

The All-Round Usefulness of the Farm Car

It Has a Place in Our Community Not as a Desirable Luxury, But as a Business Accessory

By ROBERT ALEXANDER.

IT is just about seven years since the first car was purchased in our township, a community which is, I suppose, typical of other rural communities in Ontario. Since then, and particularly in the last three years, cars have multiplied exceedingly. At our farmers' club a few nights ago, we started counting up the farmers who owned cars on the four main roads leading out of our village. We found that on these good stone roads 30 per cent. of all farmers had cars and 100 per cent. of what we considered our best and most progressive men were car owners. On side roads and concessions, the percentage of farmers owning cars was smaller, but even there fully 15 per cent. had already purchased automobiles, and more would be owned were the roads passable for a greater part of the year. "Does this mean that farmers are now so prosperous that 30 per cent. of them can afford to support a pleasure car?" asked the village blacksmith, a good friend of our movement, and a member of the club.

"Well, I reckon the car is a rare source of pleasure," responded one of the best farmers on the Guelph road, "and now that we have had a taste of farm life with a car, it would be some job to keep the lads and lassies around home without one. Our car is not owned altogether for pleasure, however. The boys and I were reckoning it up the other night, and we found that last summer almost two-thirds of the mileage travelled was for business and only one-third for pleasure."

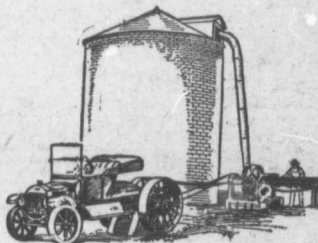
"Rather a high percentage of utility," remarked the blacksmith in a tone that suggested a question mark.

"Oh, I am not saying but that we pack the wife and a couple of kids in the back seat on some of our business trips," quickly responded my neighbor. "What I mean is, that two-thirds of our mileage was primarily for business, and the car would not have been out of the garage had it not been for a business call of one kind or other."

20 to 95% of Business.

A general discussion followed. None of us had complete records. All of us were surprised, after a little consideration, to find out how much our cars were used as a business convenience, and what an important factor in the running of our farms the car had come to be. The estimates of business use varied all the way from 20 per cent. to 95 per cent. of the mileage travelled, the latter estimate by a neighbor who lets the hired man run the farm while he does a driving business. The average of all the estimates gave the cars in our community credit for 60 to 70 per cent. of business use. "I perceive that the car has a place among us, not as a desirable luxury, but as a business necessity," remarked the secretary as he closed up his book preparatory to reading the minutes of the last meeting.

Since our chat at the club, I have been considering the claims of the car. Should it now be considered a requisite part of the farm equipment, or a luxury to be indulged in after the last dollar has been paid on the mortgage? I have come to the conclusion that it belongs in an intermediary position. If I were in the position of a few of my neighbors—just starting and heavily in debt—I would not consider a car for a moment. Its usefulness, however, is great enough to justify its purchase ahead of the burning of the mortgage. In my case, the mortgage is still of substantial proportions, but the farm is on a good paying basis, and we consider



A Portable Farm Power Plant.

The up-to-date farmer is making his car do belt work as well as road work, and so speeding up his farm.

it good business to own a car. Let me tell of some of the varied uses to which cars are put in our community. I will start at home first. We purchased our car, a five passenger touring model, a couple of years ago. Our staple products are cream and eggs, both of which are shipped to neighboring cities by express. We have to make the two-mile trip to the station practically every week day in the year. To hitch up a horse, drive to the station and then drive back again made a big hole in the working day. Wife was always fearful of handling our driver around the trains, so the daily trip to the dealer to have the new part ready while the wife is all of the delivering to his place of business in the emergency the car is our first and our best friend, and so far as cost of upkeep is concerned, total expenses for gasoline, lubricating oil and minor repairs have not been as great in the past two years as the cost of feeding and shoeing a horse.

A Busy Farm Car.

We make little use of our car as compared with some of our neighbors. One man in particular I have in mind who works his car to the limit. He has a couple of hundred acres of land, he milks 20 cows, and he goes in extensively for early potatoes and tomatoes as cash crops. During a good part of the year he ships one can of cream every day at a station three and one-half miles from the farm. The saving in time which his car effects here is very considerable. It is in the late summer months, however, that the car gets its greatest use. I have seen this neighbor starting for our nearest city, 17 miles away with 62 1/2-quart baskets of tomatoes piled up on his car. At other times it would be an equally large load of early potatoes. This produce was sold in wholesale quantities to groceries, and two or three trips would be made every day of the busy season.

