

this is the most remunerative of the fiber industries. A study of the comparative consumption of linens and cottons shows that with the steady rise in the standard of living of the masses in civilized countries, the percentage of linen goods used is steadily increasing. To one in possession of the facts about this great industry, and especially about its early establishment in this country, it must be a matter of great surprise that this enterprising nation has allowed this industry to slip from its control.

Charles Richards Dodge, one of whose reports was referred to earlier in this paper, has urged upon our Government and upon our manufacturers the great importance of the reinstatement of linen manufacturing on a large scale into this country. He has expressed the opinion that if we go about the matter intelligently, moving only so fast and so far as we can see our way clearly, the industry may come in a few years to rank among the first in the country. He has made a most careful and exhaustive study of flax culture and the manufacture of linens in Ireland, in Belgium, in Russia, and elsewhere upon the Continent, and is prepared to speak with authority. For nearly ten years he has been the special agent of the Department of Agriculture in their investigations into the culture and manufacture of fibers and fiber fabrics. He has repeatedly urged in the United States and abroad, that it would be profitable for the United States to engage largely in the manufacture of linen goods. We come now to our second question, what conditions or considerations enter into the production of flax in this country that are favorable to the use of fiber for the manufacture of linen goods? Certain agricultural conditions have been referred to briefly. The most important of these is the cheapness of lands compared with values in Ireland and on the Continent, where flax is now most largely produced. Next to this in importance is the greater native fertility of our soils. A yet further condition in our favor, especially in New England, is the fact that thousands of our best farms have been abandoned and ten thousands of acres of land, of much higher native fertility than those under cultivation in Europe, now lie in idleness or practically so. These conditions, joined with the proverbial skill and enterprise of the American farmers, should give us a decided advantage in this enterprise over European competitors. We need only learn their methods of close and intense farming to surpass them easily in the growth of flax; at least to the extent of providing fiber for the production of linen fabrics for home consumption. During the last few years the United States Department of Agriculture, through the various state experiment stations, has made extensive experiments in the growth of flax, and these experiments have demonstrated that flax can be successfully grown for fiber in almost all the states in the Northern half of the United States. During this period of investigation, and for many years previous, sufficient

flax had been grown in certain parts of this section of our country to furnish fiber for the manufacture of very much more linen goods than were consumed in our country during the period in question. To be sure, the flax grown has not been of the kind that yields the finer fibers, but the experiments of the Department of Agriculture have shown that the variety of flax producing the finer fibers can be successfully produced over the whole flax-producing area mentioned above. So far then, as purely agricultural conditions are concerned, the United States has many and important advantages over other countries now producing flax for fiber. It would seem that all that is needed to introduce the cultivation of flax into this country on an extensive scale is the producing of a market for the fiber.

*(To be Continued.)*

#### CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES IN TRADE.

The approaching conference of international commissioners at Quebec is attracting more attention to this country on the part of the people of the United States than anything that has occurred for years. The American Government has busied itself lately in attempting to gain special trade privileges for American manufactures in foreign countries. The South American Republics have been visited by commissions and encouraged to send representatives back to the United States. Efforts have been made to increase exports to Europe, Australia and the Orient. But while all the successes in these directions have been loudly heralded, one of the most satisfactory foreign trades a nation could wish for has been carried on with Canada. According to the United States Bureau of Statistics Canada's imports from the United States in the five years from 1893 to 1897 were 30.9 per cent. of all she imported, from Great Britain, 31.2 per cent. Exports to the United States were 35.3 per cent., and to Great Britain, 55.6 per cent. Of her total foreign trade in the period mentioned, 42.8 per cent. was with the United States and 43.9 per cent. with Great Britain. The Dominion collected annually on the average \$7,481,898 of duties on goods from the United States and \$7,663,030 from Great Britain. There is little we can blame the American Government with in their treatment of Canada. They have proceeded entirely upon business principles, and were not disposed to offer Canadians any special inducements in their markets so long as we were willing to buy American products without them. Congress was quite willing to let well enough alone and give its attention to other countries. When the idea of a British preference was proposed matter assumed a different aspect. Although it yet remains to be seen what effect the deduction of 25 per cent. off the schedule of duties in favor of British goods may have upon United States trade with Canada, it was evident that the Canadian Government was about to assume a new attitude in its international relations, and a new policy might have to be adopted to meet it.