

Conservation Project—The Farm Woodlot

The Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, at their last biennial convention, decided that their major project for the next few years should be the conservation of soil and food. The FWIC President, Mrs. Hugh Summers of Fonthill, Ontario, speaking at the FWIO Officers' Conference at Guelph last spring, stressed the point that rural women could do something very practical about this problem. "When there is erosion or soil drifting on your own farm", Mrs. Summers said, "you know there are plots that should be planted to trees and you use pressure to see that this is done. The same interest should extend to conservation nationally." We remember, too, that the FWIO had something to say along this line in the brief they presented to the Ontario Conservation Commission. With these things in mind, we quote here an extract from the booklet, "The Farm Woodlot," by I. C. Marritt, B.Sc.F., published by the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests. We believe it would make a good subject for discussion at an Institute meeting or in any farm home.—Editor.

THERE are many important reasons why woodlots should be preserved on Ontario farms as it is acknowledged that they are a benefit not only to the individual farmer, but to the community and the province at large. Some of these reasons are of such importance that there will be disastrous results if deforestation is carried too far. In the considered opinion of leading authorities who have spent years of study on conservation and its allied problems, at least ten to twenty per cent of any agricultural section of land should be supporting forest growth or woodland.

"In the figures of assessment of Ontario municipalities it is found that many townships have in excess of ninety per cent cleared land and quite a number have ninety-five per cent cleared. The proportion of woodland in many agricultural sections, therefore, may be considered to be insufficient to maintain the best conditions for agricultural endeavour, according to the standards required to prevent the losses sustained from drought, floods and tempests.

"It has been observed that a community with a good proportion of wooded hills and forest growth is not subject to damage by winds of high velocity and extreme floods, as are experienced by the open farm sections which do not have the protection that woodlands provide to offset these climatic conditions.

"It is impossible to appraise the amount of benefit to a community in actual dollars and cents, but it will be seen that the preservation and establishment of additional tree growth will bring about better growing conditions for all agricultural crops.

"A direct monetary return, however, is received from the sale of products of the woodlot under systematic management, and these benefits are given below together with the

other points to be considered when placing a value on the woodlot.

"1. FUELWOOD AND LUMBER. The woodlot provides necessities. The farmer requires fuel to heat his house, lumber for buildings, implement parts and small tools, and fence posts. These, if purchased, require cash that could be used to advantage in obtaining other farm requisites. Many maintain that a woodlot is worth from \$50.00 to \$100.00 per year as fuel.

"2. CASH RETURNS. There is a market for logs and fuelwood in all localities, and the production of maple syrup has provided an income to many owners since colonization days.

"3. VALUE OF FARM. The farm with a woodlot brings a higher price than one with the entire acreage cleared.

"4. INSURANCE. The farmer with a large woodlot, twenty to one hundred acres, may consider it in the same category as an insurance policy, as more wood is grown than is required on the farm. This surplus may be drawn on when there is a failure of other crops, to tide over a depression, to build new buildings, or purchase additional property.

"5. CROP FOR SUB-MARGINAL LANDS. Trees will grow well on light sand, shallow and swamp soils. These soils are often of little value for cropping and pasture, and consequently are a drag on the owner and community if not utilized in growing timber.

"6. TREES PREVENT the erosion of soils by both wind and water. There are in Ontario many sand dunes and eroded hillsides that would not exist today if these areas had been allowed to retain their forest cover.

"7. WINDBREAKS. Woodland protects cul-

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Colpoy's Bay Institute in North Bruce has taken good care of the oak tree grown from an acorn sent from England at the time of the coronation of King George VI.