



MANY AUTO THEFTS LIKELY THIS YEAR

Bad Season Predicted by Underwriters' Investigator.

PROBLEM UP TO PUBLIC

B. W. McCay Says Rigid Laws, Rigid Enforcement, Co-operation of Authorities Are Needed.

BY L. H. GREGORY.
Automobile thefts are on the increase, despite all efforts to curb them. There are men who make a business of stealing cars, driving them into another state and there selling them. More automobile thefts will occur on the Pacific coast, including Portland, this coming summer than in any previous summer period. These are a few of the high spots from an interview with B. W. McCay, chief investigator for the theft bureau of the Pacific coast auto underwriters' conference, who was in Portland last week. Joe Keller, former captain in the Portland police department, is manager of the Portland office of the theft bureau.

But while the automobile-theft situation is extremely serious and is getting worse instead of better, Mr. McCay sees certain rays of light. One of them is the efficient co-operation he is getting from motor vehicle departments, especially in California and Oregon. In the way of checking up stolen cars through records in the departments. He says the California department now has a very complete system of automobile records and he has high praise for the manner in which the Oregon motor vehicle department keeps its records.

Oregon Department Praised.
"Just to illustrate how helpful the motor vehicle department can be in aiding us to run down and recover stolen cars, let me cite three cases that happened this week while I was in Oregon," said Mr. McCay. "I brought with me the records on two cars that had been stolen in California and which our bureau had reason to believe had been driven into Oregon and sold here.

"At the motor-vehicle bureau of the secretary of state's office in Salem Wednesday the chief examination of their well-kept records quickly revealed the missing cars. Just as we had suspected, they had been driven into the state and sold here to innocent purchasers. The fact that their motor numbers were registered in connection with the issuance of Oregon licenses enabled us to trace them at once.

"Of course this wouldn't have been possible if the motor vehicle department did not keep its records in such shape that numbers of this sort could be found at once. But it has not only an alphabetical list of cars by make, an alphabetical list by owners and a list by license numbers, but also a numerical list in order of motor numbers. That made it very easy to find the numbers we sought. The Oregon motor vehicle department is very efficiently conducted, and I can say too much for the condition of its records.

