

Inspector J. J. Haycock, at request of Department of Agriculture of the Dominion of Canada, submits this interesting Report on this industry:

FIBRE NOW IN USE IMPORTED

"Binder twine to the amount of about 30,000,000 lbs. was used in Canada during the season of 1908, all of which was made from fibre that Canada was obliged to import. At present, twine for the Canadian harvest is manufactured from manilla fibre from the Philippine Islands, sisal from Yucatan and New Zealand fibre from New Zealand.

"The value of the fibre used in the Canadian industry would even at present prices, which are the lowest for eleven years, represent an outlay of over \$2,000,000. And with the continued development of the Canadian Northwest the amount required annually will not only be more than doubled in the next ten years, but will increase for many years to come. A large amount of time and money has been expended in Canada, United States and elsewhere in trying to obtain a native fibre that would answer the same purpose. The plant which seems to give the greatest promise of success and the one that has received the most experimental attention in this line is flax. But the great difficulty has been to invent some process by which the fibre could be separated from the woody matter or 'shive' in the plant.

FLAX FIBRE EXTRACTED BY ROTTING

"Of course, the value of flax fibre for the manufacture of various fabrics, yarns, threads and twine has been long recognized and utilized for numerous purposes for hundreds of years, but the systems adopted in the past for extracting the fibre from the plant has been crude, slow and expensive. Under these systems it was necessary to put the plant through a process of rotting, or as it is commonly called, 'retting,' in order to get it into a condition whereby the fibre could be separated from the plant.

"The first of these systems was known as 'dew retting' and consisted in spreading the flax straw thinly on the ground, turning it frequently, and continuing the process until the action of the dew and rain on the plant had rotted it sufficiently to separate readily. The second, 'river retting,' consisted in placing the flax in large crates, sinking the filled crates in water and weighting them