

CANADIAN PLOWMEN ABROAD

by W. L. CLARK * President
ONTARIO PLOWMEN'S ASSOCIATION

(This is the seventh and final of a series of weekly stories which Will Clark, president of the Ontario Plowmen's Association has written about the visit of Canada's champion plowmen to the British Isles.)

As I write this final letter, we are all back on our farms and going about our daily chores as usual. Our trip is over but the memory of the enjoyable time we had in Britain will remain with us for many a year.

Thanks to the excellent arrangements of our sponsors, the Salada Tea Company of Canada, Ltd., and Imperial Oil Ltd., we were able to see a number of places of historical and agricultural interest while we were in Britain, as well as observe the conditions of the country and the people. In previous letters I have described the various spots we visited and now I would like to summarize for you our impressions of agricultural conditions in Britain.

British Farming Methods

What impressed us most about British farms was the excellent way the farmer looks after his land. Proper care of the soil is, I think, the most important thing we have to learn from the farmers over there.

In Canada and the United States, we hear a great deal of talk about erosion on this continent. There was a book published some time ago dealing with this subject and called "The Plowmen's Folly."

In Britain, we didn't see any signs of erosion and they are plowing their land 10 and 12 inches deep while still maintaining a high rate of fertility. They are keeping their soil built up and if you do that you don't have to worry about erosion.

The British farmers work their land more intensely than we do and try to keep up the humus content of the soil. They also use more manure and more commercial fertilizers than we do. They keep

a high percentage of stock per acre of land which gives them an extra supply of fertilizer. They get assistance from the government in obtaining commercial fertilizer, although the supply of this is limited. They are careful to have the fertilizer suit the crop. In between times they grow grasses and in Scotland, government regulations insist upon crop rotation.

Of course, the British farms are not as heavily mechanized as ours and they therefore need more farm help than we do. Over there, farm labor in unionized and the minimum wage for an eight-hour a day week is £1 6d (about \$16.50). The average is about £5 (approximately \$20.00) with board and sometimes with lodgings.

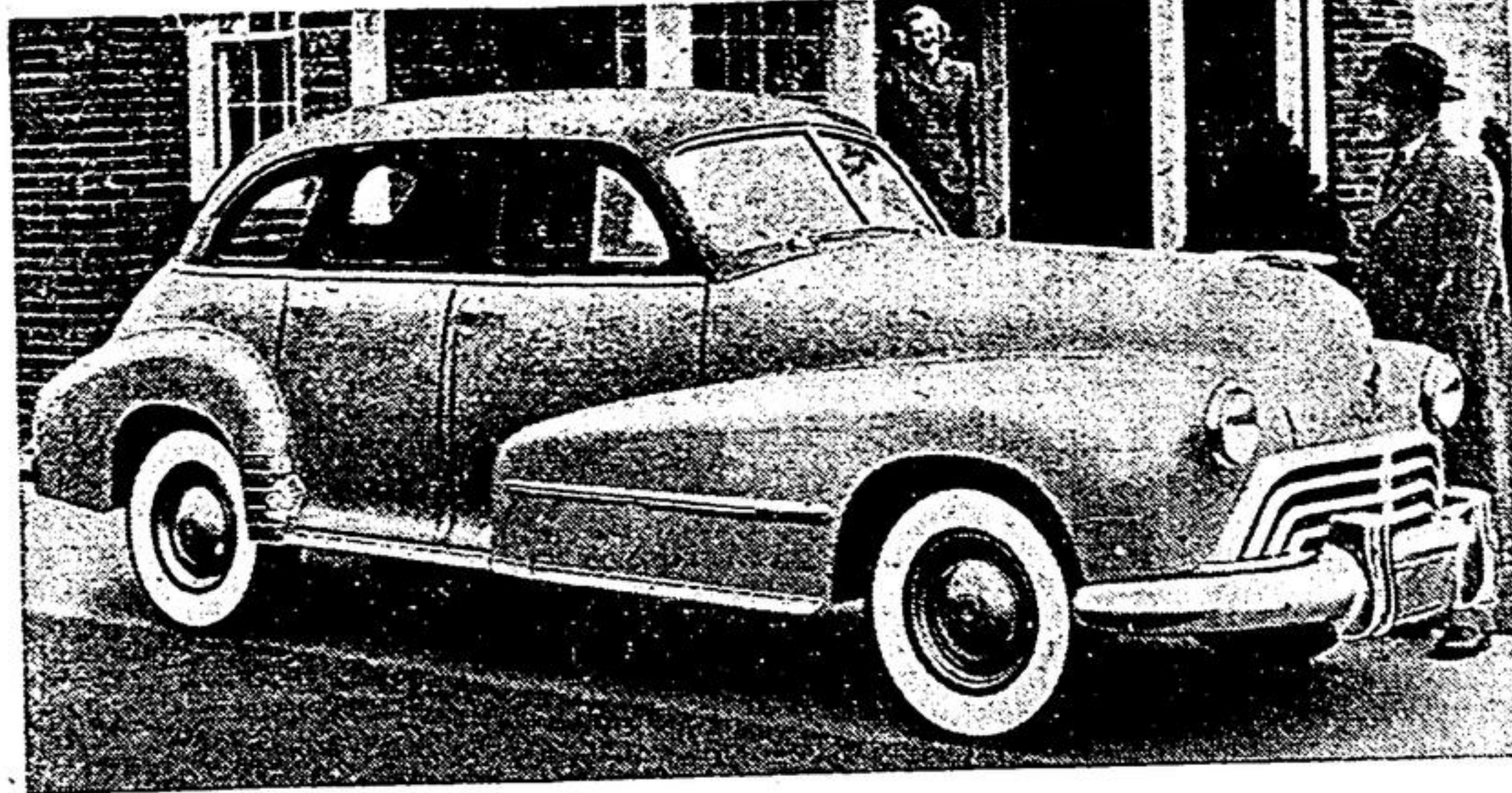
Although hand labour is still very prevalent in Britain, the trend is towards mechanization and there is a big demand for machinery of all kinds. The country is surprisingly well supplied with tractors (one tractor for every four acres of land under cultivation). The pressure of wartime demand was the means of putting tractors on the farms. There is still, however, very little mechanization in the handling of crops, etc. We saw only one manure spreader and their method of handling grain is still antiquated and slow.