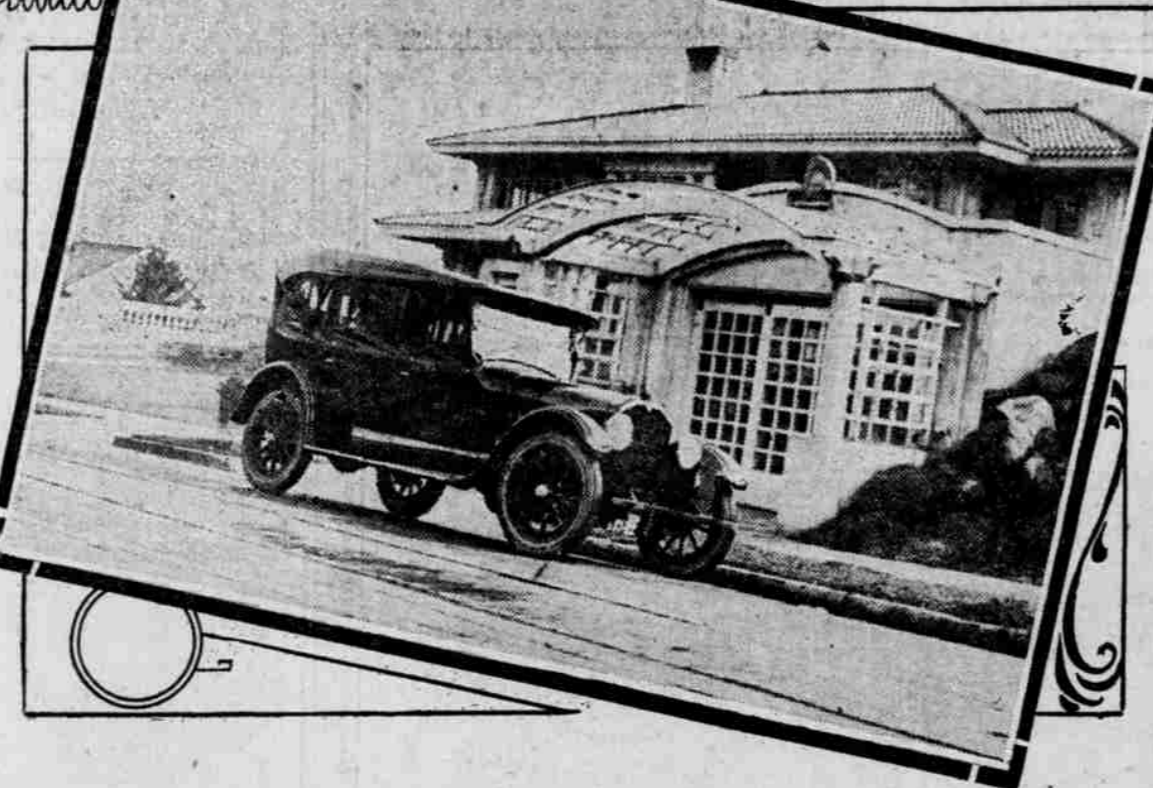
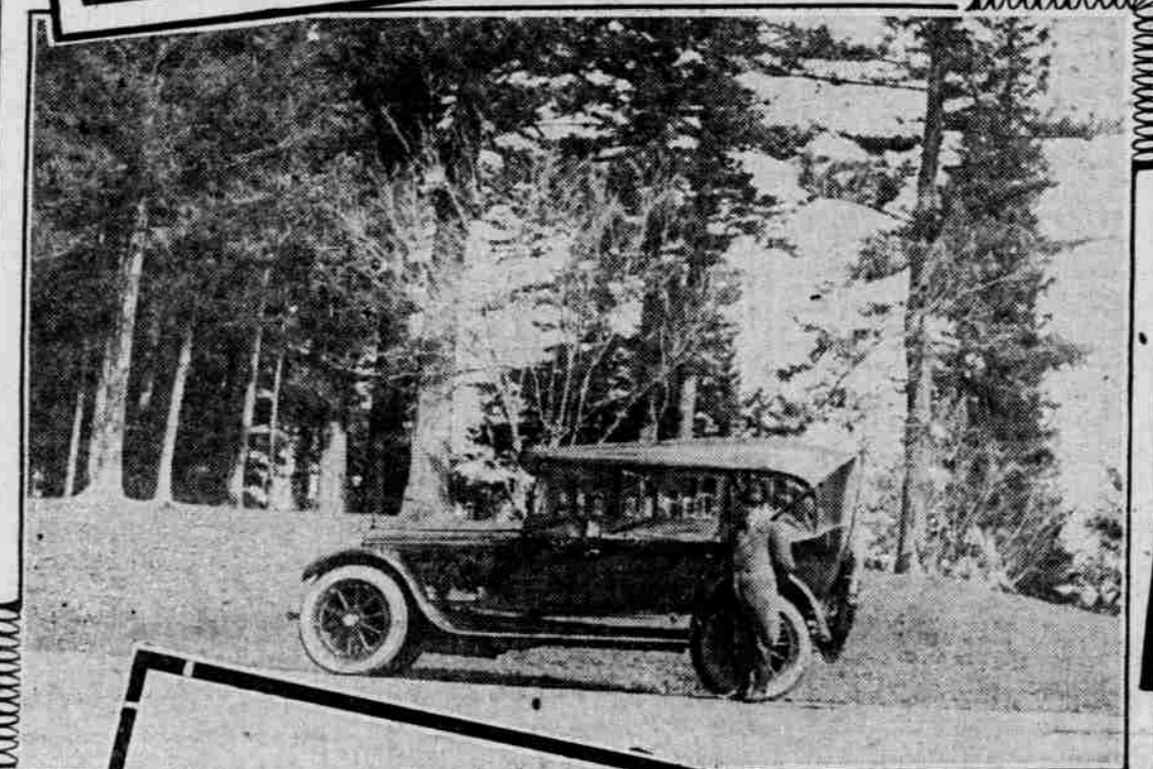
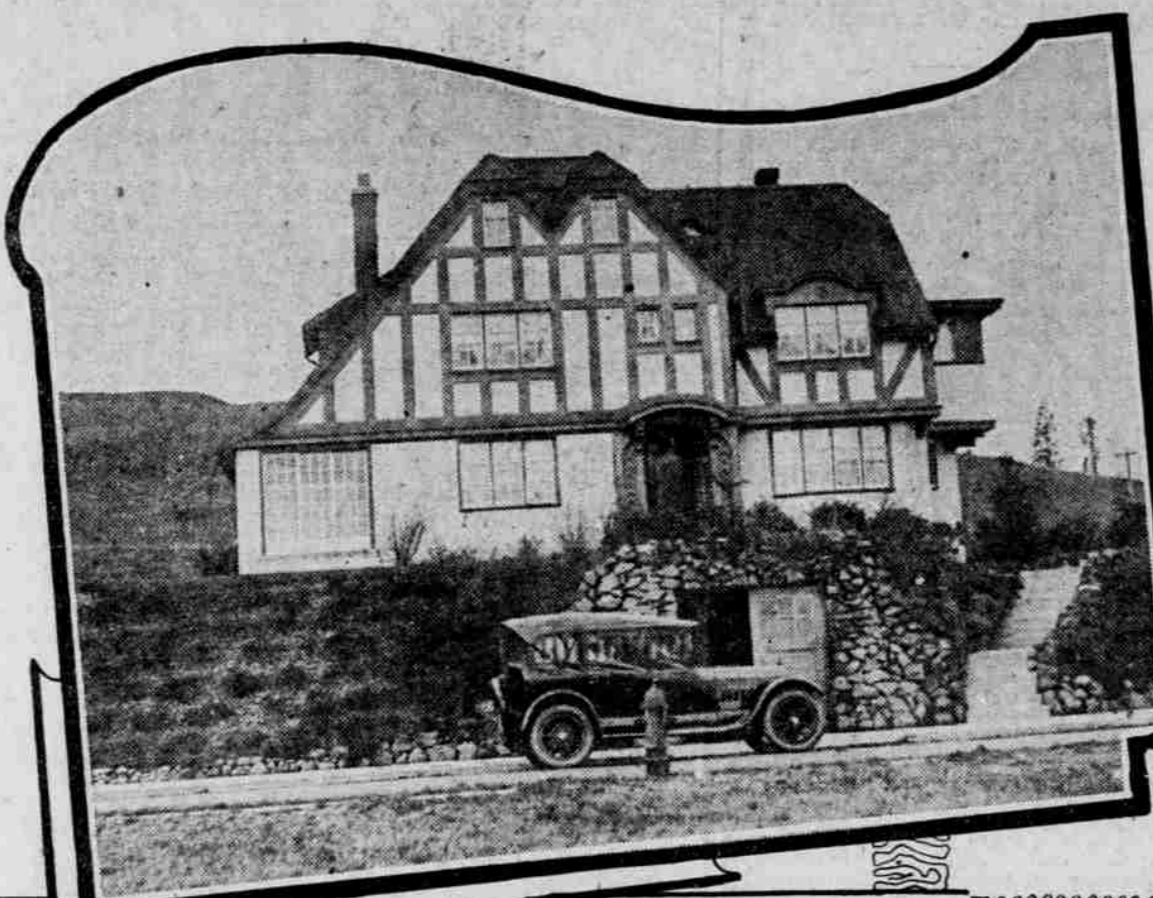
Oregon Car Recovered.
"These are two instances. The third happened almost at the same time, and will result in recovery of a stolen Oregon car. I received a telegram from the California motor vehicle department at Sacramento that the number of this car had turned up when application was made for a California license number. The car, a Ford, had been stolen from the Burlington mills of Portland. It is now at Yreka, and steps have already been taken to bring it back to Portland.

