

## The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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DOMINION.

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### The Inter-Provincial Plowing Match.

By ALLAN MCDIARMID.

There was a plowing Match and Tractor Demonstration on the Macdonald College Farm at Ste. Anne de Bellevue this fall, whether one in ten of the farmers of Ontario and Quebec knew about it or not. To put it mildly, those responsible for the advertising of the event didn't kill themselves by their efforts to bring in a crowd. Up to within a day or two of the match people were inquiring as to when it was coming off.

But in spite of the lack of help from the newspapers the crowd was there. There are other means of communication than the press, apparently; over in Quebec, at least. That was where the majority of those present hailed from, judging by the scraps of conversation one heard on every hand. They're waking up over there and I'm no prophet if the people of Ontario won't be taking pointers from them in the course of another twenty years, or less.

They can pretty nearly show us how to make good roads right now. Their roads are a credit to them, and the way they are maintaining them shows that they have got hold of the right idea. As we passed through in our car we saw men resurfacing roads that we would think were quite good enough, back home. It's the dream of the motor-car owner realized, and not until he gets back on to some of our Ontario roads do his nightmares return to him.

And to add to the pleasure of the good going we had a glimpse of Quebec scenery. Como, Hudson Heights, and Rigaud are some of the small towns that we had to pass through. Rigaud Mountain may not be famous outside its own province, but it's because comparatively few people have seen it in October when Nature has just been putting her finishing touches to the maples, elms and the dozen other varieties of trees that cover its sides. Talk about the colors of the rainbow! They're all here and a few extra shades thrown in for good measure. We used to speak of Art and Nature as being opposed to one another. Here Nature has shown herself as the one great artist.

And our road had much the same setting right through to Ste. Anne. Anyone intending to take the trip should pick on the 14th of October for it. There may not always be a plowing match at the end of the journey on that date, but I doubt very much that the country will be as beautiful any earlier or later.

After we had encompassed the dinner thrown at us by a much over-worked waiter on the College grounds, we proceeded to the field where the main attraction of the day was supposed to be. And it certainly is very pleasant to be in a position where one can stand and look on while another fellow does the work. And it was work for some of the men who were giving an exhibition of their skill in the "art of all arts", namely, the ability to plow a good furrow.

The majority of the contestants appeared to be French-Canadians, and as they are of a somewhat excitable temperament, as a rule, they were taking their task very much to heart. Sweat was dropping off the chin and nose of a good many of them, and if their horses weren't moved to do their best by the earnest admonitions of their masters, they must have been very lacking in sensibility.

And the finished furrows were good to look at, no question as to that. It takes a steady hand and a true eye to do work such as was done by most of the men engaged in this "sporting event," or whatever one likes to call it. That's really about what it amounts to, for no one pretends to say that better grain will grow on a straight, well set-up furrow than there will be on one that is crooked and otherwise hard on the eyes.

As a dairyman friend of mine said that day, "it's something like this business of trying to force a cow to give you thirty pounds of butter in a week. It looks good but it isn't practical."

And it surely isn't. Some of the plowmen were the whole afternoon finishing their strip of land, which was about thirty feet wide and less than two hundred yards in length. About half the work was done with their feet and hands. Wherever any unevenness appeared they would tramp and press the furrow into place until it looked as they thought it ought to. If I had a hired man that was as particular as that his job with me would not last him long. But a plowing match is different, of course. It's for the fun of the thing it's held, now-a-days, and it beats any picnic, in that the visitor is in no danger of having to listen to any speech-making.

The tractor demonstration was equally interesting, and, seemingly, more practical. The plowing was the best I have ever seen done by machinery. And we have need of an object lesson in this line. Too much of the tractor plowing we see shows a good deal of carelessness, or inability to handle the machine. Crooked and uneven furrows are the rule as yet. As we intimated above a little of that sort of thing does no great harm, but when one furrow is six inches deep and the next one only three the results are not apt to be good. But the tractor plowing at the Macdonald College Farm left very little to be desired on this score. And all ridges were finished without the help of the walking plow. It may not be practical to do this as a general thing, but it shows that it can be done in case of necessity.

There was a fine exhibition of almost all kinds of farm machinery and appliances, from threshing outfits to lightening-reds. But the best show of all was the double row of automobiles drawn up across one of the fields. If farmers experience hard times in the next few years, as some are predicting, they can always realize enough on the sale of their cars to carry them over. Almost everybody seemed to have come in a car. If the C. P. R. does not go out of business it must be because of the recent boost in freight rates. It seems a long time since farmers were calling motor-cars "devil machines." At any rate, a lot has happened since; even in what we used to call slow going Quebec.

It isn't so slow any more. Our brother farmers there are being educated, and they're not slack in picking up any knowledge that comes within their reach—the demonstration at Ste. Anne showed us that—and a more friendly feeling between our French-speaking and English-speaking farmers in this section of the country probably now exists because of it.

As the time came for us to turn our faces towards home, and our car began to signify its readiness to depart, the words of the old "Canadian Boat Song," written on this very spot so many years ago, came to our minds again, and the realization of the changes that have taken place since then was strong upon us all.

"Soon as the woods on shore look dim,  
We'll sing at Ste. Anne's our parting hymn."