The second year that this neighbor owned his car, he began to consider it as a source of farm power, and purchased the first auto-power attachment in our neighborhood. This attachment was simply an extension of the cranking rod with a pulley on it. It was supposed to develop at least 15 h. p., and in the two years that he used it our neighbor filled his own silo with it, blowing the corn in at the pumped water, sawed wood; in fact, used it for all purposes for which a good sized portable engine is usually employed. It did a good work at all of these jobs. He thought that perhaps sawing wood was a little hard on the car because of unevenness of load. In three

and one-half years the car was exchanged for another of the same make. It was still in fair running condition, but was going to the garage a little more frequently than our neighbor considered probable.

The auto-power attachment was sold along with the car, not because it was considered a failure, but because this ingenious farmer considered that he could make an equally good power attachment at a lot less expense. He has succeeded. His new attachment is simply a wooden pulley, bolted on to the side of one of the back wheels. The rear of the car is then elevated on blocks provided for the purpose, and the power is transmitted through the differential. This home-made power device is giving excellent satisfaction, and has been borrowed by several of the neighbors to hitch on their own cars in wood cutting season. If these power attachments generally successful it seems to me that they will make the car a first-class investment for any farmer, as practically all farms nowadays have need of some form of mechanical power. I have seen several of these devices advertised, and I certainly would like to see our Department of Agriculture experiment with the various attachments on the market and tell us whether or not they will be a good investment. I incline to the belief that they are destined to add much to the value of the farm car.

The Tractor Attachment.

Just about 20 miles from us is the Lakewood Stock Farm, whose ads. appear in the Holstein columns of Farm and Dairy. When the Provincial Plowing Match was held at Brantford last fall, we "plowing" Match was held on the farm, and I had all went down in the car, and during the day I had a chat with Mr. Dawson, the manager of the Lakewood Farm. Among other things he told me that they had purchased a tractor attachment for their Ford car. "It is working splendidly," said Mr. Dawson, when I asked him about it. "It is drawing the 12-inch plows up and down the stiff grade behind the farm. You simply can't beat the quality of the plowing, and it is a one-man operation, the driver controlling the plow with the line just as they do from these tractors here. He is plowing about five acres a day. He doesn't have to stop for rain—just puts up the top of the car and goes ahead. My wife ran the plow and the car for half a day just for the novelty of it."

"And how does it compare with horses for expense?"

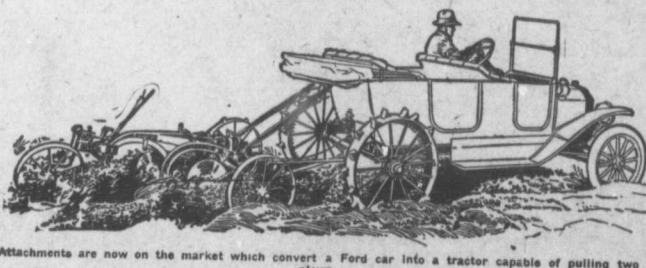
"We have been plowing with horses, too," said Mr. Dawson. "Three horses on a double bottomed plow turned over just three and one-half acres a day. We had two single teams plowing in the same field, and they turned over just one acre a day. We were paying these plowmen three dollars a day, and the horses to feed besides. It cost about \$1.69 an acre for gasoline and oil with the car and tractor attachment. Hesting! We, we haven't any particular trouble. The machine has run 10 hours and never boiled the water in the radiator. You see, there is a special radiator goes along with the tractor attachment, a pump to force circulation through the engine, and a special oiling system."

An Aid in Rush Seasons.

These tractor attachments are cheap. If I remember rightly Mr. Dawson said that theirs cost \$295 if they are a real success, here is another great avenue for usefulness in front of the farmer's car.

Such an attachment would take the place of the tractor on the small farm, though I can hardly believe that it would be desirable for heavy construction work. Its small cost would allow the farmer to use it as an aid to a smaller number of work horses in the rush seasons. I stopped to examine one of these attachments at the Canadian National Exhibition, and the man in charge told me that he had made the change from the tractor to a touring car in 17 minutes. He, however, was an expert. A farmer with experience has since told me that he has made the same change in 20 minutes. Here again we would like to get some real light and leading from our Department of Agriculture. Why should they not give these tractor attachments a real good try-out and publish the results?

I believe that the use of the term "pleasure car" is a misnomer so far as the farmer's car is concerned. We use our cars for business more than we do for pleasure. I do not want to under estimate it raises, however, as a source of pleasure in a half of my life. I am satisfied, however, with two years' experience, that we would now own a car if it cost less for pleasure only.



Attachments are now on the market which convert a Ford car into a tractor capable of pulling two plows.