how many bales go to the ton; and desirable for us, because there is no doubt we can handle 4cwt. bales just as cheaply as we can  $2\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. bales.

882. I am not acquainted with the manner in which they make up shipping-notes, and all the rest of it. I presume each bale is entered with its weight attached?—As far as the Board are concerned, they simply deal with so many bales.

883. I mean the shipper?—As far as the shipper is concerned, he gets his weight. We make a charge for weighing of 2d. per bale. We are very often asked to weigh on behalf of the merchants, because the mill weights are generally wrong. There is a very considerable loss in weight if the stuff is packed whilst wet. Mr. Gardner, who gave evidence before you, has made representations on that matter. His agents complained that the weights as given by us were totally different to the weights taken at the mills. I went into the matter very carefully, and I came to the conclusion—and I believe I satisfied them—that it was entirely the fault of the mills, and that their weights were correct, but there had been a large loss of weight. It was promised that Mr. Gardner should make an experiment to test the truth of the assertion, and I presume it must have been satisfactory because the question never cropped up again.

884. *The Chairman.*] We gather, then, that the moisture which appears in the bales is rather the effect of indifferent drying at the mills than the fault of the railways?—Yes. It might have been decreased by the stuff being left some considerable time in store with us, and the moisture thus going off.

885. *Mr. Walker.*] Supposing the merchants in America wished lighter bales, you are not encouraging the millers to produce that size of bale, because you give him every inducement to make his bales up to the maximum weight of  $4\frac{1}{2}$ cwt.?—Yes.

886. If you charge by weight you would allow the miller to send bales to the market to which he wished them to go?—That is so to a certain extent. Then, of course, we could reduce our maximum to  $2\frac{1}{2}$ cwt., and charge a corresponding tonnage rate. From our point of view, the objections to a tonnage rate are very great. It entails a very large amount of work.

887. I have had a great deal of experience in wool. I have always felt that the only rough and ready means of getting at the future is to take most care to pack to suit the market?—Of course, that is perfectly true. After all is said and done, the Board's charges for wharfage and storage certainly affect such an industry. As far as haulage is concerned, between our sheds and the ship's side they charge 1s. 6d. per ton, five bales going to the ton.

888. Supposing there were seven bales?—Over five they would have to pay more for haulage. As to the charge for the stuff coming down country, I do not know what that is. Our charge is simply wharfage, including the labour which is used in connection with the work. The haulage charge of 1s. 6d. per ton is charged by the railway if loaded at the Queen's Wharf or the jetty. The dumping charge is paid by the ship, and the storage is paid by the ship. The labour is the same whether the bales be  $2\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. or  $4\frac{1}{2}$ cwt.

889. *The Chairman.*] Are there any cases in which flax-millers dump their own produce?—I have not heard of any.

890. If they did so they would send it straight on board?—No, I do not think so. I do not think any miller sends direct. I do not think there has been a case in which flax has been sent direct. Wool is sometimes, but not flax.

891. Would there be a substantial charge saved over it?—I cannot tell you.

## APPENDIX.

RESULT of ANALYSIS of SPECIMEN No. 5,632, forwarded by the Flax Committee for Mr. Bull. Received, August, 1890. Reported on, 30th August, 1890.

Machine-dressed flax (*Phormium tenax*): This is a very bright looking sample, well prepared, being clean and soft, without having suffered any notable abrasions. Subjected to chemical treatment, the following results were obtained:—

Matter extracted therefrom by contact with a 1-per-cent. solution of soda,	
five minutes	8.10
Matter extracted therefrom by contact with a 1-per-cent. solution of soda,	
one hour	16.20
Cellulose	68.80

The strength of this fibre as compared with that of a good specimen of hand-dressed New Zealand flax (not chemically treated) is about 97 to 100.

WM. SKEY, Government Analyst.

RESULT of ANALYSIS of SPECIMEN No. 5,647, forwarded by Flax and Other Industries Committee. Locality, St. Michael's, Azores. Received, 12th September, 1890. Reported on, 24th September, 1890.

*Phormium tenax* fibre, grown at the Azores, for report: This is one of the cleanest machine-dressed samples of this fibre that has yet come under my notice. Yet it is of full strength, very soft to the touch, and not at all stained except at the butt. Subjected to a partial chemical analysis, it gave results as follows:—