

SERVICE FEATURES POLICY OF MAKERS

Factories Trying to Increase Satisfaction Among Trade and Owners Alike.

IDEA GAINING PROMINENCE

Factory Man Says That Ultimately Country's Automobile Output Will Be Controlled by a Few Companies.

In the progressive spirit that has entered the automobile industry, two important innovations of paramount significance to both the owner and the district distributor have been evolved during the past year. One deals with the needs of the present and future owners of motorcars, and the other was introduced for the benefit of agents, and is steadily gaining recognition from the leading manufacturers of the country.

"Service" is the keynote of the policy of several companies. This service extends to the dealer and the owner alike. One is designated by the term "service"—that which makes satisfaction among the owners—and the other is known as the special sales corps, or factory representatives, who are commissioned to travel about the country extending aid to the local distributors in closing up sales. Both departments are expensive for the manufacturers, but they bring results. One provides satisfaction among the customers, the other injects enthusiasm in the dealers and is an incentive for them to get out and get the business.

Some companies, like the Olds Motor Works, of Lansing, Mich., for instance, have 15 and 20 special representatives traveling about the country in the interests of the numerous agents. George E. Morrow, special factory representative of the Oldsmobile Company, visited Portland last week on one of his periodical trips to this territory, and reviewed in detail the object of the special representation idea. The Oldsmobile concern was one of the first to adopt this method of increasing its business, and thus far it has found the scheme of great benefit.

Policy Gaining Favor.
"It is coming about, maybe a little slowly, but none the less surely, and it will be only a question of a few years when every concern in the automobile business will have a corps of special representatives in the field or establish branch houses," declares Mr. Morrow. "The benefits to be derived from such procedure are manifold; it brings results, and that's the most important part."

"With the high-grade cars there is little room for mechanical betterment. Of course, refinements are made each year, but they really count for little when the real merit of the car is considered. After passing that stage where improvements of great value were impossible, it was only natural that the geniuses should turn their attention to another phase of the industry. So was born the service idea. It is rapidly taking definite form, and while at present only the large companies have accepted it, it is inevitable that it will become part and parcel of the industry as a whole."

"The motorcar owner is entitled to a little attention after his money is safe in the vaults of the dealer. It should be the policy of every automobile distributor to see that his customers have no cause for dissatisfaction, and that their business will not be increased in the proportion it should be. The satisfied customer is the best salesman on earth. Once let a man be imbued with the idea that his car is the only car, and by his enthusiasm he will make more sales than the dealer's selling force. That is the reason why the service department is coming into such general use. The needs of the owners must be attended to more thoroughly and expertly, Oldsmobile mechanics who have an expert knowledge of our cars now are touring the country, instructing the various district garage foremen how to care and clean up cars, and are giving personal attention to the complaints of owners."

"When thousands of machines are put in use, it is only a matter of time that some must get out of order, for there are many people operating automobiles who are incompetent to do so. They do not give a machine the same study, or perhaps they were not thoroughly instructed when they bought the car. An automobile can be likened to a horse. You guide all classes on the same principle, but the numerous makes vary so much in point of mechanical detail that a man who thoroughly understands one make might be at sea when it comes to driving another car properly. Therefore, a man should be thoroughly instructed when he takes a new car, no matter whether he has owned an automobile before or not."

