

Light versus Heavy Weight Tractors

By C. W. HART

FOR a time tractordom has been beset with booms, fads and fancies. Careful observation, logical deduction and true leadership have been absent. It is strange and lamentable that most of our College Professors, agricultural engineers, and writers are not directors and leaders. They seem to be followers. They appear to listen to public sentiment, whether it be running in channels true or false and strive to get on to the "Band Wagen" and go with the crowd. For a couple of seasons the "Crowd" with unreasoning inconsistency, have shouted for the little tractor and voiced a prejudice against the large. The most meager knowledge of the facts and a little fourth grade arithmetic should have shown the folly of such a course. Few people, however, are able with facts at hand to figure things out for themselves. Because the crowd nearly all goes in one direction is no sign that they are right.

A little history by revealing the causes for present and past sentiment, will show why some of the unreasoning moves in tractor development have occurred. Lack in 1902 were brought out the first oil tractors which were able to hold a real place. Certain makers had taken a comprehensive survey and set forth carefully and deliberately to found a new industry. The steam traction engine was the nearest approach to occupying the field and the newcomer had to combat its influence. The adaptability of the oil tractor, not only for the existing belt work but for

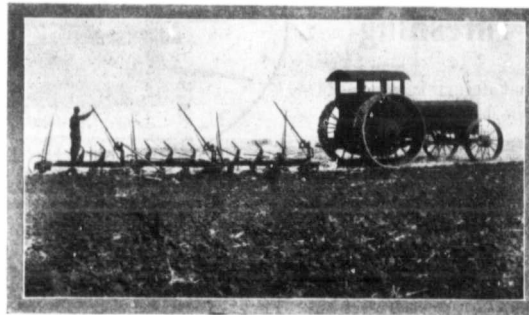
general farm tillage was surely but slowly appreciated. An industry, small in the beginning, gradually assumed headway and volume. In various parts of the world efforts to build tractors were put forth until a number of concerns were known.

The only real successful development rested with machines possessing from 60 to 70 brake horse

cultural motors and those having over a limited weight were barred from the contest. Builders and would-be builders the world over put forth their best endeavors to build a successful light agricultural motor. The collection which gathered at Winnipeg was remarkable for its number and variety. Sentiment was largely in favor of the little motor. Just as at pres-

60 horse power, pulling from 6 to 10 plows each and other work in proportion, as well as standard belt work. The old attempt to put a stationary gasoline engine on a tractor truck persisted but with diminishing force. Another bunch of manufacturers built great high wheel tractors of spindling construction, which created much furor by their wonderful ability in demonstration, but in the field were found wanting in strength and endurance. Simple rugged tractors, built as tractors from the ground up, moderate speed motors of ample capacity, with weight as light as the strength of materials would justify, continued to develop the very best results. It was this type of tractor, developing from 1902 to 1910 which brought about the success which finally attracted the attention of agriculturalists throughout the world. Like all other things, it was necessary for the public to become educated to the use of the new thing. Such education cannot be forced but goes on slowly. Accordingly, up to this time about all of the tractors were put out which could find owners or operators capable of making them successful. In such hands the success of motor farming had become evident.

Then came the most colossal mistake that any industry of real merit has had to suffer. A great corporation was organized, many millions of dollars of capital was gathered. What was supposed to be the best was hurriedly developed. In reality, an attempt was



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power, which could handle the standard heavy belt power machinery of the farm and accomplish plowing, harrowing and general tillage on a considerable scale.

At about this time a little group of theorists became possessed with the idea that little agricultural motors were the thing. They shouted loudly their irrational dogma and in the year 1909 this sentiment brought about the first Winnipeg motor contest. Those who have followed this subject will remember that in this first contest it was limited to light agri-

cultural motors, the inexperienced, the rattle brained, the all wise, the boomers and the rainbow chasers are all found in the same class favoring little motors for agriculture. The really experienced, the men who had made success, those who had facts, reason and sound judgment could not be heard. They were, however, soon felt and in a year or two the light agricultural tractor had practically disappeared. Thereafter the most prosperous days of the tractor business developed on tractors of from 40 to

The tractor is today the subject of much discussion. A few years ago it was Steam vs. Gas. Now it is light vs. heavy tractors. It is the purpose of this magazine to open its columns to a full and free discussion, to hear all sides, and for this reason we are publishing this article which is decidedly in favor of the heavy tractor. Mr. Hart is really the pioneer in the internal combustion tractor game, and we believe, speaks with the courage of his convictions. There is, however, a light tractor side to the tractor business that will be discussed in these columns in future issues. We ask our readers not to jump at conclusions too quickly, but to weigh both sides carefully. The tables in this article are based upon U.S. prices and require to be modified to suit Canadian conditions.—Ed.



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