

44. What I understand is this: that the farmer finds it cheaper to use manila?—I do not know; we have sold both.

45. How is the demand going for flax: is it increasing?—I do not know; I think it is about the same—just now on the increase.

46. That is, it maintains the same proportion?—Yes. My own opinion is that the flax has been stripped too coarse. If it was made soft, the same as manila, it would be better for some purposes.

47. Can you make it soft?—Yes.

48. Why do they not all do so?—I do not know. They have to put it through at a certain price.

49. What I want to get at is the intrinsic worth as it is used in New Zealand. If we in New Zealand cannot use it as rope, and if we will not use it as binder-twine, is it fair to get the Government to prepare the article for export?—There is no answer to that, excepting supply and demand. The only thing is that it may be produced cheaper, and perhaps better. You know, many colonial products have been brought to perfection in that way, and so come into use.

50. *Mr. McLean.*] Where is your market?—I am only experimenting; I have no mill for export.

51. At what stage would it pay to cultivate the flax: what is the earliest age at which you could use it?—At about four years, but I reckon that the best time is when the flax is five years old.

52. Have you had any experience in Irish flax?—No, but I know what it is.

53. Do you think it would do well here?—I do not see why it should not.

54. Would it grow here?—Yes. There would be two crops a year, but I think it would impoverish the ground.

55. In regard to durability, has the native-dressed flax the same durability as that dressed on a machine?—Exactly the same, according to Dr. Hector's report. I would bring under the notice of the Committee the following table from Dr. Hector's report, and ask the Committee to recommend that these experiments be again taken up, and the strength of the different fibres ascertained:—

TABLE No. 1.—RESULTS OF EXPERIMENTS MADE TO ASCERTAIN RELATIVE DURABILITY AND WEAR OF PHORMIUM AND MANILA ROPE.—WELLINGTON, MARCH AND APRIL, 1871.

Description of Rope.	Circumference before Experiment.	Length.				Weight.			Number of Days run.	Number of Miles run at 4,575 ft. per Hour.	Durability (per Cent.).
		Before Experiment.	After Experiment.	Percentage of Stretch.	Percentage of Shrinkage.	Before Experiment.	After Experiment.	Percentage of Loss or Gain.			
Dry—	In.	Ft. in.				Oz. dwt.	Oz. dwt.				
Manila ..	1.43	17 8	..	2.6	..	Not	accurately	noted	20	173.3	100
Phormium (white) ..	1.56	18 3	..	3.5	..	13 10.8	10 14.2	— 20.3	28	242.6	134
" (tarred)	1.56	18 4	..	7.6	..	16 2.4	15 8.9	— 0.3	15	129.9	74
Wet—											
Manila ..	1.43	18 2	..	1.9	11.0	Not	accurately	noted	22	190.6	110
Phormium (white) ..	1.56	18 2	..	6.1	6.0	13 9.9	12 3.8	— 10.0	20	173.3	100
" (tarred)	1.56	18 1	..	7.9	3.8	16 14.8	17 0.4	+ 0.6	19	164.6	95

TABLE No. 2.—EXPERIMENTS IN 1872.

Dry—	In.	Ft.	Ft. in.			Lb. oz	dwt. gr.	Lb. oz.	dwt.				
Manila	2.00	16	17 5½	9.1	..	1 9	11 30	1 9	0	— 2.8	39	337.9	100
Phormium, native-dressed	2.25	16	19 5	21.4	..	2 1	1 5	1 13	4	— 11.5	57	493.8	146
Phormium, machine-dressed*	2.00	16	18 6½	15.9	..	1 8	6 0	1 7	0	— 5.6	64	535.4	159
Phormium, machine-dressed (oiled)	1.62	16	18 10½	18.0	..	1 5	8 0	1 2	13	— 12.5	92	797.1	236
Wet—													
Manila†	2.00	16	17 4	8.3	8.6	1 10	2 30	1 12	0	+ 7.0	30	259.5	77
Phormium, native-dressed	2.25	16	20 9	20.7	7.3	2 1	0 0	1 15	9	— 4.3	22	191.0	57
Phormium, machine-dressed	2.00	16	18 2½	13.8	8.6	1 9	10 0	1 9	8	— 0.5	22	191.0	57
Phormium, machine-dressed (oiled)	1.62	16	19 10	23.9	3.0	1 4	8 5	1 5	5	+ 0.5	135	1,022.4	303

* This was made expressly for experiment. Mr. Kebbell remarks that it was "got up in the best manner, and felt as if a small amount of some kind of grease had been used in the manufacture. This might account for the dry line running seven days longer than the dry native-dressed."

† The manila was from a piece of whale-line, apparently of the best quality. I think it ought to have been respiced and run again.

56. Then, you cannot tell much difference between the two kinds?—No; but that is a matter which could also be found out by means of an experiment.