

cannot judge by Phormium growing in a wild state. Some old-established plants growing by the side of a creek might produce a second crop within two years, but it is not likely that a whole paddock would, unless it was manured or irrigated. Old flax-roots could be chopped up like rhubarb, and planted to form a new plantation, but that system of planting would be very uncertain—a great many of the pieces would not grow, and the expense of planting and replanting would be far greater than by plants raised from seed. There is no difficulty about sowing the seed—any one could do it, and the expense of looking after the young plants for four years would be very little for the quantity required for an acre, if a clean piece of ground is chosen for the nursery rows. Seed could easily be got; every one knows what it is like and when it is ripe—that is, just when the pods are beginning to open. The land devoted to Phormium would have to be well fenced, for the plants will not stand the treading of cattle, and that is the very reason that much of the flax growing in a wild state will never yield a second crop. The cost of the planting of an acre is not very easily estimated. The ground would, of course, have to be well ploughed and harrowed to begin with, but the intermediate root-crop ought to nearly pay for that. Then the furrows in which to put the plants would be made by the single-furrow plough and a marker. Two boys would then put in the plants, one laying them down and the other covering them with a spade or hoe. The number of plants per acre, at rows 6ft. apart and plants 2ft. apart in the rows, would be 3,630, and two boys would put in that number in less than two days. The cost of the four-year old once-transplanted plants would be considerably under £1 a thousand. It altogether depends on the quantity grown and the sort of ground chosen for the nursery rows. If dressed flax should be £30 per ton in six years' time after this there is no doubt it would pay to raise it from the seed. If the industry has to be kept going something must be done, for the flax which is accessible will soon get cut, and much of it will never produce a second crop, or, if it does, too many years will elapse between the first and second cuttings to make it worth while to protect the plants. Much of the land on our river-flats which is subject to occasional flooding would be suitable for flax-growing.

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