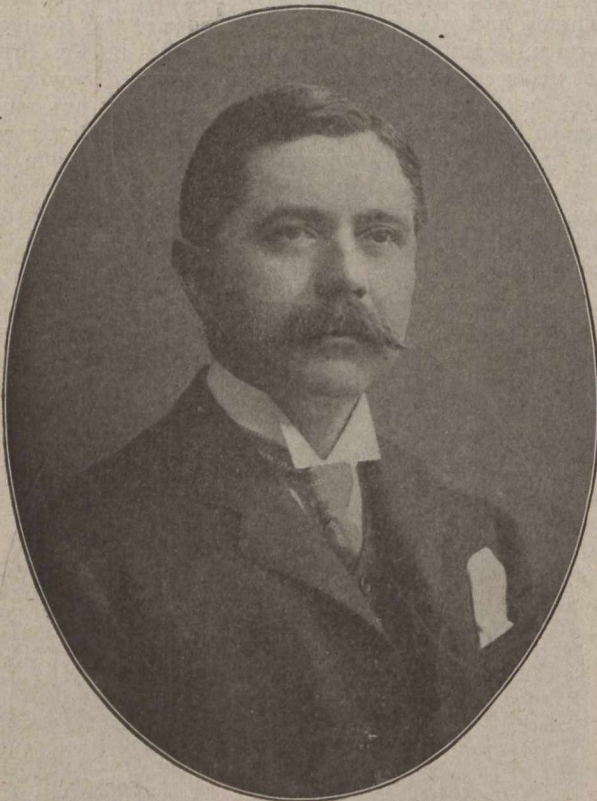


It is interesting to note in connection with the Almonte district, in Ontario, which has so long taken a prominent place in the history of woolen manufacturing in Canada, that the first power loom, or at any rate, the first Crompton power loom ever used in Canada, was introduced by the late John McIntosh. This enterprising man started the manufacture of coarse tweeds in a mill which stood on the site of the present Anchor Mill property and later erected the mill known as No. 3 which stood on the site of the present Thoburn Flannel Mill. The name also of the Rosamonds will ever be inseparably connected with the history of this famous textile section. In 1845 or thereabouts, Mr. James Rosamond was part owner of all the mills in Carleton Place and decided to convert a small fulling and carding Mill into a factory to make the local wool into, grey cloth, satinet, flannels and later on, colored flannels, and while the crude machinery of those days was not capable of the beautiful effects of the present day, yet the product was looked on as reflecting great credit on Canadian industry. In 1857, Mr. Rosamond removed to Almonte, increased his equipment and, in co-operation with Mr. Geo. Stephen (later Lord Mount Stephen), found a market for a constantly increasing output. In fact, the mills had soon to be doubled and then more than doubled in size and capacity.



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In some respects these were the halcyon days of Canadian woolen manufacture, when it and sheep-rearing were steadily developing side by side. By 1891, the product of the hand looms had diminished to little more than 4,000,000 yards, but there were 377 woolen mills and 281 knitting establishments, although many of the latter must have been the homes of operators of hand-knitting machines.

Turning to the allied sheep raising industry, it is a startling fact that the number of sheep in Canada to-day is actually less than fifty years ago. And this in spite of the fact that in many respects this country is peculiarly adapted to this branch of live-stock breeding. This is evidenced by the large number of important prizes carried away by Canadian breeders from such exhibitions as those held in Chicago and other places. The wool produced by the Canadian sheep is among the strongest in the world.

Moreover, the animal itself is almost exempt from the varied epidemics which sometimes sweep over the flocks of Great Britain, South Africa and Australia. The mutton produced is also of superior quality. As to the value of the industry of sheep raising from an agricultural point of view there are no two opinions, as sheep fertilise the land and clean it of weeds as no other live stock do. Whatever may be the cause therefore, the decline in sheep rearing is a feature of recent years in Canada's rural districts which cannot but be deplored.

The Canadian woolen industry itself in spite of the high reputation for quality upon which it has been based, and of the gratifying progress it has made under the leadership of its able broadminded leaders, has not, it must be confessed, kept pace with the increase of population and with the development of other lines of manufacture. Perhaps this is another evidence of the close inter-relation of the industry with sheep raising. As to the precise reason for this state of things opinions differ, but it may be safely inferred that it is largely due to the comparatively small protection against the overwhelming competition in this class of goods by the manufacturers of Great Britain who are past masters of the art of woolen manufacture. In certain districts also they are peculiarly past and present masters of the art of shoddy making and to this cause and to the large importations of cloth which make their way to Canada from Yorkshire is due the fact that the average clothing worn by the poorer classes of our population to-day is inferior in wearing qualities to that worn in the old days when Canadians almost universally wore the splendid product of Canada's custom mills made from the fleece of Canadian sheep. This is no way reflects upon the untiring efforts of present day Canadian mills to produce goods of up-to-date design and finish the success of which efforts no unbiassed observer will deny. In 1897 when the preferential tariff was introduced, it hit with peculiar force an industry which was just struggling to keep its own, and though on some goods the duty was afterwards largely restored, it has had a hard fight to hold its own compared with other industries, which have grown in full proportion with the tremendous development which has taken place in Canada in recent years.

The imports of woollen manufactures entered for consumption in Canada during the ten months ending with January 31st last amounted in value, according to the Dominion Customs returns, to \$4,789,038 under the general tariff and \$19,694,052 under the preferential, or a total of \$24,483,090.

Another obstacle against which the Canadian cloth manufacturer has had to contend has been the irritating lack of patriotism of tailors and retailers which has encouraged customers to look for quality and design only in imported suitings. To such length is this tendency carried that in many of the better-class tailoring establishments the claim is made that hardly any goods of domestic origin are carried in stock. Moreover, high-class goods of Canadian make are sold as imported, while inferior material of foreign make is sold as Canadian. The truth being that in many lines the Canadian product is fully equal to the best produced anywhere; in fact, as many of our readers will remember, homespun from some districts of Canada have a reputation which is more than national.

But while Canada's woolen industry has been kept back contrary to its deserts and while for the above reasons the number of mills and of hands employed are less than they would be under more auspicious circumstances, it is indeed gratifying to note that the industry to-day is in a more prosperous condition than it has been for years. Practically all the mills report business good,