



*Above: Pusher-type combines in use in an Imperial Valley flax field. The usual type farm machinery used in harvesting grain is used for flax. Right: Examining newly-cut flax straw.*

the manufacturing of fine flax papers by Ecusta.

The present relationship between Ecusta and the Imperial Valley flax growers had its beginning in the early 1930's. America was importing most of its cigarette paper from France. Champagne Paper Corporation of New York, predecessor of Ecusta and one of the chief importers of the French paper, became concerned over the reliability of the paper supply from the foreign mills. Should a war break out in Europe—and, with Hitler assuming control of Germany in 1932, it seemed almost a certainty—cigarette paper imports would be halted.

What to do? Build a cigarette paper mill in the United States—yes. But the raw materials? The French used linen rags—why not import linen rags from Europe since there was practically no linen industry of appreciable size in the United States?

Again the question of supply came up, should a war in Europe break out. The only solution lay in finding a suitable raw material, that could be found in abundance in America, to use as a substitute for linen rags.

Since linen is made with flax fibre, the most logical starting point in finding an American raw



material was with the fibre flax plant. Experiments were started in Estill, South Carolina under the direction of Mr. W. H. Ramsey, Jr., now Resident Manager and Vice President of the California Central Fibre Corporation, an Ecusta subsidiary at El Centro. Several thousand acres of fibre flax were cultivated but it was found that the growing of it for paper purposes was not economical and the work was concluded in 1935.

While the fibre flax experiments were underway, Mr. L. F. Dixon, now Vice President and General Manager of the Paper Division was investigating the seed flax crop in America. Experiments had proved that seed flax fibres could be used satisfactorily, and left only the question of a