We found the British farmers cheerful and optimistic about the future. This is not hard to understand since agriculture in Britain is more prosperous than it has ever been. The farm lands around East Lothian, near the Firth of Forth, were, we thought, the best in the country.

Agricultural prices are good although controlled. Subsidies are still in effect on a number of items and for this reason it is impossible to compare British and Canadian prices.

British Plowmen Anxious to Compete in Canada

At the matches, several of the



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British plowmen expressed a desire to compete in a Canadian plowing match. I pointed out to them that if they did come they would have to plow according to our rules, just as we had to abide by their standards in Britain. While the British plowmen use the practical style of plowing on their farms, they still favour the high cut work and narrow furrow for matches. I don't think it will be long until they are copying our style.

One thing that seemed strange to us about British plowing was the general use of the wheel. Here, of course, only the young boys use wheels.

The Salada horse plowmen, John Capton and Alf Brunton, had a curious experience the first time they plowed in Britain. Over there, the farmers say "Waa" instead of "Whoa" to stop their horses. The difference in expression was at first almost as confusing to the boys as it was to the horses.

There were a number of other factors about the British farms which caught our eye. Glen McFaddin was particularly interested in the construction of their barns and their method of feeding cattle, while Russ Hare was impressed with the neatness of the buildings

and the care of the land.

Barns in Britain are quite different from ours. They are not as large for one thing, being just one storey, and are rather squatly in design. They are made of stone and have slate roofs. Inside they are divided into compartments.

Cattle are fed the year 'round in open pens. These pens have a roof and one or two open sides.

Their method of threshing struck us as unusual. They thresh only when the grain is needed—which is about once a week—and then bring the stacks into the barn where the machines are kept.

To sum up our experiences abroad, I would say that we have had the opportunity of seeing how other people live and work as well as acquiring knowledge which we can put to good use on our farm. On a trip such as the one we have had, there are some things which are hard to evaluate—the friendships made; the good-will built up and the contacts established. The results may be more far reaching than we can imagine.

The youngest member of our party, John Capton, is the idol of all Britain. Winner of the Salada Silver medal for horse plowing, John had such a wondertime that he is casting envious eyes on the tractor prize so that he can visit Britain, and particularly northern Ireland, again.

Our sponsors are to be commended for their enterprise in promoting this trip. They did everything possible to make our visit profitable and entertaining, as did the officials of Ontario and Canada House in London. As a pleasant conclusion to our trip, we had a comfortable return voyage on the Queen Elizabeth.

We have had a grand trip—all of us. I hope our good fortune will be shared by many more Canadian farmers and will swell the entries in next year's International Plowing Match.

ONTARIO COUNTY RAISES BOUNTY OF WOLVES

With a six-foot wolf skin on display in the Council room, Ontario County Council passed a motion last week to raise the bounty on wolves killed in the county from \$25 to \$30.

The motion was introduced by Reeve E. Camick and Deputy-Reeve John Bruce, of Rama Township, who said there had been some 20 sheep killed by wolves in Rama during 1947. They hoped that the increased bounty would bring a reduction in the amount paid out in sheep claims.

The wolf whose skin was displayed had been killed after being struck by a car on the Monck Road west of Seabright. Russell Cooper, driver of the car, had killed the injured wolf with a shovel.

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Fred McNair Visits Purina Plant in Miss.

Fred McNair of Stiver Bros. was one of a group of 250 from Canada who travelled by special train to the 738-acre Research Farm of the Ralston Purina Company at Gray Summit, Mo., recently, to get first hand information on a practical approach to a grain conservation program. One of the largest privately owned livestock and poultry research projects in the world, the Purina Farm annually attracts many thousands of visitors.

McNair saw in actual practice how the poultry and livestock producer can aid in the grain conservation program and still produce at a profitable level through an efficient breeding, feeding, sanitation and management program. He learned how such profitable feeding practices as balancing the farmer's own grain and elimination of waste will produce more pounds of meat, more gallons of milk and more eggs and at the same time save grains so urgently needed abroad.

At this farm in the foothills of the Missouri Ozarks, visitors can see turkeys which are raised and marketed the year round, sows which produce an average of 18 pigs yearly on a two-litter-a-year program, dairy heifers raised on dry feed and ready for breeding at 12 to 15 months of age, ducks grown on dry land, and laying flocks which are breaking all records for egg production.

PRESENTATIONS TO ORATORICAL WINNERS

Aurora, March 10—Mary Ussher, 16, King, and Valerie Hunter, 16, Schomberg, last night received Aurora Lions club presentations as winners of the Aurora high school oratorical competitions. Miss Ussher will compete in the zone competitions in Richmond Hill tonight. J. G. MacDonald, Toronto, principal of Aurora public school for 37 years, was presented with a desk set for services to the community.

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