

RADES AND SHOWS RAPPED BY CURTIS

Exploitation Schemes Do Old Manufacturers Little Good, He Declares.

ODDS FAVOR NEW MAKERS

Western Representative Says Contents of Little Value in Deciding Real Merits of Competing Machines.

BY PAUL J. PEELY.
Races, shows, all kinds of endurance and reliability runs and other methods of exploitation are branded as worthless, and relegated to the discard as things that have served their need.

of a dream than a reality, grueling contests served the public well. They determined the reliability of machines, tested every part and taught the automobile engineers where all the little weaknesses, that would have proved fatal to hundreds of pioneer motorists had they not been discovered, were. But it is safe to say that every machine turned out by reputable manufacturers nowadays is as devoid of big defects as Eve was of rivals for Adam's affections.

Curtis further is firmly convinced of the fact that automobile shows are of minor benefit to the established manufacturer. He figures that the "old heads" are the "fall guys."

"Where do the old companies, with tried and proven machines on the market, reap the golden harvest?" demanded the Apperson representative. "They are giving great odds to the newcomers, and it generally figures out that the late ones entering the automobile field get the real benefit."

"Of course, it would be ridiculous to deny that shows of the variety conducted in New York City and Chicago are not productive of general good. Manufacturers would be cutting off their nose to spite their face to pass up these exhibits. But it is at the countless scores of smaller displays, where the local dealers and manufacturers alike are 'stung,' that the recognized automobile business men are giving a great discount."

Pessimism does not enter Curtis' chain of thought when he talks about the condition of the automobile business in the West. Optimism throws a warm glow of enthusiasm over his comments. His territory includes everything west of the Rocky Moun-

NEW DEVICE GAINS

Mechanical Cranker's Popularity Booms.

MAKERS ADOPTING STARTER

Self-Starting Method Has Phenomenal Growth in Comparatively Short Time It Has Been Used by American Engineers.

Now that a few pioneers have successfully solved the self-starting problem, motorists generally are making a rush after machines equipped with this latest and most popular device. During the past few months it has been almost startling to note the number of manufacturers who have come out with a heavy endorsement of the mechanical cranker. It seems only a few weeks ago that but two or three firms were advertising a self-starter as part of the

step toward the ideal," said Mr. Vogler. "But though important, the experiment had been made, it was not until recently that a device was brought out that could be considered certain or practical. Now that this has been accomplished it will be only a short time before every prospective purchaser of an automobile will demand that the machine he buys be equipped with a self-starter."

Practical Stage Reached.
"The assertion of some dealers that the self-starter has not reached the practical stage is not true. It is claimed by some that the employment of the new device has a bad effect on the machine, in that it is possible to do great damage to the engine with it. This is not true. Do you suppose that such reputable automobile engineers as those who endorse the self-starter would put their stamp of approval on it if it was not practical? No. There is truth in the declaration that there is room for improvement in the self-starter, but that is all. There is room for improvement in everything, and this is nowhere more apparent than in the automobile industry. A close analysis of the various 1912 models will show that vast improvement has been made in the general construction of motor cars. This improvement has not been confined to any particular part either.

Besides eliminating the disagreeable task of cranking in the mud and slush, which is often necessary, the adoption of the self-starter naturally will promote a more liberal use of the automobile. Heretofore the necessity of using so much energy in starting an automobile has been a great obstacle in its wider use by women. Now all that is necessary to start the car is to push a little button and the motor is working. And it is on coal piles, over abrupt elevations, through brush and clay roads that the tester's road lies. "Go through the worst places you can find," Head Tester Lew Potijohn, of the Cole Motor Car Company, says to his corps. "Bring that car back here with bearings burst, pistons cracked. Break up the car if necessary, but test."

HARD TEST GIVEN CARS

EVERY EFFORT MADE TO FIND WEAKNESS BY TESTERS.

Hardest Roads Are Picked by Men Who Look After Safety of Future Auto Owners.

Where automobiles are manufactured the residents daily, except Sunday, see scurrying around the city, rakish-looking, half-finished motor cars that seem to do nothing but try and break speed laws and go over inconceivable places and holes. "Crazy loons from automobile factories," "Fools," and other such epithets are addressed to these men.

In reality they are endangering their lives to protect future automobile owners from mishaps that might occur if they did not do just such "foolish" things as the public in those cities witness daily. The police keep their eyes on the boys and they often are arrested. They are not supposed to do their hard stunts in crowded districts, but the desire to make their machine do almost impossible things anywhere overcomes them and sometimes lands them before a stern justice, who sees the greatest chance in local publicity in handing out sentences to offending motorists.

In Indianapolis the testers for the various factories try to out-do each other in stunts; they have the two and one-half ton test car, on which to test their cars, but as this is smooth running, the boys use this speedy way only to test out their cars for mileage and to see how they stand on rough and abrupt elevations, through brush and clay roads that the tester's road lies. "Go through the worst places you can find," Head Tester Lew Potijohn, of the Cole Motor Car Company, says to his corps. "Bring that car back here with bearings burst, pistons cracked. Break up the car if necessary, but test."

