

The Oregon Statesman

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SALEM NOW THE FIBER FLAX CENTER OF THE UNITED STATES AND BOUND TO BECOME THE LINEN CENTER OF THE WORLD

Linens were the first vegetable fiber fabric made by man. The Pharaohs of Egypt had their fine linen; the mummies were wrapped in it, back more than 6000 years ago. Damascus was a linen manufacturing center in the days of Abraham when he came thither from Ur of the Chaldees, down near the Persian Gulf where the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris come together from the wide expanses of the Mesopotamian plain.

There is no substitute for linen, and there has not been since long before Naaman, captain of the host of the King of Syria, brought his ten changes of fine linens to offer for the healing of his leprosy.

It was planned in the beginning—when, as Prof. Thomas Condon proved, Oregon was two islands, with Eastern Oregon an inland lake—and before the waters of the Columbia, prior to the fall of the Bridge of the Gods, flowed down what is now the Willamette valley, that Salem should become the linen center of the world.

Nature has so decreed. The natural conditions are here—The climate and soil for producing the fiber flax in perfection; better even than Belgium or Ireland can grow; and the "soft" water is here. There is no lime in our water.

And the air is here—free from electricity, so necessary in the spinning of the delicate strands that go into fine linens—finer than the raiment of Solomon in all his glory.

And the climate is here; mild the year through, so that laborers may work every hour of the 312 or 365; and where ideal conditions are found for the homes of laboring people.

The water power is here; rushing down the defiles of the Cascades and the Coast Range and coursing through all the valleys between.

Nothing is wanting—nothing but the impulse and the organization of the human element.

And in a short year the magnitude of the flax industry of the Salem district has doubled; and next year it will be at least three times as large as this year.

So we are on our way.

All we need to do is to keep on keeping on.

Salem is NOW the fiber flax center of the United States. It will treble its lead in 1921, and perhaps a great deal more; and there are several prospects of getting the spinning of fiber for twine started here next year; to say nothing of linen factories, which are not far away in point of time.

The final consummation will be the working here of thousands of operatives, making here the millions of dollars' worth annually of the linens we have imported—as high as \$50,000,000 a year at the old prices—and creating new markets among the earth's teeming peoples.

Too much praise cannot be given the pioneers who have brought the flax industry of the Salem district thus far along its way towards its ultimate commanding and stupendous proportions.

It is now firmly established, so far.

Mrs. W. P. Lerd is an outstanding figure among these pioneers. Her faith has never faltered. The past season, on her farm on Lake Labish, she grew a trial field of hemp, from seed furnished for the purpose by the United States Department of Agriculture. Result, fiber 90 inches long, going at the rate of 12 tons to the acre, and one and a quarter tons of fiber, worth now in the Irish factories \$1200 to \$1500 a ton.

So there is a movement for the growing of hemp on our beaverdam and irrigated lands. This will aid the fiber flax industry; they go well together.

Theo. Roth, Edward Schunke and Emil Hansett and their associates, with their Turner flax mill, are at last on the high road to a great success; with profit for their money and patience, and vast benefit to this whole section.

The state prison plant, now five years old, was never before in such splendid shape. It is headed towards the time when it will spin flax and make twine and thread. It will do this without any appropriation, if it is let alone and allowed to use its funds and grow and develop within itself.

There is vast encouragement in the Salem slogan pages of The Statesman of this morning. Big things ahead. An industry growing into the stature of a giant; and bound to so grow, by natural processes of growth; but deserving of millions of outside money, in order to make this growth more rapidly.

BITS FOR BREAKFAST

Robert Crawford, Superintendent of the state fiber industry—

Can be pinned down to his present job, and let alone, for a little while longer, and that institution be given the free use of the funds earned by the industry itself—

The state of Oregon will very soon be making its own seine twine and sack-twine, and then its binder twine; making it so that it can be sold to the people of this state at reasonable prices, and still leave a large profit to the prison funds, and to the farmers growing the fiber flax and the hemp.

By all means, this ought to be done; by the next legislature, giving the prison authorities and Mr. Crawford a free hand and the absolute use of the funds they earn.

The legislature will not need to appropriate a dollar—

All it will need to do will be to tell Mr. Crawford to just keep on keeping on; and to free every obstacle in the way of the prison authorities handling their own flax industry and all the money earned by that industry, for use in running and developing the industry into what it ought to be.

