



A DUCT OF WIRE OVER A FRAMEWORK of wood forms the bottom of the bin where the tobacco is kept during the browning stage. Air is forced through the tobacco to prevent heating or sweating. During the time the tobacco is changing from the yellow color to brown, it must be stirred or turned several times to keep it from packing or caking. The turning is done with a pitch fork and is an easy task according to the workers who have done it. — LF PHOTO

leaves

The leaves are held in another bin over an air duct for about a week, again depending on the weather conditions, until the browning stage is completed.

The browned leaves are then dumped into a bin for further conditioning until the normal delivery date.

The only labor required during the rest of the winter is an occasional check to make sure that the tobacco is not heating in the bin. If some heating does develop, Bomberger switches on a fan to move cool air through the bin. "This could be controlled by thermostat, too, as far as that goes," Bomberger says.

In the experimental set up, carried on by Bomberger in cooperation with Wurton Machine Company, nineteen motors and fans are used to move the air through a series of sheet metal ducts, but Bomberger believes one large fan and a ductwork of plywood would be just as satisfactory. (Turn to page 16)

● Tobacco Drying

(From page 1)

done in the field, it takes longer to dry it out in the shed, Bomberger points out.

In the Bomberger shed, the tobacco is piled, butt down, over a wire duct and air is forced up through it by fan. To speed the yellowing stage some heat is introduced with the air, but no high temperatures are used. The yellowing stage takes about a week to complete, depending on the weather conditions, and then comes the radical departure from accepted methods of handling Lancaster County Tobacco.

Stalks Are Chopped

The yellowed tobacco is chopped, stalk and all, into pieces about 3 1/2 inches long, and the leaves are separated from the stalks with a blast of air from the machine. The machine looks very much like a converted forage chopper and operates very much in the same manner. According to Bomberger, a used forage chopper could probably be adapted for the job if the air could be regulated to separate the stalks from the

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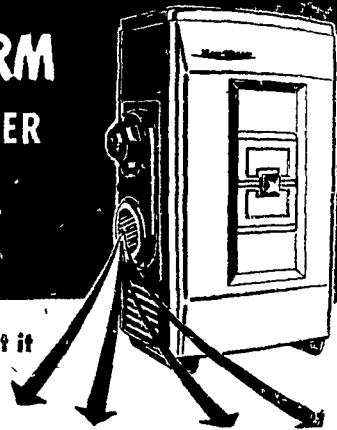
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