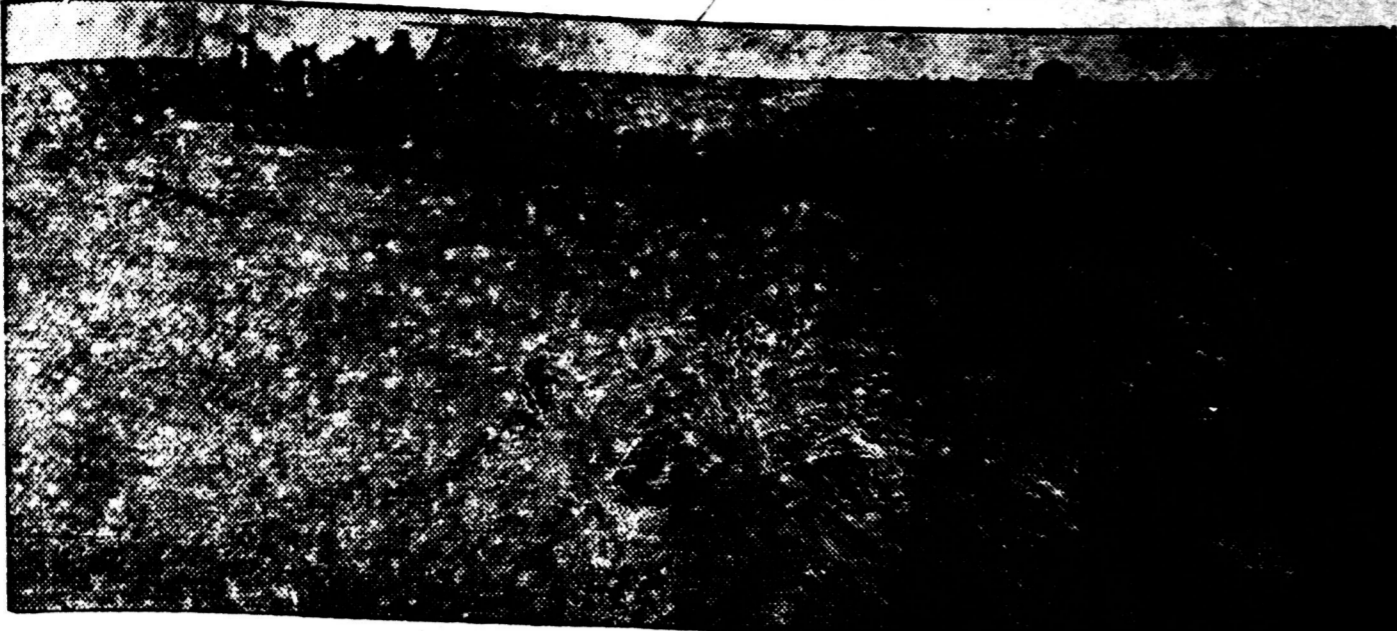


THE POSSIBILITIES OF IRRIGATION



Wheat on one of the Veterans' Farms, near Tilley, Alberta.

WHAT surprises a person most when travelling through the irrigated areas of Southern Alberta is the wonderful variety of crops that can be successfully grown there. Their abundant yields, and their excellent quality. Wheat, oats, barley and flax, the standard crops of the Canadian West grow there and give as heavy yields as anywhere else on the continent. Alfalfa thrives as it does nowhere else in Canada, and is generally making fortunes for its growers. By the application of water the crops of clover and the many varieties of nutritious tame grasses are multiplied manifold. In the gardens vegetables of all kinds, including those that are associated with hotter climes, such as tomatoes, melons, squashes, grow in the open so well as to indicate great possibilities in this direction.

Wheat, of course, is the dominant crop there as it is in those areas of Western Canada where irrigation is not practised. Oats, barley and flax are also grown extensively. The yields of all these grains compare very favorably with those in any other part of the west. Crops of what this season that have been properly irrigated are averaging thirty-five bushels to the acre. Some crops will thresh as high as forty bushels or more to the acre. The yields of other grains are equally as good. Grain growing under irrigation brings ample returns to the farmer, especially when it is considered that uniform results may be looked for every year.

