

is in a measure owing to the judicious application of the system of bonuses by the Provincial authorities.

Paper Manufacture.

The Committee recommend that the bonus at present offered for the manufacture of paper should be continued, as they feel convinced that within a short time advantage will be taken of the bonus, looking especially to the great demand for paper, and the increasing scarcity of raw material in Europe for paper-making.

Sericulture.

The Committee of last Session recommended that the further sum of £100 should be applied to assist in the cultivation of mulberry trees. This sum has been expended by a Committee, consisting of the Hon. Dr. Renwick, Mr. Curtis, and Mr. Lightband, and resulted in an arrangement with Mr. Batchelor to supply 2,000 trees at 1s. each. The greater part of these have already been distributed, and the balance can be had on application next season. The introduction of this industry must be gradual, but the Committee have reason to believe that the possibility of producing silk is thoroughly established.

The best means of producing this valuable industry appears to your Committee to be the encouragement of the general growth of mulberry trees. They have no doubt that when this growth has become general throughout the Colony, the cultivation of silk will be entered upon by a considerable part of the population, to whom it is likely to afford useful and profitable employment.

Fish Curing.

Your Committee are glad to find that the offering of bonuses, as recommended by the Committee of last year, has led to this industry being successfully initiated, and recommend that provision be made for meeting all claims for the bounty of 4s. per cwt. on all exported fish cured in accordance with the recommendation made last year.

The Committee also consider that efforts should be made to obtain such data as will enable the Legislature clearly to define the description of nets which should be used, and also the season of the year during which their use should be allowed.

Flax.

Your Committee find that the Flax Commission has virtually expired, and that all the work connected with this subject is being performed by Dr. Hector, who was chairman of the Flax Commission.

Your Committee point out the necessity for providing funds to complete the investigations now being carried on by Dr. Church, of the Royal Agricultural College of Cirencester, England; also that a sufficient sum be provided to insure the success of a competitive exhibition of flax-dressing machines to be held during the next twelve months within the Colony. That such conditions be insisted upon as will render it certain that the prizes will be given for such machines only as combine the capability of dressing the largest quantity of flax within a given time, of best quality, and at the lowest cost of production.

Your Committee recommend that the experiment concerning the growth of cultivated flax be continued in Wellington and Taranaki, and that a small grant be made to meet part of the expense. Systematic experiments are now being carried on in this direction, free of cost to the Colony, by the Canterbury Flax Association in Christchurch, and with very successful results.

Your Committee deplore the wholesale destruction, by burning, of flax growing on the Crown lands of the Colony, and are of opinion that such destruction should be prevented, if necessary, by legislation. They also recommend that official approximate estimates should be procured of flax land in various parts of the Colony, and suggest that this may easily be done through the Survey Department; such statistics would be of very great value.

Timber.

Your Committee regret to find that so little really useful information is procurable as to the strength and durability of the various descriptions of timber growing in the Colony, and recommend that the experiments which have been initiated be continued. The want of accurate knowledge on this subject cannot fail to lead to very serious results in connection with the large public works now being undertaken throughout the Colony, and your Committee consider that any moderate amount of money spent in this direction will be of the greatest advantage to the public interest.

Mineral Paints.

Your Committee have had before them the subject of the manufacture of hematite paints, by a firm in Nelson, and have every reason to believe that this industry is deserving of encouragement.

Vienna Exhibition.

Your Committee are glad to find that the Colonial Government have availed themselves of the opportunity afforded by the proposed Exhibition at Vienna next year to exhibit various productions of New Zealand, and hope that the public in all parts of the Colony will exert themselves to assist the General Government in gathering together such a collection of exhibits to be forwarded to Vienna as will insure the Colony being fully represented there.

The preliminary Exhibition now being arranged in Christchurch will afford an excellent opportunity of selecting the best specimens of Colonial produce; and if the other parts of New Zealand respond to the invitation of the Committee of the Canterbury Exhibition, there is little doubt that a most useful collection will be sent to Vienna.

Your Committee beg to call attention to the valuable correspondence and evidence attached to this Report, and, in particular, to communications from Captain McIntyre as to the possibility of establishing a remunerative line of screw colliers to work the West Coast bar harbours; also to that of Mr. Krull in reference to Beetroot Sugar; and that of Mr. Tatton, of Nelson, on the subject of Mineral Productions of the Province of Nelson.

EDWARD RICHARDSON,
Chairman.

19th October, 1872.