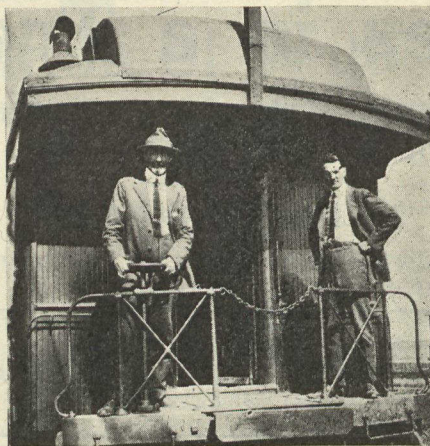


admittance. In our lectures we touch on the value of trees, the necessity for them as a stabilizer of our population and endeavour to portray to our audiences what the prairie would be like if systematic tree planting were carried out on a large scale. It is difficult sometimes to convince our hearers that the prairie is naturally a tree country and that trees can be grown. One man during a discussion remarked: "If God meant trees to grow on the prairie, why were they not here when we arrived?" and this same doubt unfortunately has led a great many people to believe that trees cannot be successfully grown on the prairie. The fact that they did not find trees on the prairie when they came there seems to be proof enough that trees won't grow. Why the prairie is treeless has been discussed on numerous occasions and experts have suggested various reasons. Of all I have heard, the most likely explanation is that fires were undoubtedly the cause. In the first place it is not known how these fires started though it is said the Indians were the cause of a great many. They used to set fire to the prairie in the fall of the year after the buffalo had migrated south so that the nice fresh green grass in the spring would tempt the buffalo nearer home. Without a doubt these fires didn't stop where Mr. Indian started them and the result of course was disastrous to any permanent growth appearing on the prairie. Now that the country is settled, one hears less and less of the prairie fire menace; in fact it has practically disappeared except for a few isolated cases. The result now is that the trees are coming back on the prairie and very rapidly too in the form of the Aspen Poplar which are appearing in bluffs of various sizes. Old residents tell us that thirty-five years ago there were no trees on the prairie west of Brandon excepting in the river bottoms and sloughs. Now you have to travel as far west as the outskirts of Regina, before you are out of sight of these bluffs. The spread from the north has been equally rapid and the trees are well south of the C.N.R. Edmonton-Saskatoon line and travelling fast. From the west the advance is coming on too and trees are reported at various places where there was none a few years back. In fact even in the central parts of the prairie small bluffs are appearing, the seed evidently being carried over by the wind and finding a damp place to germinate. And all this has taken place during the past few years, as few of these trees are over twenty years old as can be seen on examina-



Archibald Mitchell, Western Lecturer of the Canadian Forestry Association and his assistant, Angus G. Cooch, on the rear platform of the Tree Planting Lecture Car.

tion. This, too, despite the fact that the west has passed through one of the driest spells of its history and instead of the trees dying they have actually increased. There is no question at all but that we have sufficient moisture every year for trees on the prairie and that trees can be grown. We have sufficient moisture if we keep what we get and nature accomplishes that by growing her trees close together, forming a dense canopy over head to keep the sun out and by using shrubbery coupled with the close planting so that the wind cannot pass through to steal the moisture.

I am not going to publish details of how a shelter belt should be planted, the trees to use etc., as this has been covered on numerous occasions by well known authorities. This information is given though to the audience and illustrated by some sixty lantern slides, prepared from pictures taken by the staff during previous seasons.

### The Question Hour

Following the lectures we hold a discussion. The audience is invited to ask questions and also reminded that it is only in this way that we can get at the root of their local problems. A good discussion is well worth while and a lot of useful information is handed out by the farmers themselves while telling of their own experiences. Everything from trees to gardening is discussed and on numerous occasions it has been well past midnight before the last man left the car.

Our field work takes us all over the country. A farmer comes in and wants us to take a look at his trees.

We are motored out and a thorough inspection given, suggestions made for improvements and demonstrations in how to handle various little things he is not clear on given right on the spot.

City and town plantings are booming right along. Calgary had the biggest Tree Week in its history when the various business men's organizations appointed a committee to handle the campaign and no fewer than twelve thousand trees and shrubs were planted under their auspices. Cardston, Vulcan and numerous other small towns are boulevarding their streets. It is refreshing indeed to see that this task has been tackled with determination and a decided improvement made on the appearance of the town. Tugaskie and Cupar in Saskatchewan are other small towns that have boulevarded streets and numerous others will start next year.

### Plans are Prepared

Cemeteries, too, need trees. Of all the bare, desolate looking places in the west, the average cemetery is the worst. This year the towns of Gull Lake, Sask. and Burdett, Alta., have taken the matter in hand and are falling in line with High River, Alta., and other older settled places that have really beautiful cemetery grounds. Plans were prepared by Mr. Mitchell, Western Lecturer, of the Canadian Forestry Association, for these places and already the energetic Mayor of Gull Lake, Mr. Sydney Smith, has started the ball rolling by having the land prepared for planting next year.

We have been greatly aided in our work by the splendid co-operation of the press. It cannot be too strongly put that the success of the work to a great degree has been made possible by the excellent publicity obtained from all western papers. As one expert put it, "Tree planting is freezing out the advertising." At least one cannot pick up a paper without seeing something on the subject.

So much well-merited praise has been given in these columns to the Tree Planting Division of the Dominion Forestry Branch at Indian Head and Sutherland, Sask., as to make detailed reference in this account unnecessary. The pioneer work of the Tree Planting Division in popularizing tree culture and in carrying on experimental work, has won the gratitude of thousands of