Trees in Millions for Our Prairies

Three and a half millions Manitoba maples, 900,000 Russian poplars, 1,500,-000 caraganas—it is necessary to talk in big figures to tell of the work the Forestry Field Nursery at Sutherland is carrying on. But it still not enough. Six million trees set out by Saskatchewan farmers next spring will represent a good year's work for the future welfare of Saskatchewan; but even then the work will be only begun. After it had been carried on on as large a scale or larger, for the next ten years, a fair start will have been made. In twenty years the condition may be regarded as approaching the point of satisfaction. In thirty years the appearance of Saskatchewan will be wholly altered, and the change will all be to advantage.

When the first settlers came to Saskatchewan they were greatly pleased by the fact that there were no trees to cut down to clear the land for growing grainnothing to do but to plow through the prairie sod But gradually the people are nature of the handicap that the lack of trees means. They are learning that the trees, destroyed long centuries ago, must be replaced if agriculture is to be as profitable as it should. They are learning that every tree on the prairies has a definite value not easily to be measured, but nonetheless real. And because the people are learning these things is exactly why there are six millions or more of trees at Sutherland to be set out in the spring

The wind is one of the enemies the prairie farmer must fight, and the trees are his only weapons. Soil-drifting is one of the difficulties this enemy creates for the farmer. Several remedies are useful, but first and foremost comes the wind-break of trees and shrubbery. But great as is the damage from drifting, it is not the worst. The wind is an insidious thief of moisture. The average precipitation over a large part of the province—the part where trees are scarcest—is barely sufficient to grow big crops. What does fall is all needed, but the lack of trees is enabling the wind to filch it away. No one needs to be told the effect that a hot, steady wind has in this regard. Trees and more trees is the answer. Trees will break up the wind, lessen its force, conserve the moisture, and also attract precipitation.

The advice of the superintendent of the Forestry Farm is to plant trees seedlings preferred. The seedlings cost almost nothing for transportation and little for labor in planting them. They

will grow faster than older trees transplanted, and a much larger proportion will survive transplanting.

Once there was an idea, almost a tradition, that trees would not grow on the prairie. It doesn't exist now. Not all trees will grow in prairie soil and with the climatic conditions of the level plains, but a dozen different varieties will, and most of them do wonderfully well if given the little care that is necessary.

Not only the farmers should be interested in tree-planting, of course. There are hundreds of little towns in the province, drab, bare and unpleasant in appearance, that could be completely transformed by tree-planting. It has already been done in many cases, so it is not the theory, but fact. And the more trees, the better the appearance is likely to be, and the greater the pleasure of living in the towns. (From Saskatoon Star)

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