

1898.
NEW ZEALAND.

EXTENSION OF COMMERCE COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF THE) ON THE FLAX INDUSTRY, TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

(Mr. McNAB, CHAIRMAN.

Report brought up on the 3rd day of November, 1898, and ordered to be printed.

REPORT.

I HAVE the honour to report with regard to the flax industry: The Committee regrets that time did not permit of all the witnesses available being called; but the Commissioners' report, together with the evidence called, give very hopeful indications of valuable improvements, both in chemical and mechanical directions.

On account of the great expense incurred in experiment in connection with the preparation of flax, your Committee considers the present inducement in the shape of a bonus is insufficient, and recommends the Government to increase the amount offered to £5,000.

3rd November, 1898.

ROBERT McNAB, Chairman.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

FRIDAY, 2ND SEPTEMBER, 1898.

WILLIAM TOOGOOD examined.

1. *The Chairman* said that Mr. Buchanan had suggested that the Committee should call some witnesses to give information in regard to the flax industry, and had suggested certain names in that connection. Consequently, Mr. Toogood had come down under the impression that a meeting would be held that morning. As, however, the Committee did not sit in the morning, he (the Chairman) had asked and had secured the permission of the House to sit in the afternoon, so that Mr. Toogood could be examined. (To witness): Your name is William Toogood, and you come from Featherston?—Yes.

2. I understand that you desire to give evidence before this Committee in connection with the flax industry?—Yes.

3. What is the nature of your connection with the industry?—I have been connected with it, more or less, for the last ten years. I had a mill when the "boom" was on, and for the last eight years I have been experimenting. I think I have got my machines to work very well now, as you will see by the last report. I think the industry is wrongly worked altogether; it is worked on a wrong principle. There is too much waste by the present process, and that is what I am trying to improve. I have spent a good deal of money in this direction—£1,500 or £1,600. I have, therefore, some knowledge of the subject.