

OPENINGS FOR INDUSTRIES IN THE WEST

Flour and Oatmeal Milling, Linseed Oil, Starch, Alcohol, Vegetable Canning and Evaporating, Meat Packing and Canning, Tanning, Leather Goods, Paper and Pulp Mills, Binder Twine, Salt, Woollen Mills, Mineral Development.

WE sometimes hear the remark that Western Canada can never become a great manufacturing country. While this is perhaps true in the main, at least so far as it applies to the present generation, yet it is only true in a comparative sense. We cannot expect to become a manufacturing country, in comparison with Great Britain or the New England States even. Population for one thing would not admit of this. A large population is necessary before a country can become great in manufactures.

At the same time the idea that this is not a manufacturing country, is often carried too far. As population increases profitable openings will be found for manufacturing industries which have not yet been thought of. It is absurd to say that a country possessing such great natural wealth and with such varied resources, does not present some profitable openings for manufactures. Besides the products of the soil in the broadest sense, which may be turned to account in manufacturing industries, we have coal, minerals of various kinds and considerable forest wealth. All these will be utilized in time.

Naturally our chief and early industries will be devoted to working up the raw material which is produced in the country. One industry in this direction has already made considerable headway, and there is abundant room for further development in the same direction. We refer of course to flour and oatmeal milling. The preparation of cereal food stuffs is the principal manufacturing industry of Manitoba at the present time, and the available supply of raw material is now ample to permit of a vast expansion of this industry at once. The great bulk of our cereal export is now in the form of the raw material, though there would appear to be no good reason why a much larger portion of this should not be put into the manufactured state at home. In the manufacture of wheat flour, oatmeal, pot and pearl barley, etc., there is evidently room for indefinite expansion.

In the same line as the cereals, we have another product of the soil which furnishes the raw material for a manufacturing industry. We refer to flax seed. Manitoba produces a considerable quantity of flax seed, which might be made available for the extension of a home manufacturing industry. We have now one crushing establishment in Winnipeg, but as in the case of wheat and other grains, the great bulk of the flax seed is shipped in the raw state. The yield of flax seed in Manitoba this year is officially placed at 1,281,354 bushels, while the home capacity for crushing is only about 100,000 bushels. Flax has not been grown here for the fibre, cultivation being limited to the production of the seed. Flax could also be grown for the fibre, and this opens possibilities for the extension of industries in other directions.

Still another product of the soil which affords an opening for the establishment of manufacturing industries, is the potato. Potatoes yield a large crop here and they are always abundant and cheap. They furnish

the raw material for starch factories, and it is also thought that alcohol or potato spirit could be manufactured here to advantage. Potato spirit is a well known article of commerce, largely used in the arts.

The canning and evaporating of vegetables and fruits is another industry which might be entered upon successfully. There is no city in Canada where vegetables are more abundant and prices more reasonable than right here in Winnipeg. Notwithstanding this, all our canned goods in this line are brought in from the Eastern provinces. Why not can our tomatoes and other vegetables at home? In fruits we have not a very extended variety which would be available for canning, but we have some. Any quantity of blueberries could be obtained for this purpose, at a very reasonable price. These berries are handled in Winnipeg by the ton every season, and there would be no question as to the supply, at a reasonable price. Large quantities in fact often go to waste for lack of a market.

From products of the soil we may turn to the curing and canning of meats. Some progress has been made in the packing industry in Winnipeg, and to a smaller extent at some other points in the country. So far only the curing of hog products has been attempted. There is room for the expansion of this industry, and also for the canning of meats. Our export live stock trade has developed fast of late years. The export of live stock, however, is not the most economical way of handling the trade. What is required is slaughtering establishments, in connection with cold storage warehouses, so as to permit of the exportation of chilled meats, instead of the expensive plan of shipping live stock. From slaughtering and refrigerating establishments it would be only a step to the canning and curing of all kinds of meats, poultry, etc., on a large scale. In this direction there is an opening here for a large and profitable industry. We have the raw material, and by adopting this course there would be a great saving in freights, besides the advantage to be derived from the prosecution of the home industry.

Again, following in the same direction, we have in the supply of hides the raw material for a tanning industry. At present the great bulk of the hides and skins marketed here are shipped to Eastern Canada or the United States. It is believed that tanning would prove profitable here. A committee of the Winnipeg board of trade looked into this question, with the result that the members of the committee were quite convinced that the industry would be carried on successfully. There is an abundant supply of hides now for quite an extensive tanning industry here, and when we get the slaughtering establishments for the purpose of exporting dressed meats, the supply will of course be greatly increased. A local tanning industry would perhaps open the way for the manufacture here of boots and shoes, harness and other leather goods on a large scale. There is now quite a large establishment here engaged in the wholesale manufacture of harness and saddlery goods.