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**CANADIAN
PLOWMEN
ABROAD**

by ROY SHAYER, Past President
ONTARIO
PLOWMEN'S ASSOCIATION



Editor's Note:

Roy Shayer 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 plowmen, on their trip to the British Isles, Eire and France. This is the third of a series of five weekly articles he has written as team manager about their experiences and impressions.

Rather than try to recount every stop we made and every town and farm we visited in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Eire and England, I thought this week I would tell you of some of the impressions we gained of farming in those countries. 'We' means Doug Reid of Brampton, 26-year-old Canadian tractor plowing champ, Algie Wallace, of North Gower, 35, horse plowing champion, and myself, Roy Shayer, of Finch, Ont., their team manager.



Douglas S. Reid

First of all I would like to make one point. I do not think it is possible to compare adequately Canadian and British farming methods, or farms. Climatic differences for instance make it almost impossible to discuss cattle feeding for in England they are able to pasture their cattle during months that in Canada it is impossible to do so.

Another reason against comparison is the many old farm buildings we saw which defy modernization and are consequently handicaps to efficiency. One of the first things the boys noticed was the absence of barns as we know them in this country. On the majority of the farms they had byres which in essence are really only four posts with a roof on top. In these byres the cattle shelter from the weather and feed during autumn and winter pasturing.

The factor which most impressed Doug in British farming was the weed control, and I think I agree with him. The weed control on the British farms is outstanding; there is not a weed to be seen on the majority of the farms.

While the three of us were agreed that British farming could stand to be more mechanized, and were a little astonished to see the amount of heavy work that is done in the fields by women, we still had to take our ten-gallon hats off to the British farmer in the matter of yield per acre. They are still ahead of us there.

It is hard to decide why this should be. Perhaps it's because the land is richer, or maybe they look after it better or fertilize it more.

One farm we won't forget in a hurry, because there we saw something that upset all our notions about cattle breeders. It was the farm of J. O'Neil, just outside Belfast. Mr. O'Neil farms his 100 acres just about as intensively as 100 acres can be farmed. With a herd of more than 100 Ayrshires, he was keeping more than one cow per acre without feeding them concentrates. He feeds them only ensiled hay, about 90 pounds per day per cow. His hay was cured in horizontal silos and was testing about 14 per cent protein.

All of which, as you will agree, was very good, and we were impressed by this performance, but then Mr. O'Neil told us that he hadn't bought a male or female in six years. He was obviously an enthusiastic supporter of inbreeding, and we were hard-pushed for something to say, for to us his herd howed every sign of the need for new blood stock.

Three of the larger farms we visited in Scotland and England, were breeding and milking Holsteins, and some of the cattle were direct descendants from two of Ontario's best-known blood lines. But first let me tell you of a fact which struck us as rather strange. In Scotland the farmers thought very ill of the Canadian-type Holstein, both breeders and milkers, while English farmers could not say enough to the credit of Holsteins.

On the farm of Edwin de Gray Seaman, in Huntingdonshire, we came across a son of Markeman, the animal that sacked the Alliston farm house of J. J. E. McCague with so many blue ribbons. Mr. Seaman was farming 1,800 acres, 800 of which were reclaimed marsh. He was running 300 Canadian-bred Holsteins and would write an unsolicited testimonial for them at the drop of anyone's hat.

At Calthorpe we found our second Ontario expatriate in a flourishing son of the pride of Oxford County, Tom Dent's Sovereign. He was on the 1,200 acre dairy farm

of James Alston. All of Mr. Alston's 250 Holsteins were from Canadian blood lines. He was milking 100 with an average test of 3.7 per cent. Incidentally, he also had one of the finest stables of Clydesdales that we saw in the whole of our visit.

Though he did not voice it to any of the farmers, Doug had one suggestion for improving the British farms. He thinks they would be well advised to uproot the hedgerows with which the English countryside abounds. He admitted willingly that they were picturesque but his practical Canadian eye decided too much land is wasted on either side of the hedges. "If they were my farms," he said, "I'd get a bulldozer and root them all out, then replace them with an electric or stationary fence of some kind."

