

(No. 211a.)—Dr. HECTOR to the AGENT-GENERAL.—18th April, 1872.

I have the honor to inform you that a large parcel of very superior Maori-dressed *Phormium* was recently shipped by the 'Caduceus' at Auckland, to the address of Thomas Anderson, Esq., 27, Leadenhall Street, London, which is to be sold, I believe, at public sale. Should you require any more than the shipment the Commissioners sent home a few months ago for experiment, this will, no doubt, be open to you; and, from a sample which I have seen, it appears of fair quality.

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 11th January, in which you inform me that the name "hemp" has been applied to the *Phormium* in the English market reports. This is much to be regretted, as the term is equally as inappropriate as "flax," for while the latter gave the commercial world a fictitious idea of its value, and caused the home growers of *Linum* to discourage the use of *Phormium* for fear of its entering into competition with their trade, the former will tend to exclude it from being experimented with in the manufacture of stuffs, and will give the idea that it is only useful in the manufacture of rope and very coarse sacking.

I have, therefore, to request that you will endeavour to promote for this fibre a general use of the term "*Phormium*," which has already been adopted in these Colonies, and which, as it does not imply any resemblance to flax or hemp, will help to prevent its being brought into competition with any particular class of fibre.

(193.)—Mr. MORRISON to Dr. HECTOR.—20th September, 1871.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 114, of 7th July last, and in reply I beg to inform you that I have received from Messrs. Levin and Co. bill of lading for the twenty-three bales of New Zealand flax shipped by the 'England.'

I note your instructions as to the object which the Commissioners have in view in sending this flax, and I beg to state that on the arrival of the 'England' the bales will be claimed, and distributed under the direction of the Agent-General.

(No. 196.)—Dr. HECTOR to Mr. MORRISON.—21st December, 1871.

I have the honor to inform you that I have forwarded to your address by the 'Halcione,' which left here at the beginning of the month, a sample bale of *Phormium*, dressed by the Cape Egmont Flax Company at their mills at Opunake. It seems to have been carefully got up, is well scutched, and had the ends of the fibre hackled.

I shall be obliged by your reporting to me the opinion of fibre brokers on the quality of this bale, and the price which such fibre, if in bulk, would be worth in the market.

(No. 252.)—Mr. BULLER to Dr. HECTOR.—28th March, 1872.

The Agent-General has referred to me your letter of the 21st December, 1871, addressed to Mr. John Morrison, on the subject of a sample bale of *Phormium*, dressed by the Cape Egmont Flax Company, at the Opunake Mills, and forwarded by you to England for the purpose of obtaining the "opinion of fibre brokers on the quality of the bale, and the price which such fibre, if in bulk, would be worth in the market."

The bale in question arrived safely by the 'Halcione' about three weeks ago, and was landed in good order.

Having obtained the approval of the Agent-General, I arranged with Mr. C. Thorne to get the fibre valued by some respectable brokers, and we have to-day received his report to the following effect:—

"I have shown the flax to-day to two of the leading fibre merchants—Messrs. Catling and Walker and Messrs. K. Hennelly and Co.—as well as to two of our principal New Zealand flax brokers—Messrs. Manning, Collier, and Co. and Messrs. Devitt and Hett. These respective gentlemen saw the flax at separate times, and without any knowledge of the value put upon it by each other. There was not any difference in their opinion, as they, one and all, estimated its value to-day (27th March) at £45 per ton.

"Probably had a parcel of ten tons equal in quality to your bale been submitted to public competition this day it might have realised over the value they put upon it, as there was a good demand in the sale-room for New Zealand flax, as Manilla hemp is high in price. Should the fall in the value of Manilla shortly take place, as is anticipated by the trade, then a reduction in the present prices of New Zealand flax may also be looked for, unless equally as superior as your bale. This estimate is only, of course, for roping purposes."

I also arranged with Mr. Thorne to send a small quantity of the *Phormium* to Mr. Forbes, of Dundee, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the fibre, as thus prepared, is adapted for textile fabrics, and this has accordingly been done. I trust that Mr. Forbes's report may arrive in time to permit of my forwarding it by the present mail.

(No. 251.)—Mr. W. L. BULLER to Dr. HECTOR.—28th March, 1872.

I beg to send herewith for the information of the Commissioners a report of prices realised at the last hemp and flax sales (Devitt and Hett, 13th March). I beg to forward at the same time a sample (marked A) of the New Zealand hemp that brought the highest figure, viz., £38. It was given to me as a fair average sample of the ^{O & G}_{D M} of Messrs. Devitt and Hett's list; and, so far as my opportunities of