

APPENDIX No. 2

I have some matter prepared relating to the importance of farmers improving their home grounds or the surroundings of their houses, with information regarding the preparation of the soil, grading and making a lawn, and laying it out with a few ornamental trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants. That comes in in connection with our botanic garden work, and I should like very much to include the matter in my evidence, if agreeable to you, because I think more information should be given to farmers upon the improvement of their homes. They sadly need it in this country; that you all know. I will be very glad to answer any questions in regard to it, but I think as we have been talking so much of forest trees it would be well to include that matter with the planting of forest belts, so as to make the subject as complete as possible.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE HOME GROUNDS.

To those who appreciate and who have been accustomed to attractive surroundings, many a farmer's house seems a cheerless place indeed. Exposed to the summer's sun and to the winter's blast, with rarely a tree, shrub or climber to break the uninteresting outline of its four walls, without a lawn or flower garden to separate it from the fields, it is the farmer's abode; but should we dignify it by the name of home when it is contrasted with other farmer's homes where fine trees give their refreshing shade in summer and check the cold winds in winter; where the green lawn slopes away to the roadway or separates the home grounds from the fields; and flowering shrubs, flower beds, and borders enliven the scene and make the farmer and his wife and children truly feel that 'there is no place like home.' With the easy and rapid means of transportation which we now enjoy in Canada, few farmers' sons and daughters are unable to visit some of our cities and towns during their early years. Is it any wonder that in many cases when they return home and contrast their home surroundings with those they have seen they become dissatisfied and long for a brighter place to live? And while it is true that lack of homelike surroundings is not the only reason why boys and girls leave the farm when they get an opportunity, it does, without doubt, influence them in making their decision.

There are two main reasons, we think, why farmers do not improve their home surroundings, namely, through lack of desire, and because they think they have not time. There is a third reason which might also be given, namely, want of knowledge, but information is now so easily obtained that there is little excuse on that score. How is it possible to instil a desire in farmers to make their homes more attractive? If they would only realize that their children would appreciate it and would be more likely to remain on the farm, the desire would surely come. Once the desire came, time would be found to do the work.

Making the Lawn.—The soil around the dwelling usually dries up in the spring before the fields, as the house is, as a rule, built on a slight elevation, hence work could be begun several days before there was any temptation to go to the fields. A lawn should be the first object in view, as once the extent of the grounds were defined by the grass, the further development could be gradual. A well-kept lawn is also much more attractive than flower beds in rough ground, and once the lawn has been made the farmer's wife and family will be able to render valuable assistance with the trees, shrubs and flower beds.

A large lawn will probably be neglected by the average farmer, hence the area which is to be devoted to grass should be well considered. If possible, there should be a lawn in front and at one side of the house. A lawn fifty feet wide in front makes a very good approach to a house, and if convenient this should be carried the same width along the side. More lawn would be better, but there should not be less. The less grass is cut up by roads and paths, the more effective it is, hence the paths should be arranged with a view to leaving as large a plot of unbroken lawn as possible. In order that the grass may look green most of the summer, there should be a good depth