

is of a record nature. This is very gratifying in view of the good values ruling for phormium-fibre on oversea markets.

#### DISEASED LEAF.

The grub continues to work havoc in some phormium areas, making it practically impossible for millers working the affected flax to secure a good-fair grade, while the broken character of the fibre leads to an unsatisfactory increase in the quantity of tow produced; the character of this residual product is under the circumstances also weaker.

#### TOW AND STRIPPER-SLIPS.

The tow and stripper-slips coming to hand are in a very unsatisfactory condition, and in many cases have to be condemned for shipment. In only a few instances are these by-products prepared as they should be.

#### ADVANCING METHODS.

In several instances millers are taking steps to improve their methods of production by building more modern mills and by installing improved appliances. Two thoroughly up-to-date mills have been erected in the Manawatu district this season, and two are being constructed in the Wairarapa district.

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### THE CABBAGE-TREE: A POSSIBLE SOURCE OF MARKETABLE FIBRE.

A SAMPLE of cabbage-tree (probably *Cordyline australis*) fibre was recently submitted by the Imperial authorities in London to brokers to ascertain its value. The sample was fairly well prepared, but rather pulpy, of poor lustre, harsh, and somewhat brittle. The colour was uneven, being mostly deep cream, whilst some portions of the sample were greenish. The fibre, which had been insufficiently cleaned, was of irregular strength, most of it strong, but some parts weak, especially at the ends. The length varied from 1 ft. 5 in. to 2 ft. 10 in., being mostly from 2 ft. 3 in. to 2 ft. 6 in. The brokers stated that if the fibre were 3 ft. to 4 ft. in length it would be worth £25 per ton in London (November, 1912), with Mexican sisal at £34 per ton. The fibre could therefore be used for ropemaking purposes, but in order to realize good prices it should be at least 3 ft. 6 in. to 4 ft. in length.