

The information obtained by Mr. Chilman (App. p. 103) relative to sea damage is so far satisfactory that it relieves the fibre from the imputation that the damage is due to imperfection in the manufacture. It is, however, evident to anyone who has inspected the shipping of the fibre that the ends of the bales, where the centre of the hanks is exposed, are frequently stained and discoloured, even before they leave the Colony, and this is notably the case in the bales of New Zealand fibre which were re-exported for the Commissioners. The opinion expressed by Mr. Chilman, that the covering of the bales may be dispensed with, cannot therefore be endorsed.

The sample bales of the fibres which compete with the *Phormium* received from London were all well protected by such coverings, more care having been taken in packing them than is usual with New Zealand fibre. The Manilla bale was covered with matting made from the plaintain leaves, and this suggests that the cheapest form of bale cover for the New Zealand fibre might be made from the refuse leaves which are rejected in the process of manufacture.

Size of bales.

Mr. Chilman's remarks, relative to the advisability of adhering to one uniform size of bale, are most important, but the Commissioners are of opinion that, instead of adopting as he suggests a size of bale similar to that of Jute, with which fibre *Phormium* does not compete, it would be better to adopt the dimensions of a Manilla bale, which measures 3ft. 3in. x 1ft. 8in. x 1ft. 8in., and weighs about $2\frac{1}{4}$ cwt.

Until the reports have been received from the scientific gentlemen who have undertaken the chemical and microscopical examination of the fibre, and also till the result of experiments instituted in England has been made known, we need only call attention to the chemical reports of Mr. Skey, given in the Appendix (p. 91), as these relate indirectly to the preparation of the fibre for other uses than rope-making, on which subject it is better to defer forming any judgment till the above evidence has been obtained, and which will form the subject of a further Report.

Fibre should be
named
PHORMIUM.

In this report the Commissioners have intentionally abstained from applying the term *flax* to the New Zealand fibre, and have substituted the name PHORMIUM in the hope that it will come into general use for the roping fibre which is at present exported from New Zealand, as it avoids misconception, and will be more in keeping with the names applied to the other roping fibres with which it has to compete in foreign markets.

JAMES HECTOR, Chairman.
T. M. HAULTAIN.
JOHN KEBBELL.

Wellington, 6th October, 1871.