It is now the best in the United States, but it should be a great deal better, and will be, if the above suggestions are heeded.

And just to keep on keeping on will make the whole flax industry of the Salem district a gigantic industry before long. It is on its way. There is nothing in all the range of Salem's great basic industries that promises better for the future.

MR. STREET ASKS

(Continued from Page 3.)

So the reporter had to make excuses that Oregon has been a new country, and her people have had a great many things to do in the way of development—

And that, at last, they are laying the sure foundations of a great flax industry that will mean linen mills and twine mills employing thousands of people and keeping in this country millions heretofore sent to foreign lands for flax products.

George H. Street, mentioned above, is the general manager of the Flax Products Corporation, home office 510 Equitable building, Baltimore, and New York office at 36 Wall street, room 908.

Mr. Street has been looking over the flax situation in the Salem district.

He will ship a carload or more of our flax straw to the east, with a view to testing it under some of the processes controlled by his company.

Mr. Street's people are interested in everything connected with the production of the best fiber flax, for the making of twine and thread, and, ultimately, linen. He says about 80 per cent of all the flax fiber produced goes into twine and thread.

Mr. Street is scouting the country for himself and associates, with a view to deciding where they will locate several of their flax treating plants, and when; plants to get the fiber out of the flax straw.

He has found a number of things that are very important to Salem and the Salem district.

In the first place, he has found that the state penitentiary flax plant is turning out as good fiber as can be produced in the whole world; that although Manager Crawford has old style machinery, the fiber he is getting ready for the market ought to be the pride of Salem and the Salem district, and the whole United States. Every Oregonian and every American ought to be proud of this product, says Mr. Street.

He declares that flax is a profitable crop to grow in this locality, and that it is a profitable crop to manufacture.

"All this section needs to do is to push the industry," said Mr. Street.

He declared that as soon as the spinners of the United States find they can rely upon the supply from the Salem district, they will of course use the American supply.

"Why shouldn't they?" asked Mr. Street. He added that, of course, they will not go elsewhere.

Right now, if the product from 15,000 acres were available, instead of that from the less than 600 acres grown here the past season, it would all be bought by American spinners, and at remunerative prices.

Mr. Street says there is money in tow and the other by-products of flax growing, too; but that the big thing for this district is the long fiber flax. That is what we should specialize on.

Another very important thing, in the opinion of Mr. Street, is our favorable climate, and our favorable situation for manufacturing. In the Dakotas, where there is a flax industry, depending upon the coarser fibers from the seed flax, there is about five months of time taken out of every year—on account of the excessively cold weather of the winters. Here we have an open season, admitting of work in manufacturing the whole year through. And then the living conditions for laborers are good here. They may have homes of their own, with gardens and conveniences, instead of being crowded together in tall flat buildings and subject to high rents and all sorts of exactions incident to great cities and factory districts as too generally found.

Mr. Street intimated very plainly that he is coming back to Salem, and he also left the inference with the reporter that his company will provide the factory facilities soon for helping to take

DATES OF SLOGANS IN DAILY STATESMAN

(In Twice-a-Week Statesman Following Day)

Loganberries, Oct. 7.
Prunes, Oct. 14.
Dairying, Oct. 21.
Flax, Oct. 28.
Filberts, Nov. 4.
Walnuts, Nov. 11.
Strawberries, Nov. 18.
Apples, Nov. 25.
Raspberries, Dec. 2.
Mint, Dec. 9.
Great cows, Dec. 16.
Blackberries, Dec. 23.
Cherries, Dec. 30.
Pears, Jan. 6, 1921.
Gooseberries, Jan. 13.
Corn, Jan. 20.
Celery, Jan. 27.
Spinach, Feb. 3.
Onions, Feb. 10.
Potatoes, Feb. 17.
Bees, Feb. 24.
Mining, March 2.
Goats, March 9.
Beans, March 16.
Paved highways, March 23.
Broccoli, March 30.
Siles, April 6.
Legumes, April 13.
Asparagus, April 20.
Grapes, April 27.

