

voted by the Irish Parliament from time to time, for the promotion of the cultivation and the manufacture of flax. A second patent was granted by Queen Anne, continuing the patent of 1700 for ten years, and also continuing the allowance of £1180 per annum. In this reign several laws were passed for the benefit of linen manufacture, regulating its width and length, granting freedom to weavers, exempting them from toll, and admitting duty free, flax seed from Holland, Russia and Muscovy; and further to encourage the importation of such seed, a bounty of 5s. per hogshead of all imported from those countries was granted. From 1704 to 1708 there was paid under Queen Anne's patent "£2,457 12s. 11½d; to the French colony at Lisburn, £451 6s. 7½d; to William Cromellin, the principal of the French Colonists, towards a linen manufacture, £2,225; to Louis Cromellin, and other flax dressers, £55 4s. 9d; for printing Cromellin's books," and for various other charges, amounting in the whole to £7,283 12s. 0½d; besides "a pension of £600 a year for three years, and £120 a year for two years to the French Minister. In 1705 an essay was published by "L. Cromellin, overseer of the Royal linen manufacture of Ireland," for the purpose of improving the hempen and flaxen manufactures of Ireland: in it he at this early period dwelt upon the value of "Russian seed imported from Riga or Narva." The instructions given by him for cultivation of the land, and growing of the crop, differ little from what was written by Pliny the Roman naturalist and historian, 1800 years ago, and by the host of modern theoretical essayists whose papers are to be met with everywhere. About the year 1710 Mr. Joseph Beaumont compiled tables calculating the proportions to be observed in making linen, called "sleaving tables," which were much approved of by manufacturers, and were thought of such merit that the Irish House of Commons voted to him a reward for same.

The Irish Linen Board was constituted under an act of Parliament; and was to consist of 72 trustees—18 to be nominated by each of the four Provinces. Spinning schools were established in every county, 32 workshops were opened; £20 a year was allowed for each of the 32 masters, and £10 each to 32 mistresses, to instruct in the preparation and spinning of flax. In 1711 a further grant of £1619 was made by a vote of Parliament, "for the encouragement of the linen and flaxen manufacture;" and an act was passed to encourage "the sowing and dressing of flax." In 1713, special committees of the House of Commons were appointed to inspect the management and state of

the linen manufacture, and to make reports. Foreign flax seed was imported by the Board to remedy the evils arising from frauds committed by dealers in seed, who fraudulently imposed bad home saved seed, representing it to be good foreign seed. The Board disposed of part of the imported seed gratis, and part at half cost. "This encouraged the sowing of larger quantities than usual, and the produce let people see the goodness of the foreign seed in preference to their own."

Itinerant "flax men" were appointed in each Province, to instruct all persons in the best methods of sowing and preparing their seed and managing their flax; and the committee of the House of Commons reported that these men were of "great use." The trustees published and disposed of several books of instructions, encouragement was given by the trustees to parties setting up manufactures of linen and bleach yards, and rewards were offered for sowing flax seed. At the instance of the Linen Board, Mr. Turner, who was employed for the purpose of improving flax and flax seed, and bleaching cloth, published several papers giving new methods of improving flax and flax seed. In these he gave directions as to the mode of cultivation. Some of his instructions are about as unsuitable as many in the present day, calculated only to mislead and mystify the flax growers. Amongst the oddities of his teaching he suggests "to steep the flax seed about two days in new milk, in order to prepare it for sowing."

The trustees of the Board contracted for eight spinning schools, to instruct 160 girls, at £1 16s. per annum for each girl, amounting to £288 per annum; and for 470 boys and girls to spin hemp, at the like allowance, amounting to £846; being a total of £1134 yearly for these spinning schools. The annual expense of the board at this time amounted to £1729. The Committee of Enquiry reported, "that the importing and sowing of foreign flax seed was *absolutely necessary* for the improvement of flaxen manufactures; that the appointment of proper persons for the instructing of the common people in the best methods for sowing, managing, and dressing flax and hemp, the continuance of the spinning schools and the setting up of flax and hemp manufactures in the several provinces of the kingdom, is highly advantageous to promote the trade of the kingdom."

A sum of £1,000 a year was voted to the trustees of the Board, for two years, to aid the cause; and, in 1719, a further sum of £2000 was paid to the trustees. In 1721, another Committee of Enquiry was appointed by the House, and they reported, amongst other things, "that they had employed an understanding person to go into