

hemp fibre of the best quality, as is evidenced by the success already attained by Canadian growers; and further, having in view the enormous possibilities in economic industry, not only in the fibre produced but in its many and varied by-products, it is desirable that the Government should give consideration of ways and means necessary to further increase the production of these fibres and to generally lend such co-operation as may be required to permanently establish the industry in this country on a stable basis, to the end that its full economic value in its many and varied uses, may as far as possible be conserved within the Dominion."

He said: Mr. Speaker, I do not feel, in view of the great national and international importance of increased production of flax fibre, owing to the conditions which prevail at the present time, that I owe this House an apology at this late hour for introducing a subject which, in my opinion, is entitled to the most serious consideration of this Government. The subject of flax fibre production has been more generally drawn to the attention of the nations of the world, in view of the increased use for it, and of the new methods of use, and by reason of the fact it has been found impossible to find any other material to adequately take its place. Sir, at the present time the governments of all the nations which are at war practically are striving to use every means possible within their power to increase the growth of flax fibre in their various districts. Russia, which in the past has been a large world-producer of flax fibre, not by any means of the best quality, but in volume the largest producer, is shut off from that trade. Her markets are absolutely closed at the present time to Canada or to any of the allied countries. France and Belgium, which have been the producers of the higher grade of flax fibre for many years back, are practically devastated and overrun, and production there is almost out of the question. Ireland, which has been for almost centuries a large producer of flax, was also a very large importer of the raw fibre. While Ireland to-day produces in domestic linen one-third of the production of the whole world—in other words while Ireland possesses about one-third of the spindles that are being used in the world—she does not by any means, and has not in the past, produced anything like the proportion of raw fibre that she spins into yarns and uses for other purposes. Ireland has been a big importer of fibre from Russia of the coarser grades, and a big importer from France, Belgium and other countries which produce high grade fibre for the spinning of yarn and the weaving of linen. In view of the extraordinary condi-

[Mr. Glass.]

tions that prevail in Belgium and France, and owing to the conditions which prevail in Russia at the present time, the world's productive markets of flax fibre are practically closed to Great Britain and her Allies. Already the Food Board of Britain have been so strongly impressed with the necessity of increasing the production of this commodity that they have under Government direction appropriated, it is stated, some £2,000,000, or \$10,000,000, to encourage the larger production, and Great Britain has directly under her control two large areas, which are set aside, of 10,000 acres each, in which, to produce fibre for the purposes of the Government, which, generally speaking and strictly speaking, are for the purpose and manufacture of aeroplane wings. The use of flax fibre and flax linen in the construction of aeroplanes is an entirely new industry, and I understand it has been impossible to get any other material which will take the application of whatever formula may be necessary to cover the cloth to resist the atmospheric effects while being used in flying. Therefore, Great Britain, in view of the urgency and the emergency, has seen fit to practically commandeer the entire production of the fibre of Great Britain. She does not to-day allow a dollar's worth of fibre to be sent out of the country. In Canada, while we have weaving mills, and while we, ourselves, have been able to grow a fibre of excellent quality, and have been able to send the fibre to the United States and Ireland to be spun into yarn, we have not got any industry in this country which connects up that important part of the industry in Canada—that is the spinning of the yarn from the raw fibre, producing the yarn from which the weaving mills may weave their linen. We had a discussion on the subject of flax fibre in this House just exactly two years ago, and at that time the development of the industry was not as far advanced as it is at the present time, and I want to say to the House candidly that in my opinion, due to the efforts the Government put forth at that time, to the influence of the higher prices which have prevailed since that time, I repeat to the stimulus of increased prices, and to the stimulus of the fibre department of the Department of Agriculture, the development of fibre production has gone forward at a very reasonable pace; in other words, the productive value for the year 1917 represents more than six times the total productive value of the fibre in the year 1915. That is due to a certain ex-