

year \$1.50 per bushel or one bushel may be said to be equal in value to two of spring wheat at current prices and weighing four pounds less to the bushel.

The average quantity of clean scotched fibre is 300 lbs., worth from \$8 to \$10 per 100 lb. according to the quality, shewing a net amount per acre for both seed and fibre of \$48. Many farmers prefer selling out of their stock. When dry and ready for market in this state, with the seed on, it is worth from \$12 to \$15 per ton, and as high as \$18 per ton was paid at the scutching mills last season for superior quality. The quantity produced in this state is from two to three tons per acre. An oil mill will be erected in Toronto this year for the purpose of crushing the land, converting it into linseed oil and oil cake for feeding the cattle. As a further proof of this new and important branch of industry some 38,000 bushels of Canadian growth of seed was delivered at the mills of Messrs. Lymans, Clare & Co., Montreal, last year; and should this season prove favorable, as it has thus far (except perhaps somewhat of late) there will be over fifty thousand acres cultivated next year.

The great secret in producing the finer qualities of fibre that will command the highest price in the market is in the knowledge acquired and practiced of either dew or water rotting. The former practice has been followed generally throughout the Province thus far, and as there is less trouble in following this system, I have generally recommended it: it is accomplished by spreading the flax upon a meadow after the seed is taken off, it is then left for a period of some fourteen or fifteen days, and is judged fit for lifting when, by rubbing a few of the stalks between the fingers, the woody part separates from the fibre freely; while on the grass it requires turning once or twice. When water rotted it will require six or eight days in this stage, according to the heat of the water, but I have known it ready in four days. When this system is followed, which is only done at present at the mills of Col. Mitchell of Norval, it requires only four or five days' exposure on the grass.

Proprietors of either steam or water power saw mills when the timber is exhausted will find that flax culture will come to their aid, for scutching machinery can be easily put into their mills at very little expense with the exception of the breaker for preparing the flax for the

scutcher, the sum of \$800 would put in machinery sufficient to keep from eight to ten hands employed, each scutcher turning out from 80 to 100 lbs. per day of clean scotched flax ready for market. The great difference in the price of flax in Ireland and other flax growing countries where prices range from £50 to £200 stg. per ton, is evidence of the skill attained in producing the finer qualities.

It is quite common for farmers to get from £30 to £40 stg., per acre for flax on the ground before it is pulled. Surely this should be a strong inducement for the Canadian farmer to give it a fair trial when he has his land free from rent, and with trifling taxes comparatively. I have seen as fine a quality of fibre and as much to the acre in the township of Blanchard Co., Perth, as ever grew on any acre of land in Ireland.

Lastly,—You ask is flax an exhausting crop. I reply not more so than barley or fall wheat: it is expected that a farmer will put his flax crop into ground well prepared and which may have yielded a root crop the year before; or, where they have not ground so prepared, let them dress it with a few extra loads of manure, but this should be invariably done the year before.

In conclusion, I have only to urge that too much attention cannot be given to this new branch of agriculture. In the State of New York, in the midst of all their distractions arising out of the civil war, they have in that State alone appropriated the sum of \$20,000 for the encouragement of flax culture; and at present they offer the best market we have for the qualities we at present produce in Canada.

We ought to produce a large quantity of superior quality for exportation; and no doubt, with a little more experience, we will do so, the prospects being now most promising.

But one of the chief reasons, if not the best that can be brought forward to induce the farmer to turn his attention to this crop, is that it is not liable to the ravages of the weevil midge or fly as wheat is, nor will frost injure it to any extent.

Other advantages might be enumerated, but at present I content myself with placing these remarks before you, trusting they may meet with due consideration from your Committee. I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN A. DONALDSON.

Quebec, 13th June, 1864.