Drug garden, May 4.
Sugar beets, May 11.
Sorghum, May 18.
Cabbage, May 25.
Poultry and Pet Stock, June 1.
Land, June 8.
Dehydration, June 15.
Hops, June 22.
Wholesale and Jobbing, June 29.
Cucumbers, July 6.
Hogs, July 13.
City beautiful, flowers and bulbs, July 20.
Schools, July 27.
Sheep, Aug. 3.
National Advertising, Aug. 10.
Seeds, Aug. 17.
Livestock, Aug. 24.
Automotive Industry, Aug. 31.
Grain and Grain Products, Sept. 7.
Manufacturing, Sept. 14.
Woodworking and other things, Sept. 21.
Paper Mill, Sept. 28.
(Black copies of Salem Slogan editions of The Daily Oregon Statesman are on hand. They are for sale at 10c each, mailed to any address.)

care of the 15,000 acres of flax which he says ought to be grown here.

That this many acres might be secured, under the right kinds of inducements, there is little doubt in the mind of the reporter; possibly not that many acres for the harvest of 1921, but at least by the next harvest.

The reader will observe that the flax industry in the Salem district will next year be at least three times as large as it is this year; through facilities already provided for—though it has about doubled in the past year.

In fact, Salem as a flax fiber center is already on the map; ahead of any other section of the United States. And there is now no doubt of the ultimate erection of twine factories and thread and linen mills here; and perhaps they will come very soon.

FLAX CULTURE

(Continued from Page 3.)

a side, each supporting the other. Where the flax is properly cured, it is bright golden in color and is not moist to the feel. The sheaf or bundle should be carefully examined under the hand to see if the dampness and greenness has disappeared. As soon as this result has come about the straw should be immediately delivered to the flax warehouse before it is injured by the weather.

Ten rules which, if carefully followed, will help insure a good crop of flax in most any kind of season:

1. Select good land well drained and as free of weeds as possible.
2. Prepare seed bed until the soil is well pulverized and free from lumps.
3. Sow good seed, ninety to one hundred pounds to the acre.
4. Sow broadcast and evenly.
5. Harvest before straw becomes over-ripe and hard.
6. Keep straw as even as possible on butt end, whether pulled or cut.
7. Shock immediately in proper, well-built shocks, to insure proper cure.
8. Be sure air can circulate well through the shock.
9. Do not mix good, long flax straw with short straw. Sort it in the field and deliver separately.
10. Deliver flax straw to warehouse before it has been weather damaged, if possible.

A THOUSAND ACRES

(Continued from Page 3.)

This industry is now on its feet and all it needs is a little period of being let alone to grow, after which it will make great returns to the funds of the prison, to the farmers who grow the flax, and to the industries of the state needing twine.

Last Year's Crop.

The prison flax industry contracted for the raising of about 275 acres of flax. They paid \$50 a ton for the pulled flax, and furnished the seed free; seed that was selling at the time of sowing at \$6.50 a bushel. A bushel is 56 pounds, and it takes a little less than two bushels of seed to the acre; about 100 pounds.

The average of the best yields of pulled flax was around two and a half tons to the acre. One man brought 4220 pounds to the acre; another, 4227; another, 5071; another, 4812.

Some fields that were poor were cut with mowers, and their yield was around 2000 to 2500 pounds to the acre, and only \$29 a ton was paid for the cut flax.

Farmers paid \$25 to \$30 an acre to the laborers who pulled the flax.

Nearly all the farmers who raised flax last season netted much more to the acre than for their grain.

The total seed furnished was 23,816 pounds, and the total flax straw received and paid for, 812,425 pounds.

Want 1000 Acres.

Mr. Crawford hopes to contract for 1000 acres of flax the coming year. He will have more than

sound company wishing to operate here could no doubt get all the flax grown that would be needed to supply large mills; perhaps up to 10,000 to 15,000 acres,—and certainly that much after a few years.

Theo. Roth is president and Edward Schunke is secretary and treasurer of the Oregon Flax Fibre Co. It is quite evident now that they have "started something" that will prove both financially profitable to themselves and of vast benefit to the Salem district—for there is no doubt whatever that such operations are the forerunners of twine and thread and linen factories here.

The Turks were the first people to bury their dead in cemeteries adorned with ornamental headstones.

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New shipment just received at Shipley's

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IT'S COMING.

WHAT?

Watch further announcements