But for us it was not.

"Row, brothers, row, the stream runs fast."

for the very scow on which we were ferried over to our own side of the Ottawa was pushed along by a gasoline motor. The days of inspiration for the poets are over, even at Ste. Anne.

### Co-operative Principles.

Co-operative principles must be adhered to in the organization and operation of farmers' marketing associations. The farmers in a community can not be expected to have a vital interest in a marketing organization which is operated for the profit of and controlled by a few individuals. The term "co-operative" is often used very loosely, with the result that many persons do not have a well-defined idea of what a co-operative organization really is. The ordinary non-co-operative business corporation is operated for the profit of the persons who are financially interested in it. Distribution of profits is made in accordance with money invested, and the voting power is regulated in the same manner. In a co-operative marketing organization each member usually has only one vote, so that one or a few members will not control its operations. It is conducted to render service and to effect savings for the members, and not to earn profits for distribution as dividends on money invested. A fair rate of interest is granted to the capital invested by the members, and the balance of any surplus to be distributed is divided in accordance with patronage; that is, the amount of business transacted with the organization. The membership of a co-operative association is open to producers desiring to avail themselves of its facilities, and safeguards are created to prevent the ownership and

control of the enterprise from falling into the hands of a few.

Many farmers' organizations have been organized on the non-co-operative plan. That the importance of the co-operative plan is now becoming generally recognized, is evidenced by the fact that many non-co-operative organizations are reorganizing and adopting co-operative principles. This is well illustrated by farmers' grain elevator companies, a large proportion of which have been organized along non-co-operative lines, but many of which are now reorganizing and changing to the co-operative plan.

Able management is one of the most important requirements for success. Many organizations have had disastrous experiences with poor administration. The directors of a co-operative marketing association should be broad-minded men who have the interests of the organization at heart. The business manager must be capable and be fitted for the position. Proper business methods go hand in hand with capable business management, and their importance must not be overlooked. Accurate accounting records are essential in order that complete information regarding the condition of the business may be available at all times. Frequent audits of the accounts of every co-operative organization by competent persons are of vital importance.

A co-operative enterprise is directly dependent for its success upon the loyalty of the members and their interest in the organization. Lack of loyalty and interest on the part of the members has resulted in the downfall of many co-operative associations. Organizations founded upon a real desire of the members are less likely to suffer from lack of allegiance than those which have for their basis misconceptions and prejudice.

Contracts between the members and the organization whereby they agree to market certain products through it are vitally important in many instances, and especially in the case of associations engaged in the handling of perishable products. Specific agreements of this kind make it possible for the organization to plan intelligently for the handling of the business, because its management knows what products it will be called upon to market. Interests with which a co-operative marketing organization is competing sometimes offer temptations to the members in the form of higher prices for the purposes of breaking up the association, and thereby eliminating this competition. Contracts which keep the members from yielding to temptations of this nature help the organization to survive these attacks.

The Michigan Potato Grower's Exchange, which was formed in 1918, has definite agreements with its members governing the sale of their potatoes. The California Fruit Growers' Exchange follows the same plan in its operations. Many other successful co-operative marketing organizations have demonstrated the value of members' contracts.

Agreements binding the members to sell their products through the association in reality furnish a protection for the loyal members against the weakness of the other members, whose allegiance is of less enduring quality. Some growers hesitate to sign contracts, because they fail to realize that these agreements are for the best interests of their own organization, and, consequently, for their own benefit. A member who has confidence in his organization and intends to be loyal to it should have no real objection to placing himself on record by signing a contract which binds him to market certain products through the organization. A grower who lacks this confidence will not be a strong supporter of the enterprise, and one who intends to be disloyal to his organization is a dangerous enemy.

The pooling of products sold through co-operative organizations is an important feature. By pooling is meant averaging the returns received for products sold during a certain period, or for certain shipments, so that each grower having products of the same grade receives the same price. This method of operation protects the individual member from loss, because of unfavorable market conditions of a temporary nature. The following instance shows how failure to adopt a pooling system may result in an injustice to some members. A potato association shipped out two cars of potatoes on the same day. One car found a ready market, while the other one was sold at a considerably lower price, with the result that the growers having potatoes in the second car received less than the others through no fault of their own. Dissatisfaction naturally arose, and the manager experienced a great deal of difficulty in explaining the matter to the satisfaction of the growers. The success of a pooling system is dependent upon the observance of uniform and effective grading of the products.

Some farmers' marketing organizations, especially grain elevator companies, purchase the members' products outright. Conditions and practices in grain marketing make such a plan feasible, but organizations handling other products usually find it to their advantage to pool shipments and await returns before making payments to the growers. This method relieves the association of speculative risks, the avoidance of which is highly desirable. Co-operative creameries, which prorate to the patrons monthly, in accordance with the amount of butter-fat each has delivered the preceding month, the returns received for products sold less operating expenses, are good examples of pooling.

The length of the pooling periods varies with the products handled and the local conditions. Thus, there are carlot, daily, weekly, semi-monthly, monthly, and seasonal pools.—U. S. Farmers Bulletin 1144

Keep the plow going as late as possible; it helps next season's production.