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News

Europeans Are Threatening America's Motor Supremacy

Motor Trade Authority Points Out Necessary Improvements Which Must Be Made to Hold Valuable Export Business.

(By William L. Irvine)
U. S. Department of Commerce

America's supremacy in the automotive export field, fears of which were recently expressed before congress, will not be lost if the prediction of Mr. William Letts, president of the British Society of Motor Car Manufacturers and Traders, Ltd., is borne out by the introduction in America, within a

short time of a new type of motor car embodying the outstanding qualities of European and American light automobiles.

I quite agree with Mr. Letts that this new car is needed not only for the overseas market but in America, as well. More and more the factors of economy and safety are becoming insistent. Higher gasoline cost and the continued increase of traffic pressure

on our highways make it imperative that our manufacturers reconsider the home market.

U. S. Factory Big Car

For a long time America was "sold" on the idea that to have safety and comfort a big car was required. And so we carried hundreds of excess pounds of metal around with us. As long as gasoline was cheap and the roads and streets not crowded, we did not mind. But changed conditions in the past few years have made imperative a change in the construction of automobiles. Anyone who has studied the development of motor cars will have noted that the tendency in construction has been towards lighter cars with smaller, more efficient engines. Our manufacturers are beginning to meet the problem, but we have a long way to go and a great deal to learn as well.

The average American does not realize how export trade affects most of the things he buys. In the matter of motor cars the development of the export market has a very beneficial effect on the price he pays for his car. If we have a big export market we are thus able to increase our production and increased production means lower unit cost. Within the past three years our export market has been increased. From taking eight per cent of our total production our overseas demand has increased to a little better than eleven per cent during the past year. Now it is feared that we will not hold this market.

European Competition Keen

Dr. Julius Klein, director of the bureau of foreign and domestic commerce, perhaps the best posted man in America on our export situation, at a hearing before the appropriation committee of congress a few weeks ago, called attention to the fact that European manufacturers were making a determined effort to weaken America's dominant position in automotive exports. Previously he has stated that if we are to hold the positions we have won, it is necessary that we adapt our products to meet the special demands of our overseas customers.

It might appear that in the face of our steady increase in overseas sales that his warnings are groundless. But that is not so. Our overseas market has been increased because we made cars better suited to the market, and because the purchasing power in foreign countries has increased. The world is about over the convalescent stage following the pain of the war. That also means that European manufacturers are recovering, and recovery means greater production and that means that the chief advantage of America—price—will be lessened. In England, France and Italy there are already several manufacturers who are producing cars on a quantity basis.

Facing Real Issue

So we are facing a real issue in our export market despite the apparently satisfactory conditions. How are our manufacturers going to meet it? I believe by providing a car that will meet the European requirements of high engine efficiency with great economy and speed, without sacrificing those qualities which have made American motor cars superior in many respects to European cars.

In my study of the market conditions overseas, especially in the Far East, I found a growing sentiment against American cars because of their wastefulness of fuel. While the people over there liked their power, their comfort, their flexibility, and the general ease of handling, they deplored their high fuel consumption. And this is a

FLETCHER OIL PLANS STATION

As soon as the bid is let, which will be within the next few days, work will start on a modern service station to be constructed by the Fletcher Oil company at the corner of Hemlock street and Jefferson avenue on the triangular lot where the La Grande Filling station is now located.

The building will be Spanish type, constructed of steel and concrete, with a tile roof. The plans are quite elaborate. The cost of the building alone will be approximately \$4000. When completed the cost will be about \$6000 which includes equipment. The structure will have a 24-foot front on Hemlock street, facing Adams avenue. Each side will have many windows making it possible to see through the station at any angle. There will be a window and counter at the small end of the triangle.

The station will be equipped with two air-lift gasoline pumps, wash racks, oil drain and rest rooms. Air and water will be so located that it will be available night and day. When completed John Zweifel and H. E. Kuhn will be placed in charge. Veltex gasoline and oil will be sold.

Veltex products will also be handled at the new service station being constructed by W. C. Kelly at the east end of Adams avenue for H. H. McLaughlin and W. E. Crews, proprietors of the Orchard camp grounds. The service station will be constructed in connection with the five-acre camp grounds there. The building is a frame structure 14 by 20 feet.

Workmen are now moving a building from the corner of Second street and Adams avenue where W. C. Kelly will erect a similar station, to be placed in charge of Elmo Clegg. Mr. Clegg has been employed by Clyde Kiddle at Island City for many years. Veltex products will also be handled here. The building, which will be the same size as the one being constructed on East Adams avenue, will be absolutely modern and will provide every convenience for the motoring public. It will be a frame structure with cement floors. Work will start on the building proper before the last of this month.