And the testers are like little children with a new toy. They are going to "bust" that machine if it is possible. And they do break them quite often. But new parts are always ready for them. The best way to judge a tester's worth is in the damage he does to his car. The tester that goes out and saves money for his firm is the one that finds his name off the payroll in a short time.

The Cole motor cars, like the majority of other automobiles manufactured, are put through a grueling test. Recently at the factory the testers discovered a coal pile in the test yard. The work up the car if necessary, but test."

When a new sewer is laid in a street or the road taken up for any cause, out hop the testers, riding under the burning words that come from the street inspectors and contractors, but they get the cars over the road.

When the motor is complete it gets the crummeater test. Then comes the block test for 48 hours to work in the bearings, valves and pistons. The roller test for the axle and transmission. Then the road test in the hands of testers, the "heroes" of the automobile factory.

The testers in the Cole Motor Car Company are personally responsible for their cars. When they go on the test and find the motor is not running right, hear a noise or a pound, they must locate it. They must put in new parts if necessary. When the car leaves their hands for an inspection by the head tester, it must be right

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TESTERS PLAY ROLE OF HERO AT AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE FACTORY.

MOTOR CARS BEING TESTED BEFORE FINAL INSPECTION.

by H. C. Curtis, Western representative of the Apperson Company.

Curtis, who makes his headquarters in Los Angeles, has been in Portland for the past few days, making his quarterly visit to the Northwest, and took occasion to air his views about the automobile industry in a reminiscent talk with several motorists. "There is no further need of automobile races, shows or contests that give the victor the spoils," chirped the round factory soothsayer. "All they give the new fellow a big chance—he has nothing to lose and everything to gain. When it slumbers right down to cold facts, there is little real benefit to be derived from such things. The public seldom gets the real truth concerning them. Anyway, a break of bad luck—an unseen bump in the road, ditches and tire and minor mechanical mishaps that don't count—often bring a cheap car in ahead of a competing machine that really outclasses the winner so far that it would be a disgrace to the English language to attempt to make a comparison."

Trick Wins Race.
"Pick up the paper any Sunday and you'll find cars advertised solely on their victories in contests. There's one I recall distinctly—'The car that was made in a day.' That machine had the luck to come out with colors flying in a big automobile race. Its victory came with great odds of luck, and the little machine—no better, nor perhaps no worse, than others in its class—jumped into popularity in an instant."

Here was interposed the theory that half the time it is not the car but the man behind the pilot wheel that "brings home the bacon." Curtis was quick to cite instances where this has been the rule, recalling in particular the last Phoenix road race from Los Angeles to the desert metropolis.

"There was one race that was won by the driver, and not through the superiority of the automobile," said Curtis. "The winning man went over the course minutes before the start of the race and discovered that by taking his car cross lots a little way he could cut off 20 miles. He further discovered that by climbing a steep grade and letting his car go over boulders and underbrush for a few rods he could save 14 miles. The cars that finished first and second beat it neck and neck until the leader was nearing his secret cut-off. He stopped his machine, got his mechanic to tinkering under it, and to all appearances was in hard luck. The second man passed him, beat it as fast as he could for the next checking station—Yuma—figuring that the race was his."

Victory Die Little Good.
"After his rival was well on his way, the eventual winner hopped into his car and started over his own route. You can imagine the chagrin of the second man when he arrived in Yuma and was greeted with the information that his rival, whom he had left stalled on the road, had passed through the town 18 minutes before him."

"That little trick was the means of winning the race, even who can say that the car was any better than a score of others entered?"
"And as proof that the winning of the race, even who can say that the car was any better than a score of others entered?"

Manufacturers who have weathered the storm of pioneering and have built up reputations that have set their machines upon a high plane, have no further need to establish the worthiness of their products and should devote the energy and money they spend in participating in exploitation schemes to other methods of promoting sales, according to Curtis.

Racing's Mission Performed.
"Racing and endurance contests had a great mission in the automobile industry, but they have served their purpose and there is absolutely no use for continuing them," he opined. "In the early days, when motor cars were more

valuable, and he is in close touch with conditions in the district.

"California will play an important part in making the sales of 1912 total a number that will amaze all those who do not follow the automobile business closely," declared the Los Angeles booster. "There are very few dealers in Los Angeles or San Francisco who cannot dispose of all the cars they can get. I find that this degree of prosperity also obtains in the smaller towns."

"Just how the Northwest shapes up at this time, I cannot say. But if I have the success that our Pacific Coast representatives have had here this season, I'll be satisfied. From the reports I have received, I take it that almost every dealer in this territory is doing a large volume of business. I am certain, from present indications, that the Northwest dealers could handle more Appersons than it would be possible for them to get. Each territory's allotment is limited."

According to Curtis, 5000 Appersons will be produced for the 1912 trade. The producing capacity of the company has been considerably enlarged, he says, and that it will be possible to manufacture this number. The figures prove rather much of a surprise, inasmuch as less than 1500 Appersons were turned out for the season recently closed.

HIGHWAY IS GIVEN BOOM

DISCOVERY OF COAL LEADS TO NEW ACTIVITY.

Famous Roads May Be Extended Toward Dawson as Result of Uncovering of Fuel Deposits.