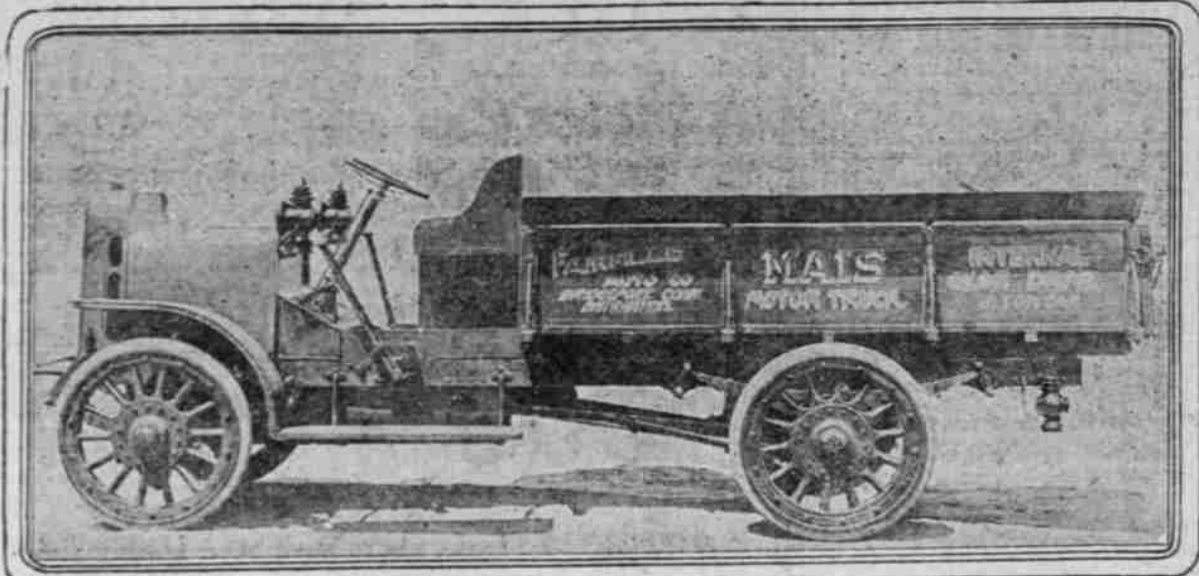
"The district distributors should be given consideration, too. There are times when a factory representative can come into a town and close up several deals that the local agent might lose, or at the best have to wait several months before he would make the sales. An illustration of this was given by one of our men. He went to New York, and in two weeks closed up 13 sales that the dealers did not have much hope of landing. Next month he was sent to Texas, and his work again was phenomenal. In three weeks he sold 12 cars to men whom the local dealers had put down on their books as 'future prospects.'"

"Besides getting contracts for the company and helping the distributors make sales, the special representative has another mission. That is to find out, if possible, if there are any dissatisfied owners of the make he represents. If he finds any, he immediately notifies the service man, who makes a trip to the town and remedies the trouble. The factory man also instills enthusiasm in the dealers, and when the local representative sees that the factory is taking some interest in seeing that he makes a success of his business, he will have more ambition to sell the car. A good live dealer sometimes proves the making of the car in certain territories, though in the majority of cases the high-grade cars really sell themselves."

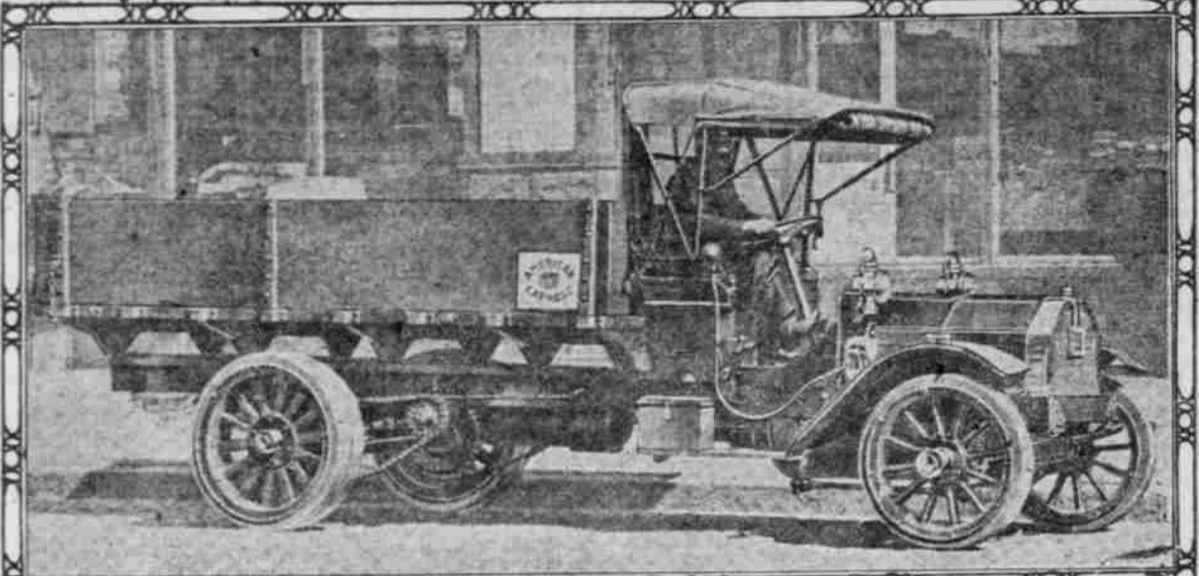
Mr. Morrow declares there is a growing tendency toward the establishment of factory branches, and that ultimately the automobile business will be controlled by a few large companies that will establish these houses all over the country.

