

PEACE GARDEN

At the Annual Meeting of the International Association of Gardeners held in Toronto in October, 1929, Mr. Henry J. Moore, in his presidential address, proposed to the outstanding horticulturists and gardeners of the North American continent that there should be a living memorial to commemorate the century of peace that has existed between Canada and the United States. He suggested that it take the form of a garden somewhere along the International boundary. His unique proposal fired the imagination of his hearers and they pledged themselves to promote its interests. Thus the International Peace Garden, Incorporated, was organized and an international committee formed. Mr. Moore was one of a committee of three chosen to choose a site.

From among the many sites viewed by the committee, that of the Turtle Mountains, between Manitoba and North Dakota, was selected. It is only a few miles from the geographical center of the North American Continent. Its scenic beauty is difficult to surpass. Wild Life abounds there, and it is situated on the Canada to Panama highway, said to be the longest north to south highway in the world.

The Manitoba lands comprising the Peace Garden were given by the Manitoba Government and those in Dakota were purchased by the State and presented. The entire plot of 2,200 acres, 1,300 in Canada and 900 in the United States, is now under the control of the International Peace Garden, Incorporated.

On July 14, 1932 thousands of people from both nations witnessed and took part in the dedication ceremony. It was a typical New World event, with many nationalities and creeds represented. The great gathering of 50,000 people read aloud, in unison, the inscription on the cairn which was unveiled. On a bronze plaque on the cairn is inscribed the following: "To God in His glory we two nations dedicate this garden and pledge ourselves that as long as man shall live we will not take up arms against one another".

What would it mean if 50,000 citizens of all border nations would voluntarily gather at their borders and declare before God that they would substitute flowers for fortifications and instruments of death? It is this feature of the garden which makes it a symbol of International Friendship and gives to it world significance.

It was unfortunate that the depression years followed so closely upon the formal opening of the garden, brought restrictions on development. However the United States government provided a CCC camp to develop the garden, and several hundred men were engaged in activities on the American side throughout that period. Sheltered picnic conveniences were erected and roads and scenic bridges were built. The coming of World War II again was a barrier to development. Annual meetings were held, however, and plans laid for extensive operations to begin at the earliest possible moment. The time for this has now definitely arrived, and work was again begun in 1947.

That the International Peace Garden is destined to become a shrine to international friendship and goodwill is shown by excerpts from the official reports. Holland, Mexico, Australia and Scotland have signified their wish to participate in this unique undertaking, as well as numerous national organizations.

A garden is a lovely, growing thing, just as peace is a vital expanding force, which must be nurtured and cared for. Peace does not exist of its own accord, but through a conscious effort to develop and maintain understanding and tolerance. This garden to be a real International Peace Garden must be in the hearts and minds of all people. Members must contribute to its creation and maintenance, they must visit it and remember always why it has been established.