

were made, such as employing Randall on his claim that he knew all about the business, whereas he had been a cotton mill man without any experience in flax machinery—that the men who embarked in these ill-starred ventures were men without knowledge or judgment. They were all men of business ability and experience, as their success in other branches of manufacturing showed. There was a general belief in Canada and the States that linen manufacturing was destined to be a permanent and profitable industry. In 1868, a date at which the industry was already doomed, this belief was still held, and was expressed in the following paragraph in a book on the "Industries of Canada," by H. B. Small, of Ottawa:

"Only a few years ago, the Messrs. Perine & Company, of Doon, in the county of Waterloo, gave the impetus to flax culture there by distributing seed among the farmers, promising to purchase both the fibre and seed and start a mill for dressing the flax. Since then, they have so largely increased their operations, that they are now carrying on no less than eight scutching mills in that county, in addition to a large linen factory. At Norval also, Co. Halton, Col. Mitchell has invested largely in vats for steeping purposes, and machinery for spinning and weaving. In the village of Preston, a large linen manufactory is in operation. There need, however, be no apprehension that the country will produce more than it can consume. At the present time Barber Bros., of Streetsville, are using large quantities of yarn from the linen mills of the Messrs. Perine for warp and filling woolen weft [What the writer meant was that it was used as warp with woolen weft in producing union cloths.] thus producing a much stronger article than can be manufactured with cotton and woolen. Hence the linen manufacturers need have no more ground to fear want of demand than the woolen manufacturer."

Had the Civil War lasted four or five years longer, it is quite possible the industry might have become entrenched in Canada, because the supply of raw material of home growth could have been provided for.

Just at this point lay the difficulty, and it forms the difficulty to-day as it did in the period of the Civil War. If those who are starting out in the business now design to build up a native flax industry, they should well realize that they must begin on the farm, and not in the factory. The linen business is analogous to the beet root sugar industry, and those who have embarked in the latter field recently in Ontario, have found that it is one thing to build and equip a mill, but quite another thing to get the farmers to grow beets enough to keep the mill running. In deciding how to use his land, the farmer is not solely influenced by the prospect of working for dividends for the owner of the tall chimney, but by the expectation of making money for himself by the crop in which there is the least hard labor. The linen industry had already begun to collapse in Ontario in 1866-8, before the farmers in Waterloo and Wellington counties, in which it started, were convinced that flax growing would pay as a permanent staple crop. It is true, that flax was grown here and there all over the Province, but chiefly, as in other Provinces, to furnish fibre for the house-wife to spin and weave into towels and sheetings for family use.

It may be stated here, that the only flax firm in Ontario which survived the crisis of the Civil War was M. B. Perine & Company, of Doon, and the explanation of their survival and subsequent prosperity, is that they began at the beginning. They settled the agriculture problem first. They started their first scutching mill in 1851, and began by distributing flax seed to the farmers, from whom they guaran-

teed to take the crop at a stated price. In many cases, they had to teach the farmers how to grow and prepare it for the mill, and it was only by the exercise of great patience and perseverance, that they made the business a success. Having established their scutch mill at Doon, they widened the area of flax growing and started a second mill at Conestogo, a third at Stirton, and a fourth at Baden. It was not until 1862, that the firm started the manufacture of flax twines, which they have continued to the present day. During the Civil War period, they imported looms, and manufactured bagging, but later abandoned that branch and sold out their weaving machinery. The Livingston brothers, who afterwards started scutching mills and the manufacture of linseed oil, and through whose operations the area of flax growing was largely extended, learned the business in the firm of Perine & Company. It was thus that the flax industry in Ontario began and grew until between 1880 and 1890 there were over fifty scutching mills in this district of Ontario. Since then it has steadily declined. The Livingstons at one time had about a dozen scutching mills, now they have only three mills running. The firm of Perine & Company, have much difficulty in procuring supplies. They estimate that in the last five years, the area of flax growing in Waterloo, Wellington and surrounding counties has declined fifty per cent. Out of the fifty or more mills referred to, as existing in the nineties, the following is approximately a complete list, and several of these are running light. Doon, Conestogo (now closed), Exeter, Hensall, Zurich, Alvinston, Shipka, Dashwood (2), Crediton, Seaforth, Mitchell, Sebringville, Lucan, St. Mary's, Ailsa Craig, Parkhill, Forest, Wallaceburg, Tilbury, Dresden, Belle River, Essex, Embro, Arthur, and Palmerston

Apart from the requirements of the twine mills, the principal products of the scutching mills of Ontario have been shipped to the upholstering factories and exported to the United States for twine and upholstery manufacturing purposes. Occasionally some flax and tow are shipped to Great Britain, but seldom in large quantities. In 1897 Canada exported 2,608 cwt. of flax, valued at \$21,438, and 300 cwt. of tow, valued at \$350 to Great Britain, the exports to the United States in the same year being 35,414 cwt. of flax, worth \$283,214, and 18,535 cwt. of tow worth \$84,378. Of these totals of flax, \$3,754 came from Quebec, and all the rest from Ontario. There is considerable fluctuation in the export of flax products. In 1897, for instance, we shipped to the United States 38,022 cwt. of flax, and 18,835 cwt. of tow, but in 1898 the export was only 5,710 cwt. of flax and 11,281 cwt. of tow. In 1901 the export of flax was 32,140 cwt., but the export of tow had dropped to 612 cwt. In the year ending June 30th, 1903, the export was 19,301 cwt. of flax, worth \$175,243, and 555 tons of tow worth \$3,943, all going to the United States. In the same year Canada imported \$2,000 worth of flax and tow. It will thus seem that flax as an article of export is on the decline. The exports as far back as 1877 were greater than those of 1903 by \$3,793.

But this is not all. The flax and linen industry is also declining as a household industry. The generation of women who could spin and weave flax is fast dying out, and the flax spinning-wheel and hand-loom are heirlooms only. They are found in our museums and historical societies, but no longer in operation by the winter fire-place. The old German ladies from Waterloo county who gave exhibitions of flax spinning in the Pioneers' Building at the Toronto Exhibition last year, excited feelings in the beholder analogous to the emotions of the Jews when they gathered in Jerusalem after the 70 years' captivity. The census re-