"In the course of time I think a few large corporations will control the vast majority of automobiles made in the United States," says Mr. Morrow. "There is little profit in the manufacture of automobiles, and there must come a time when the small companies will drop out, because there is not sur-

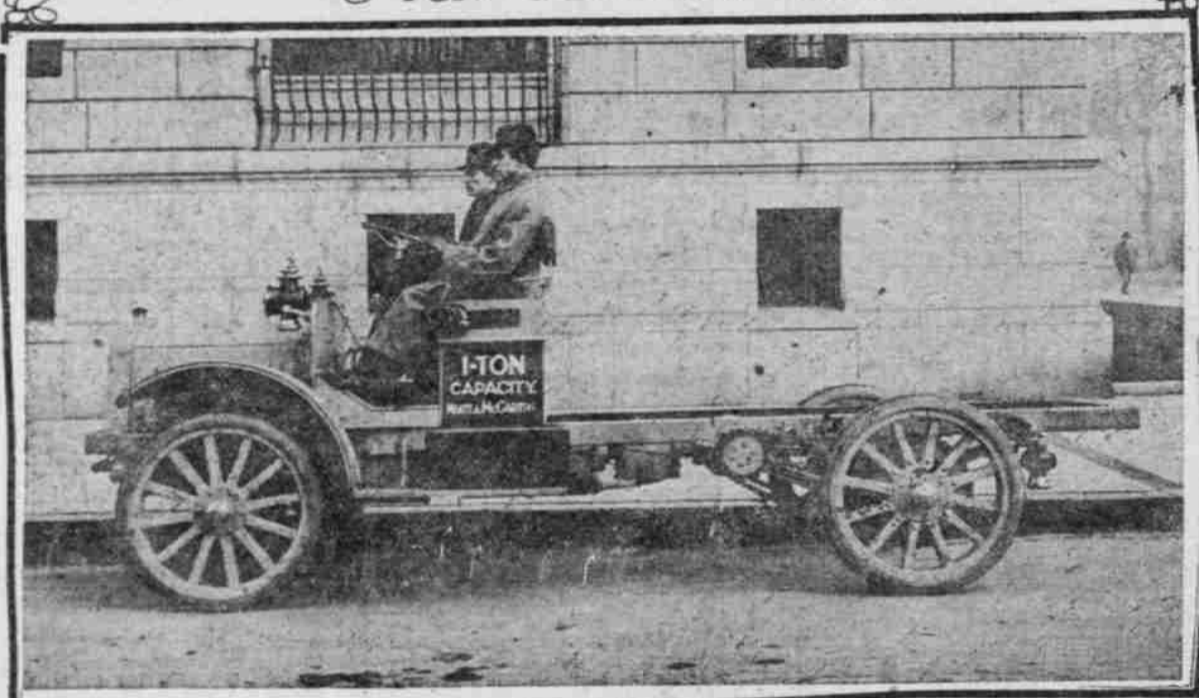
COMMERCIAL VEHICLES WHICH ARE PROVING PROMINENT FACTOR IN PORTLAND'S BUSINESS AFFAIRS.



2 1/2 TON PEERS TRUCK



3 TON PEERLESS TRUCK



1 TON KELLY TRUCK

cient profit in the business, unless it is conducted on a large scale.

"When this comes about the big companies will put in branch houses in all the important districts. Even now the Oldsmobile company is following out the plan. We recently established branches in San Francisco and Los Angeles, to take care of the Pacific Coast; one in Minneapolis, another in Dallas, Tex., and one in Omaha, Neb. For instance, the Northwest is adequately cared for by the San Francisco branch and in other parts of the country a like territory is covered by the district branch houses."

Western Washington and Oregon are productive of the best results in this field, declares Mr. Morrow. He says that Eastern Washington is in the throes of a general business slump and that the automobile trade there is moving very slowly.

"Racing is dead in Europe," was the comment of the great Hemery shortly after his arrival in this country to participate in the Grand Prix race. Hemery, who is recognized as Europe's greatest automobile pilot, declares that he has not made enough out of the game in the past two years in Europe to make the game worth the candle. Hemery won the so-called Grand Prix in France last summer. Hemery, Wagner, Nazario, Lancia and other famous European pilots have turned their attention from racing to the manufacturing end, either for themselves or as engineers and designers for big European factories. There is a possibility of Hemery staying in America.

HAS GREAT TIRE RECORD

Mortimer Roberts Has Done Many Miles With the Tires He Now Uses.

