

There's Money in a Maple Bush!

How Fifty Thousand Canadian Farmers are Extracting Millions From the Annual Flow of Sap.

By Robson Black

(Plates reproduced by courtesy Department of Agriculture, Ottawa.)

MARCH brings the Harvest of the Maple Tree. Millions of maple trunks on 55,000 farms will pour out their unmatched nectar and a few months later from five to seven million dollars will represent the reward of the Canadian farmer's Springtime industry.

Twenty million pounds of maple sugar! Such is the maple trees' happy gift each year to the farm owners of Eastern Canada.

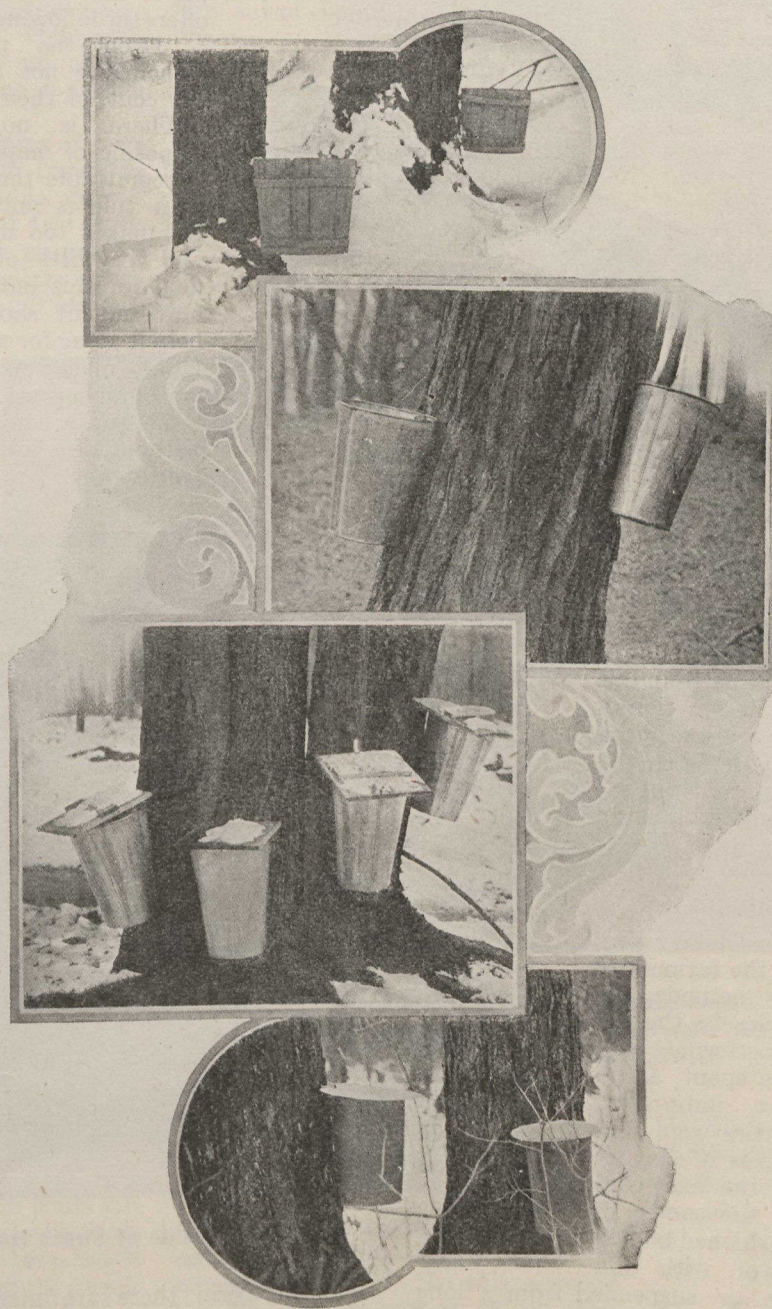
In the boyhood of most of us, "maple sugar making," suggested the picturesque experience of a "sugaring-off party" where business cares were forgotten, petty discomforts were winked at and every body from the county judge to the grocer's lad loaded into a democrat and bumped along to the sugar bush, the air made jubilant with laughter and excited shouting. One may visit many parts of Ontario and Quebec and the Maritime Provinces where the same happy observance holds its place, where the sugaring off party is just as noisy and insatiably hungry as ever. The striking change in those thirty years, however, is in the systematizing and organizing of maple sugar making as a business, greater elimination of waste and the official encouragement of the industry by the Governments through teachers and even special "maple sugar schools" exclusively devoted to the perfecting of the maple making process.

Maple Sugar Schools

It is a long leap in time and method from the carefree Indian extracting crude maple sap by a gash of his tomahawk and the well organized Eastern Town-

ships or Ontario farm with its 2,000 maple trees carefully managed and contributing to the farmers of Eastern Canada over five million dollars a year. While it is true that thousands of old time maple woodlots have been cut down to provide a place for field crops and others have been needlessly and foolishly destroyed, the increased popularity of maple products in Canadian and foreign

markets with relatively high prices for quality goods, have been a partial compensation. Not only have hundreds of Quebec and Ontario and Maritime Province farmers introduced modern machinery for collecting and boiling down the sap and preparing it in attractive containers for a discriminating market, but the Quebec Government has recognized the new economic status of the Maple Sugar Industry by establishing schools for sugar makers. The Quebec Department of Agriculture has carried on, by funds provided by the Dominion Government under the Agricultural Instruction Act, three to four schools each Spring in charge of well skilled sugar makers. The instruction given is of a practical nature and includes tapping, sap gathering, and the various manipulations leading up to the finished syrup and sugar. The students assist with the work at the school and their board is provided them by the Provincial Department of Agriculture. These schools are situated at La Minerve, Beauceville, Ste. Louise, and St. Casimir. At these schools, trees are kept in numbers ranging from 3,000 to 5,000. In addition to this instructional work, five special demonstrators in sugar-making have each year travelled through the sugar-making districts giving



Sap buckets receiving the run.

The wooden buckets shown in the top scene are no longer used by the careful maple sugar-maker. Lower scenes show wooden and metal bucket covers.