

Western Horticulturists Convene

The annual convention of the Western Horticultural Society was held in Winnipeg on February 14th with President D. W. Buchanan in the chair. In his address, Mr. Buchanan congratulated the members on the healthful and prosperous condition of the Society, the paid-up members of which numbered one hundred, as compared with none before the last annual meeting. In 1894 the Society had fifty-nine nominal members, which grew to one hundred and seventy six in 1905.

Mr. Buchanan summed up the causes of the marked increase in the following: 1. A more lively interest was now being taken throughout the country. This followed naturally after the period of attention to agriculture, which had absorbed all the farmers' attention up to the present.

2. Outside members were putting forth greater efforts. He mentioned especially Mr. A. P. Stevenson, who in his inspection throughout the West had greatly assisted.

3. The main cause, however, he assigned to the press, which had aided them on every occasion in dissemination of horticultural knowledge.

The most important work of the past year, had been the preparation of a list of trees and shrubs suitable for planting in the North West. Much benefit has resulted from the dissemination of trees, plants and shrubs among members.

After a discussion, it was decided not to hold an exhibition this year because of the heavy expense. Mr. Middleton, the delegate from Brandon, was surprised that it should cost the Society anything for hall rent and rough lumber, as these things are easily obtained for such a purpose in Brandon. Much regret was expressed that the horticultural display was of such mediocrity at the Winnipeg Exhibition. Mr. W. G. Scott, who was a delegate to the Minnesota Horticultural Convention last December, delivered his report, as also did the delegates to the recent forestry convention in Ottawa.

"THE WOOD CROP."

Mr. Norman Ross, Dominion Forester at Indian Head, discussed the growing of wood for a crop, and while there are no plantations in the West from which to take data, those having experience in tree planting were convinced that fuel and fencing timber could be profitably produced and that too in a shorter time than is generally supposed.

The growing of wood as a crop has received practically no attention in the West. In a country where wood is such an every-day necessity and where there is such an absolute scarcity of a natural supply, this is most surprising. Lack of knowledge in regard to tree planting and no return for the labor and money expended in this way, are largely the causes.

In Mr. Ross' mind there was not the slightest doubt as to the profitability of raising wood on our prairies providing the seedlings could be obtained at a reasonable figure, say at \$5 or less per thousand. About 2,500 seedlings were required to plant one acre; this would at \$5 per thousand mean \$12 for plant material. The cost of planting he put at \$7 and surface cultivation till trees were properly established at \$4, total about \$23 per acre.

We are at a loss here in selecting suitable varieties of woods. We know the hardy trees suited to different localities but the yield from any time in the future was a matter of uncertainty.

Mr. Ross considered that the native larch or tamarac would probably be the most profitable for planting east of Moose Jaw. It was a rapid grower and suited to most soils which were not excessively dry or sandy. It is one of the best we have for fuel and is excellent for fence posts; and when large enough made a splendid railroad tie. Seedlings in any quantity could only be obtained at present from the natural tamarac swamps but the expense was small.

Mr. Ross then considered the advantages for wood purposes of the Dakota cottonwood, willow, native elm, Manitoba maple, native ash, spruce and Scotch pine. He then dealt fully with planting and subsequent treatment. Soil preparation is absolutely essential to success. Plant the trees four feet apart each way. Surface cultivation must be kept up during the first year. After the fourth year, the plantation could take care of it-

self. Thinning should be carried on periodically just leaving the trees enough of room to grow. In later years whole portions could be cut off. As in deciduous trees, new shoots would spring up from the roots. The annual increment per acre each year should determine the amount of wood to be cut annually.

A very lively discussion followed Mr. Ross' paper. Mr. Buchanan thought trees grown as a crop should be as profitable as any other.

An interesting paper was contributed to the convention by Dr. Speechly of Pilot Mound, who is making a study of early blooming perennials. The Doctor's paper was entitled "Gardening on a Town Lot," and emphasized the importance of deep cultivation and recommended that where possible the hardy bulbs, perennials and annuals, take the place of geraniums and begonias. In concluding the paper, Dr. Speechly suggested that:

1. As to tree planting—The native spruce is easiest to procure, easiest to transport, easiest to protect, easiest to plant, when a tiny seedling. I would therefore urge that this tree should be gotten and planted when about six inches in height.

2. As to hedges—Granting the virtues of Caragana, maple or snow berry hedges, the clipped lilac hedge is the best, because it retains its leaves till late October."

Mr. Ross said that six inches was too small for transplanting spruce, while 12 to 18 inches was too large. The trouble with all evergreens was the extreme difficulty in securing growth after transplanting, if the roots were destroyed. Large leaved, deciduous trees should re-establish themselves almost with two roots.

Regarding the lilac hedge, Mr. Stevenson said Dr. Speechly was right, but he would recommend in preference the Canadian maple, with its delicately colored tops. Mr. Caldwell of Virden, thought the evergreen made the best hedge and Dr. Thompson liked the wild rose.

ALBERTA HORTICULTURE.