"This just shows how much can be done through co-operation of state motor vehicle departments in tracing stolen cars. It is a matter of a complete system in this regard of any state. In addition to its motor vehicle department, California has a state bureau of identification and investigation, with which a description of every article of stolen property reported to the police departments and insurance companies is listed. It does not confine its work to automobiles, but it is doing a remarkable work in making possible the recovery of stolen automobiles.

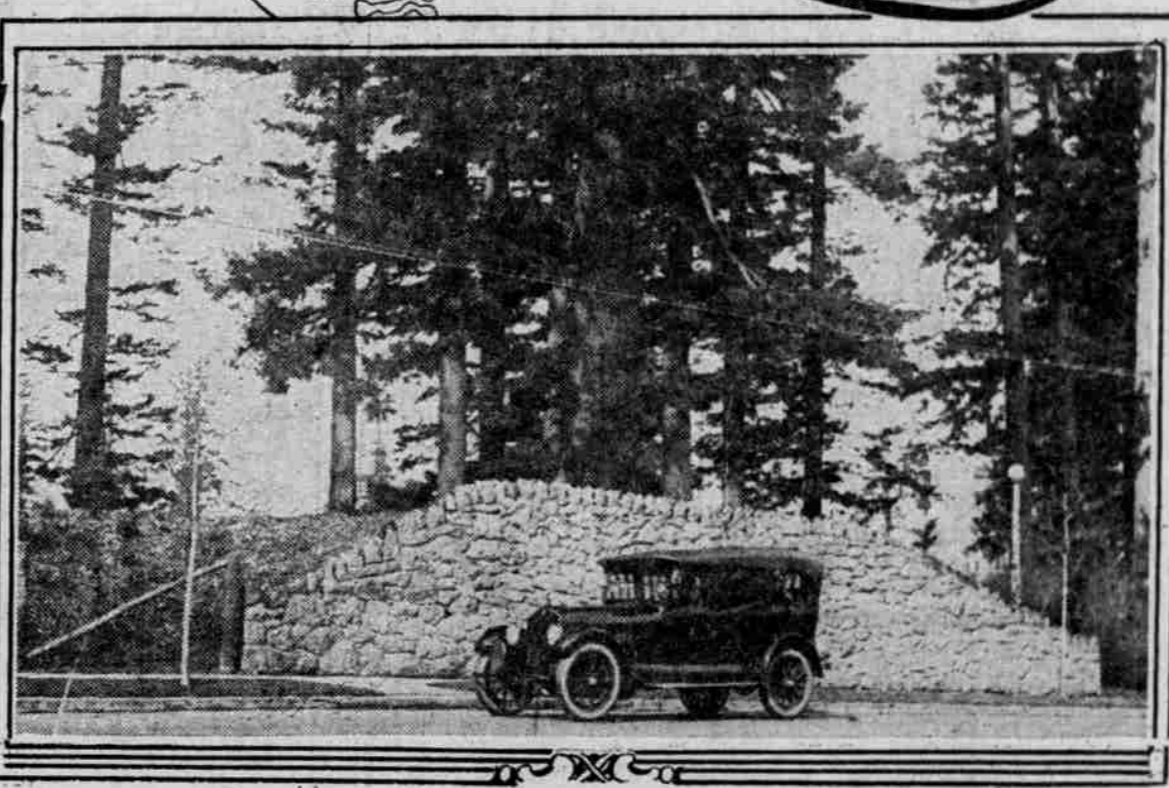
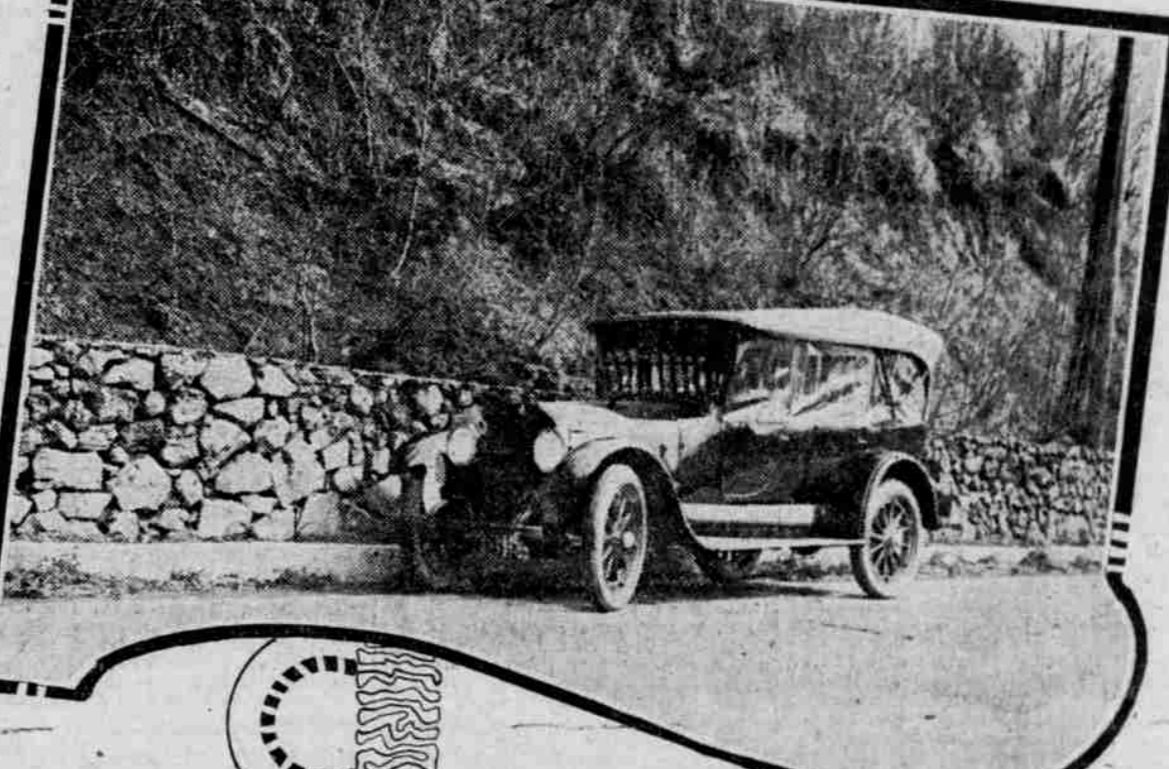
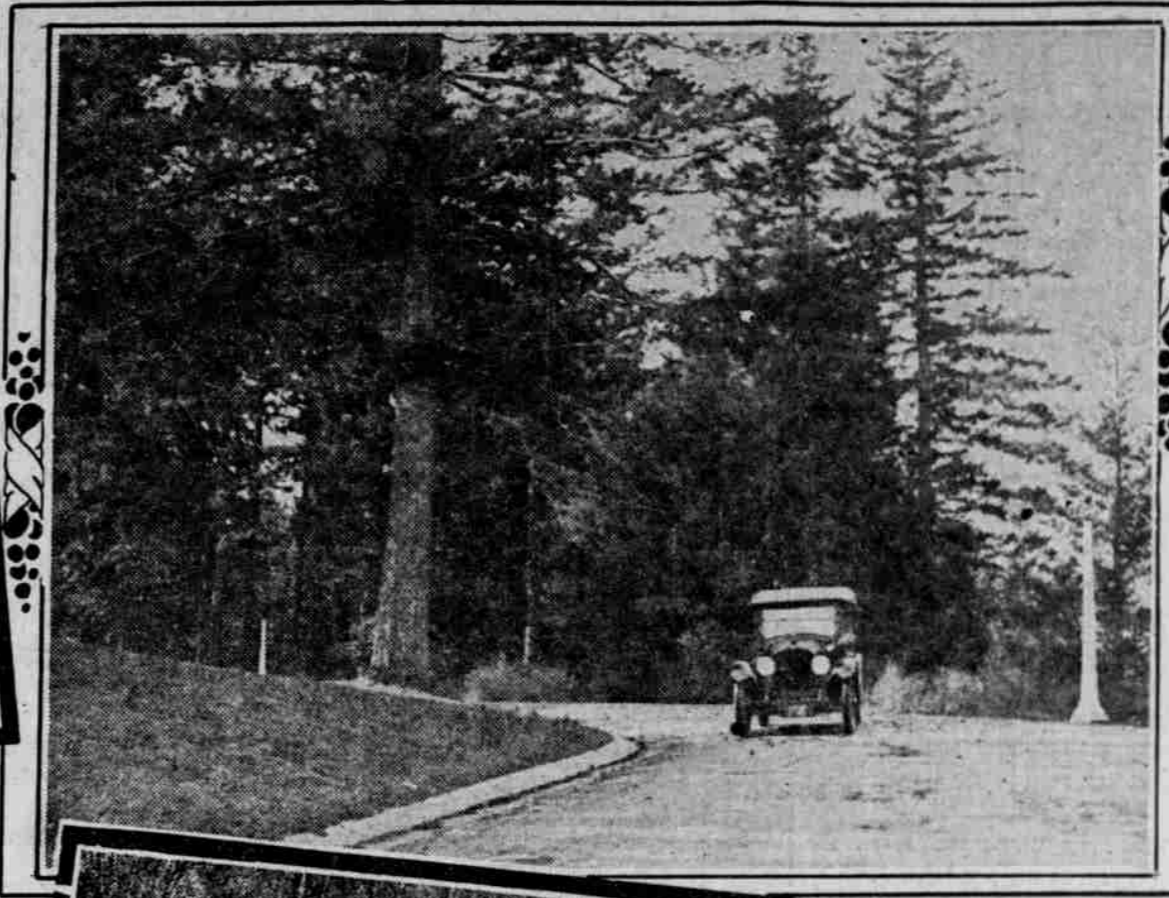
"This bureau is in charge of Mr. Merrill, who has devised a wonderful system of keeping records. So complete is his check on the motor numbers of all stolen cars within a very short time of the report on them, and immediately takes steps for their recovery.

