

Plowing Match History Traces Back To 1846

Plowing matches have been a part of our agricultural program in Ontario for well over a century. In the early days they were sponsored by Agricultural Societies, the first farm groups to be established and history records that in 1846 when the first provincial exhibition was held in

Toronto a special feature of the event was a plowing match.

It took place on a farm on Yonge Street in the vicinity of St. Clair Avenue. These matches not only gave farmers an opportunity to display their skill in the handling of a walking plow but to show the fine teams of horses many of which

were imported or were from imported stock.

The holding of competitions of this type in conjunction with an exhibition or fair was never very practical as it was difficult to find suitable land conveniently located in relation to the fair grounds, therefore, those especially interested decided to stage

such contests apart from the fair and the result was the setting up of Plowing Associations on a township or county basis.

This plan was quite general by the turn of the century. However by 1911, interest in matches had fallen off so much that a meeting of officers representing the most active matches was held in Toronto for the purpose of assessing the status of these events and what should be the future program.

The result of this meeting was the formation of the Ontario Plowmen's Association. Two years later they held their first provincial match on a farm near the city which is now the site of Sunnybrook Hospital. There were 31 competitors with horse drawn plows but one brave soul entered the competition with a plow drawn by a tractor. It proved to be a real curiosity.

The match was so successful in the eyes of the Association that a decision was immediately made for the provincial match to be an annual event. It was repeated on the same farm the next year but thereafter was rotated throughout those areas in Ontario where interest in plowing matches was keenest.

The plan of holding the match in the fall season and in a new location each year has never been changed in the 58 years of the Association's existence. The match, however, was discontinued during the period of the last war but was revived again in 1946, the site being Port Albert in Huron County. In 1926 it was given the title International Plowing Match and Farm Machinery Demonstration.

The setting up of a provincial association in 1911 gave new life to branches all across the province. The number grew until today we have 65 affiliated with the parent body. These branch matches have served as the training ground for competitors wishing to compete for

provincial honours and more recently one of the rules for the International Match is that a competitor must have been a prize winner at a local match.

ORGANIZATION
The provincial Association has a board of 40 directors. Each represents a county or territorial district with one or more matches. All board members are farmers or retired farmers. The board also has two junior directors. They are nominated by the Ontario Junior Farmers' Association.

Each branch, which may either be on a township or county basis, holds its annual meeting in December at which delegates are appointed to attend the annual meeting and convention of the provincial association a month or so later.

Each branch assumes the full responsibility of carrying on its own program without financial assistance from the parent body. Provincial board members, on invitation, attend meetings and help wherever possible in the promotion of local match programs. Useful information is given branch delegates who attend the annual provincial convention.

During recent years branches have enlarged their activities by staging other events in conjunction with their plowing match such as demonstrations of farm drainage, brush, stump and fence removal, corn and soyabean harvesting, the use of newer types of implements including plows. In addition very few branch matches are held without machinery displays of some kind.

EXHIBITORS
From the time the tractor was introduced during the first world war a labour saving device, farm machinery companies have taken a keen interest in the International. Up until recent years they have co-operated by furnishing and servicing tractors and where possible, they had their block men and dealers look up plows for competitors.

Coupled with this was their interest in arranging exhibits at the plowing match of other lines of equipment and the demonstrating of same. This brought about the setting up by the Plowmen's Association of a properly organized exhibit area and

Continued Page 11

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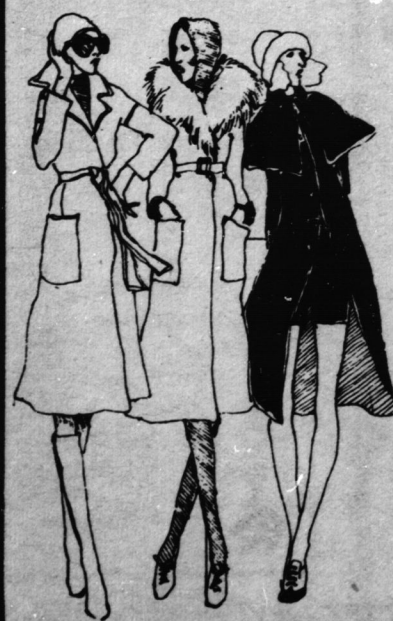
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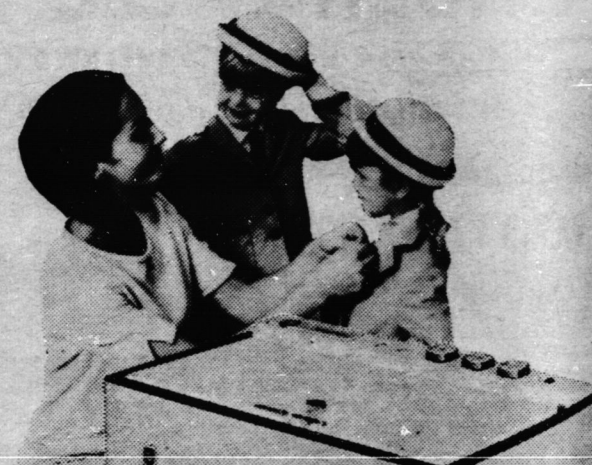
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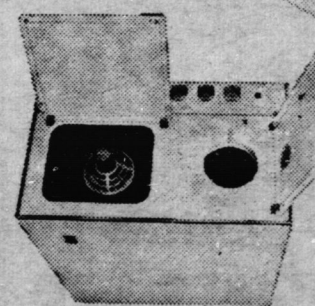
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History

