

BLUESKIN MILLS, Dunedin.

Use one steam engine of 16-horse power, working up to 23, and a water-wheel of 8 or 9-horse power. Also, six of Kincaid & McQueen's machines (improved), making 160 revolutions per minute, each of which will pass through 32 or 33 cwt. per day of green leaf; it takes $6\frac{1}{2}$ or 7 tons of leaf to produce one of fibre; and the leaf costs 18s. per ton, delivered at the mill. The owners are introducing a wet-scutcher, and also have a pair of iron rollers for pressing out the moisture after scutching. The water-scutcher will make 110 revolutions, and the dry-scutcher 300 per minute. The rates of wages vary from 10s. to £1 16s. per week. The machines can turn out $2\frac{1}{4}$ tons of fibre per week, at the following cost:—

Engine and stripper	...	...	...	...	...	£9 16 0
Washing	...	...	...	...	...	2 10 0
Bleaching	...	...	...	...	...	6 15 0
Scutching	...	...	...	...	...	5 15 0
Firewood	...	...	...	...	...	1 13 0
Green leaf	...	...	...	...	...	13 13 7
Total for $2\frac{1}{4}$ tons	...	...	...	...	...	£40 2 7
Or, per ton	...	...	...	...	...	£14 11 0
Carting to town	...	...	...	...	...	18 0
Oil, &c.	...	...	...	...	...	1 0 0
						£16 9 0

Besides interest on capital, wear and tear, &c. Drying ground, not good.

MILLER, Silver Stream, near Dunedin.

Has a water-wheel 14 feet by 4, and drives one of Price's machines. Pays 12s. a ton for the green leaf, delivered at the mill, and requires $6\frac{1}{2}$ tons for one of fibre. Washes by hand, and turns out only half a ton a week, as the mill is not kept constantly at work. Pays from 5s. to £1 a week for boys and men, besides their food, and gets £19 a ton in Dunedin for his fibre, for rope-spinning; paying 22s. a ton for carting it in. He takes great pains in the different processes, and makes a very good sample.

SOUNESS & Co., near Dunedin.

Have an 8-horse power steam engine, which drives two or three Kincaid & McQueen's strippers. They pay 17s. a ton for the green leaf, and require 7 or 8 tons for one of fibre. The flax is hand-washed, and requires three weeks to bleach and dry, when it is passed through a barrel-scutcher. Wages vary from 10s. to £1 a week, with food for boys and men; and they can produce two tons of fibre a week, when keeping two of the machines constantly going.

CAMPBELL, Ashburton Mills, near Dunedin.

Uses a water-wheel 30 feet by 2, and one of Kincaid & McQueen's, and another of Barnes' stripping machines, which can each put through 30 cwt. of leaf per day. Employs boys only at the mill, besides the grown up men of the family. Pays 13s. a ton for the green leaf, and requires 7 tons to make one of fibre; washes in boxes, and supply of water is limited. After bleaching in the sun, it is put through an arm-scutch, the imperfectly stripped ends having first been cut off. The cost of preparation is between £13 and £14 per ton, including 10s. cartage to Dunedin.

SEYMOUR, Wairau, 21st December, 1870.

There are very large flax fields in the valley of the Wairau, and it is profusely in flower this year. The settlers only recognize one species, though it varies in size and colour of the leaf according as it grows in wet or drained land. Mr. Seymour states that he preferred the shorter and yellower variety, as it passed more easily through the machine, and supplied an equally strong and a better looking fibre. His mill is not at work at the present time, but it is likely that he will soon resume operations. His buildings and plant are very complete, but the supply of water for washing is deficient, and he will never produce a good sample until this want has been provided for. He has used Price's, Anderson's, and Mills' stripping machines, but greatly prefers the first, as working better, and being less liable to get out of order. He has had one of these in constant use since March, 1870, that has never required repair. Has made 80 tons of fibre at a cost of £20 per ton, including interest on capital. It would cost 30s. a ton extra to split the leaf. The flax plants that were cut five or six months ago have sent up several good leaves, three and four feet long, and will be ready to cut again by the time the twelve months has expired. The fans that had thrown up a flower stalk have invariably died away after having been cut; and the fan that produced seed last year, whether cut or not, has died this season. Whether this is constant should be carefully noted in other flax fields.

Mr. HATHAWAY is dressing flax at his mills on the Wairau River, close to the ferry. He prefers Anderson's machines, and advertises them for sale; but the fibre, as it comes from the strippers, is very insufficiently cleaned. He has, however, abundance of water for washing purposes. Mr. Ninnis, the manager, has a seed bed, in which were some young flax plants, four and five inches high, which were four months old; these had been sown in September. He had planted in every other month of the year without success.

Mr. HOWLAND, about two miles higher up the river, was about commencing work. He has magnificent water-power, and a centrifugal pump supplies him with volumes of water for washing the flax. He uses Anderson's machines for stripping, and has, besides, a stamping machine of his own invention, under which the flax is passed by an endless band immediately after coming from the stripper, whilst a stream of water flows over it. I have no doubt that his fibre will be cleaned in a very superior manner; but one set of stampers will not be able to keep pace with his five or six stripping machines. He uses a peculiar scutcher, with toothed or scolloped beaters.