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**CANADIAN PLOWMEN ABROAD**  
by ROY SHAVER, Past President  
ONTARIO PLOWMEN'S ASSOCIATION



Editor's Note: Roy Shaver of Finch, Ont., past president of Ontario Plowmen's Association, accompanied Douglas S. Reid of Brampton, Ont., and Algie Wallace of North Gower, Ont., Canada's champion plowman, on their trip to the British Isles, Eire and France. This is the second of a series of five weekly articles he has written as team manager about their experiences and impressions.

by Roy Shaver  
After a fast flight across the Atlantic from Montreal, we landed at

Stretwick, Scotland, and our travels had really begun. We had already created a precedent as the first team of Ontario Plowmen's Association champions in seven years of Esso Trans-Atlantic trips to make the west-east trip by air.  
Normally we would have crossed by boat and returned by plane. However, the O.P.A. directors wanted my two companions, Algie Wallace of North Gower, champion horse plowman, and Doug Reid of Brampton, champion tractor plowman, to compete in the British Ploughing Association national match at Stirling, Scotland, early in November. They wished to have Canadians take part in a trial match which would test a set of rules that had been proposed for international plowing competition. We had to fly over there in time to allow for two days' practice.

**With Scottish Host**  
Our headquarters for the time we were in Scotland was the small spa town of Bridge of Allan, just outside of Stirling. From it we sallied forth to visit the farm home of William Muirhead. Mr. Muirhead was vice-chairman of the British match. He lives in an area with the odd name of 'Foot o' Green', and he farms the land on which the battle of Bannockburn was fought. Not far from his house, atop a small hill, stands a flagstaff marking the spot where Robert the Bruce stood to direct his victorious army.  
The day of the plowing match was grey and melancholy. The Ochil Hills, Stirling Castle and the Wallace Monument formed a backdrop for the 300 acres on which the match was held. Around the secretary's tent the flags of eight nations hung limply from their masts. We saw for the first time, and I understand so did the Scots, the flag of West Germany. We were told 166 plowmen from 10 countries, many of them national champions, competed, watched by more than 10,000 spectators.

Scottish newspapers reported it as the largest plowing match ever held in the British Isles.  
**Rich, Black Soil**  
The soil was of the rich blackness that is so often found in low-lying river country. With the Firth of Forth flowing down to the North Sea from Stirlingshire, the type and quality of the soil was understandable. But what we did find strange was the rapidity with which the texture of the soil seemed to change over such a small area. Even within the 100 acres actually used for plowing it changed several times.  
It is always nice to be able to come back with a trophy, and the fact that Doug and Algie did not this year is no reflection on their plowing skill. In the first place Algie, a horse plowman, had to plow in a tractor class. Then an unfortunate series of circumstances got us off to a bad start, in fact a late start. We understood our plows would be waiting for us at the plow ridges. When we arrived they were being serviced some distance away. We were also confused by the site directions — we probably got our dialects mixed. Consequently we started plowing almost 30 minutes late and the boys were unplaced in the field of 15.

**One Good Lesson**  
From it all though, we learned one good lesson, which applies to all international matches and most certainly to the world match being held in Canada this year. Much of the confusion I am sure arose from the varying translations of the rules. That may sound strange when we were all speaking English, but if you examine it, it is not. Plowing terms used here differ from those used in Europe, and even where the terms are the same, there are different shades of meaning. When this can happen among English-speaking people, it is not hard to imagine the confusion which can, and did, arise among contestants speaking different languages.  
The delegates to the international conference, held the day after the match, were quick to realize this and took steps to remedy the situation before next October's world tourney. A glossary of plowing terms is to be prepared in the language of each competing country, in an attempt to eliminate some of the ambiguities and differences in definitions.

**The Real Peacemaker**  
While I was at the conference I could not help thinking of Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent at the closing banquet of the O.P.A. International match, when he said the plowman is 'the real peacemaker.' He said he saw the annual overseas trips of Canadian plowmen as a powerful weapon in the battle for peace, in that we are beating our swords back into plowshares and 'where swords may not be able to pierce the Iron Curtain the plowshares we send overseas may well do so.'

I am sure his heart would have been warmed had he been able to sit in on the conference. Representatives of 11 nations, each with its own country's interests at heart, sat down and, without acrimony, in two days laid the foundation for the first world plowing match. Much of the credit for this I give to the chairman of the meeting, I have never attended a conference or meeting of any kind that was run more smoothly or efficiently than the general sessions of the first day. It was a meeting where national feelings could have flared but when discussion showed signs of becoming heated, the chairman directed the delegates' enthusiasms into more constructive channels.

**Accept Canada's Invitation**  
As you know by now Canada's invitation to the world group was accepted by 19 votes to one, and the first world match will be held near Cobourg next fall, in conjunction with the O.P.A. International.  
Perhaps the conference went so smoothly because all the delegates had been mingling for days previously and had been friendly competitors the day before at the British match. Or perhaps, too, it was the result of the banquet held the night before in Stirling's historic Golden Lion Hotel.