Mortimer Roberts, of the Abbott-Detroit team, does not have to worry about tire trouble. He has been using a set of American-made Michelin tires since last April, competing in the following races and track events:

Won one of the two events at the Algonquin Hill Climb; covered about 150 miles at the Hawthorn track meet; 55 miles more a couple of weeks later at the Guttenberg track; then a long jump to the Galveston races, where he covered two months, using the car every day on the tryouts and taking part in one 50-mile event, two 25-mile and several five and 10-mile events. He also broke the track record at 45 seconds; back North to take part in the Elgin races, in which he won the 125-mile event; then to Cincinnati, where he covered about 200 miles; from there to the Syracuse track, covering about 100 miles and winning all events; next to the Philadelphia races, where he covered about 75 miles; also took part in the track meet in the same city the following week, covering about 60 miles; another long jump to the West where he won four out of the five events, covering about 100 miles; then back to Detroit, during which time he took part in the state fair events, covering about 100 miles.

From Detroit he headed for the sunny South and landed in Savannah, where he covered more than 1000 miles on the race course there, finishing the several events entered on the same set of tires.

STARTER NOT ISSUE

Self-Cranker No Help to Sale of Cars, Says Rose.

NEW DEVICE IS DISCUSSED

Head of E.-M.-F. Northwest Companies Maintains That Self-Starters Have Little Effect on Auto Purchasers.

Of the few new mechanical devices featuring the 1912 automobile there can be little question but that the self-starter, in point of general interest, overshadows all others. Electric lighting systems and silent motors have created mild ripples in the motorcar pond, but the mechanical cranks' surge of popularity resembles a tidal wave. As yet comparatively few manufacturers have adopted the self-starter, but that cannot be taken as evidence that it is impractical and due for the discard in a short time.

This little device, which does away with the necessity of cranking the motor by muscle power, has caused no end of discussion in automobile circles. Its worth as a selling force is disputed by a great many, while those who are distributing cars that come equipped with it are emphatic in their contention that it makes their machines go like "wild fire."

"The fact that a car comes direct from the factory equipped with a self-starter is no indication that the car is easier to sell," declares L. H. Rose, manager of the Northwest branches of the Studebaker corporation, the concern which manufactures the Flanders "20" and E.-M.-F. "30." "At least, that is the way I have found it. Of course, it is beyond denial that nearly every prospective purchaser of an automobile is interested to some extent in the latest device, but beyond wanting to know its principle of operation, the possible damage it can do to a motor and the good to be derived from its employment, there is nothing to indicate that it decides for the buyer."

Salesmen Have Equal Field.
"The dealer selling a car without a self-starter has just as wide a field to argue in as his colleague who equips his car with it. I have found that it is possible, in the majority of cases, to get the self-starter idea out of a buyer's head easily if he will listen to reason."

"Now, I do not wish to give the impression that the self-starter is not all right. I have never seen one that I know has been given proper tests, and until I have, I am inclined to await the decision of the manufacturers."

"Like the vast majority of men connected with the automobile business, I

believe that it will be only a matter of two or three years when every car on the market will be equipped with a self-starter. This is inevitable. The idea is one that makes for the motor car greater popularity, and any improvement that can be made of general use will gain proper recognition in due course of time.

"Again I am disposed to lean with the majority. While we of the non-self-starting brigade admit the practicability of the device, its ultimate perfection, its natural conduciveness toward a more liberal use of the automobile, and the probability of it reaching that stage of simplicity where danger of misuse is minimized, I will not advise its use until it is perfected, as it is certain to be."

"As evidence of this note the equipment of the leading cars of the world—the big, luxurious machines, where cost of construction, in adding new features, is not considered. They have no self-starters. The Packard, Oldsmobile, Pierce-Arrow, Alco and the big European machines are still started by the old method. And in deciding the worth of some new features, we must pay a little attention to what the

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The White Motor Car Co.

Nineteenth and Washington Sts. S. C. HUSTON, Manager PORTLAND, OREGON

"big fellows" do. Not in all cases, mind you, but in instances where a device is on the open market and easily can be obtained by any manufacturer. The makers of high-grade machines have a reputation to sustain; they cannot afford to take a "flyer" with the possibility of emerging with their standard lowered. You can rest assured that if they surmised that the self-starter, in its present stage of development, would not jeopardize that reputation for absolute worthiness they so jealously cling to, they would adopt it.

"In dealing with a person who has his own ideas, which he will not change, no matter how much logical argument is brought to convince him that he is wrong, and he will have nothing but a machine that starts itself, we can give him what his fancy dictates. We are not handicapped by the inability to obtain one. There are half a dozen accepted self-starters on the market in its present stage of development, and would not jeopardize that reputation and prominent engineers have pronounced them up to the present standard.

"From my observations I have come to the conclusion that a man who can sell a machine equipped with a self-starter would have just the same success handling a line without one, and vice versa. It does not require any extraordinary amount of salesmanship to sell automobiles not equipped with a self-starter if the machine the man is handling is a good car."



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