

THE FLAX INDUSTRY.

A TALK UPON THE POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS BUSINESS IN ONTARIO.

FLAX has been grown in certain districts of Ontario for 30 years past, but the industry has not made the progress which other lines, in which merchants and farmers are also interested, have made. John Hogarth, who is prominently connected with the business of growing flax, and turning the raw product into finished goods, appears to think that the comparatively small progress which has taken place is due to natural limitations.

"In some places," he said to a reporter the other day, "they have the soil, but not the climate; in others they have the climate but not the soil. About Stratford we find both the initial conditions necessary to success. We have the soil, and we have the climate as well. I do not know of any other part of Ontario of which the same can be said. They are trying to make the industry go in Essex, but I do not look for success there.

"The first mill was opened at Wolverton by J. Nelson Brown, and mills were afterwards started in Blenheim and in Oxford County.

"At present there are between 35 and 40 factories, all located in what may be called the Stratford district. Only about 25 of these are running, however, some of the others being closed on account of litigation.

"Each factory in operation requires the product of about 500 acres of ground. The average production is two tons to the acre, and the crop sells at \$6 to \$10 per ton."

"Flax can be pulled for \$4.50 per acre, no expensive machinery is required for taking off the crop, and it goes direct from the field to the factory. Taking everything into consideration—no threshing, no storage, no risk of fire—it costs as little to harvest and market an acre of flax as it does one of oats. But oats will only yield about \$8 to the acre, while flax will return \$16 to \$18. More than that, flax can be turned into money earlier in the season than any other crop which the farmer produces."

Those engaged in growing are mostly Irish or Germans. In some cases, a mill company leases the land and plants and harvests the crop with its own labor. Nearly all the fibre so far produced has been sent to the United States, although some has been shipped to Ireland.

The company of which Mr. Hogarth is manager is known as

the Perth Flax and Cordage Co., and it proposes not to sell the fibre, but to manufacture it into twine and rope.

There is a flax mill in St. Mary's, owned by Weir & Weir, which employs 60 men the year round, and last year they worked up 1,900 tons of flax. Another mill in the same town is of about equal capacity.

The mills thresh out the seed from the flax, and this is retailed at about \$1.70 per cwt., bags included. For the meal 10c. per cwt. more is charged. There is, say Weir & Weir, a lot of adulterated meal on the market, which is composed in part of shorts and part of oilcake meal. The fibre of the flax worked up at St. Mary's is sold in the States.

There is a mill at Baden, the only one of the kind in Ontario, where oil is pressed from the seed.

WONDERFUL DISPLAY IN WEAVING.

At no time of the year is the ingenuity of the weaver called into greater demand than in catering for the Christmas trade. This is very noticeable in all classes of fancy silks, more particularly in those lines used for the manufacture of men's fancy silk neckties.

The Christmas trade in these goods has, within the last few years, reached such large proportions, that now the leading furnisners look for something that is specially designed and woven with a view to the demands of the holiday trade.

This idea of Christmas neckties has been greatly fostered by enterprising New York necktie manufacturers, until we now think that for the coming season they have reached the climax of beauty in designing and weaving, on pure silks, of mottoes pertaining to the festive season.

We understand a very choice selection of the above novelties are being shown by the Canadian necktie manufacturers.

"MARITIME" WRAPPERS.

The Maritime Wrapper Co.'s line of fall wrappers has met with flattering success on the road, and the orders received by the Woodstock house speak well for the general excellence of the Maritime productions. Among the favorites may be mentioned No. 974, dark fancy flannelette, trimmed back and front, bishop No. 974, to retail at \$1.50, No. 988, twilled wrapperette, dark tancy effects, puff sleeves, to retail at \$1.75, and No. 992 in molleton cloth, choice colorings, trimmed bolero, puffed sleeves, to retail at \$2.

The firm are represented in Ontario by Mr. J. H. Parkhill, 72 Yonge St. Arcade, Toronto.

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