

SALEM WILL BE NEW BELFAST

This Will Come About with the Inevitable Development of the Flax and Linen Industries Here Where All Conditions Are Favorable—Present Time Propitious for Rapid Strides in this Field—Hemp Industry Goes with That of Flax

The writer believes the most important development that is taking place in the Salem district—

The most important in relation to its certain effect of making Salem a large city—

Is the development of the flax industry, and along with it the hemp industry.

Linen is the world's oldest vegetable-fibre fabric.

Linen will outlast cotton in everyday wear in proportion of one to eight or more; that is, one linen sheet or tablecloth will outwear eight or more of cotton.

It is extremely important therefore, that the world should have more linen; it is bound to have more and more; the cry now is for more and more.

Ireland now manufactures more than one-third of the linen of the world; and she has been producing less than a fourth of the flax needed in her manufactures.

The bulk of her raw materials formerly came from Russia.

Russia is now practically out of it; perhaps permanently; for before the war flax was raised by Russian peasants as a tax tribute crop.

Trying to Fill Gap

In the six counties of northern Ireland there are 900,000 spindles, which require 40,000 tons of flax to keep them running full time. When the Russian supply was available, the linen mills of northern Ireland secured 25,000 tons from Russia, 9,500 tons at home, 4,000 from Belgium and 1,500 tons from Holland.

An authority writing in the London Times of a few weeks ago said that assuming that the northern counties of Ireland should be successful in getting their proportion of the world's raw flax supplies, they would still have a deficit of 17,500 tons annually to keep their spindles running full time. But this authority does not expect more than half supplies for the next five years—or until two or three years after Russia has "settled down"—and one guess is as good as another as to that probable or possible date. This notwithstanding the fact that Italian hemp is being substituted for flax in the northern Ireland mills, entering around Belfast. But the Italian hemp crop has been 30 per cent short, with an increasing world wide demand for it.

The northern Ireland mill managers have looked for relief from the colonial possessions of Great Britain; to Canada and South Africa and India and the others; and to France and Belgium and Holland—but they have looked in vain, excepting for slight relief from a larger acreage in France, Holland and Canada.

A New Day Coming

The United States was a flax-growing and manufacturing country in colonial days; making the "home-spun" on hand looms in the houses of the people; each farmer cultivating a small patch of flax.

The United States manufactured more flax in 1776 than she does now.

But a few days is coming.

A recent authoritative statement reads: "It is said that probably the greatest industrial asset which the war has given to America is the possibility of establishing in the United States a flax and linen industry; that is the manufacture of American linen from American flax."

What does that mean to Salem? This writer is willing to risk his reputation as a prophet by saying it means millions; millions annually.

Flax was first grown on a considerable scale in Oregon for its seed; in the seventies and early eighties for the linseed oil mills of the Gray family, the mills being located on the present site of the Salem woolen mills.

Best in the World

In 1895, Eugene Bosse, from Belgium, who had been exporting flax for the United States department of agriculture, came to Salem. He had been so employed for two years, flax being grown under the direction of the various state agricultural college experiment stations—and he had found that the best flax in the United States or the world—the best flax—was raised in the section of Oregon.

This fact was known before to a few people, as will appear below.

Mr. Bosse raised and treated flax for its fiber here for a number of years with varying business success or failure; due to many causes, the story being too long for details at this time.

In 1896 Mrs. W. F. Lord, wife of Governor Lord of Oregon, organized the Oregon Women's Flax Fiber association, and under the direction of this association and its financing several crops of flax were raised. Due to several misfortunes, including a fire, this association was not financially able to carry out all its program; but it at least demonstrated over again the superiority of the flax grown here, for its fiber.

Dr. Deimel, the greatest manufacturer of linen mesh wearing apparel, investigated conditions here and he was on the point of estab-

lishing a mill here when the war interfered.

The companies with which he is connected may yet be interested; and they will have to look somewhere for raw materials, at least.

There have since been several flax treating plants in operation here. One of them, the Oregon Flax Fibre company, of Turner, seven miles south of Salem, built a plant for making tow and fibre about six years ago. It was financed by Theodore Roth, Edward Schunke, E. J. Hansett and other Salem people, and raised flax of its own—and contracted for the raising of flax by the farmers of that section, and carried on its business till the plant was sold, last year, to the Willamette Flax & Hemp company, which company is now operating it.

Then there is the state flax industry at the penitentiary of which more will be said later on in this article.

