

**Flax-growing in Canada.**

Now that the lands of many of the old flax-growing countries are showing signs of exhaustion, and the fibre deteriorating in quality, and while the demand for linen fabrics is well maintained, it would be useful to enquire whether there are not new sources of supply to which British manufacturers might turn. As to the adaptability of the soil and climate of Canada, flax of excellent quality has been grown in every province of the Dominion, and has been utilized to a considerable extent in domestic manufactures ever since the first settlements. In 1881 there were reported 2,836,338 lbs. of dressed flax and 1,293,892 yards of home made linen produced in Canada, of which over 1,005,000 yards were made in Quebec, 68,038 yards in Nova Scotia, 51,456 in New Brunswick, and 30,088 yards in Prince Edward Island. This, however, showed a decline of half a million yards since 1881. In the Canadian Northwest three species of indigenous flax grow luxuriantly over a vast area of country and might, no doubt, be utilized one day to good advantage in the manufacture of twines, etc., when machinery was introduced to work up the fibre. The true flax plant has been introduced by the French Canadian pioneers in the reign of the Hudson Bay Co., 200 years ago. It was, however, only within the last few years that a true conception was beginning to be formed of the special suitability of the Canadian Northwest for flax-growing, of the vast area that could be brought under cultivation and of the excellence of the fibre for the purposes of the manufacturer. A comparison of the soils of Egypt, Belgium and Holland, where the fine fibres of the world were grown, and from Russia, where the largest quantity was produced, with that of the Canadian Northwest, showed that the conditions for obtaining quantity and quality were there present in almost every part of the country. Professor Macoun has recently stated that he had seen flax growing 12 feet high in the Canadian Northwest, that the well regulated rain falls prevented the land from becoming sour, and the severe and continued frost pulverized the ground deeper than any other subsoiling process could possibly do. Flax could be grown not only in large quantities in Canada, but also at a large profit. Out of 100,000 tons of flax used in Great Britain last year over 83,000 tons were imported. England produced less than 450 tons and Ireland less than 21,000 tons. Thus England paid out £3,200,000 for her raw material in flax last year. From Russia alone she bought flax valued at £2,083,590. This shows a great market in England. A very large trade might also be done in flax seed for the manufacture of linseed oil and oil cake for feeding cattle. Eight acres of land would produce a ton of dressed fibre, of which the average value would be £41, which would give a total result much better than wheat at its present price in Manitoba and the Northwest. There were 250,000,000 acres of virgin soil in the Northwest that could be thus treated with in "the wheat belt" alone, and if one crop and no more were taken off each new field as it was brought first under cultivation it would supply the factories of England, Ireland and Scotland with fibre for 80 years to come.

—By E. Biggar, from the Emigrant.

**The Sea Otter's Pelt.**

To the rich pelt of the sea otter, when in prime condition, must be accorded the first place in point of value. In 1880 the census reports state that 50,283 sea otter skins were shipped to San Francisco in ten years, 1871 to 1880, or 4,028 per annum. Reliable data show that during the last six years, 1880 to 1886, the yield of sea otter skins has somewhat diminished. The reason of this decrease is that with in the last few years the hunters, both white and native, have been using breech-loading fire arms to shoot the animals, and, furthermore, stimulated by the high prices paid by rival traders, the otter is pursued with greater avidity than in former years. Naturally timid, the sea otter now seeks rest upon the most inaccessible rocks and reefs amid the surf-lashed inlets off the Aleutian archipelago and Alaskan shores. The prices paid by the traders to the hunters vary. For a first class, full grown, silver tipped skin as high as \$100 has been paid; the second class ranges from \$60 to \$80; the third grade from \$25 to \$50; the fourth grade, \$10 to \$20; while a pup skin fetches from \$5 to \$10, the value of the skin being judged by the richness of fur, depth of color, size and general condition. Its uses for garments is confined to trimming sealskin sacsques and cloaks and for muffs and caps. The major portion of sea-otter skins are sent to Europe, and, in common with the land furs, are disposed of, at the great auction sales which are held biannually in London and Leipsic. At the Leipsic sale buyers from every great city in Europe are in attendance, the largest purchasers being from Russia, in which country the bulk of the sea-otter skins find a ready market.

Beaver skins when viewed in their raw state present a very unattractive appearance. The long, reddish-brown hair has to be plucked, and after that operation is concluded the rich, soft light-brown fur is exposed. The yield of beaver pelts has been gradually diminishing during the last few years, and there is no doubt that before long the animal will become extinct. Prices of beaver fur have advanced from \$3 per pelt in 1880 to \$5 in 1886, and the probabilities are that the values will yearly progress. For trimmings, victorines, capes, muffs, and in some special cases, as linings for coats, beaver is highly prized.

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It is reported that freight room has already this week been taken for not far from 50,000 sacks of flour to be exported. The room was arranged for in Chicago, but the flour does not go from this city nor pass through it. Duluth will be the collecting point, and the contributors will be millers at different places along the line of the Northern Pacific Railroad. That section is looming up as a competitor even with Minneapolis, which has hitherto been pointed to with pride as the one source of future supply for the flour wants of Europe. The rate from Duluth is only 5 cents per 100 pounds more than from Chicago, and the smallness of the difference sufficiently explains why the flour export business in this city is dull.—Chicago Tribune.

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