But, yielding such good returns as the growing of grain does, other crops that may be grown under irrigation are possibly still more profitable, and it seems reasonable to suppose that in years to come the growing of grain in districts where water is available will be to some extent superseded by other crops. Land that will produce up to seven hundred bushels of potatoes, of a quality that brings the best prices, on which peas, of the most desirable kinds, yielding forty to sixty bushels to the acre are being grown, where sugar beets of high sugar content thrive where pumpkins of enormous size



Squash grown with irrigation at Brooks, Alberta.

and excellent flavor, cantaloupes, watermelons, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, to say nothing of giant cauliflower and cabbages, early and late, and all varieties of carrots, turnips, beets, all kinds of beans and many other vegetables flourish; and which produce the most delicious strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries and other small fruits—this land will, no doubt, be used to grow more of these things in the future, especially when labor conditions are such as to enable a more intensive system of farming to be followed.

Then there are the fodder crops, of which alfalfa is the chief. Contrary to a widespread belief, it is not grain, but a fruit growing, not truck gardening, but to the growth of fodder crops that the greater portion of the irrigable lands in the United States are devoted. The large yields of alfalfa that are being obtained in Southern Alberta under irrigation assure this crop of an important place in the production of the farmer who is able to utilize the water from the mountain streams on his land. Not only are the yields of alfalfa large, but this crop also enriches the soil to such an extent that any other crop grown on the land after it has been

Among the list of munitions of war, which are vital to victory, there is none more important than the oat crop of Canada, the food for man and beast and one of the most valuable of the farmer's field crops, and in the oat plants themselves this year many people profess to find a portent of coming victory for the Allies.

For some weeks, observant people in the agricultural districts, have pointed out a curious phenomenon in connection with the structure of the leaves of the oats, which many have observed the year the British arms triumphed in South Africa. The sign or portent is to be found on the flag leaf of the oats. The sign can be variously interpreted as the letter "B" or the figure "3" or one of the leaves looked more like a "3" than the other.

Does it mean that "victory" is coming to the British arms in 1919? Such is the interpretation given to the phenomenon by the superstitious, who declare they looked in vain for the sign last year and the year before, remembering the portent of victory in 1902.

The sign may be seen by anyone at all to be found on the flag leaf which is the leaf nearest the head of the grain. To find it, pull the leaf, a going which it is unnecessary to injure the grain, and spread the three-shaped frond flat on a table under a strong light. It makes no difference which side of the leaf is uppermost as the mysterious sign can be seen on either side. About one-third of the distance from the place where the leaf joins the plant to the tip, here is usually, but not always, an appreciable narrowing of the leaf, and right at this point, impressed through the leaf, as it were, as though with a large type, is the letter "B" or the figure "3," plain to the eye.

One of the persons interested in the phenomenon, said recently: "They are all talking about it all over the country, they say that at the time of the Boer War, the letter 'B' which precedes 'victory' was observed in similar circumstances on the oat leaves."

Some say it is a "B" and some say an "3" and many believe that it means "victory for Britain," he said. "A farmer pointed it out to me yesterday and it's there all right."

Another explanation of the sign which finds favor with some, is that it is connected with the new star, for many people believe that astral visitors have a special influence on crops. The grapevine is supposed to be peculiarly susceptible to the influence of comets, and wine produced in the years when comets, in the course of their erratic orbit, pass the earth is supposed to be better than in other years and the supposition during last century has been proved on many occasions, commencing with the visit of Halley's comet in 1811. "Comet Port" was especially sought by connoisseurs of wine.

And comets themselves, whether or not they can influence the growing crops, are believed in many lands to preage war. An old Scotsman now in the city, who remembers the Crimean war, remembers also the visit of the comet that year.

The strange part of the appearance of the sign on the oat leaf this year is that it should be this year. With the portent of victory in South Africa in 1902 it may safely be assumed that eager eyes scanned the leaves last year and the year before and people there are who see in the sign the interpretation of the recent war despatches which tell of the defeat of the German arms and the discomfiture of the Crown Prince's forces.