World's Best Flax

Now for the most convincing proof of all that this is the best flax country on earth, for the fiber:

Listen: Mr. Miller, near Turner, took samples of flax fiber grown by himself to the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876.

His product came into competition with every flax growing country in the world.

The judges did not know where the samples were raised. They judged by points—length, strength, etc., nine points in all. No one of the judges, however, knew the findings of any other judge. When the footings were made it was found that the Oregon flax had won ON ALL NINE POINTS.

It was the best flax fiber grown in the world in every single particular.

At that time, a great Belfast manufacturer of linen products made the statement that no other country could come up to Oregon, and that he could take two pounds of the Marion county fiber AND SPIN A THREAD THAT WOULD REACH AROUND THE WORLD.

The Barbours are spinning linen thread and selling it now round \$6 a pound; \$12 a ton.

Fishermen at Astoria are paying \$2.50 a pound for the twine that goes into their nets. It costs them nearly \$400 for a net; and, in the salt water, the net lasts only two years.

This is one reason for the high price of flax.

The Dawning New Day

At the request of Governor Pierce and with the influence of Superintendent Johnson S. Smith of the state penitentiary, the Oregon legislature at its session that ended last month passed a revolving fund law, setting aside \$100,000, and making available nearly \$50,000 more, and allowing of the borrowing of still \$50,000 more for buying raw materials and paying the cost of labor in working them up; a law fashioned after the Minnesota law; designed to put the Oregon prison on a self-supporting basis through the operation of its industries—

And the most important of these industries is expected to be the present flax industry, improved and enlarged for turning flax into fiber, spinning tow, upholstery tow, and dairy feed; and threshing the seed—five articles of commerce—

And, more important still, it is expected to secure machinery for the spinning at the prison of sack twine and later on seine and other twines, and perhaps for the manufacturing of rugs, crash toweling and other articles.

Still More Important

Still more important, this will be the beginning of a demonstration on a firm basis of the possibilities of a great flax and linen

industry here; using millions of capital and employing scores of thousands of men and women the year through.

The penitentiary plant will this year take 2000 tons of flax; and likely more than that many tons will be raised in the Salem district; part of it to be treated by the Turner plant, and perhaps some of it at the Rickneal plant of the co-operative association; Rickneal, Polk county about eight miles west of Salem.

Flax and Cotton

The United States department of agriculture recently made the statement that in 1921 the boll weevil fatally affected 79 per cent of the cotton grown in the United States and actually prevented the production of 6,277,000 bales. Said the Portland Oregonian in a recent editorial article:

"Probably it is too gloomy a forecast that paints the complete destruction of cotton growing in the United States, but fruit growers, for example, who have seen entire districts in the older states abandoned to the ravages of bor-

er, moth and scale will be too wise to disparage, as they used to do the value of scientific research and united action for pest suppression. Scarcely a standard commodity is now immune. The corn borer, smut and rust in wheat, the alfalfa weevil and a myriad of other insidious workers threaten our food supply at its source. The isolation which was the pioneer farmer's protection against spread of plant disease has given way to conditions which demand co-operative measures of the highest type."

"Is Cotton Declining? May Linen Come In"

Under the above heading The Statesman of February 24th had the following editorial article:

"Southern Kansas, Kentucky and Missouri are going into cotton culture this season on a much larger scale than usual, encouraged by the advancing price for that staple. The only fly in the ointment is the prevalence of the boll weevil. As a rule in the south arsenic is the chief weapon used for fighting the pest, while planters have relied on the negro for applying the dope. But in these states the colored man hesitates to undertake the job. One would naturally suppose this was because he disliked handling the poison. But it isn't. He believes it is God's will that the bug shall exist. Religious scruples have taken many strange forms, but none stranger than this."—Los Angeles Times.

The advancing prices of cotton are likely to prevail for a long time.

A recent newspaper report records a continuance and a growth of the exodus of negroes from the south that has been going on for a long time; especially since the World War unsettled the colored population of that region, giving its members opportunities for labor in the north, and showing about 500,000 of the young men of the race something of the outside world and its allurements and opportunities. This report says 50,000 negroes have left the cotton districts of the south within the past few months—

Spreading lively alarm among the cotton producers concerning the growing lack of labor for cultivating and harvesting their crops.

Then the boll weevil has increased its damages 50 per cent in the past year—

Notwithstanding the millions of dollars of government money devoted to the attempted eradication of the destructive pest.

All this is having an effect upon the prices of cotton goods of all kinds; on the prices of all the various articles of commerce in which cotton is used.

What interest have the people of the Salem district in this news; in these developments?

