

and likely to be a failure for years to come, it behooves us then to try some other that will be as nearly an equivalent as possible to the loss of the wheat crop, and there is no crop (that I know of) more likely to fill the place of wheat (so far as money is concerned) than *flax*. If the Government intend to give encouragement for the cultivation of flax, I am willing, so far as my experience goes, to render every assistance in my power to any one who may embark in the business; with such a mill as I have mentioned, I could instruct any man in a few days to go through the whole operation.

I can take hold of any part of the business myself, having been obliged to do so sometimes when a hand was sick or from some other cause.

As ever forty years have elapsed since the mill I have been speaking of was in use, I would not recommend the plan of that mill, without ascertaining what improvement has been made within forty years, in the North of Ireland, for breaking and scutching flax, and if an improvement has been made, it should be adopted in Canada, unless at too heavy an outlay. When I left the County Down, I am not aware of a spindle being used for spinning flax by machinery, in the North of Ireland; the small wheel and the hand loom was all the machinery then used,—nevertheless, the linen trade was carried on very extensively.

I will give you an extract from a well-written article in the *British American Cultivator*, in 1843, which will show a wonderful improvement in the linen manufacture from the time I have been speaking of, 1816. I don't think there was a mill in Belfast, at that time, for manufacturing flax into cloth, that is, by spinning and weaving by machinery. I will give the part most interesting to ourselves:—

"Last year, before a Committee of the House of Commons, which sat upon the export and import, it was ascertained that 80,000 tons of flax had been brought over from the continent to Ireland, at a cost in money of six millions of pounds sterling, which would average £75 sterling per ton. This fact would appear almost incredible; but when the extent of the Irish linen manufactures are taken into consideration, all doubts on the subject would be set aside. In Belfast alone, there are upwards of forty mills in full operation, some of which work up fifty tons a week."

I have been ruminating in my mind for some years back, how this important business could be profitably started in this country. The most feasible means that I can now see is that recommended by the *Protectionist*, and copied into the November number of the *Agriculturist*. The writer states, "The great object to be attained is a ready market, at remunerative prices, for every stone of flax offered for sale. Were its cultivation once established, capital would be attracted for the purchase of both flax and seed; but something must be done at the outset. At the risk of being charged with a desire to return to the bounty system, we would propose a plan by which the Government might encourage the growth of flax without expense to themselves, and with manifest advantage to the country. Let the Government establish warehouses in Quebec, Montreal, Kingston, Toronto, and London, for the receipt of flax, and appoint well-qualified persons to receive and examine the same, and to grant receipts for the quantity delivered, describing the quality according to a scale agreed upon. Those receipts to state the quantity and quality of the flax, to be payable six months after date, at the current price of flax, less a certain percentage for freight and commission, &c., and to be negotiable instruments passed from hand to hand without endorsement. They would thus obtain at once a money value, while the flax could be shipped in bond and sold by an agent in the British markets. This could be equally well performed by a private company; but, in that case, the receipts would not be available to the farmers so readily as if they had the guarantee of the Government."

I can see no improvement that could be made in the above suggestion, unless in the number of warehouses. I think they might be reduced to two; it would curtail the expenditure from five warehouses to two, and at the same time reducing the number of agents, and I think not much inconvenience would be felt from the reduction. I would recommend one warehouse in Montreal and the other at Toronto, and if in the course of time it may appear necessary to increase the number of warehouses, then it can be done.

If the Government think it advisable to encourage the growth of flax, I think the models of two of the most improved mills would be all that would be necessary: one for Canada East, and the other for Canada West. Those being once established, and their operations satisfactory, the time would not be far distant when like machinery would be erected in every part of the Province.