Not All So Well Organized.
"The motor vehicle department is at once notified, and a green card with the motor number placed in numerical order in its motor number record. When an application for license is made for this car, the fact that it is a stolen vehicle is instantly detected.

HITTING SOME OF THE HIGH SPOTS ABOUT PORTLAND IN A LATEST MODEL 1920 PEERLESS EIGHT



While Portland isn't exactly a city of hills, there are plenty of eminences around town for any person who likes hill-climbing for a change. Lee J. Kearns, sales manager for the D. C. Warren Motor Car company, hit a few of these "high spots" last Sunday in a new Peerless Eight. Anyone who would like a little slightly touring without leaving Portland on a rainy day when it's too wet to go touring in the country, can find plenty of



variety and scenery by hitting the same high places. The pictures show: Above, left—The Peerless on West-Terrace, and right, in Mount Tabor Park. Center, left—Another view in Mount Tabor park and its big fir trees; and right, on King's Heights. Below, left—On Arlington Heights, and right, at Laurelhurst park, which isn't exactly a high spot in the way of elevation, but is on the route between high spots.

MORE INCREASES IN AUTO PRICES LIKELY

Another General Rise Said to Be Due About May 1.

FREIGHT CONDITION IS BAD

Even With Car Production Nearing Normal Again, Makers Can't Get Any Freight Cars.

DETROIT, Mich., March 20.—Increases of \$50 to \$100 in the prices of all Ford models recently are the forerunners of a general advance in practically all makes of Michigan automobiles, in the opinion of the best-posted men in the industry. Although most makers have been boosting prices with considerable regularity during the past year, they have found production costs constantly rising and a demand for their cars that cannot be fulfilled this season.

From an authoritative source comes the belief that the next advance which will fix prices for the summer is due to take effect before May 1. Detroit auto makers have been harassed over the production problem ever since the declaration of peace. It is a bugaboo of the industry, of factories, dealers all over the country and abroad are crying for cars and the makers have long lists of unfilled orders on their books.

Town Cluttered Up With Cars.
Owing to the freight-car shortage thousands of machines are parked in all available places throughout the city. Hundreds of automobiles partially protected with canvas coverings are still waiting shipment or drive-away at Michigan state fair grounds. This accumulation continues to grow, despite the fact that hundreds of vehicles are being driven over the almost impassable snow-covered roads from Detroit, Pontiac, Flint, Lansing, Alma and other points.

After three years of curtailed production, most of the plants are beginning to reach the normal output stage. The Ford company alone is turning out 315 cars each day. Production at the Dodge plant is better than 550 daily, with the Hudson, Essex, Paige, Maxwell, Chalmers, Buick and all others exerting Herculean efforts to attain maximum production and to meet at least in part the demand for their products.

The result of these conditions necessarily will be felt by the consumer. Even with improved freight-car service and eliminating expenses, drive-away, the price must go up, the manufacturers say. Prices of raw materials entering into the manufacture of the automobile continue to mount. Increased production schedules being impossible in some of the smaller plants, the owners of these demand an increase in prices mandatory.