Continued From Page 10

which is now commonly known as "Tented City".

It was not long until firms with other lines of labour saving devices came in as exhibitors. Today those using the match in addition to the above include banks, oil companies, producers of cars and truck, dairy equipment, farm building, household and garden supplies, also livestock breeders, chick hatcheries, feed and fertilizer companies, real estate agencies, radio, T.V. stations and newspapers.

In addition government agencies and departments have joined the ranks and each year occupy a large portion of the exhibit area. It should be acknowledged that churches, junior farmers, women's institutes and service clubs, also many

individuals in the food servicing business, have made it a practise of participating. The net revenue from such a venture is usually quite satisfactory.

Down through the years a great many churches and a community centre building debts have been liquidated, at least in part, through money made at the International Plowing Match.

TENTED CITY

Despite the fact the O.P.A. has never put a campaign on to sell space or has urged anyone to buy, the number of exhibitors and caterers has grown steadily over the year. At the 1965 match over 2 miles of frontage was purchased.

Exhibitors and caterers are supplied with hydro, telephone, garbage pick-up, water under pressure, toilet facilities, identification badges and the necessary passes and what is more important they are exposed to large crowds of farm

people averaging from 20,000 to 30,000 per day. Anyone familiar with Tented City will note that it is usually laid out in four streets which permits both sides of each street to be occupied.

One of these streets is used entirely by manufacturers of heavy machinery. The large machinery companies normally occupy approximately 20 per cent of the Tented City exhibit area but represent only 4 per cent of the total exhibitors.

SPECIAL SERVICES

The International Plowing Match and Farm Machinery Demonstration enjoys a great measure of support and co-operation from various agencies and government departments.

Ontario Hydro has always supplied power for exhibitors in Tented City, Ontario Provincial Police look after the traffic. The Ontario Fire Marshal's Office see to it that Tented City is kept free of fire hazards and provide protection.

The Department of Highways carry a supply of signs and erect them each year for the benefit of those driving to the match. Bell Telephone Company supplies local and long distance service.

All this is given freely and without cost to the Association, and came about simply for the asking. It is therefore assumed those responsible feel that participating in such a large event is good public relations.

The same can be said of radio, television and press. These agencies must be convinced they can benefit or they would not be there. Their representatives are always on the job and anxious to be of service.

ATTENDANCE

Weather plays a big part in the success or failure of any outdoor event. Heavy losses have been experienced over the years because of unfavourable weather conditions. Hurricane Hazel in 1954, when the match was in progress at Breslaw in Waterloo County, has not been forgotten.

Sweet Corn

Weeks Ahead

KEMPTVILLE - Marketable sweet corn two weeks ahead of local production has been developed at the Kemptville College of Agricultural Technology.

Bob Daniels, of the horticulture division of the college, says this was accomplished by growing seedlings in a greenhouse for 18 days. They were then transplanted to the fields under clear plastic. Variety trials indicate that Garden Treat Polar V is most suitable for this type of planting.

This year, said Mr. Daniels, the corn was ready by July 15. Further trials will indicate whether the system has commercial possibilities. Usually the only sweet corn available at this time of year is imported from Florida.

MISSION PLANNED VANCOUVER (CP) - The Vancouver Board of Trade 1972 offshore trade and goodwill mission will leave Vancouver next March 23 for a South Pacific tour ending April 16.

Despite this handicap and contrary to statements being made, the attendance over the years has ranged all the way from 60,000 to 150,000.

COMMITTEE SYSTEM Since the early days of the International the Local Committee idea has been in effect. In fact, it would be impossible to stage a successful match without the full support of the host county.

This plan is sound in that it provides a county with a

wonderful opportunity to advertise its agriculture and allied industries. It also gives cities and towns within the county a chance to co-operate with the rural people in staging Canada's largest outdoor agricultural event.

The International has always been in the fall at a time when local committees can procure from co-operating farmers the necessary land for Tented City, plowing competitions, parking and demonstrations.

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