

## CHAPTER XIV.

# TEXTILE INDUSTRIES.

**S**OUTH AFRICAN wool is too well-known to require any long historical or descriptive introduction. The annual wool clip is in the neighbourhood of 125,000,000 lb.

Cotton-growing has also expanded rapidly during recent years. Early attempts to cultivate cotton failed, and the present successful development dates back only as far as 1910, when the British Government and the cotton manufacturers of England held out inducements to cotton growers throughout the Empire. Cotton from the agricultural point of view is treated fully in the booklet, "Farming Opportunities in South Africa." The crop has been increased year by year, and in 1920-21 was three and a half million pounds.

The textile industry in South Africa is capable of being developed to a great extent, and will in time prove of importance to the country.

The abnormal conditions brought about by the war, the enormous increase in cost of freight, and the higher rate of wages caused by labour trouble overseas, have given South Africa a unique opportunity of establishing a woollen industry on a sound basis.

A factory known as the Woollen Mills, Ltd., was opened two or three years ago, with branches and woolwasheries at Woodstock, Capetown, and at Wolseley, C.P. This is the pioneer textile factory of the Union. "Waverley" blankets, travelling rugs, tweeds, and blankets for the native trade are manufactured.

During 1923, a large factory was opened at Harrismith, O.F.S., known as the National Woollen Industries of South Africa, Ltd.

Almost the whole of the Union wool clip has hitherto been shipped overseas, there to be manufactured into goods which are bought back by South Africa. The production in South Africa is steadily

increasing. For instance, the clip of 1921 exceeded that of 1920 by 9.3 per cent. This is accounted for by the increase in the number of sheep, and also by improvement in the class of sheep, due to the efforts of the Sheep Division of the Department of Agriculture in assisting farmers to classify and grade their flocks.

The appended tables give data on the total production, exports, and imports of South Africa for the years 1921 and 1922. Statistics relative to the wool washeries in operation in the Union are also given.

There are, it is plain, very good possibilities of development in the manufacture of woollen goods.

### Cotton.

Cotton-growing has now got beyond the experimental stage in many districts of the Union, and promises to become one of the staple crops in certain areas. This is important, as in South Africa there is a large demand for cheap cotton goods. With the native population of between five and six millions, this class of goods finds a ready market. Each year the production is greater, and the figures for 1921 show an increase of 349 per cent. over the crop of 1920.

The areas at present under cultivation are situated in the districts of the northern and eastern Transvaal, Swaziland, Zululand, and Natal, the most important among these being the Candover Cotton Estates, Natal, and the Rustenburg District of the Transvaal. Producers are represented by:

The Rustenburg Farmers' Co-operative Society, Rustenburg;

The S.A. Co-operative Cotton Growers, Ltd., Box 1423, Durban.

An attempt is being made by the Division of Tobacco and Cotton of the Department of Agriculture to encourage farmers in the eastern Cape Province and the Transkei to start cotton-growing in