

### *Preparation of the Soil for Flax.*

Flax can be grown upon almost any land in Saskatchewan. Soil that will produce profitable crops of any other grain will usually do at least as well when sown to flax. This plant is not so particular about the kind of soil—whether heavy or light, clay or sand, chocolate loam or black mud, deep or shallow—as it is about the condition the soil is in. It will respond to a fertile soil and does best in this province on the heavy deep clay loam lands, but it will respond even more to a soil that has been thoroughly prepared for the crop. Flax is a fast growing crop by habit but has a small and delicate root system. For these reasons it requires to find liberal supplies of plant food available for its use at the outset. It is not a vigorous feeding crop, such for instance as oats is. It requires a deeply stirred seed bed that is firm almost to the top and has just sufficient loose soil on the surface to cover the seed uniformly. Therefore virgin prairie land, timothy or rye grass sod, summerfallow or corn land all make good forms of preparation for flax. These are suitable also because they tend to insure a seed bed free from weeds. Because it requires to grow rapidly yet is not a gross feeder, or a good "rustler," flax does not thrive when in competition with weeds. Flax should not be sown upon land fall ploughed to a depth of about five inches and which is dry, lumpy, and full of weed seeds that have not germinated; this is the worst possible preparation. If none of the forms of preparation named above is available, it may be sown upon land ploughed the fall before for the purpose of insuring early germination of seed seeds and spring ploughed to a depth of three or four inches about the middle of May or after a good growth of rubbish has been secured. Such land should be packed, rolled, or in some manner made firm immediately after ploughing and before being seeded.

When flax is to be sown on new land in the same season as it is broken the best method of preparation will usually be found to be as follows: plough the prairie sod from four to five inches deep and follow with a packer, roller, float, disc harrow loaded with stone or some other implement that will press the inverted sods firmly back on to the subsoil. If the breaking is being done prior to May 15th the field may be disc harrowed to a depth of about 1½ inches, care being taken to avoid getting to the bottom of the sod or turning sods grass side up. Follow the disc harrow with a drag harrow until a well pulverised seed bed is secured and then leave the field until the time for sowing the crop shall have come. By these means the best seed bed possible under the circumstances will be provided. If the breaking is being done between May 15th and June 5th the preparation of the seed bed should be as set forth above up to the point of disc harrowing. As the season is now getting late it would not be advisable to take time for the more thorough method. In order that the seed may quickly germinate and start to grow it had better be sown at once in the well packed sod, with a disc drill if one is obtainable, if not with a sharp shoe drill. The seed will then be in moist soil from the start although the desirable soil culture will not have been prepared. The drill should be followed immediately by a "float" or "planker" or by the drag harrows inverted, loaded lightly with poles and fastened together. This treatment will