600 Buicks in Driveway.
The snow-bound inhabitants of southern Michigan and Ohio were treated to a pleasing sight as well as a new record-breaking feat when 600 Buick motor cars plowed their way through the heavy drifted roads from Flint.

This single day driveway of Buick cars was a new achievement in factory deliveries. The mammoth fleet successfully accomplished the task of breaking the first trails into Detroit and northern Ohio towns and restoring traffic to its original condition.

This 600-car driveway will probably establish a national record for all manufacturers. It is announced that C. T. Silver, prominent New York motor-car distributor and one of the industry's foremost authorities in motor-car design and coach work, is developing a new car. The car, it is said, is not the result of rushing into production due to the abnormal demand for automobiles. It is stated that the designing and development work started three or four years ago. Some of the industry's leading engineers have been retained by Silver to assist in the work.

Silver to Make an Auto.
From all reports, the car when announced will be a finished product ready for production and the market. No details have been disclosed, but Silver's long association with popular-priced cars makes it seem only natural that the product bearing his own name will be in the same priced class.

Already enjoying a fixed place in the automobile industry, through its motor trucks, which have been on the market several weeks, the Winthorpe Motor Truck Co. announces that it will soon be in production with a six-cylinder passenger car.

PEERLESS SETS A RECORD

17 MINUTES OFF SAN FRANCISCO-LOS ANGELES TIME.

New Mark of 9 Hours 20 Minutes Set for Former Record Made by Cadillac in 1916.

The Los Angeles-San Francisco road record of 9 hours and 37 minutes, made by a Cadillac in 1916, was broken a couple of weeks ago when a Peerless Eight made the distance in 9 hours and 20 minutes. The car, which was a stock model in every particular, except that the windshield had been removed, carrying four passengers, left San Francisco at 2:14 P. M. and arrived at Los Angeles the following morning at 7:16 o'clock.

PORTLAND FIRM EXPANDS

W. C. GARBE, INC., OPENING A SEATTLE BRANCH.

Master Truck to Be Handled There From Temporary Quarters With P. E. Sands.

W. C. Garbe, president, and E. A. Leaton-Smith, manager of the truck department of W. C. Garbe, Inc., formerly the Oregon Motor Car company, were in Seattle last week, attending the Seattle automobile show and arranging for the opening of a Seattle branch of the company.

TO CONNECT WITH HIGHWAY

Progressive Spirit Shown by Woodburn Property Owners.

WOODBURN, Or., March 20.—(Special.)—Woodburn residents are preparing to make extensive street improvements this year. A large majority of the Hayes-street property holders have petitioned the city council for paving that thoroughfare and a majority of the Lincoln-street property owners will soon be obtained on a petition to pave that highway.

After all, it is the public itself that must ultimately solve the automobile theft problem. There has been too much of a tendency, due no doubt to the fact that it was considered a great joke in early days of the automobile industry when a man's car was stolen to look lightly at automobile thefts. Judges are lenient. A man can steal a shirt or a few dollars, and be severely punished. He steals an automobile worth hundreds or thousands of dollars and is rebuked and turned loose, or perhaps sentenced lightly and paroled. Naturally, he goes out and repeats. Many men are making the theft of automobiles a business.

Needless to say, every automobile parked anywhere in the streets should be locked. Any good lock is a preventive of theft. Of course, an automobile thief of the professional type can beat any lock if he sets out to do it, but he would a hundred times rather avoid the risk and take the car that isn't locked. He is too likely to be caught when he tackles the locked car. And very few good locks are ever picked.

When a man in my position urges that all automobiles should have locks, somebody is likely to rise up and say that propaganda is being put out in behalf of the lock manufacturers. But I will take that risk, for it is self-evident to any thinking person that a car that is locked is far safer from being stolen than one left unlocked so that any person can drive it away. The insurance companies have no interest in any special make of lock, or in any lock manufacturer. But they do want to prevent thefts.

Another very necessary step in the campaign to curb automobile thefts is enforcement of local ordinances such as the one in Portland requiring all dealers in second-hand cars to report immediately they acquire such a car, its motor number and any other records required. Such ordinances will be enforced when public demand requires their enforcement. And by making it impossible for the thief to dispose of the car locally, such enforcement will prevent a great many thefts.

Always keep your car under perfect control.