

Flax Cultivation.

We find the following communication on this important subject in the *Toronto Leader*, by which it will be seen that the Government has undertaken to introduce into the Province several of the improved flax scutching machines lately brought into use in Ireland. By these machines flax can be scutched in a much more expeditious and economical manner than heretofore, and their introduction into this country will doubtless tend to remove one of the chief obstacles which are laid in the way of extensive flax culture.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE LEADER, Sir—Some time ago, I published in the columns of your valuable paper a letter on the cultivation of flax, and again deem it advisable to remind the farmers of the importance of this valuable branch of agriculture. During my visits to several Agricultural Societies, I found a strong desire on the part of the farmers to give it a fair trial, but the absence of proper machinery to prepare it for market seemed to be a strong objection to give it to any extent. On my visit to Quebec, a few days ago, I brought the matter before the Government, who seemed to see at once the necessity of meeting this objection, and an order of Council was at once issued for the importation of a number of those machines, manufactured by Messrs. Rowan & Bro., Belfast, to be distributed in various parts of the province, where it may be thought a quantity of flax will be cultivated, and so that mechanics may see them and have the opportunity of making others by them. Certainly so much credit cannot be given to the Government for this liberality in thus purchasing those mills. I also had the honor of bringing the matter before His Excellency the Governor General, and Lord Monck, who expressed his most hearty approval of the project, and was much pleased at every flattering prospect of Canada becoming a flax growing country. It would, therefore, be most desirable that the members of the agricultural Societies would organize a flax association; and I hope in a few days to be able to inform you that His Excellency the Governor General will be pleased to become its patron.

Now that machinery for scutching and preparing this valuable plant for market is to be readily obtained, it is to be hoped we will see the cultivation of flax to a very great extent, make the trial and give it that attention it well deserves. On my way to Quebec, I called at Montreal, where I was informed, on visiting the extensive mills of Messrs. Lyman & Co., that they had purchased over 40,000 bushels of flax from parties in Upper and Lower Canada this season, furnishing another strong proof that the soil and climate are so well adapted for its

growth and cultivation. From this seed is manufactured large quantities of Linseed Oil, and Oil Cake, which we are obliged to send to Montreal and purchase, instead of having those mills in our midst. With the present prospects of a small supply of cotton, owing to the sad disruption in the Southern States, certainly flax must take its place to a very great extent, and become more and more profitable to the farmer every year.

The mode of handling flax, as at present carried out in Canada, does not secure to the farmer the best quality nor most remunerative price, as it is well known by those who have seen it done in Ireland, the seed is never allowed to ripen. The flax is pulled between the time the bell or blossom is on and before the seed is allowed to ripen, thereby securing a much finer fibre and a larger quantity, for which the highest prices are obtained. Only a trial and experience will convince the farmers of this fact, and by attention and perseverance they may obtain their £70 or £80 sterling per ton, as the farmers are doing at present in Ireland.

I may also mention, in conclusion, that I met a gentleman in Montreal on his way to the mills of Messrs. Blaikie & Alexander, Norval, to Messrs. Perine's Conestoga, also other mills in the neighborhood of Galt and Berlin, for the purpose of purchasing all the scutched flax they had, and the moment it is known that a quantity is grown here, he will have agents and buyers in the country at once. Let me again urge on the farmers to make the necessary inquiry, and visit those mills, where they will see the ample process carried on of preparing the plant for market after growth, and informing themselves in every particular, which they can readily obtain from those who have already tried it. I trust that the other papers throughout the Province will copy this letter, imperfectly written as it is, in order that one and all may benefit alike by following this most important branch of our agricultural pursuits. In the list of prizes, too, next year, I hope flax and flax seed will be included in every list issued by the agricultural societies.

Your obedient servant,

JOHN A. DONALDSON.

Canadian Government Emigration Agent.

Linnæa Borealis.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CANADIAN AGRICULTURIST. SIR,—The 19th No. of the *Agriculturist*, dated Oct. 1st did not reach my hands till yesterday, although I am a regular subscriber. I should have otherwise have troubled you with an earlier comment on a notice of the "*Linnæa Borealis*," page 607, which you have transcribed from the pages of the *Montreal Commercial Advertiser*. The correspondent of the latter paper is, I think, in error when he asserts that the plant received its title from