Stories of the discovery of the sign are not confined to any one field or any one locality, but are widely scattered over the farms of old Ontario.

Spruce for Planes.
So great is the demand for airplane spruce by the Allies that eastern as well as Sitka spruce is now being used. Canada has large resources of eastern spruce, which has hitherto been used mostly for the manufacture of pulp, paper and lumber, and the British War Mission is at present trying to secure in Eastern Canada as large an amount as possible of the grades suitable for airplane manufacture.

Eastern spruce has for some time been used for airplane construction in the United States, although only a very small percentage of this timber is sufficiently clear for this purpose. Tests made by the United States and Canadian Governments show that where material of suitable quality can be found, the species serves admirably for airplane construction and may be expected to supplement the supplies of Sitka spruce from the Pacific Coast, which are only now beginning to approach adequate proportions.

Pick Wild Berries.
The Canada Food Board calls upon people at summer resorts and rest-places in suitable areas to make an immediate drive on the wild berry patches. Small fruits in general are scarce this year, but the wild berries are as abundant as usual. The main argument for gathering the wild berries freely is the shortage of butter in Europe. During the winter of 1918-19 jam must be used extensively on this continent as a substitute for butter, and the finest flavored jam in the world is that which is made from wild berries.

SETT



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riages. H.R.H.



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als on the

tires



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of a battalion

coffin.

The Lord of Castle Mountain



Castle Mountain in the Canadian Pacific Rockies.

THE early fall had come in the mountains. Hunting parties patrolled the valleys still green and untouched by frost. The lower slopes of the rising ground were dark with spruce, brightened here and there with the lighter green of poplar and willow. Higher still the spruce forest climbed in ever narrowing walls up the water fed gulches, white here and there large patches of poplar gleamed golden yellow, for the frost was nipping things at six thousand feet.

Above the timber line the grey crags towered, their highest peaks and pinnacles shining with the virgins brightness of the first snows. In the midst of the mountains, standing alone in seeming aristocratic exclusion, the colored battlements of Castle Mountain reached heavenward in a timber. Castle Mountain is a freak of nature. For a hundred miles south there is none like it. To the north the range runs to the Arctic with no smaller outcropping. Eastward to the prairies where the Bow River crashes down from the first steps of the foothills it is not duplicated, but westward, fifteen or twenty miles, there first appear signs of similar formation. Castle Mountain is igneous rock thrust from the bowels of the earth by some fierce heat of forgotten ages, thrust up in a spasm of forgotten ages, thrust up in the midst of the tamer grey of sandstone and limestone formation of the first belt of the Canadian Rockies. On the edge of a sheer precipice a magnificent specimen of the Rocky Mountain sheep, or bighorn, nibbled daintily at some tender lichens. A shadow fitted across his eyes, but he paid no heed, for the lambs that were small in the spring were now well-grown and could take care of themselves should some bold eagle try to topple one of the ledges. The big buck had no worries therefore. The bears were down below fattening on berries; the wolves were in the timber getting good food from among the partridges, rabbits and perhaps some wounded deer or moose. The precipice on which the sheep stood dropped sheer for some six hundred feet to the snow-covered rubble of the upper edges of the timber belt, stunted, scattered trees barely clinging out a precarious existence where the rock walls started to climb. Away from the valley bottom a black dot crawled unheeded. It was a Canadian Pacific freight train laboring along from Banff to Lake Louise. A man, rifle on back, crawled like a fly up a steep "chimney"; sweat dripped from his brow, his breath was labored; he crept slowly upwards, using hands and feet and sometimes his chin. Field glasses had told him the splendid buck was above and he wanted a shot at the king of the peaks. At last he reached the plateau and looked. There, five hundred yards away on the further side of a canon, which it would take a half day to circle, stood the game placidly feeding. Waiting in

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In Ottawa's French Baptist Church the male members of the choir set the fashion of attending Sunday worship minus coats, the males of the congregation quickly following suit on the suggestion of the pastor.