R. G. Mathews of Macleod, Alta., read a paper on Horticulture in Southern Alberta. Mr. Mathews first apologised for his short experience in horticulture and the vagaries of Alberta's climate, then told of the success he had had with different trees and shrubs at Macleod. Southern Alberta's climate is somewhat adverse to the growing of tender or delicate trees on account of the extreme variation in temperature within a few days, yet progress is being made with trees, shrubs, small fruits and vegetables. Mr. Mathews started with box elder seedlings, which in four years were about 12 feet high and as thick as a man's arm, cottonwood, Russian poplar, white birch, elm and several varieties of willow, were added; all of which did well, except the willow. Later Carolina poplar, native balm of Gilead, Rocky mountain spruce and ash were planted. The only failure was the spruce. The cottonwoods and poplars proved exceedingly rapid growers. In two years seedlings have become trees of from 12 to 16 feet in height and with trunks 4 to 6 inches through. White birch seems best suited to the climate, never freezing back and capable of enduring great hardship. In general Mr. Mathews recommends poplar and cottonwoods for rapid growth, and though slower somewhat, still first on the list, white birch. Box elder (Manitoba maples) freeze back. None of the trees were watered except the first box elder seedling, thorough cultivation was relied upon instead. Of small fruits, raspberry, currant and gooseberry were all successfully grown, especially currants. The golden Carolina raspberry proved hardy and a good bearer.

Of shrubs, lilacs, (white and purple), spireas (Van Housli), honey suckles, (Dartarian), Caraganas, Southerwood and privets, have all been grown successfully.

Of vegetables nearly all do well. Muskmelons ripened in the open in 1904, and in 1905 nearly all tomatoes ripened.

Seedlings of Siberian crab and hardy varieties of apple are thriving exceedingly well.

POTATO GROWING.

Mr. Tomlin of Kildonan gave a paper on "Potato culture." In his opinion it matters little whether the soil is a loam or the heavy

alluvial black soil of the valleys, except in a wet year when the tubers on the former will be drier. The main thing in potato growing is to have the soil rich with manure, as it insures a larger crop, better quality and larger and more uniform tubers. It is never safe to decide definitely upon any variety until it has been tested three years. Medium sized potatoes are better for planting than extremely large ones. The speaker's plan was to select about every three years, a bushel of the most suitably sized tubers for seed and these he propagated for three years on different soils, which seemed to fix their characteristics. Mr. Tomlin believes potato culture will be more difficult in the future, as the beetle is now with us and within the past two years the blight has made its appearance. No particular variety was recommended, as so much depended upon the locality.

In preparing the soil, if it is rich, plow about ten inches deep in the fall, let the weeds start in the spring, then harrow once or twice before planting. If for early crop May 1st was generally soon enough. For a later crop, from the middle of May to the end. Later than that an early variety should be used. The drills should be straight, otherwise cultivating was very difficult. The amount of cultivation required depends upon the year. The depth generally from three to four inches was decided by the variety, some growing down with the soil, some towards the surface. The drills should be from 30 to 33 inches apart, and the sets about a foot. In the case of very rank growers this distance should be increased.

THE FARMER'S GARDEN.

Dr. S. J. Thompson of St. James read a paper on "Small Fruits on a Prairie Farm", which he said applied more particularly to busy farmers. The garden should be arranged so that a horse could be used to do the cultivating and more land than could be attended to should not be set out. The land should be well drained and cultivated in the fall. The plants should be set in rows six feet apart, running north and south, currants six feet apart in the rows, gooseberries and raspberries four feet. Dry soil should be watched. He planted Cora corn between the rows and left the stalks during the winter after the ears had been removed. The corn was removed the next year and the soil between the rows cultivated and given a mulch of straw. The growth of corn was then discontinued and the old and weakest canes removed. Dr. Thompson recommended the following as good bearers and hardy: Red currants, Fay's prolific and cherry red; black currants, Lee's prolific; white currants, White grape; gooseberries, the Houghton; red raspberries, the Turner. A farmer would have sufficient for a large family from one dozen red currants, one half a dozen each of black and white currants and gooseberries and one and one half dozen red raspberries. Trees should be grown as soon as possible for protection. Small fruits could be grown with less trouble in Manitoba than elsewhere, as we have few insect pests and diseases and frost would not destroy blossoms or young fruit more than one year in ten.

A discussion upon apple growing was led by Mr. Peter Middleton of Brandon, who claimed a stockade about 16 feet high was the best protection for an orchard and advocated training the trees to grow near the ground.

Mr. Stevenson said that it was calculated that it took an apple tree 5,000 years to become acclimatized. A tender variety would not of itself change. We could succeed in the west only by cross fertilization. Professor Robertson of Minnesota and Mr. Stevenson, strongly emphasized their belief that the hardy apple trees would be obtained only by special selection of seedlings grown from seed produced in the west.

Professor Robertson addressed the convention upon the culture of strawberries in which he had been very successful. He described in detail, his methods of planting, cultivation and production of the plants, and recommended the Bederwood, Warfield, Lovett, and Senator Dunlap varieties. He cultivated the same plants for six years; instead of setting out new plants each year, as was customary, and had as good a crop the last year as the first.

The election of officers resulted as follows: Honorary presidents, Angus McKay, Indian Head S. A. Bédard, Brandon, and W. J. Black, M. A. C.; directors, D. W. Buchanan, St. Charles, A. P. Stevenson, Nelson, G. E. Batho, Winnipeg, W. G. Scott, Winnipeg, Dr. Speechly, Pilot Mound, W. A. Farmer, Kildonan, John Caldwell, Virden, Prof. Baird, Dr. S. J. Thompson, Robt. Aitkin, Geo. Gray and Jas. Birch.

Afterwards the directors elected the following