

## Arbor Day—Its Observance and Growth

**A**RBOR DAY, so pleasantly and usefully observed in many Canadian localities, is hardly a national institution. Each year witnesses more and more tree planting by individuals and municipalities but usually this work has little relation to any one day or season. Arbor Day has proved most valuable in concentrating public interest strongly on the value and need of tree planting. Particularly has this been effective with school children. In scores of communities today, the adult population is enjoying the benefits of the tree planting carried on in their childhood, for twenty or thirty years brings the tiny seedling or sapling into a thing of glorious and self-renewing beauty. However, one does not need to name the hundreds of Canadian cities where imposing school buildings have been erected these many years, surrounded by bare and bleak commons, with not a single tree to break the harsh lines of brick and mortar and boardwalk. Fifteen years would give all such schools a superb park of maples and elms or other species. Who will pretend that the wretched openness of so many of our school grounds exerts no effects on building of youthful character. Who would exchange the splendid picture of the elm sheltered cathedral and churches and streets of Fredericton, New Brunswick, for example, with the drab strings of houses on staring avenues of other communities that are permitted to continue year after year without any concerted attempt to remedy.

It is now 51 years since the first Arbor Day was observed. Nebraska was the pioneer. It was at a meeting of the State Board of Agriculture, held at Lincoln in January, 1872, that J. Sterling Morton introduced a resolution to the effect that "The tenth day of April, 1872, be especially set apart and consecrated for tree planting in Nebraska."

The planting was no new thing in that state when the Arbor Day plan was proposed by Mr. Morton, for a lack of trees had proved to be a serious drawback to the first settlers, as Nebraska was at one time practically a treeless state. Protection for the orchards, crops and buildings, from the winds that swept unhindered over that flat country, was imperative, and every farmer needed wood and fence posts. An attempt had been made to supply this deficiency, but the planting of trees had, up to that time, been in a haphazard manner.

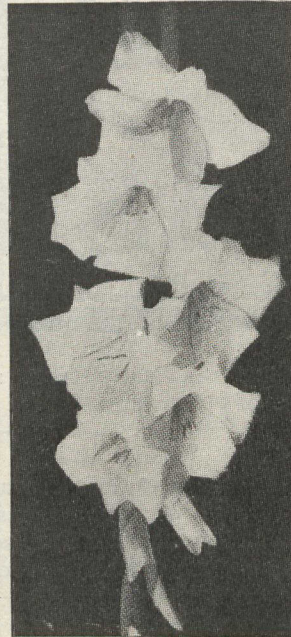
Arbor Day was, therefore, taken up with great popular enthusiasm and, during the quarter of a century that has elapsed since its first observance, more than 700,000 acres of land, containing nearly 1,000,000,000 trees, have been planted in Nebraska.

The idea of planting trees upon a particular day, however, was somewhat slow to find favor in the other states. Kansas and Tennessee did not follow the lead of Nebraska until 1875, and it was another year before Minnesota fell into line. It was not until 1882 that Ohio and North Dakota proclaimed an Arbor Day of their own.

Since that time, the plan has been gradually adopted by other states until, at present, nearly every state in the Union has its day set apart for the planting of trees, usually during the month of April, with appropriate exercises by schools and civic clubs.

Nor has the idea of Arbor Day been confined to the borders of the United States. In 1887 the educa-

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