Though the eyes of Pacific Coast good-roads enthusiasts are turned just now on the progress of Chester Lawrence and Telesphore Beaudet, the daring motorists who are trying to blaze a way from San Diego to Mexico City in an effort to win the gold medal offered by the Pacific Highway Association for the first car making that run, quite as important things are being done for the highway cause in the northern extremity of the Pacific Coast. Away up in Hazelton, B. C., 46 miles from the Alaskan boundary, where P. E. Sands went some months ago to win just such a gold medal as the southerners are after, every man and woman has temporarily become a roads fanatic. Good roads for their own valuable sake are not the object of the worthy Hazeltonians. One could hardly expect that if such a road were not forthcoming their trade might be diverted to another town. This spurred the Hazelton folk to renewed activity. Delegations are now busy with both provincial and Dominion government officials, and it seems probable that in a few months work will be commenced, not only on the wagon road, but on a good trail leading north from Ground Hog to Cabin Nine, well on the telegraph route to Dawson.

This means that another great step is about to be taken in the development of Pacific Highway, which now has a gold medal up for the first car arriving under its own power at Dawson from Vancouver. B. C. Officers of the association feel greatly encouraged, with such vigorous activity at both northern and southern ends of the great project.

factory equipment of their product.

Now one cannot fail to notice the great number of motor car builders who are featuring the addition of this device. In discussing the phenomenal advance that has been made by the self-starter in the past three months, F. W. Vogler, Northwest distributor for several popular makes, pointed out that ever since the automobile came into general use owners and drivers have been slaves to the starting crank. Mr. Vogler is one of the Portland dealers who is enthusiastic over the possibilities of this device, and since the Reo and Apperson 1912 models have been received by him he has become more firm in his approval of the system. Both machines mentioned are equipped with the self-starter.

Many Improvements Made.
Although he has not been identified with the automobile business since its "infancy," the Portland wholesale agent has seen many startling innovations wrought in the manufacture of motor cars in his comparatively short experience. He is selling power vehicles when a four-cylinder machine was considered the height of luxury; when wind shields, speedometers, tops, demountable rims and a score of other accessories were unheard of. In his opinion, the perfection of the self-starter and the silent type of motor are the most wonderful improvements that have been made in motor-car construction in late years. He is firm in the belief that the self-starter is destined to be attached to every automobile of the future and that it will be the means of creating a wider demand for the modern method of transportation. In speaking of the Silent Knight motor, Mr. Vogler expressed the opinion that this improvement, which has a decided tendency to reduce to a minimum the up-keep cost, eventually will be a benefit to motorists generally. He says that Knight's success has caused the American manufacturers to devote considerable time and money to the perfection of this device in their own motors and that therefore the automobile owners in general will be benefited.

"It has been felt for a long while that if the tedious and sometimes dangerous preliminary task of cranking could be done away with, automobile development would have made a long

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or the tester will hear about it. He is made to do his work personally, so that he can't find any excuse and say, "Well, I knew it and told so-and-so to fix it." He must remedy it himself. From the head tester it goes to the final test, when it again gets a hard going over.

The test car is the chassis of an automobile before it goes into the paint shop. Just a rough, old body, with two rumble seats and a heavy piece of iron to correspond with the weight of the body is placed on the chassis. The tester in rain, snow or shine leaps into his "Maria" every morning when the whistle blows and goes "Joy-riding" to help solve the problem of absolute safety to the future automobile owner.

FOREIGN IDEA ADOPTED

LONG-STROKE MOTOR GAINS FAVOR WITH MAKERS.

Design Has Tendency to Reduce Consumption of Gasoline and Lengthen Engine's Life.

The long-stroke motor has come to stay in now an established fact and another year will see all progressive manufacturers using this type of engine exclusively. While the American manufacturer has been considerably criticised for allowing his European competitors to gain a two years' lead on him before adopting this type of motor, it must be remembered that it is a comparatively simple matter for the European manufacturer to make a change of this nature for the reason that he makes but a few hundred cars, without any very expensive equipment, while the American manufacturer makes them by the thousands and tens of thousands with a tremendous investment in jigs and special tools which become to a great extent worthless when a radical change of this nature is adopted.

The manufacturer of the Mitchell car as well as a few other of the larger manufacturers who have already adopted this design, due probably to the fact that the personnel of designing departments is composed largely of French engineers and who have, therefore, been a little closer in touch with the latest developments in gas engineering abroad, as well as at home. One reason, possibly, why the European manufacturers have given more attention to this matter than the home

makers is because of the high price of gasoline abroad, making fuel economy one of the strongest selling points of a car. There are, however, many other benefits to be derived from this design of engine, of which the most important are probably the slower crank shaft speed resulting in longer life to the engine bearings; a motor which is more easily cooled, and which will stand harder work without overheating and greater leverage on the crank

shaft on account of the longer connecting rods required by the longer stroke.

Truck's Worth Recognized.
Two more Federal trucks have been purchased from the Stoddard-Dayton Auto Company by the Portland Railway, Light & Power Company. This makes the eleventh Federal truck that the power company has purchased.

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