T. H. Maxwell, manager of the Fletcher Oil company here, said this morning that a new service station and bulk plant was now under construction in East Pendleton, adjacent to the highway. With the completion of this station, all plant Veltex products will be available from Rolling, Wyo., to Pendleton and from Salt Lake City, Utah to Pendleton along the Old Oregon Trail.

The service station and auto camp at the former country club grounds will be opened May 1st. The station building is completed and is now being painted.

Twelve Large Plants Produce Chevrolets

In order to distribute its enormous automobile production the Chevrolet Motor company has 12 great factories, including seven huge assembly plants with an adjacent Fisher body plant at logical centers.

This system was built to insure prompt delivery to Chevrolet dealers in large quantities. A large assembly unit is located at Oakland, California, to serve the Pacific Coast territory.

very important thing when you consider that the majority of their fuel is brought in by tankers at heavy expense. This fuel factor caused a large taxicab company of Tokyo to turn from American to French cars because it could not afford to ignore the difference between 17 and 28 miles to the gallon. In doing this it sacrificed easy driving for the European car calls for gear shifting on the smallest hills and whenever turns were made at low speed.

How Foreigners Buy

If European authorities are right about what American manufacturers have in mind then we successfully compete against the European manufacturers who are beginning to invade the markets where we have been supreme for the past ten years. Foreigners do not buy on price alone, which has been our chief advantage. They like comfort, speed and economy of maintenance and operation. If we can give them these together without standards of body comfort, power and ease of operation, and an increased safety factor with better breaking, we can rest assured that we will continue to get a healthy share of the business with resultant benefit to every car operator in America.

This generally applies to the light car. In the expensive field the Europeans occupy a much better position. After all the motor wheels of America are kept turning by the working people and a few more miles to a gallon of gas, and cars that will last longer will be a great benefit to them. From my contact with manufacturers in this country, I believe that this new era in automobiles is not far distant.

MARCH DELIVERY RECORD SET BY BUICK COMPANY

March saw a new high delivery record set by the Buick Motor company for the current series according to Jennings and Shumate, local dealers. In this month 23,224 cars went into the hands of owners. This is the largest month in deliveries since the present models were introduced last August, and closely parallels shipments for the same period.

March shipments of 23,224 cars broke all previous records, according to factory announcement. It is pointed out also that deliveries and shipments for March are almost the same. This bears out Sales Manager E. T. Strong's recent statement that Buick dealers throughout the country have been unable to stock many cars for the usual spring demand.

Oregonians to Confer With Irrigation Heads

WASHINGTON, Apr. 24. (AP)—H. E. Bradbury, president of the Klamath irrigation district, Oregon, and Fred Fletcher, representing pumping districts of the Klamath project are scheduled to confer soon with reclamation bureau officials on relief legislation on their projects. Bradbury expects to arrive today and Fletcher early next week.

The only practical remedy for scored cylinders is re-boring. Boring or enlarging of the cylinders calls for oversized pistons and rings to insure smooth and quick operation and good compression of the engine. Scoring may not always be caused by lack of lubrication of cylinders; it may be due to foreign particles.

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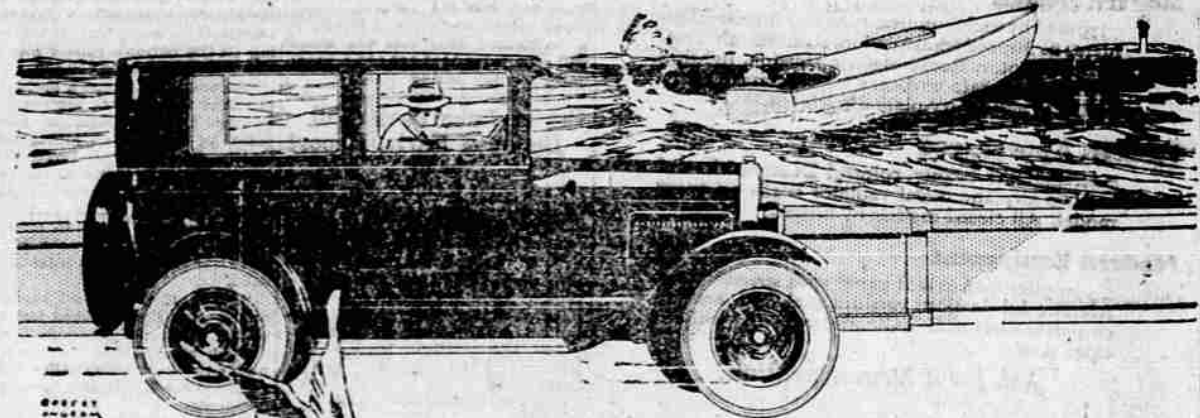
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