



The larger photo above was taken at Flaxcombe, Saskatchewan. It shows a cosily sheltered home with excellent gardens, tennis court, and all the other pleasant auxiliaries of a farm life. But please note that this property is an oasis in endless miles of bare veldt. The owner secured the trees from the Dominion Forestry Branch at Indian Head.

At the lower right is shown what can be done with trees on the treeless prairie. The scene is at Altario, Alberta, showing an outside row of red willow planted in 1916. Truly a magnificent result in six years.

Who says spruce won't thrive on the Western prairies? The photo at lower left furnishes convincing refutation. This picture was taken on a farm at Loverna, Saskatchewan.

Prairie Trees Satisfy Home Hunger

A Plea for the Encouragement of Tree-Planting as Stabilizer of Population

By M. J. Stevenson, Morris, Manitoba.

THE EARLY SETTLERS who first located in the West can well remember how they travelled for days at a time through a sea of grass without seeing a tree of any kind except along the water-courses. This has been changed somewhat by the planting of trees around the farm homes; but Mother Nature herself has taken a hand in the planting and has changed the entire aspect of the landscape in some districts.

Since the prairie fires have almost become a thing of the past due to the breaking up of the prairie and the grading of the roads, islands of poplar have appeared as if by magic miles from the parent trees, adding much to the charm of a prairie landscape.

In order to understand how Nature accomplishes this seemingly impossible task, let us look into the life history of this tree. Quaking aspen

(*Populus Tremuloides*) is the most widely distributed tree of North America. And it is safe to say the only tree which exceeds it in this respect in all the world is its near relative the European aspen. Together these trees nearly encircle the land surface of the globe. This very wide distribution is no doubt due to the light, fluffy nature of the seed which ripens in this latitude about the last of May filling the air with their cottony down and is blown for miles, covering ponds and sloughs with seed. This tree occupies a peculiar position in the forests of North America. Growing up rapidly over vast areas that have been deforested by fire or the axe, they attain as a rule only a small size and die at an early age. They are Nature's first effort to reforest burned areas and reclothe the prairie with trees. And it is this characteristic perhaps more than their

commercial utility that constitutes their chief value as a forest tree. To me it is very interesting to watch Mother Nature at work reforesting the prairie. Usually first upon the scene is the prairie willow. The trees of this species obtain a foothold in some slight depression and after a few years growth catch and hold the snow and help out the moisture question, always a paramount question in any tree planting scheme in the West. The willow leaves help to rot the sod and to make a damp mould ideal for the reception of the fluffy poplar seed. The result:—a few young aspens around the willows; these increase chiefly by root sprouts a wider area year by year. — And lo! the miracle has been accomplished and another "Island of Beauty" has been born upon the prairie sea and a new haven of refuge has been created for our feathered friends the birds.