They may hold eventualities of great interest to our people. If the mounting prices of cotton shall go on indefinitely, which is within the possibilities, there will naturally result a search for cotton substitutes—

And the vegetable fiber that will make the best and cheapest substitute for cotton is flax fiber.

It is more than a substitute. Articles made from flax fiber have five to ten times the strength and wearing and enduring qualities of similar articles made from cotton.

Flax fiber is intrinsically worth a great deal more than cotton pound for pound, and the price of cotton is already up around the price of the best flax fiber, around 30 to 33 cents a pound, and away above spinning tow, which is now around 17 cents a pound. Spot cotton was quoted at \$29.80 a pound in the New York market yesterday.

If this trend shall continue, and if the people of the Willamette valley will become active in pushing their own interests, it will not be long till all the available acreage of this valley will be used for raising fiber flax. This would mean linen mills here; and spinning mills and many kinds of manufacturing plants using flax products, and incidentally hemp products; for our richer lands here are capable of producing vast quantities of hemp, running two or three times the tonnage to the acre of flax; and capable of being used also in many ways as a substitute for cotton.

The Oregon penitentiary, thanks to the Legislature that adjourned early yesterday morning, will now be in position to work up the product of a larger acreage of flax than has yet been grown in the Salem district; and soon to carry its manufacture into higher prices than has been done heretofore.

So far so good.

But this will be only pointing the way to the greater things that may be accomplished in this alluring field. What Salem needs now is men with a vision of what may be accomplished in the flax and linen business. Men who will help to spread abroad the news of the great future to be found in this field. There are greater things bound up here than in all our forests; than in all our fruits; than in all our grains and grasses and vegetables; than in our minerals. Here is the biggest thing in Oregon in the making. Here are profitable investment opportunities for millions of capital. Here are labor opportunities for hundreds of thousands of men and women. Here are city builders; the magnet that is destined to draw from the wide world annually many millions of dollars to be spent here in making our state the richest among all the sisterhood of states.

The Statesman expects to publish a series of articles on this subject from time to time, on this page.

Another Statesman Editorial

The Statesman of March 3 carried the following editorial article:

The Statesman of last Saturday called editorial attention to the fact that the price of cotton is getting up away beyond the price of spinning flax tow, and nearly as high as the best flax fiber—

And still going higher.

Cotton in the New York market a week ago yesterday was \$29.80 a pound. It was \$30.75 a pound yesterday.

The price of spinning flax tow here is now 17 cents a pound, and of the best flax fiber 33 cents a pound.

This rise in the price of cotton

is due to two things, among many others—

The states south of the Mason and Dixon line are deeply wrought up over the emigration of their negroes to the north. Not since the war has there been such an exodus, and the full significance of the negroes' sudden departure from their homeland is shown by the fact that they are taking their departure just when the weather is coldest in Yankee land. They are essentially children of the sun, and the urge is great and deep that will make them move to the lands of blizzards and cold during the winter season.

The departure has wrought havoc in the cotton fields, with the result that the Memphis Cotton Exchange has asked congress to amend the immigration laws so that laborers may be brought from Europe to the cotton belt. The day of poorly paid skilled labor seems to have ended in the south, although some states are endeavoring to force their black workmen to remain at home.

The southern states have failed to make provision for the education and improvement of their negro population, with the result that white farmers and plantation owners are today faced with the prospect of financial ruin and many large agricultural districts have their lands cumbered and idle. The southerners have always insisted that the solution of the negro problem was a southern matter, but up to date have done nothing about it.

Many things are working together to make the time propitious for the development of the flax and linen industries in the Salem district.

The mechanical puller will allow of large fields with no more expense than the harvesting of grain. Other mechanical inventions are coming in that will cheapen the preparation of the flax straw for manufacturing, and manufacturing processes here will be in the most favorable location—favored by nature, with "soft" water and mild climate, and an atmosphere singularly free from "electricity," important in spinning fine threads.

There is a favorable protective tariff on flax manufactures now—

And in fact all things are working together for the making of Salem a world center in flax and linen manufactures—

All things but the organizers

and the capital, and they can be had, if we keep at it everlastingly.

Might Go On and On

The writer might go on and on—

The subject is almost inexhaustible.

The price of cotton is still rising. The average price of cotton in the United States for 1905 was 9.8 cents a pound. It was 10.01 in 1915. It was 35.7 in 1921. It is likely to go higher than the best spinning flax at any time. And to stay higher.

