

85. Always into two grades?—Yes.
86. Supposing you have the different lengths, one, two, and three—long, medium, and short—you begin by putting all the short through first, setting the machine for that particular class?—We have three or four machines running; one length is run through one machine, and another through another.
87. They are set for the particular lengths of the flax?—Yes.
88. You can set the machinery to dress the different lengths?—Yes; if you do not, it must spoil some, and make all sorts of bangles.
89. Do you contract for the whole thing?—No; I do not contract for anything about the mills; all mine is done by day-work.
90. When it is put through the stripper boys catch it?—We have travelling tables which take it away from the strippers, and the boys take it away to be washed.
91. Does not the fibre get tangled in the process?—No; it comes down without being tangled. Everything travels at the same speed. It comes down perfectly level and straight.
92. And does not the vegetable matter get mixed up with the fibre in that way?—No; it comes away much clearer. When it is taken off the tables it is shaken out and divided into hanks.
93. What size hank is the best—small or large?—A fair-sized hank about the size of that on the table is the best. It is then handed by boys to the men and washed, and then steeped and put out into the paddock.
94. How long is it steeped?—Three or four hours as a rule.
95. You steep it in the water?—Yes.
96. In hanks?—Yes.
97. The water is constantly going through it?—Yes, steadily.
98. It is then taken into the paddock and laid out on the grass?—Yes.
99. How often do you turn it?—That depends a great deal on the weather; I like mixed showery weather, that is the best for getting on quickly.
100. The extremes both ways are bad?—Yes.
101. Do you put any on the wires?—I scarcely put any on the wires; I always stack mine in the paddock.
102. How long does it remain in the stack?—I like to let it stand a month if we can; it is all the better.
103. In what sized stacks?—We put 2 tons into a stack.
104. How do you find the flax runs? how many tons of green flax runs to a ton of the dressed?—That depends a good deal on the weather, but generally it is from 5 to 6 tons.
105. Then, after having it on the stacks, you take it back to the scutcher?—Yes.
106. How do you manage about scutching? do you contract for that?—Sometimes. If it is done by the day-time we give £1 a ton, and if taken at the night-time we give £1 5s.
107. And you have some person to look after it?—I generally look after it all myself.
108. You save a great deal in the matter of tow? You do not get much tow?—Not if it is carefully stripped. When I did all the scutching myself I never made more than half a hundred-weight of tow to the ton of fibre. But now there is from 1½cwt. to 2cwt. of tow.
109. Do you use ordinary revolving scutchers?—We have had a lot of different sorts of scutchers. First we had arm scutchers, then drum scutchers, and then skeleton drums; after that closed drums, and now we have also some fine cast-iron hackles on the face of the scutcher-drum.
110. Do you think that an improvement?—Yes; it is very much improved with combs.
111. Does it not make more tow?—It depends in the way on which the fibre is handled before it goes to the scutchers. There is a great deal in the handling of it.
112. What length are the teeth?—About ½ in. long.
113. And they worked very close?—You set them to suit your work, according to the fibre you are scutching. If it were fine fibre you would set them very close.
114. Having got the scutching done you have the man who takes off the hanks: what sized hanks do you make for baling?—We put three hanks to one toppet.
115. I have heard the remark made that the toppets are too large for the London market?—Many of them are much larger than mine.
116. Three times that size [pointing to flax on the table]?—Yes, just about, making each toppet weigh 2½lb.
117. Do you use any special comb for the purpose?—No.
118. You just twist it up in the hanks?—Yes.
119. There seems to be great complaints about the size of the bales?—All my buyers like good big bales. It is different to go on the market. None of mine go on the market; they go direct to the manufacturers, who would rather have large bales. In this way you save a good deal in dumping, as it is only 2s. 6d. for a good-sized bale, and you have to pay the same for a small one.
120. If you were selling in the London market, do you think you would continue to have the big bales?—As long as it suited the customers. I have heard that it would be more convenient to have smaller bales for the London market, and I should think about 2½cwt. in a bales would be sufficient; but as long as the large bales suited I should have them, as I like them best, because they are less trouble.
121. Do you bale by day-work or piece-work?—By day-work.
122. What do you put round the bales?—Nothing but a lash made of tow.
123. Can you give us an idea of the cost of turning out flax such as you have described, per ton?—The whole thing?
124. Yes?—I should think it could be done at a cost of £14 with an engine. It can be done