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THE PLANET

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for this that the highest number of points is allotted. To secure the best results the use of the skimmer is absolutely necessary and, besides, in aiding in the weed covering, it serves yet another purpose, that of giving the furrows a rounded appearance. The skimmer is a shoe-like arrangement which fits on to the plow in front of the coulters and, besides clearing the weeds in front of the coulters, dumps them so that they fall in the centre of the furrow; the weeds are thus placed in a position where the earth is deepest and where they will not be likely to

reach the surface and survive. It is a matter of consideration whether to use weed rods or chains. If the weeds are short, it is probably better to dispense with either of these, as they are inclined to pull the tops of the weeds just over far enough so that they will flip back quickly before being covered with the soil, and, in this way, a number of them may show their tops and ultimately survive. If, on the other hand, the weeds are long, the chain or weed rod cannot be dispensed with as they aid in rolling the weeds well under the furrow.

The Finish

The finish is the next consideration, and this should be neatly done as there is nothing that sets a plowed lot off to better advantage than a clean straight finish. First, lower the coulters and set it back in order to prevent loose dirt dribbling over and leaving a ragged finish; then raise the point of application of the draft in order that the plow will take a grip, necessitating a downward pressure upon the handles, which, together with the indispensable heel plate, obviates the tendency any plow has to "skit" and enables one to hold the plow level and secure a well turned furrow which is so difficult to obtain. Above all, the finish must not be deep, for, in that case, it will not fill in properly with the harrowing, and, consequently the grain will grow, but poorly, while the damage to the binder, not to mention the effect on the horses in crossing such a finish will be much greater than in crossing one shallow and properly made. When the last two furrows are reached they should be the proper width, and this the plowman can gauge early in the day so that his finish will come out just right; this leaves a 10 1/2 inches for the second last furrow and 9 1/2 for the last. The second last furrow should be plowed a trifle shallower than the last so that the last furrow may be more easily held, there being some ground against the land side of the plow.

Gang Plows

As the gang plow is now being more generally used in the West than the walking plow on account of its economic advantages, it naturally follows that the classes for this style of plow at the plowing matches are always well filled. As a general rule the walking plows hold supremacy when it comes down to doing the best work. However, at several of the plowing matches held in the West, the sweepstakes prize has been captured by the man with the gang. Where the gang plow falls below the walking plow in a plowing contest is usually the crown and finish. A much cleaner and neater finish can be made with the walking plow and usually a lower and more uniform crown. On perfectly level ground, however, that cleans well, the general plowing of the gang is held by many to be fully equal to that of the walking plow.

To one that has plowed, the principles pointed out above in regard to the walking plow are applicable to the gang plow. The writer, however, never having had any experience with the gang plow at plowing matches, cannot give any definite rule to be followed in doing prize plowing.

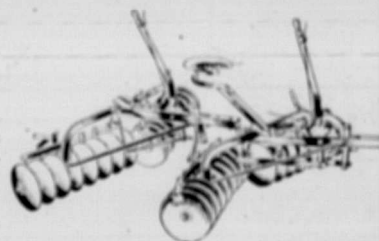
Score Card

There is a great diversity of opinion as to what shall constitute a good score card. The following is perhaps the ideal as it has been prepared by a number of champion plowmen of the province: Crown, 15; straightness, 15; covering weeds, 25; in and out at ends, 5; depth, 8; width, 8; evenness of surface, 10; finish, 14. This makes a total of 100 points—a perfect score.

Not only do plowing matches improve the general plowing of the surrounding country, but they engender more interest in farm life for the boy. He is taught to be more careful and pains taking in his plowing, and by this means he acquires the habit of doing other things about the farm to the best of his ability. He is also taught to be a more careful teamster and to take more pride in having his horses in good condition and well harnessed. Plowing matches, besides having these good effects, relieve immeasurably the monotony of farm life for the boy.

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