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Pioneering Textile Fibers

Ruth Herzig
Iowa State College

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This new feather light fiber replaces war materials, kapok and sponge rubber

Pioneering

Textile Fibers

Succeeding priority materials are new textiles made from synthetic products, says Ruth Herzig

SOYBEAN, peanut or milkweed fibers, nylon fleece, fiber D, luminescent fabrics, velon and aralac are the fibers voted most likely to succeed priority materials such as wool and nylon.

Nylon fleece is the first new nylon fabric to appear on the market since war demands required the entire production for military needs. When use of nylon in the manufacture of parachutes resulted in a great deal of scrap and clippings, manufacturers began searching for an outlet to use this waste material. The result was nylon fleece, which is composed in most cases of a knitted back of rayon or cotton, with the reworked nylon used as a fleece or pile. It has appeared in lightweight fabrics for dresses and accessories, as well as in heavy overcoatings similar to camel's hair.

The properties of aralac, which is spun from casein, are similar to those of wool. Only 60 percent as strong as wool, aralac excels wool in being moth-resistant and less expensive. For this reason fabrics formerly made of 100 percent wool can now be produced at a lower price by replacing part of the wool with aralac. By adding aralac to spun rayon, a fabric of greater warmth is produced at a slight increase in cost.

Formerly known as lanital, aralac was first used by the felt industry in 1939 to partially replace rabbit fur in the manufacture of men's and women's fur felt hats. Since then it has been blended with wool, mohair, cotton and rayon in various proportions to make sweaters, dresses, ankle socks and slacks. Now interlinings are made of 100 percent aralac.

Peanut fiber, produced from peanut protein mixed with 50 percent pure wool, results in a good quality "Scotch woolen" type of material. This new composition will be known as peanut cloth.

Another strong, durable synthetic fiber, velon, produced by a rubber company, has been introduced into the woven and knitted fabric field and will take its place with the more famous man-made fibers. The new material is a plastic yarn which is woven like cloth from fibers of vinylidene chloride and is flexible, re-

silient and stain resistant. Velon has already been produced in fabrics for draperies and upholstery and present plans, provided the chemicals can be obtained, call for production of these fabrics with natural elasticity to make girdles and other undergarments for women.

Research workers in Henry Ford's laboratories at Fort Dearborn have discovered how to spin textile fabrics from soybeans. These fabrics, which resemble wool in texture and consistency, are combined with wool in making upholstery fabrics. (Continued page 19)

Bark from giant redwoods produces non-priority fibers from which the new "siren suit" worn by this airplane spotter is made





Upper: The wise bride keeps her equipment gifts well cleaned and polished for effective and continued utilization; lower: a light-weight skillet with plastic handles is a useful gift

Pioneering Textile Fibers

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rial has been woven that contains 30 percent soybean fiber. Felting for hats has also been made of a 50 percent blend of the fiber. As in the case of peanut fiber, fabrics made entirely of soybeans are not yet being manufactured. Costing less than natural wool, soybean fabrics are also less durable and are best used in combination with silk or wool.

There is a possibility of using milkweed as a substitute for Java kapok and felt in the textile industry. Although the milkweed floss at present is being used in navy life jackets and flying suits, post war days will find it as stuffing for pillows or felted like fur and turned into a featherweight hat that is also waterproof.

Fiber D, Du Pont's new rayon discovery, will be used for pile floor coverings and woven upholstery and drapery fabrics. It differs from our present rayon fiber in its greater covering power in pile fabrics and its ability to shed dirt far more readily than conventional rayon does. Because Fiber D is still in the developmental stage, its full use has not yet been determined.

A luminescent fabric has been developed by the DuPont Company which shows with visible light in complete darkness. Cut in strips, it may be used to mark doorways, staircases, handrails and fire extinguishers. This fabric, less expensive than luminous paint, can be applied to any type of surface with casein glue or thumb tacks. Exposure to electric light for only 30 seconds is sufficient to give the coating the power to glow for several hours. The bluish light emitted by the new material under total blackout conditions may be renewed by re-exposure to light.



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