

Farm Safety Theme Gets Top Billing At Lions Club

Farm Safety, which is being widely promoted at the present time throughout Ontario, received top billing on Monday evening at the regular meeting of the Stouffville Lions Club. It was the occasion of the club's annual Farmers' Night dinner, and the speaker was Mr. Len Sykes, Executive Director of the Retail Farm Equipment Dealers' Association and Managing Director of the Canada Farm & Industrial Equipment Show.

Mr. Sykes, in his opening remarks, commended the Lions Club for established practice of setting aside one night a year to bring together the town and country men. He said:

"It has long been my thought that through this and numerous other ways a much better understanding of each other's problems might well be attained. Your Stouffville Club is by no

means the first group of its kind that has asked me to talk to them on the subject of FARM SAFETY. The night I attended the South Branch Lions Club, some 32 of the 35 people at that meeting had either been involved themselves or had a family member who had experienced a Farm Accident. One member carried an empty sleeve in evidence.

From 1951 to 1956, Canada's Rural population decreased by 5%, while the Urban population increased by 12%. During the same period, the condition in Ontario showed a decrease of 1% in its Rural population against an increase of 14% in the Urban sections.

These figures are mentioned to show that production demands have been and will be increased while the number of those left to meet the demands is consistently being reduced.

Today the average farmer produces ten times the food and fibre that his grandfather did—in less time and with less labor. For this we can be mighty thankful. Now, as a hundred years ago, the farmer is the rugged backbone of our economy. As he has grown, so has the country. A partner in the farmer's growth has been the Implement Dealer. He has put into the farmer's hands the tools, and serviced those tools, that have produced our abundance. It is generally conceded that the Agricultural Industry will see an increase in individual acreage with accent on mechanization.

Man has always been beset by one misfortune and then another. In ancient Rome it was wise to stand well clear of the chariots; and there was time in Merry Old England when you kept your head by

staying clear of the Tower. Farm animals were at one time the greatest menace to Safety on the Farm. Today they are responsible for only about 7%, while mechanized equipment contributes some 52% of the accident causes.



LEN SYKES

Awareness of FARM SAFETY was first brought to the fore by the Farm Equipment Institute—an organization of Farm Equipment Manufacturers of the United States. It has now reached a well organized project by the U.S. National Safety Council, and in that country everything is well in hand. A similar condition exists under the Royal Society for the Prevention of Farm Accidents in Great Britain.

Conditions are somewhat different in Canada—particularly here in Ontario. There will be those of you who are aware of the Farm Accident Survey presently being conducted by the Ontario Department of Agriculture. In fact, some of you may even be participating in conducting the project in your area. We, as an organization, are very happy indeed that some action is being taken. This, of course, will most likely lead to other activity, and so on. For the present, however, and in an effort to justify my concern, I must use other sources for information at this time.

Authentic figures from the province of Saskatchewan inform us that 80 lives were lost through farm accidents in 1957, and that there were 2,724 farm accidents requiring hospitalization in the same year. Alberta figures suggest that there were 68 fatalities in one year in that Province.

Let it be noted that these two provinces have been actively concerned with definite statistics in farming activities since 1952. Further quoting from the Alberta report: 88 young people under age 20 were killed, 54 of whom were under 10 years; during the three-year period 1955, '56 and '57. The causes of these deaths were from tractor operation. Twenty overturned on the highway; 23 overturned in the field, and 20 occurred when

someone fell off a tractor and was run over. That my Association of Ontario Retail Farm Equipment Dealers condones my activities and allows me to spend both their time and money to assist Farm Safety is, I am sure, a credit to them. While serving this position it has been possible for me to look into the treatment being given this subject by various States across the border and to visit and discuss the programs carried on by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents in England.

It may surprise you to know that very definite laws prevail in Europe concerning Tractors and Farm Machinery. In France and West Germany extra seats are to be found on all tractors, where it is a rule that anyone other than the driver riding on a tractor must sit. A parent in England who allows a child to ride on his tractor, or permits anyone under age to drive a tractor—even on his own farm, is governed by law. If an acci-

dent occurs, the adult is liable. From my numerous observations, it is not my contention that laws or even pamphlets are the answer to the problem. Laws require enforcement, and pamphlets must be read and digested. Awareness of the problems through flash messages such as posters and short printed messages provided in great quantities, together with plenty of actual education, might be better attained. While attending the Western Safety Conference it became quite evident that the western Provincial governments were deep in an educational program and never missed an opportunity to interject some form of demonstration or display that would tend to promote an element of safety.

One point I am particularly determined to make and leave with you, is that it is not the tractor that causes death and accidents, but the operator. Newspaper headlines such as "Tractor Causes death of young farmer" are most certainly

very inaccurate. The death was sharp shouldered roads. Use safe speeds and legal lights at night. Keep children away from working machines. Keep safety shields in place. Before unplugging, cleaning or rolling machinery, shut off the power and neutralize the gears. Keep clothing in good repair. Have work breaks to cut fatigue. Check on the children before moving machines around farm buildings or play areas. Keep doors securely fastened to prevent falls from vehicles. Check, check, and Double-Check. To check for safety is not a whim. It will save time, money, a life or a limb."

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