

Planting Snowbreaks on Railways

What Canadian and American Experience Has Shown Thus Far
—Cutting Down Cost of the "Snow Crop."

The following article from "The North Woods" will interest readers of the Journal. The difficulties of "the snow crop" have been faced equally by our Canadian railroads and the planting of trees as a permanent solution for snow troubles has been recognized for some years. The Intercolonial Railway performed some windbreak work but, according to present information, did not maintain the plantations. The Canadian Pacific on their western lines have planted windbreaks extensively, and similar work on the eastern lines will be commenced this spring. It is understood also that the Canadian Northern have been investigating the matter. The practice on Canadian Pacific western lines has been to use willow and broad-leaved species which have the advantage of speedy growth. It may be that spruce or other conifers will be found useful for the purpose. This is a point which the experiments thus far have not successfully determined.

"Those most closely interested in harvesting the snow crop—aside from a few over-zealous men—are the railroads. There is always a certain amount of snow—or rather a very uncertain amount which shows a tendency to collect in the railroad cuts or on the prairies. The railroad men are interested in corralling that snow before it gets into the cut. They are all convinced that it must be corralled, but the best method of doing it is still in doubt.

It was to discuss this important question that the representative of eight railroads and of the College of Forestry met in the office of the

State Forester on the morning of March 20. The live snow fence was the object of discussion. For many years these railroads have been patiently building portable board fences at a cost about \$3.50 per rod, laboriously distributing along the cuts every fall and collecting them every spring at a further cost of at least fifteen cents per rod, and with the full understanding that a new set of panels would have to be constructed at least every five years. And even at that the results have not always been satisfactory.

The Work of Testing.

Many of the roads have tired of feeding this financial leak and are attempting to replace this temporary and expensive fence system with a permanent snowbreak of trees and shrubs planted along the right of way. It is pioneer work along this line, and subject to all the derision and doubts that such new ideas are heir to. Some are skeptical, some confident, but all of them who have taken up the work are spending considerable money on it. Naturally much of the work is of an experimental character because no one knows just what kind of a snowbreak will be most effective; what species to use, how to place them or how to plant them. Up to the present each one has been groping on alone with but little idea of what the others were doing. This meeting was called to effect an exchange of ideas, and see what could be learned from all the experience of the different roads viewed in the aggregate. The result was well worth while.