

# Home Making by Tree Planting

How Both the Quality of Living and the Profits of Farming in Western Canada may be Easily Augmented

*By Dean Howes, University of Alberta,*

*In an address before the Western Canada Irrigation Association*

**A**T a meeting which seems to be so largely utilitarian, in motive, it might be more seemly and more consistent if my talk on tree planting were confined to variety, method, care, etc. However, there are several good reasons why I prefer to take some other phase of the subject. In the first place I am not an authority on tree planting and tree culture, and in the second place—but what is the use of a second reason when the first is so good? It would appear to me, however, that the greatest problem before us is to get our people interested in tree planting. We can get the technical information, when and where necessary.

It seems hard to understand why it is so often difficult to interest the farmer in the question of planting trees on his farm, when one considers the years he has possibly spent facing burning winds in summer, icy winds in winter, with too little precipitation and no means of holding the winter snows. Then, too, when we think of what a setting of trees would mean in the formation of an honest-to-goodness homesteading, it seem still more hard to understand why a farmer should not be interested in the practice that would mean so much in improving the appearance of his property, correcting the extremes of climate to which he is exposed, and enhancing the value of the property as to market value.

## Nothing to do but work

Some, perhaps all, of our farmers came to western Canada from the east and from the south, avowedly with the purpose of getting away from the so-called drudgery of the more or less standardized, mixed farm, which many of us remember so well. Those who came west early in our history re-visited their poor relations in the east, spending the winter with them, and on them, because, forsooth, they had nothing to do during the winter under the peculiar farm conditions in the Golden

West, and this was their story: There were no cows to milk twice a day for seven days in the week, no hogs to pamper, practically no chores to do. There was a little rush at seeding time and at harvest but for the rest all they were expected to do was

## Under Pioneer Conditions

They came west under pioneer conditions and for some years either carelessness or the grim struggle I have hinted at, precluded any ideas of beautification, or the establish-



THIS HELPS TO MAKE "HOMES" OF PRAIRIE "HOUSES."

Mr. A. Heyer of Neville, Saskatchewan, is a successful farmer and a great tree planter. He has cultivated many lovely beds of peonies by means of the shelter afforded by his tree plantations.

a lot of heavy sitting around. This more or less fanciful picture may have been partially typical of the younger or unmarried pioneer, what about the man with a family? The man who came west with his family very often came with little means in the way of money or goods. That occasionally may have been one of the reasons for his moving. He settled on the prairie, and for some few years the struggle to secure what they should eat and what they should drink, not to speak of that where-with they would be clothed, occupied the attention of Dad and the whole family. Do you think that either of these types of pioneers were likely to be much interested in the planting of trees for home beautification? It is fair to surmise that they very seldom thought of the tree as an economic factor in the development of their farms.

ment of a real home, such as they knew in the other lands. The years went by as they have a habit of doing, our people got into a rut, and in time lost the incentive necessary to this important work. And the pity of it is that young children brought west, or born on the prairie have grown up never knowing what the planting of trees about a home means to the individual, to the community, or to the nation. Our bare buildings on the bald prairies can never be homes to hold the young people, where they are most needed, and to the work for which they are best fitted. It is my belief that much can be done to interest the children and young people in the planting of trees through the schools, school-fairs, clubs or other organized effort. Through these means you can cultivate and develop the taste for the aesthetic that is in most human na-