

with an association trade-mark for the use of members; keep a list of members and their brands in the London sale-rooms; expel any member guilty of false packing or making a bad article; publish a price-list of the hemp sold like the wool catalogues circulated by the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company. The power of such a body would be great, both to check the production of a bad article and to protect the interests of members in many ways.

Mr. James Robinson and others in this district may share with Mr. Chinnery the credit of having successfully bridged the interval between the two flax periods. I cordially agree with all that can be said as to the policy of making only a first-rate article, but there can be no doubt that the few thousand bales of badly-dressed hemp that may have been sent Home have not been the cause of the very heavy decline in the values of all fibres. The cause will probably be found in the increased production of manila, sisal, &c. In 1889, the year of high prices for New Zealand hemp, the supply of manila in the London market was about 12,000 tons short of the supply in 1888. The receipts of manila in London in 1888 were 658,000 bales, and in 1889, 566,000. When Mr. Gardner mentioned 120,000 tons he must have referred to the quantity in the London market, and not to the world's consumption, and he certainly overestimated New Zealand hemp at 50,000 tons. According to the Customs returns the total export for 1889 was 17,084 tons. I find 7,233 tons reported as having been landed in London in 1889. The quantity afloat and shipped to America, Antwerp, and other markets must, I suppose, account for the rest. For the first six months of this year the export was a little over 14,000 tons. The following returns of the quantities and values of New Zealand hemp exported in different years since 1853 may be of interest:—

Year.	Tons.	Value per Ton.			Year.	Tons.	Value per Ton.		
		£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.
1853	46 ...	22	14	0	1871	4,100 ...	23	3	5
1855	150 ...	31	3	2	1872	4,100 ...	23	3	5
1856	22 ...	25	1	9	1873	6,454 ...	22	5	7
1859	77 ...	20	11	2	1874	2,038 ...	18	9	10
1861	2 ...	21	10	0	1875	639 ...	18	7	6
1865	3 ...	25	0	0	1877	1,053 ...	17	17	6
1866	40 ...	24	18	0	1879	445 ...	17	13	10
1867	126 ...	33	15	1	1882	2,040 ...	20	11	3
1868	534 ...	15	4	5	1886	1,112 ...	14	6	4
1869	2,028 ...	22	6	2	1888	4,042 ...	18	12	5
1870	5,471 ...	24	4	8	1889	17,084 ...	21	2	9

I may say that I have not much faith in the proposed inspection by Government officers; we do very well without it in the case of wool. The quantity of hemp is now so large that a thorough examination would be very costly if practicable, and the advantage would chiefly be for parcels sold to arrive. That sold in London after arrival would probably still be inspected by the buyers there. I think it would be well if manufacturers would put their names and addresses as well as brands on each bale. I mean to adopt that course.

Tuamarina, Marlborough, 7th August.

I am, &c.,

J. C. CHAYTOR.

CULTIVATION of *Phormium Tenax* (Native Flax).

THE following information relating to the cultivation of *Phormium tenax* was supplied by Mr. T. Waugh, Corporation gardener, Invercargill, to the *Southland News*, in 1889:—

Mr. Waugh says there are some *Phormium* plants growing in the Corporation nursery which were raised from seed, and are now eight or nine years old. They might have been cut two years ago, which would make the time from the seed-sowing to the cutting at least six years. The seed would have to be sown in nursery rows, in the same way as tree-seeds, July or August being the time. Light soil is best for it, as for other seeds, and rows are better than beds, because they can be more easily weeded. The young plants would stand two years in the seed rows, and the quantity required to plant an acre would, for these two years, occupy a very small piece of ground. When taken up they would be too small to plant out permanently, but should be transplanted into other nursery rows, and a few inches between each plant allowed. The plants would occupy these rows during the third and fourth seasons, and would then be ready to plant out in their permanent stations. Allowing other two years for the plants to reach maturity would make them six years old, as before stated, at the first cutting. Sowing *Phormium* where it was intended to grow permanently would never do at all; the expense of keeping the ground clean was so great, and if the weeds were not kept down they would choke the plants. During the time the young plants were in the nursery rows, the land ultimately to be occupied by them could be cropped and thus made fit to receive the plants, and, if the permanent rows were made 5ft. or 6ft. apart, some kind of root-crop could be grown between them so as to pay for keeping the land tilled and free from weeds. Even at the end of six years the crop would not be a large one—certainly not two tons of dressed flax to the acre, as some people say they get; but even one ton at present prices makes it worth considering whether *Phormium* could not be grown as a farm crop. Thirty pounds per acre would pay a good many years' rent, and during the first four years the plants, as shown above, would not occupy much ground. Of course the second cutting would be greater, the plants by that time having stooped out and taken up the whole of the ground, and completely suppressed the weeds. The second cutting would be got in two, three, or four years, according to circumstances; but very little is known how the plants would act in a cultivated state. One