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THE CHALLENGE OF FLAX:

A Study of New Zealand Woolpack and Textiles Limited,
Foxton, and its Employees.

A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts
in Geography at Massey University

By

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PREFACE

"Flax is the life blood of Foxton" - a truth or a myth? This often repeated remark by past and present residents prompted the study of its one major industry, New Zealand Woolpack and Textiles Limited and its employees. To give the study a wider perspective, it has been set against the background of the flax industry as it developed in New Zealand prior to 1933. This terminal date marked the virtual collapse of New Zealand's export trade in flax fibre and the establishment at Foxton of the Company of New Zealand Woolpack and Textiles Limited.

Although the firm continues to play a vital role in the economic and social affairs of Foxton, flax in recent years has been of declining importance to the industry as it has diversified its manufactures into products which no longer have flax as their prime raw material. If plastic fibres are substituted for flax in the manufacture of woolpacks, and there is a strong possibility, flax growing and milling would be of even less significance for the people of Foxton than they are today.

I should like to record my sincere appreciation of those who have rendered assistance during the preparation of this thesis. In particular, the

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