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CANADIAN PLOWMEN ABROAD

By W. E. BULLICK, Past President
ONTARIO PLOWMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Editor's Note:

William Bullick of Camlachie, Ont., past president of Ontario Plowmen's Association and manager of the Canadian plowing team at the second annual World Plowing Match at Killarney, Ireland, recently returned to Canada with team members James Eccles of Brampton, Ont., and Robert Timbers of Stouffville, Ont. Here is the first of his reports on the trip.

by William Bullick
"What happened at the world plowing match in Ireland?" That's a question I've been asked frequently since my return to Canada, and most people who ask it really mean "Why did not Jim Eccles or Bob Timbers bring home the Easo Golden Plow?" It was something a lot of people expected, since Jim won the trophy at the first annual World Plowing Match at Cobourg, Ont., last year, and a few days before that, Bob Timbers won the Canadian plowing championship, defeating Jim Eccles in the process.

As most of my readers will know by now, the Easo Golden Plow, symbol of world tractor plowing supremacy, went to Hugh Barr of Northern Ireland, with Leslie Dixon of Britain as runner-up. Out of 25 competitors from 13 countries, Jim Eccles finished eighth and Bob Timbers 13th.

One thing our first overseas world match taught us was that contestants who live in or near the country where the match is held will always have a certain advantage — they are able to take ample equipment to the match, along with whatever extra parts they think they might need.

This advantage is perhaps more obvious to us now than it was last year, when Jim and Bob came first and third, respectively, among the world championship contestants on their home soil. It was certainly in evidence this year, when out of the top five plowmen, three were from either Ireland or England, and the remaining two came from Finland and Holland.

Our boys would have partly overcome this geographical handicap by taking their own plows overseas, had they foreseen how things would turn out. The only Canadian plows available to them in Ireland were some that had been sent over in 1946 and which were not in match condition. It was a little like expecting a champion marksman to compete against other championship with a rifle he had never seen before in his life.

Another problem, which bothered all contestants to more or less the same extent, was the quality of the soil itself.

For years our boys had been used to plowing in a deep heavy soil that produces a pancake type of furrow. The loose soil of the Irish land was a new experience. There are certain special attachments that plowmen are entitled to use under world rules, and it is possible that if our boys had had these, they might have done better, both in stubble and in sod.

However, the soil was quite stony just a few inches below the surface, a condition that even a special attachment would not have overcome.

Having toured much of Ireland by this time, we felt there were other sites that would have been more available for a world plowing match than the land there on the Mental Hospital Farm at Gortree, which is just two miles from Killarney. On the other hand, I doubt if they could have picked a more beautiful setting if they had surveyed every possible site in the world. The fields themselves lay between beautiful hills on the west and the magnificent lakes of Killarney on the east.

And, as if to make things even more perfect, the Irish upheld their reputation for being among the most gracious hosts in the world. The crowds (and there were some 30,000 spectators on each day of the two-day match) cheered the contestants wherever they appeared. They knew our Jim Eccles by the publicity he had received in the Irish press and radio, and he got a special hand from the crowd, particularly in the two-mile parade of tractors — including all the competing plowmen — that moved from Killarney to the site of the match on opening day.

We stayed in a lovely hotel in Killarney, and in addition we had wonderful accommodation on a farm with a most generous and considerate Irish farmer who, in accordance with plans arranged by the World Plowing Organization, "adopted" our two plowmen during the practice days prior to the match, making sure they could concentrate on practicing without having to worry about other things.

Though we didn't bring home the championship, we all felt the whole trip was more than worthwhile. We

saw a lot of things that were new to us, and we were treated like kings wherever we went, being feted at banquet after banquet attended by such dignitaries as Premier John Costello and the lord mayor of Dublin.

And I think that, by taking part in the first match outside Canada, we gained a lot of practical experience that will prove valuable when we pass it along to Joe Tran, 1954 Canadian champion, and runner-up Ivar McLaughlin, who will be competing as the Canadian team next year in Sweden.

Our main point of advice to them will be that they take their own plows to the match with them, as many of the European contestants did this year. (The Germans even brought their own tractors.)

And we will also urge them to get all the practice they can at the site of the match, for not until they get there will they know what the plowing conditions are or how often bad weather might prevent them from practicing. Despite the helpfulness of our Irish farmer host, our boys never got a chance to practice in sod at all, they had time to practice only in stubble.

If they take these steps, we feel that the new Canadian team stands a good chance of bringing home the Easo Golden Plow in 1955.

Fred Nurse Third In Wheat Competition

L. B. Mehlenbacher, Cayuga, in Haldimand County was the winner of the 60 bushel wheat contest sponsored by the Maple Leaf Milling Co., the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association and the Ontario Dept. of Agriculture. Fred Nurse, Ashgrove farmer, was third in this contest in which the three entries standing highest in yield and field score, from each of 18 counties, are eligible to compete for Provincial Honors. There were 46 entries in the contest.

Judging was on the basis of appearance, weight and milling quality. The winning entry was the Genesee variety, the same variety which this year won a world championship in wheat for Mr. W. E. Breckon of Freeman.

230 entries finished the first stage of this contest, with an average yield of 51.3 bushels per acre. The highest yield was chalked up by Ed Ruthven, Port Hope in Durham County, with a yield of 72.8 bushels, also of the Genesee variety.

Standing of the 10 prize winners are as follows:
1. L. B. Mehlenbacher, Cayuga; 2. M. E. Hooper, St. Mary's; 3. F. Nurse, Georgetown; 4. John Cruikshank, Hampton; 5. Adrian Minor, Wainfleet; 6. Garnet Richard, Bowmanville; 7. Wm. Turnbull, Brussels; 8. Wye Bank Farm, Brantford; 9. Ed Ruthven, Port Hope; 10. V. Cuthbert, Curries (tied).

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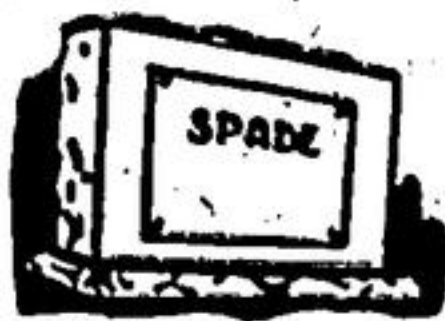
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