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THE CANADIAN TEXTILE DIRECTORY

A Handbook of all the Cotton, Woolen and other Textile manufactures of Canada, with lists of manufacturers' agents and the wholesale and retail dry goods and kindred trades of the Dominion, to which is appended a vast amount of valuable statistics relating to these trades. Fourth edition. Price, \$3.00.

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FLAX STRAW FOR BINDER TWINE.

Canadian farmers pay about one and a half million dollars a year for the cord which binds their wheat sheaves. This is made almost entirely from manila and sisal, which has to be imported from the Philippines and Mexico. If the raw material can be produced in the country, a great source of wealth would be created. Flax straw can be used for making binder twine and flax can be grown without difficulty, especially in the Northwest. Last year there

was under this crop, west of Winnipeg, over 40,000 acres. The flax is cultivated for the seed only, the straw being burned. This is a great waste. The Journal has several times called attention to the possibilities, and we are glad to know that the problem is being worked out by the scientists of the Model Farm at Brandon, and Mr. Wolverton, manager of the binder twine factory in that town. Last year this factory supplied 250,000 pounds of twine for the western harvest, and is, we are informed, this year turning out 6,000 pounds a day.

As already stated, flax is grown in the Northwest for seed only, but a suitable fibre for twine can be produced by close seeding, by which means a long stem on the flax plant can be obtained. At the experimental farm, by doubling the quantity of seed, a satisfactory straight stem, free from branches, has been secured, though the yield of seed has not been proportionately increased. The next step is the improvement of machinery for treating the flax straw. Just as the old flail had to disappear before the modern thresher to make wheat-raising profitable in the west, so the bowler, still in use in Ontario in flax thrashing, must be improved upon to produce flax fibre for binder twine in commercial quantities. The machinery for extracting the fibre from the straw has already been built on a small scale for experimental purposes, and twine of the best class, possessing the requisite qualities of strength, evenness and length, has been made. The practicability of machinery for producing twine in marketable quantities has, however, yet to be proven.

The experiments will be continued, and next year flax seed from Russia will be tried, that country having a reputation for producing the best flax in Europe.

If the western farmers can grow the raw material for binder twine, it will add half a million dollars to the value of their flax crop, with very little added expense for cultivation. We may also see the farmer and the manufacturer united in working for the maintenance of a duty on imported twine.

STUDY WHAT THE PEOPLE WANT.

Someone well points out that the one thing which keeps the British textile mills busy is the knowledge the English manufacturers possess of trade conditions in the various countries to which they export goods. If there is a falling off in the demand for cotton goods, say for China, or India,