

TRACTION PLOWING

AS TOLD BY THE MEN WHO DO IT

On this and the following pages will be found a number of letters from traction plowmen in Canada West, the originals of which are on file in our office. We have inserted the letters just as they came to us, and we will, therefore, not hold ourselves responsible for any of the opinions or criticisms contained therein. Should anyone disagree with the statements made, we would be pleased to offer them the use of our reading columns for the purpose of criticism, etc.—Editor.

Plowing Not As Hard on Engine as Standing Still.

In 1910 I did not have much experience in plowing, as water was scarce. I started about the first of May and broke 160 acres for flax and after that it was too dry to do much breaking.

On the 160 acres I used 375 pounds of lignite coal per acre, costing \$2.80 per ton and it took me 14 days to finish it, paying the fireman \$2.00 per day and tankman \$2.00 per day. I ran the engine myself and had my own teams.

I have a J. I. Case engine and a Cockshutt plow. This is a good outfit. My engine is in good shape. I do not think that it is as hard on an engine to plow as to stand idle and rust out. I believe an engine will last longer at work than standing idle. That is if it has good care. In a steam engine it is the boiler that gives out first.

A man going into plowing for profit should have a large outfit, as it takes the same amount of men to run a small outfit as it does a large one.

In regard to hitches. I would say that it depends on how the engine is made. I have cut wheat and plowed at the same time, pulling the binder with a cable from the plows and having the drive wheels of the binder in the furrow of the last plow and this worked fine.

In discing I made a drawbar out of a 6 x 8 and fastened it across the back of engine and pulling from this had another 4 x 4 fastened by cables four feet back of the drawbar. This is to keep the discs apart and for fastening the poles of the first discs working as a spreader. This works good and double discs the land.

I have never used the engine for seeding. All engines are not constructed alike and one hitch for one make may not work out on another engine. A man will have to use his own judgment.

Wishing the Canadian Thresherman and Farmer a successful year I remain,

Yours truly,
Eugene Waite,
Midale, Sask.

Wants Plenty of Power.

I have been in the traction plowing business five seasons.

The first outfit I run was a 14 h. p. Geiser engine, which pulled

six fourteen-inch bottoms. It was the first one in the Swift Current district. It did good work and was a success when handled right.

The next rig I had charge of was an Avery engine 30 horse power return flue, which pulled eight, fourteen-inch Cockshutt bottoms. But the engine was not designed for plowing and did not stand up to the work. I broke about 800 acres during the season.

The next outfit I had in charge was a Reeves 32 h. p. cross compound engine, and a ten-bottom Cockshutt plow. We were out 78 days but only plowed 58 days, the remaining 23 days being taken up in moving from one job to another and waiting for repairs and coal. I plowed 1510 acres during the season, making

also use these same engines to thresh with, having two of the largest Sawyer-Massey separators made.

I would advise anybody going in the steam plowing business, expecting to do work for the public, to get nothing less than a 32 h. p. engine. It takes the same number of men and teams to run a rig plowing seven furrows, as it does ten or twelve, the only difference in expense being a little more coal on the large outfit.

Mw crew for one outfit consists of five men and two teams—engineer, fireman, coal hauler, water hauler and plowman. The plowman does the cooking for the crew in a cook car which we keep right on the job.

According to my experience, it requires 75 to 100 imperial

Expert Firing.

As last summer was my first experience in steam plowing, I will just be able to give the result of my season's work.

My outfit consists of a North West Cross Compound engine, 34 h. p., and an eight furrow John Deere engine gang. As most of the land in this district is heavy gumbo soil, I thought it not advisable to overload, but I could just as easily pull ten plows as eight; in fact, my engine steams better with a heavy load than a light load.

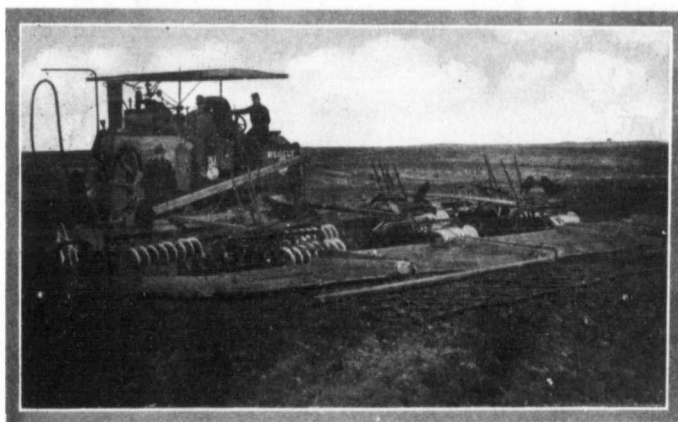
With eight fourteen-inch plows, I cut about 18 feet on the round; thus on a half mile furrow it makes 1 1-11 acres. Most of my work was on the half mile stretch, making an average about 17 to 18 rounds a day, thus making about 18 or 19 acres in the day's work.

I employed an engineer, steersman, plowman, tankman, and team, and a man and a team part of the time for hauling coal, according to the distance. One of the teams on the farm brought a load every day.

We burnt about 3,800 pounds of steam coal in a day's run. It was un-screened coal. Next year I think I will get the screened, as it will make more than the difference in the price to have it clean. The fine coal when put in the firebox forms a cake on the grates, thus preventing the draft and deadening the fire, also forming a

coating on the flues and interfering with the steaming. There is a vast difference in firemen. Some firemen will use from six to eight hundred more coal in a day than others. It requires a man that is on to his job to be an economical fireman. He can soon throw away a lot of money in waste fuel. It took me quite a while to learn to fire myself. Keep about four inches of coal completely covering the surface of the grates and don't allow holes to burn in the fuel or the cold draft will get through, thus cooling the fire and also injuring your flues.

We use a tank of water to every two rounds on a half mile furrow. My tank holds about 8 barrels of water and having tank capacity enough on the engine to empty that, it



A Rumely 30 h.p. Steam Tractor doing a tillage stunt.

an average of about 27½ acres per day for the time we worked. The largest job I had in one place was 200 acres and the smallest was 25 acres. The work was scattered over an area of 25 square miles.

I operated this same outfit in Alberta the following year, which was 1909, but did not do so well, owing to the land being heavier and the season being very unfavorable.

In the spring of 1910 I bought a half interest in a 32 h. p. Sawyer-Massey tandem compound engine and a twelve bottom John Deere big engine gang. We pulled the 12 plows when on nice level land, otherwise we dropped off two. We also have a 30 h.p. Sawyer-Massey and John Deere plows which we ran during the later part of the season. This 30 h. p. engine pulls ten plows. We

gallons of water, and 130 to 200 pounds of coal to break one acre of Saskatchewan prairie land four inches deep. The consumption of coal and water varies with the quality of coal and kind of engine used. With the Sawyer-Massey engine and British Columbia steam coal I can break one acre, using 75 gallons of water and 130 pounds of coal.

The biggest day's work I did was 36 acres in fourteen hours. My average speed is about 2 miles per hour, while pulling plows, taking fifteen minutes off for taking coal, water and oiling up, which makes an hour and fifteen minutes for every two miles. Twenty miles a day I consider good work.

Yours truly, C. C. Wilson,
Swift Current, Sask.