

or six. As we increase growing you will increase selling to us.

Mr. Patterson said that a great deal of what Mr. Donaldson had said was much in accordance with his own opinion. He saw an article from Mr. Donaldson in the Toronto Daily Leader, and it was evident that the public of Canada were alive to the matter. He (Mr. Patterson) had written a letter to that paper, and in it said that, if they would grow the flax, the people of Belfast would buy it.

Mr. Hind said there was no doubt that how to obtain a better supply of flax was the most important question connected with the linen trade. Mr. Donaldson's proposition was a very feasible one; but would it be right for them to teach the people of Canada how to grow flax that might be bought up by a competing country?

Mr. Donaldson—Yes; but I am sure you will get the preference.

Chairman—Is there any duty in the States?

Mr. Donaldson—I think 12½ per cent.

Chairman—That would be quite protective enough.

Mr. Donaldson said at present farmers did not generally sow flax in the best land. He had had a conversation with Mr. McCrea about it, and he was quite satisfied that in Canada flax could be grown equal to anything grown in Ireland. He had not spoken his own opinion merely.

Mr. Hind said they were met to give assistance to this project or the reverse. There could be no doubt at all about the importance of this question to the flax spinners of Belfast, and the country generally, and anything that could give them an increased supply of the raw material would certainly be a great boon to the trade. But it should be remembered that the United States was very near Canada, and that, especially in the States bordering upon Canada, there had lately been considerable progress made in both cotton and woollen manufactures; and, of course, if they saw their way, they would be naturally anxious to advance in the manufacture of linen also. If the people of Belfast subscribed their money for the cultivation of flax in Canada, they might be merely giving encouragement to the manufacture of linen in the United States. He (Mr. Hind) would be glad to see a good supply of flax coming from Canada, or any other place that could supply it, but he had no desire that they should put a whip into the hands of those who should whip them. Let there be a guarantee that some direct benefit would be gained by it. How could they tell whether or not one ton of the flax would ever come here? How could they tell whether or not the Americans would give a higher price? He (Mr. Hind) was afraid the project was not looked on very successfully by the manufacturers of this part of the country, else they would have had a larger meeting to consider the question.

He did not want to take a narrow view of the question; but the linen business had not the elastic nature of the cotton business, and it should be naturally jealous of not letting the trade escape from themselves. If a guarantee were given that a portion of the flax would be sent here to be sold at market prices, the question would be different. There was no doubt the flax could be grown. The question was should they take any steps in the encouragement of the growth of it?

The Chairman said it could not be expected that a guarantee would be given.

Mr. Donaldson—Of course if the Americans give £50 a ton for it, and no more could be obtained here, I could not secure the flax to grow, but I don't think you need fear getting a very large portion of it.

Mr. Hind—We have got none of it yet.

Mr. Donaldson—There were only 2,000 ac. grown last year, and very little of it would reach your market. But we can grow what will reach your market, which I don't think the Americans will purchase.

Mr. Hind—But the facility of getting it more easily raise a market in America for it. They have made two or three attempts to force the cultivation of flax, and the very places where we did so we got least from; and it occurs to me that, if the farmers of Canada find it to be for their interest to cultivate it, they will do so irrespective of any assistance from this country. If they did not find it to their interest to cultivate it, they could not be made to grow it. If they get a better price here they will grow it here. If not, they will not send it. If they can make money by growing wheat they will grow wheat, and if they can make more money by growing flax they will grow flax; and if the Government of Canada are anxious for the growth of flax, £200 a year is not a large matter to stand in the way. I think all we can do is to say:—"Here is a market for you. We will give you all encouragement that a buyer can give a seller if you only bring it to us. But it is not our duty both to pay for the cultivation of the material and then to purchase it."

The Chairman thought they should first know much of this season's growth would be here. He thought the cultivation was more the Government and farmer's question than the flax-spinners. Instead of being beneficial to them it might be injurious.

Mr. Donaldson—Seeing the anxiety on the part of the manufacturers and flax-spinners to get the raw-material, and, seeing that they had subscribed towards its cultivation in Ireland, I was convinced that you were anxious to get a large amount of it. If I had not supposed that the proposition would have been met so heartily, I would have endeavoured to get the Government at home to do something in the matter at once. But seeing that it was so much to grow a large quantity of it there, and