plation, may not be out of place here. In the Education Act of this Province, there seems to be no restriction on either the Central Board or the Local Committees in extending their organization, and engrafting on their present admirable system a Central Normal School of Industrial Education, for the purpose, in the first place, of training such of the masters of their schools as may be found expedient into the knowledge of dressing flax, and thereby, through them, imparting it to the small settlers and their families in their several districts; and, in the second, of it becoming ultimately an Elementary Technical School, suited to the wants of the Province. The social problem, What is to be done with our Colonial youth? has to be grappled with, and the sooner the better. The facility for educating them in the knowledge of the mechanical and chemical arts would be looked upon as a great boon by many a parent and guardian; and there is no limit to the advantages that would accrue from such an institution to the general advancement and welfare of the community at large. "Where there is a will there is a way;" and it is to be hoped that the Provincial Council would be too glad to vote an additional grant in aid of such a purpose; for what is done freely and extensively in analogous cases by the Home and other Governments of Europe, may surely be followed in a small degree by the Provincial Governments of the "Britain of the South." It would "be casting their bread upon the waters; they would find it after many days,"—aye, an hundredfold.

*Applicability of the Process to Proprietors of Extensive Areas of Flax.*

For operations on a large scale, there can also be constructed suitable appliances and machinery, combining every possible mechanical arrangement to save time and labour, costing in the end less money, working much cheaper, and turning out the fibre in larger quantity and of better quality than can be done by any proportionate number of machines having stripping-drums. For in these machines the frequent clogging from gum and fibre, requiring a stoppage of at least five minutes every hour to clean them, and the severe wear and tear they are subject to, as well as the unpleasant and deafening noise they make from having to be driven at a very high speed, irrespective of their abrasive action on the fibre, are great objections, whereas the plant (technically meaning the apparatus and machinery) of the steeping process is of simple construction, easily repaired, liable to comparatively slight wear and tear, worked with little noise, and exempt at the same time from unnecessary mutilation or waste of fibre.

It admits also of the gum being saved, and is likewise applicable to the utilization of the cabbage or ti-tree, the kie-kie, and nikau, also the toi and tussock grasses, as well as other suitable fibrous plants, whether indigenous to or cultivated in New Zealand.

*Conclusion.*

It may be remarked, that although the general run of New Zealand flax is prepared with a view to its being used for rope-making, yet it is capable of being dressed to as high a degree of fineness as the European flax, the best qualities of which realize from £130 to £180 a ton. Coarseness and fineness are only relative terms; but, in the present hastening to get rich of those who have embarked in the preparation of the fibre by stripping-drum machines, the question of fineness is overlooked in the hurry to get the flax into a sufficiently marketable condition for a merchant to make an advance on it. Besides the process is, as already described, at variance with the necessary conditions for the production of a fine fibre, which can only be attained by retting, and otherwise careful manipulation.

Whilst treating such a subject as this, the monition of Horace, "*Dum brevis esse laboro, obscurus fio,*" comes frequently to one's mind; for striving after conciseness on the one hand is but merging into obscurity on the other, and hence the obviousness of what might otherwise seem extraneous or prolix. It is nevertheless imperfect in many ways; but if it serves to stimulate inquiry into, or a practical adoption of the suggestions it shadows forth, as well as the particular process it describes, its purpose will be accomplished.

## No. XV.

Mr. T. Bromfield to His Excellency the Governor.

May it please Your Excellency, Auckland, April, 1870.

To pardon the liberty I take in thus troubling you, but perhaps it may not have occurred to your Excellency's mind of a fearful crying evil or calamity that has already begun to spread itself in this our adopted country, viz., the employment of children of tender age in mills and factories. Already little children are compelled to be up at half-past 5 o'clock in the morning, and be in the flax mills at work at 6 o'clock, and work until 6 o'clock at night—those children from six years of age and upwards—but the younger they are, the less wages to pay.

I will not attempt to dictate to your Excellency, but beg to refer you to the English Factory Act, and am your Excellency's humble servant,

His Excellency Sir G. F. Bowen, Governor. Thomas Bromfield.

## No. XVI.

Mr. D. McArthur to the Chairman of the Flax Commission.

Sir,— Invercargill, 17th June, 1870.

The more intelligent of those interested in the flax question (notwithstanding the somewhat discouraging advices from London) feel confident that the cultivation of flax will be a source of great Colonial wealth, giving employment to multitudes who are now a burden and source of much anxiety in Great Britain, and many of whom, although not very well suited for the rougher work of colonization, could be made useful and valuable colonists in connection with the cultivation and manufacture of flax.

The present prices in London would yield large returns to the colonist, provided he could get labour at what it ought to be, viz., one-half the current rates.