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EDITORIAL.

Our Exhibitions.

The value of the influence of agricultural and industrial exhibitions in promoting improvement in Canadian live stock, farm products and machinery, and in advertising the country's capabilities for the production of food supplies in great variety and of superior quality, can hardly be overestimated. The improvement of our stock of horses, cattle, sheep, swine and poultry by the importation of the best procurable in each has been largely the result of the stimulation of competition at the fairs, and at no time in the history of the country has that competition been keener than at present, prominent breeders vying with each other in procuring the best that money can buy in Britain, while the many in rank and file of our stockmen are fitting for the fray selections from their herds and flocks, with confident hope of holding their own creditably against the newer importations, as they have often done before. In no country can a larger or better showing of live stock of so many breeds and classes be seen than at the leading Canadian shows, where all classes are shown on the same dates, so that they can be covered by one visit, and not in sections at different dates, at intervals of two or more weeks, as at the Columbian, the Pan-American, and some other big American shows. And, after all, the live stock is the backbone, the principal attraction of all these great shows. Take away that department and the chief element of interest is gone; and no wonder, for it is by long odds the most important of the country's assets, representing more money value and entering more largely into the thrift and happiness and comfort of the people than any other. The principal Canadian fairs, however, in addition to the live-stock feature, show a grand combination of industrial and manufacturing exhibits, and these, we have reason to believe, will receive greater prominence this year than heretofore, as it has been found that actual demonstrations of the manufacture of various articles on the ground are among the most attractive features of a show of this kind, and there are also grounds for believing that the element of entertainment, in response to the appeal of the people and the press so strongly made after the fair season last year, will be of a higher character this year.

The Province of Ontario may well be proud of the three great exhibitions maintained at Toronto, London, and Ottawa. The Maritime Provinces have a magnificent equipment for an exhibition in the splendid fair grounds and buildings at Halifax. Manitoba and the Northwest Territories have reason to congratulate themselves on the success of their shows recently held at Winnipeg, Brandon, Calgary, and Edmonton, while the prospect for those slated for British Columbia, at New Westminster, Kamloops, and Victoria, are said to be of the most encouraging character.

Our people should loyally stand by their own shows, for we should all miss them very much if for any reason they should be withdrawn, and any one who has had experience in running a fair knows that the work involves many difficulties and discouragements, and that the promoters have by no means a sinecure in striving to keep up the interest and to make them pay expenses.

All indications, we are glad to know, give

promise of a successful fair season in Canada this year. For the first time in its history, we are informed, entries of live stock from Manitoba and the Maritime Provinces have been received for the Toronto Industrial Exhibition, and from many sources comes the assurance that the number of visitors from the United States this year will be vastly greater than in any former year. The Toronto show is by common consent the greatest annual event of its kind on the American continent, combining more strong, practical and substantial features than any other, as well as sufficient attractions and entertainments to satisfy any reasonable demand. The London show is a model exhibition in most particulars and always draws a large attendance of admiring patrons from all of Western Ontario and many of the adjoining States; while the Central, at Ottawa, the "hub" of the Dominion, draws from east and west large crowds of visitors, who are never disappointed. Times are good, crops on the whole are good, feed for stock is plentiful, and farmers and their families can afford to take a few holidays after the busy season of harvest is over. With the low excursion rates always arranged for, pleasure and education, combined with entertainment, can in no other way be so cheaply obtained.

Evergreens on the Farm.

To make an agricultural country of Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritime Provinces, it was necessary to destroy the primeval forests. The destruction was not complete, but it is still in progress. By way of restoration, comparatively little has been attempted. The effect upon the climate has been injurious, but even for purposes of shelter and ornament, hosts of farmers have as yet done little or no tree-planting. Too often this is the last improvement the farmer sets about making, whereas it should be one of the first, for it takes time for trees to grow and their full benefits to accrue.

Trees and hedges not only add to the comfort of the homestead, both in hot and cold weather, but improve the appearance and enhance the value of the farm many times the little outlay involved. Plain, modest buildings surrounded by evergreen and other trees will impress the passerby or stranger as a home occupied by a family of taste and comfort far more than the large, pretentious farmhouse, bare-looking for want of trees. We question if any investment made will give as certain, as satisfactory or as large returns. For hedge purposes or wind-breaks all the year 'round, nothing equals evergreens. Cedar lends itself admirably for hedge purposes, being in some respects unsurpassed; but, all points considered, the spruce is probably our most hardy, useful and handsome evergreen tree. It is really astonishing what a trifling \$10 investment for labor and young spruce trees will accomplish for the appearance of a farm in five or ten years' time. The transformation is a paying one in every respect, and, once established, the tree practically takes care of itself, barring a little occasional trimming.

June has been considered the one popular month for planting, but ideas on this point are changing, excellent results being attained by doing the work late in October or November. Large numbers of trees are now successfully planted in the fall. Hence, the reader need not put this work off till another season. The chief

reason why so little planting is done is simply procrastination. Men know they should do so, and desire to do so, but some other duty no more important, or some trifling pleasure crops up, and the work is postponed from year to year. The moral is: "Prepare now to plant spruce this fall."

It is a mistake to select large trees for this purpose. From two to three feet is a good height. Trees that have been root-pruned are best. They should be carefully taken up from the nursery row with a good root, and must not be exposed to sun or wind. Two hours of such exposure of roots is enough to kill a spruce. Make a hole large and deep enough to take in the roots without crowding or twisting, and what is most important of all, see that the moist, mellow earth is closely and firmly packed beneath and around every rootlet, so that they can at once begin sucking in moisture and plant food from the earth. It is a fatal mistake to leave cavities about the roots of a newly-planted tree. A small tree properly planted will soon outgrow and surpass the larger one. Once well established, it will make a growth of some eighteen inches to three feet every year. If a drought should succeed planting, water the trees occasionally. The writer recalls the setting-out of some 75 spruce trees, a few years ago, on a Middlesex, Ont., farm, about the last of June, succeeded by a severe and prolonged drought, but by care in planting and a few waterings not a tree was lost.

If intended for a hedge, set them about four feet apart, and if for other purposes, such as in clumps or as a general wind-break row, plant about 15 or 16 feet apart. The lower limbs will in a few years reach out and touch each other. Some place them eight feet apart, and then in a couple of years remove alternate trees to put in other places. While the trees are young, keep the ground about them free from weeds and grass by cultivation, or by mulching with straw manure or some similar material.

By way of preparation for planting this fall, clear away the old fence or rubbish and turn down the sod, running half a dozen furrows with the plow, and by November 1st, the ground, if harrowed once or twice, should be in good condition to receive the young trees. Selected and planted as we have briefly indicated, there need be no such thing as failure. In the case of hedges, the top and sides must be severely pruned, and in other cases, a foot or so of the main top shoot should be cut off when the tree is three or four years old. This will cause the side branches to grow out stronger, and make a more compact tree. If allowed to run up naturally, the tree will soon become sprawling and open in appearance.

There probably have not been for twenty years past as many improvements to farmhouses and barns made as in the present season, which is an evidence of growing intelligence and thrift, and improved financial condition, occasioned by better prices for Canadian farm products and better methods in farming, and also more leisure to devote to enhancing the appearance of the surroundings of the farm home. Amid all this progress, let not the planting of evergreens and other trees be neglected; and, if you have not already done so, give the spruce a trial. The results will so please you that you will soon want to plant more.