It was with no small sense of awe that we of British, and particularly Scots—I am one-quarter Scots—ancestry assembled in the Golden Lion, for it was here that Robert Burns spent many an hour musing and quenching his thirst. There was many a word tossed in the Golden Lion that night too, and I think some of them are worth repeating, for the show plowmen in other parts of the world think as we do, and that in fact, we are really all brothers under the skin.

**International Aspect**  
President of the British Ploughing Association is the Rt. Hon. W. McNair Snadden, M.P., Joint Parliamentary Under-secretary of State for Scotland. A true Scots gentleman and farmer is hidden beneath that onerous title. He said he felt that the B.P.A. had done a good job that day in strengthening the ties that bound those in the British Isles to the nations of the Commonwealth and Western Europe. "If anything has impressed us about this competition it is the international aspect of it," he said.

Pointing out that the world population was rising faster than the food production, he said that the principal weapon in the battle to keep the world fed was the plow. Plowing such as was seen that day required very great skill and judgment. Mr. Snadden remarked that horse

lovers would have noted with pleasure that while there were more tractors than horses, most of the people were looking at the horses. He added with a chuckle, "You may also have noticed that the men behind the horses had their sleeves rolled up, while the chaps on the tractors had their coats on." None laughed or applauded louder than Algie at this remark.

**More Food for People**  
Another gentleman who impressed us all very much was Bengt Svensson, the secretary of the International Contact Committee of the Swedish Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs. He said, "In Scandinavia, we believe that international plowing competitions are a good thing. From them we will find a better way of plowing and so improve farming and the production of more food for the people of the world. Personally I also believe it is a good thing that the farmers of various countries should come together and make friends."  
The roaring applause of the 410 plowmen present was a fitting Amen to Mr. Svensson's sentiments.

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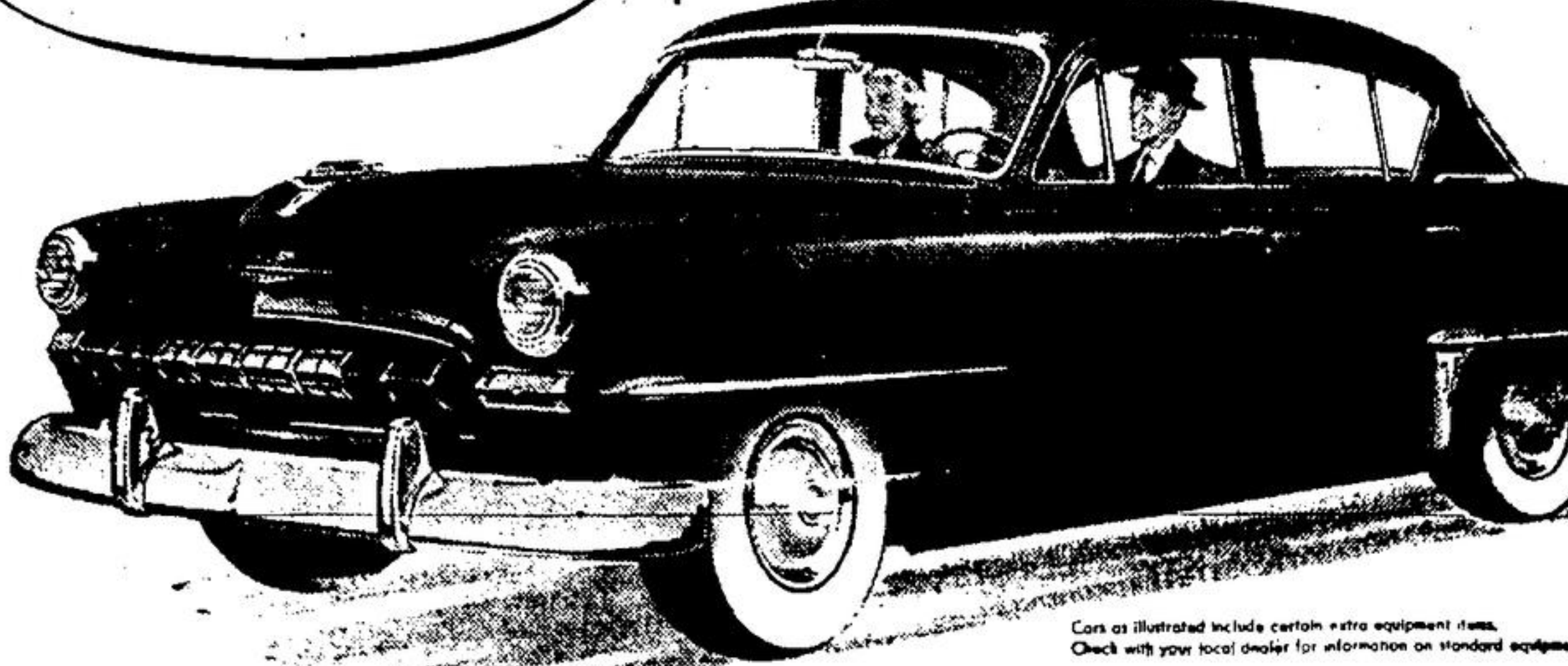
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