

TREE PLANTING IN THE WEST.

*Norman M. Ross, Assistant Superintendent
of Forestry for Canada.*

Five years ago, in the spring of 1901, the Forestry Branch of the Department of the Interior commenced a system of practical co-operation with the settlers on the Western prairies with a view to assisting them in the formation of shelterbelts and woodlots on their farms. In order that the system might be successful it was decided as its main feature, to supply free of charge, seedling stock of hardy forest trees to those who were willing to comply with the regulations of the Department. Since the scheme was put into force the number of settlers desiring to take advantage of this offer has increased very rapidly year by year so that a very large number of seedlings are necessary to supply the increasing demand. This spring something in the neighborhood of two million seedlings were sent out and it is expected that from three to four millions will be required annually in the future.

To grow this number of seedlings of the varieties suited to the country requires a large area of ground. From the experience in the nurseries during the past three years it is found that on an average 80 to 90 thousand seedlings of ash or maple can be grown per acre. The ash are allowed to stay in the nursery two years and the maple only one. About 75% of the trees distributed consist of these two varieties. About 50 or 60 acres will have to be devoted to nursery stock each year to supply the three or four million seedlings which it is thought there will be a demand for. During the past three years a few acres on the Brandon and Indian Head Experimental Farms have been placed at the disposal of the Forestry Branch for nursery purposes. The amount of ground, however, available on these farms is now too limited for the increased work. It was therefore found necessary to select a site for a comparatively large nursery entirely independent of the Experimental Farms.

A quarter section of 160 acres situated a mile south of the town of Indian Head in the new Province of Saskatchewan on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway was decided upon as being the most suitable, owing to its proximity to the Experimental Farm where nursery operations were then being carried on. The land was virgin prairie but the soil is lighter than that in the immediate vicinity and