

The crops from plots in the various provinces have been shipped to Ottawa, then retted and scutched in a fully-equipped flax-mill at the Central Farm. The flax straw from many of these plots yielded fibre of first-class quality. An exhibit of flax fibre and products, prepared by the Experimental Farms, won a gold medal at the Toronto Exhibition last year.

Experiments have also been made, and are being continued, in the utilization of western flax straw. Special attention has been given to the production of a practicable flax harvester and it is hoped that such a machine will soon be on the market.

Several publications dealing very fully with flax and flax growing have been issued recently and are available free to any one writing the Publications Branch, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa.

A FEW CULTURAL HINTS.

For the information of those thinking of doing something with this crop in 1918 or succeeding years, the following notes will be found useful:—

Soils and Rotation.

By attention and careful cultivation good flax may be grown in various soils, but some are much better adapted for it than others. The best is a firm, dry, deep loam. The land should be fairly well drained. Land long saturated with surface water, or with the water level near the surface need not be expected to give good flax. Flax does best after a crop that has been hoed, but very satisfactory results may be expected on fall-ploughed sod or even on spring-ploughed sod if the land is well worked down right after ploughing.

Preparation of Soil.

The preparation of the land should be such as will reduce it to as fine a state of tilth as possible. If possible it should have been ploughed in autumn to a moderate depth, if light, but to a greater depth if heavy. Spring ploughing need not be so deep as autumn, and, in either case, this land should be worked frequently in the spring to pulverize it thoroughly. Land that is badly infested with weeds should not be used for flax, as weeding must be done by hand after the seed germinates. The seed-bed should be compact, and to accomplish this it will be necessary to roll it, either before the seed is sown or after, preferably before. Sometimes the land is rolled both before and after sowing, the practice depending largely on the nature of the soil. If the soil is so soft that the horses' feet leave a deep impression, the seeds, when sown on the rolled surface, will have a tendency to accumulate in these hollows, and will probably be buried more deeply than on the rest of the field; hence the crop will not be uniform.

On the other hand, if the soil contains a considerable amount of clay, the practice of rolling after sowing the seed will tend to make the surface crust even more readily after rain.

Is Flax a Specially Exhausting Crop?

This question is usually answered by our farmers in the affirmative, but this opinion does not appear to be warranted by the chemical analyses which have been made of this crop, showing the principal elements of fertility taken from the soil during the period of its growth. The results which have been obtained by chemical examination have furnished the following figures, which represent approximately the plant food removed from the soil by flax, wheat and oats.

An acre of flax producing 15 bushels of seed and 2,000 pounds of straw takes from the soil 26 pounds nitrogen, 14.86 pounds phosphoric acid, and 9.28 pounds potash for the 840 pounds of seed, and 20 pounds nitrogen, 9 pounds phosphoric acid,