Listen:

Emil Hansett, who has charge of the penitentiary flax plant, worked up all the 1922 crop (a small supply), disposed of it, and received the money for the product, and realized a profit of 5 1/2 per cent on the cost; and he paid \$1 a day for prison labor, 75c going to the state and 25c to the men; and he charged up every item of overhead.

And the prices for fiber and tow were lower than now; a good deal lower for tow. If that profit can be made from the primary manufacturing processes—what profits may be made from the spinning of flax here—taking 33-cent fiber, for instance, and making \$2.60 a pound of twine, and doing it at a cost of about 10 to 15 cents a pound.

Then think of the higher realms of linen manufacturing. Think of the 33-cent fiber in your linen handkerchiefs for which you pay 50c; if you can buy one of pure linen—and that means \$2400 a pound!

And laces are still higher; very much higher.

Flax has been grown on Salem district land in such tonnage; over five tons to the acre, that one acre has produced over a ton of the best fiber; say about 200 pounds to the ton. That is unusual. But it can be done again. Figure it up, and see that a million dollars' worth of linen handkerchiefs might be taken from about five acres of Salem district land. And perhaps two or three million dollars' worth or more of laces. But make it 10 acres; or make it 20 or more, and where will you find such yields from land—plus labor and scientific and mechanical knowledge and profit on capital invested; where, outside of a gold or copper or lead or diamond mine?

And these all work out; pinch out. Flax growing on the same land will last forever; with proper rotation; the same rotation that careful farmers give to potatoes of grain or corn or vegetables, most of which are more exhausting to the land than is the growing of flax.

FIFTY TWO BASIC INDUSTRIES OF SALEM

(Continued from page 3.)

will compare favorably with the best districts in the world.

An Industrial Center

Salem has industrial dinner bucket brigades drawing more than \$3,000,000 a year; and her total payrolls are perhaps above \$7,000,000; perhaps exceeding any city in the country in her per capita wage earnings; her population being a little more than 20,000. White coal is the biggest thing for any city; and this is being accentuated more every day. Edison says electricity is the only thing in the world that is growing cheaper. Our houses will soon be heated by electricity; and they will be cooled by it, and lighted, and everything that can be done mechanically will be performed by the currents that come over the wires. There are already mapped out available undeveloped water powers in streams near to Salem amounting to 130, 218 horse power. Some of these powers will cost comparatively little to develop. This will mean cheap power for Salem. The biggest thing that can happen to Salem is the harnessing of these powers; and the time is not far distant. Salem is bound to become a great manufacturing city. There are many other reasons, but cheap hydro-electric power is the biggest of them all.

Wood Working

One-third of all the undeveloped water power in the United States is located in the Columbia River basin. Half the water power of this country is in the three Pacific coast states. One-fifth of the standing timber in the United States is in Oregon. Manufacturing plants will have to come where the timber is; and they are bound to come where the water power is. No factory can run without wood; even steel mills have to have boxes and crates. Salem has a number of flourishing wood working plants, and she is bound to get

many more; including furniture factories.

Our Paper Mill

Salem has the most up-to-date paper mill in the world. The first car of paper was shipped September 30, 1920; and the mill was in full operation, after 15 months of building. However, more and more machinery is being added, to make the finest grades of fancy papers; sulphite processes only for the present—but wood pulp process to be added before long. The Oregon Pulp and Paper company is the corporate name, and a great deal of the capital, for both common and preferred stock, is local capital. Major F. W. Leadbetter and Chas. K. Spaulding are among the moving spirit of the great enterprise. Major Leadbetter says Oregon is in the center of the greatest wood pulp supply in the world. So we may confidently look forward to constant expansion of this great mill; and to the construction of more paper mills.

NEVER TASTED BARTLETT PEAR

George Washington may have crossed the Delaware but he never had the pleasure of eating a fine Bartlett pear, such as grows to perfection around Salem. For the year he died, 1799, a man by the name of Bartlett brought from England just one pear tree and planted it on his farm near Dorchester, Mass. And from this one tree came the famous Bartlett pear, by far the leading pear on the Pacific coast. The Bartlett pear was first grown in 1770 by a Mr. Williams in England. But after Enock Bartlett planted his one tree in 1799, it has always been known as the Bartlett.

There are millions waiting here for the men who will organize the linen industry in the Salem district. This will come in time—but it can be hurried by the right men, to their great profit.

Of course Salem is the Cherry City of the World. The four greatest sweet cherries of the world were born here: Bing, Lambert, Black Republican and Logg Stemmed Waterhouse. And the Royal Anne and other great cherries attain greatest perfection here.

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