

CANADA'S TEXTILE INDUSTRY.

(Written specially for the Journal Of Commerce by the Editor and Associate Editor of The Canadian Textile Journal.)

The most important industry in which a community can engage is agriculture because upon that is based the production of the two prime necessities to human life, food and clothing. In a country with a cold climate such as Canada's the one is scarcely more important than the other. But everywhere in all ages, as is proven by the earliest records in man's history and by the discoveries of antiquarians, attempts have been made to fit and decorate the human body with fibrous materials of some sort. Indeed, no history goes back far enough to tell the precise beginnings of the art of spinning and weaving.

The discovery about fifty or sixty years ago of the ruins left by the Swiss Lake Dwellers' showed that the art was well known in the earliest era of the Stone Age, when the mammoth and the cave bear stalked the antediluvian earth. In the ruins were found the remnants of fabrics of wool, flax, bast and other serviceable fabrics, besides rope and cordage, bales of flax yarns and many other indications that the industry, even in that remote period had already achieved some importance. In the Bronze Age, crude spindles and looms were used similar to those made to this day by some of the uncivilized tribes of modern Africa. In Brittany, bodies have been discovered wrapped in plaited woolen cloth, similar to those earlier discovered in the homes of the ancient Cliff Dwellers of south-west America. Beautiful textile fabrics dating back thousands of years before Christ have been discovered among the earliest ruins of Egypt, Peru and Mexico as well as in Arizona. On the walls of Babylon and Nineveh, uncovered by archaeologists, is to be seen pictured the whole process of the textile industry, from the raising of the sheep and the cultivation of the flax to the spinning of the yarn and the weaving of the tissue.

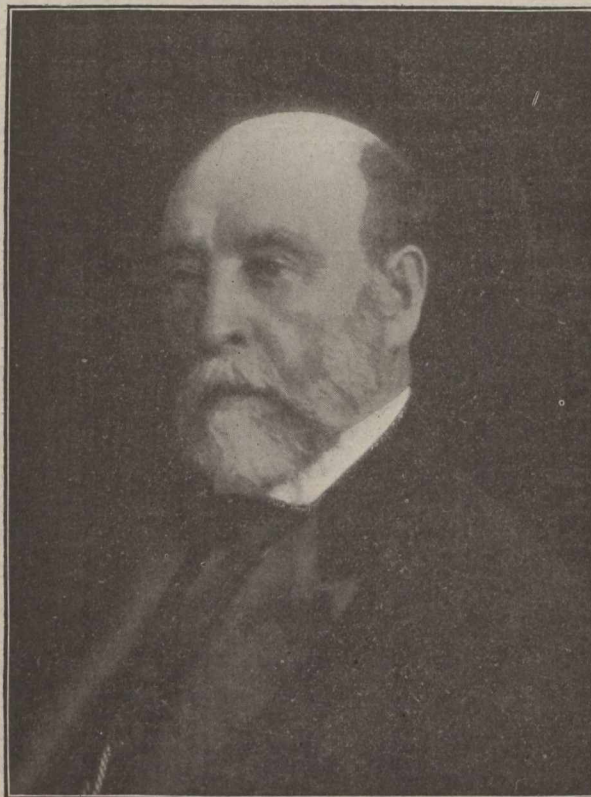
From the first use of the distaff and the spindle to the marvellously intricate, almost human operation of the textile machinery of the present day, from the crude weavings of pre-historic man to the exquisite and varied designs of the twentieth century is a long story, illustrating in a thousand and one details the romance of science and persistent industry. The first great improvement in spinning was the invention of the hand-wheel, in which the spindle was mounted horizontally in a frame and rotated by a band passing around a large wheel set in the frame work. Little further change took place for a long period in this method of making fabrics, under which the output was necessarily restricted by the amount of manual labor that could be brought to it and the small capacity of the crude spinning wheel and equally crude loom.

The great textile industry of the world as we understand it at the present day, had its beginnings in the basic inventions of Wyatt, Hargreaves, Arkwright, Crompton and others. Improvements in the loom had been effected before their time and in various countries, but during the eighteenth century there seemed to spring up in many minds a persistent idea to invent textile appliances which should place the industry on an altogether different footing. The strenuous opposition which met the efforts of these great inventors, both from the workers, and in many cases, the general public, and the slow but sure way in which their machines fought their way to success are a matter of history.

The genesis and speedy evolution of the factory system in industrial countries which has brought about such marvellous changes in the social, political and commercial

conditions of the modern world were due, in combination with the coincident application of the power of steam, to this extraordinary development of the machinery idea for manufacturing purposes.

Canada is a young country and to some extent, so far as the growth of industrialism is concerned, may be said to have started near the top. But in a considerable degree even Canada can show evidences of the same evolution in its textile industries which has been manifested in older countries. This, however, will be pointed out in due course.



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To-day, in every great manufacturing country of the world, the textile industry in its manifold branches, is at or near the top of the list of industries in respect to the capital and number of hands employed, the value of the out-put and the high standing of the various executives employing their energies in this important path. The best test of the importance of an industry to a given community is perhaps not the amount of capital it uses, or even the value of its product, but the extent to which it gives employment and the amount of wages it pays out. On this basis, the textile industry is probably, after agriculture, the most important of all. Not only does it provide clothing, that essential for comfort and even life of the whole people, but it includes hats and bonnets, carpets, upholsteries, curtains, towelings, bed coverings and a dozen other necessities.

In Great Britain, which for years past has been the greatest textile manufacturing country in the world, the annual value of the product is over \$1,200,000,000. The textile mills employ a capital of \$1,300,000,000 besides that employed further in making the fabrics into finished wearing apparel. Of the entire population of say, 45,000,000, well over 5,000,000 are directly employed in manufacturing textile products, while one-half of Great Britain's entire list of exports consists of these goods. In Germany, where the textile industries loom up larger every year the number of hands employed is double those in any other single industry. In the United States, the textile and clothing industries employ about as many hands as the iron and steel and food products, groups of