One question I have been asked repeatedly since our return is "How is the British farmer making out?" Though we did not have an opportunity to speak to what we call loosely refer to as an average farmer, I would say that for a long time the British farmer hasn't been as well off as he is now. Most of the farmers we met were operating fairly large farms that could be called showplaces, but all of them agreed they didn't want anything to change for awhile. Though they are up against high feed prices they have guaranteed markets, with government supported prices, for everything they can produce.

That they cannot produce enough is easily demonstrated. Eggs are rationed at one and two per person per week, depending upon available supplies. They cost about 14 cents each, or \$1.68 a dozen. If I tell you that six pounds, or \$6.50, is a more than average weekly salary in the British Isles, I don't think there is more I need tell you about the food situation.

Don't fail to visit at least one of Georgetown's industrial plants on the industrial tours tomorrow.

THE MAIL BAG

It's a Long, Long Time From May to September

Dear Editor:

I realize this letter will be somewhat of a shock to you as you are no doubt not used to receiving letters from what is sometimes vulgarly referred to as the canine world. However, on my master's assurance that you are a true believer in freedom of speech for all, I dictated these few thoughts to him to put down on paper, as I am not quite as versatile as Daffy the Dog in "Mickey Mouse".

First let me introduce myself. I am a young lady, three years old, spinster, (no family, of course), of that grand old breed called English Bulldog, and have been a resident of Georgetown since coming here as a youngster (six weeks).

The reason for my writing? As you know, sir, it's a long summer, being locked up in the backyard or in the house, but being a good law abiding bull dog, like the vast majority of other dogs we tolerate that as best we can, and realize it's all for the best, what with vegetable and flower gardens, beautiful lawns, etc. However, comes the fall . . . the vegetable crop is taken in, the weeds overrun the plot where once there were flowers, and the lawns are frozen much too hard to bury a bone in. So, Mr Editor, why persecute us just because we can't talk back very well? We enjoy the odd run in the fall and the winter, we can't do any harm, so please folks, let's not have any hasty signatures on a petition that means we dogs have to live a dog's life on the end of a leash 365 days of the year.

We realize the gentleman who is circulating the petition is probably a little tired of seeing dogs after being in charge of collecting dog taxes last year. We know it's a tough, thankless job. But we'd like to ask a fair question: How would he like to sit down in his office, tied by the neck, seven days a week, never to be able to go out in the fresh air? Try it for a week, sir, and we'll venture to say you will gladly forsake your petition for more worthy pursuits.

Misses think perhaps that we dogs could get our point across better, if we picketed your office . . . Imagine! all the dogs in town in front of your office with signs saying "We Want Justice," or "You can walk around untied," Mr. Dog Tax Collector, how about us? The boss, (that's what I call the master) tho', he's against that idea. Figures we could make you get the 'point' a lot faster and 'sharper' if every time you come to the door to get your petition, the dog of the house is allowed to answer the door.

Think it over, folks, and remember,

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Thanks for the use of your paper to present our side of the case, Mr. Editor, and trusting our thoughts on the matter will help further canine-human relations.

Yours very truly,

BULL

FARM NEWS

Pigs Only Company, No Profit, Survey Shows

During the four year period 1947 to 1951 fifty commercial hog producers kept detailed cost figures on their enterprise in cooperation with the Ontario Dept. of Agriculture.

In this study, feed, labour, interest, depreciation, insurance and other current expenditures were taken into consideration. These figures indicate that on the average during this four year period it cost \$8.02 to raise a pig to weaning age. From weaning to market weight of 200 lbs., another \$27.12 is involved, which brings the total cost of raising a hog up to market weight to \$35.14. A two hundred pound mar-

ket hog on the average dresses out around 75 per cent of 150 lbs.

When the announcement was made a few months ago, that the floor price would be reduced on January 1st from 26c to 23c, it can be readily understood why such a large percentage of Ontario hog producers lost interest in the swine industry. One does not need to be much of a mathematician to figure out that a 200 lb. hog with a dressing percentage of 75 per cent would bring the producer at the 23 cent price, approximately \$34.50. One may like swine but after all the pig's company isn't going to contribute anything towards meeting the taxes and other current expenditures.

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— W. O. MISENER, Manager.



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