THE VIRGINIA FOREST TREE SEEDLING HARVESTER

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Development of the Forest Tree Seedling Harvester by the Virginia Division of Forestry is scheduled for completion and final testing in early November. The harvester, designed to save labor and to rapidly lift tree seedlings, was constructed in the Division's Central Shops by 0. R. Bellomy, LeRoy Collins, and G. W. King. The machine is scheduled for operational use during the 1969-70 season. (fig. 1).

The 8-row harvester utilizes an undercutter blade, counter-running belts for seedling transportation, and activated tines with rod extensions for soil removal. Commercially standard and readily obtainable belts, bearings, sprockets, and other parts have been utilized for all major components (fig. 2) .

During tests at the Division's New Kent Forestry Center, the harvester functioned well at speeds

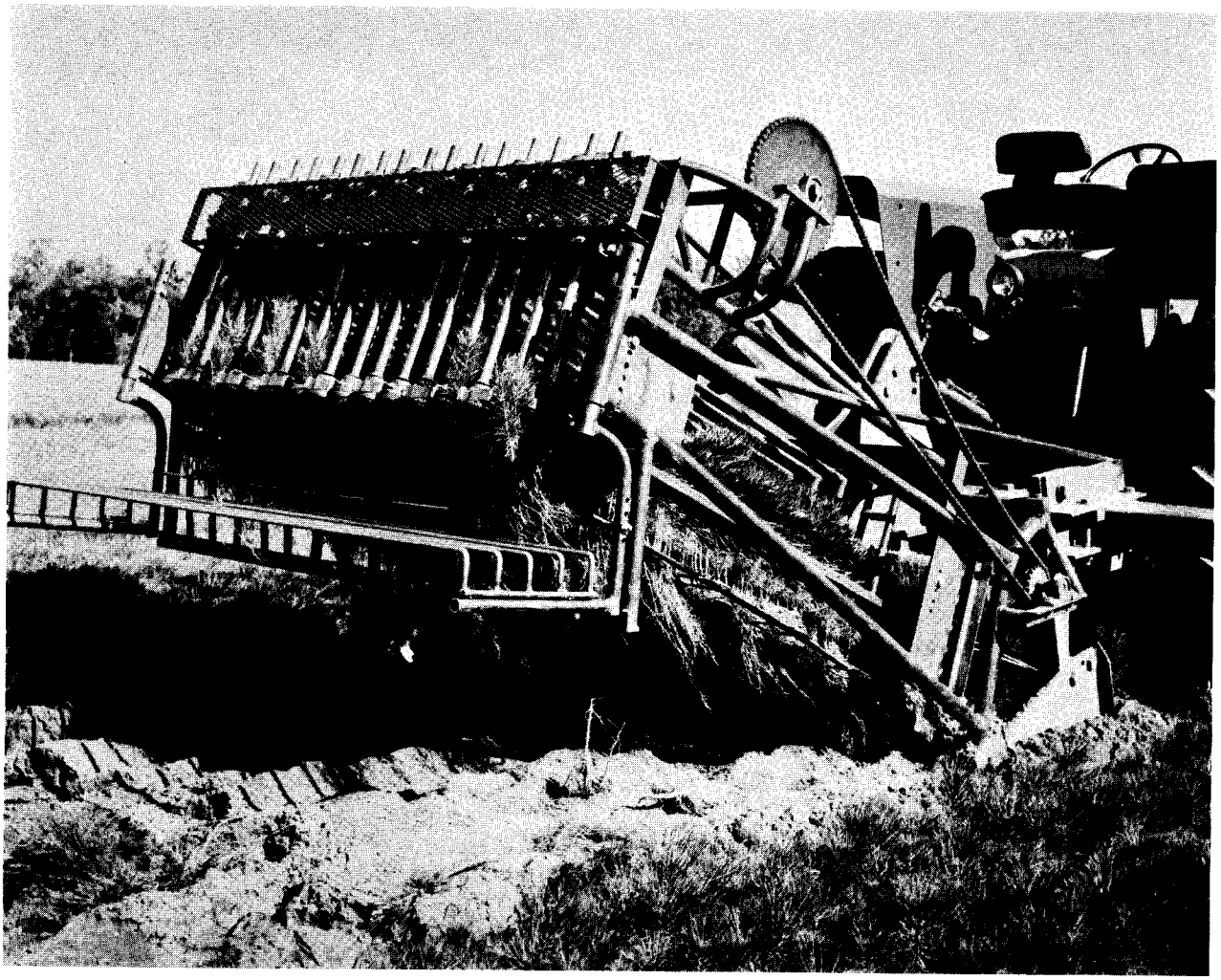

Figure 1.—A closeup view of the Virginia Forest Tree Seedling Harvester.

ranging from 15 to 40 bed-feet per minute. Preliminary plans are to operate it at 15 to 20 bed-feet per minute, permitting harvesting from 126,000 to 168,000 seedlings per hour from the Divison's loblolly pine beds. The machine is mounted by a three-point hitch to a hydrostatic driven tractor, which also powers the mechanism and tows a trailer used for preliminary packing of the seedlings. A conveyor delivers the seedlings to the trailer.

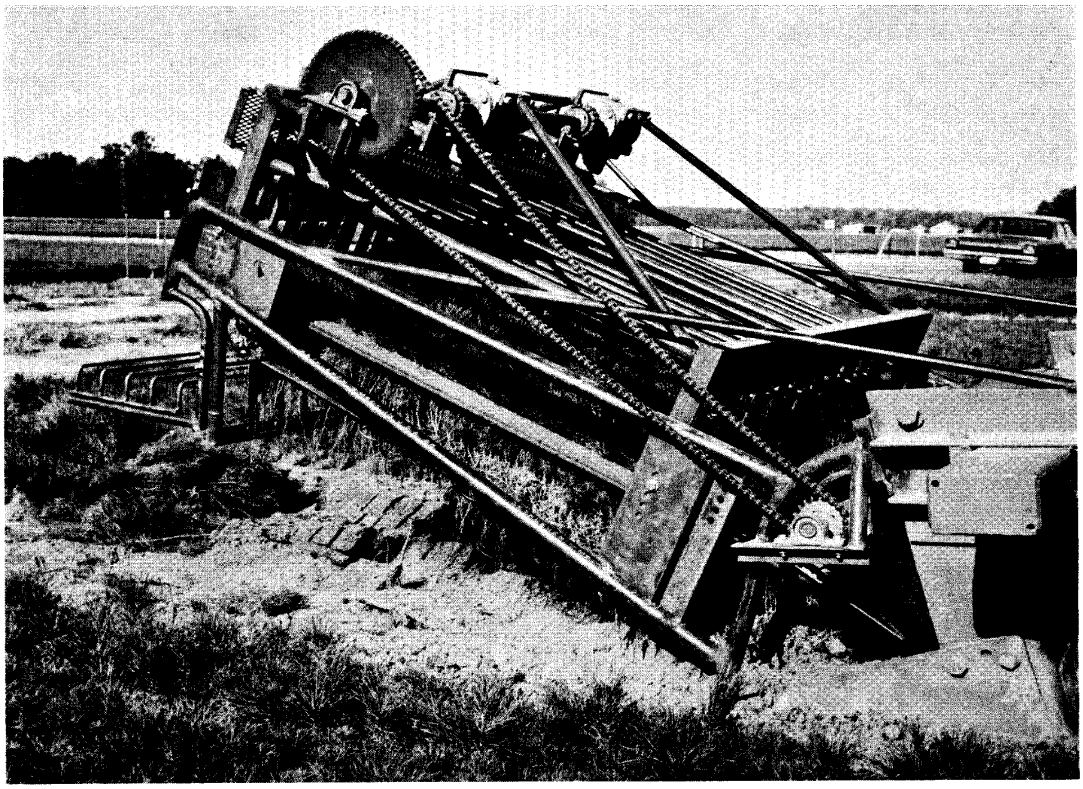

Figure 2.—The Virginia Forest Tree Seedling Harvester. Note the undercutter blade.