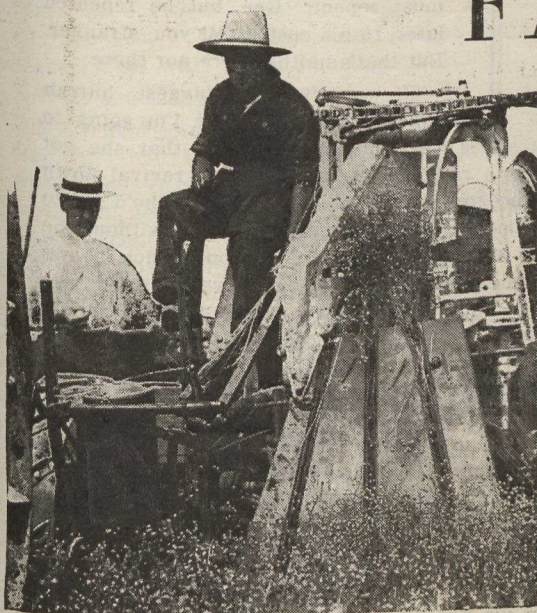


FACTS about FLAX

*SHORT STORY of the Aeroplane
Wings that grow in the fields of
Ontario; an acre of flax to one set of
wings.*

From information furnished

By A. L. McCREDIE



THIS ugly machine for pulling flax was invented by an Ontario preacher. It is here seen at work in a York county field, man-ridden, tractor-hauled, ugly—but expected in future to be efficient.

NOT your towel, table-cloth or spool of linen thread that is pictured in embryo here—but the wings of your future aeroplane if you decide to use one. No flax, no aeroplanes. According to A. L. McCredie, former editor of the Canadian Countryman, now flax grower and manufacturer in St. Mary's, Ont., it takes about an average acre of flax to make the wings for one aeroplane. Whether it takes less or more depends upon whether the flax is well-grown, picked before being fully ripe, retted evenly and well scutched (the separation of the fibre from the woody part of the stem).

Now of all commodities affected by the war, flax has gone up faster than anything else. Copper has quadrupled in price since the war. Flax has quintupled. In 1913 flax was produced at a loss. The demand for flax is as urgent now as the old U. S. slogan of 1914, "Buy a bale of cotton," when the war flung the 1914 crop back on the producer and everybody was urged to buy a bale no matter if it rotted in the back yard, just to help the producer. Not



BY the old poetic hand method, all roots come up,—because the roots are as valuable as the stem for the wings of an aeroplane.

so with flax, every fibre of which with a tremendously increased acreage is needed for man-wings. And it takes skilled labor to produce flax for wings. Unskilled labor is useless in the operation and management. War takes away the very people needed to make war-wings. Such is war! Canada raised about 8,000 acres of fibre flax in 1917; this year the acreage runs to about 14,000. Fibre flax grows almost entirely in Western Ontario where the mills are with the remnants of skilled labor. Seed flax grows almost wholly in the West.

If you are growing flax in 1919, at about \$25 a ton, do not compare it for profit, says McCredie, with wheat or hogs, but with oats or barley. You can



THIS dream of flax and femininity is a sheaf of flax in the arms of Miss Martin, who is in visiting charge of all women's summer work camps in Ontario.

grow it in old sod, without fertilizer. When asked whether flax would ever come to compete with cotton as an industry, McCredie says,—No, flax products are too expensive to compete in price unless the flax industry should develop by the transfer of processes from hand to machine work, so as to cut the cost. So in 1918 we have the machine flax puller which is expected to replace the old poetic Millet-like picture of girls pulling by hand.

Visions of the future—when Canada has developed an aeroplane industry for both war and peace; when Canada has an aircraft force of her own "on its own," and when the flax fields of Ontario are as characteristic as the apple orchards of Nova Scotia, and the wheat fields of the prairies. Canada's vast distances, and at present sparse population, make the airship as great a necessity in the 20th century as transcontinentals were in the 19th. Canada is to become a flying country. But unless we go into the growing of flax as systematically as the culture of hogs, the aeroplane industry behind the aircraft force can never materialize. A nation of flyers can never develop on imported wings.

SPHAGNUM MOSS FOR SOLDIERS

WAR has brought even moss to the aid of everybody. Cotton has gone up in price but not nearly so much as it would have done if sphagnum moss had not been utilized as dressings for wounds, instead of so much absorbent cotton. How we learn from savages! The Indians in the north country for centuries have made various kinds of dressings from the sphagnum mosses that are found almost anywhere between Owen Sound and near the Arctic Circle. For a long



while now sphagnum moss from Scotland has been used as dressings for war wounds at the front. It is now being prepared and sent in large quantities from Canada. The ladies shown in this photograph are engaged in sorting and picking those hygienic mosses before packing them into compresses for use instead of absorbent cotton. The use of sphagnum moss has made it possible to do without thousands of tons of cotton, besides making as good a dressing as any wounded man could want.