

# Motordom in Nineteen-Fourteen

What is Happening in the World of Motor-Cars and Motorists

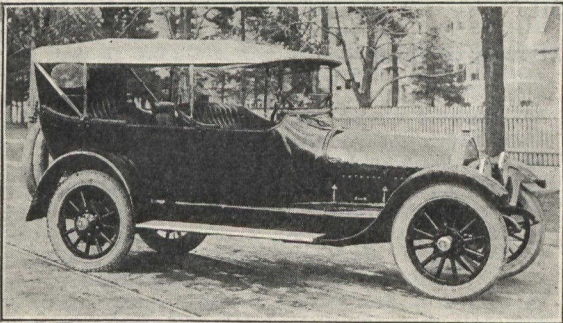
## Motor-Cars and Tight Money

*How the Trade is Weathering the Financial Flurry*

By MAIN JOHNSON

**M**ORE automobile licenses issued in Ontario in January than in any previous first month of the year; greater demands for space at the Toronto Automobile Show, opening this week, than on any previous occasion; unqualified success of last month's Montreal Show; elaborate preparations for the coming exhibitions in Ottawa, Hamilton and in Western cities; the visit of automobile men from the Canadian West to the Eastern shows, an index of improving conditions in the Prairie Provinces—this makes quite an imposing array of signs that the automobile business in Canada is "standing up" well under the load of the prevalent temporary dullness in trade.

There is another side to the shield, however, and



McLaughlin six-cylinder Model B. 55.

it is just as well to see the whole situation at once, in its unfavourable aspect as well as in its bright colours. A number of the smaller Canadian firms have dropped out in the last eight or ten months; collections, particularly in the West, are poor; sales are being made on conditions not satisfactory enough to automobile manufacturers, and which would not have been accepted a couple of years ago, and there is an apparent movement towards retrenchment in many firms.

The net result—is one of real encouragement. In fact, there are elements in the situation that justify genuine optimism. The outstanding fact is that the automobile business in Canada has weathered the storm much better than even many of its best friends had hoped for. It has been proved, once and for all, that the motor car in Canada has passed the stage, the unstable stage, of being merely a luxury. Several manufacturers, who have been interviewed, and private owners of cars also, have emphasized this cardinal point—the automobile, to a considerable extent, has become a necessity, and this quality of "being needed" is the greatest permanent asset of the automobile.

**B**USINESS men are becoming more dependent on the motor car to take them around on their business appointments. To go back to the infinitely uncomfortable surface street car, or to the pleasant but slow method of walking, would be almost as distasteful and as unprofitable as to go without the telephone. The growth of Canadian cities, moreover, with the consequent lengthening of the distances between the residential districts and the business sections, especially since the transportation systems have not kept pace with urban and suburban development, has made the autocar an essential possession of hundreds of families, who, whether general business is booming or rather lethargic, at least have to go between the "city," in the London sense of that word, and their homes.

"Business has surprised us by keeping up so well," was the word of the manager of one of the largest Canadian firms manufacturing medium-priced cars. "We made a profit on our last year's operations, and that is saying a good deal. Of course, it is well known that some firms were not fortunate enough to do this, and suffered rather severe losses, but I believe it is almost the unanimous opinion of automobile men that the bottom was reached several months ago, and that 1914, on the whole, will be a better year than 1913, especially in its latter half." This manager's chief complaint was the poor terms

on which many cars have had to be sold in the last five or six months. "That was a bad sign," he admitted, "and it is a condition which must not be allowed to become chronic."

A famous firm, manufacturing low priced cars, was quite jubilant. "Our output and our sales," declared one of their representatives, "are both bigger than this time last year, and that means better than any previous year. Any loss we have suffered in a falling-off of buyers among those people who usually purchase our cars has been more than overbalanced by our new acquisitions from the ranks of those who, if business prospects were a little more encouraging, would have bought more expensive machines."

**O**NE of the items mentioned, the increase in the number of licenses issued in Ontario during January, must be qualified a little, although the fact itself is encouraging, and should down the virulent pessimists, yet allowance must be made for the unusually fine weather for motoring which characterized a large portion of the month, which led more motorists than usual to run their cars in the winter and induced them to get their license earlier than is their custom. Nevertheless, the unusually large registration shows that motorists are still "in the business," and that they have not ceased using their cars or buying new ones. It is interesting to note that the Provincial Secretary's Department for 1914 have ordered the same number of license plates (25,000) as they did for 1913. Usually they increase the order several thousand each year.

One significant commentary on the stability and activity of motoring is that the Ontario Motor League, the provincial association of motorists, in the very period when business was thought to be poor, was increasing its membership steadily, until it has reached a total of 3,600. The late autumn also

witnessed the formation of the Canadian Automobile Federation, a Dominion-wide organization. Such development and virility would hardly be the reflection of stagnation and despair in the automobile trade.

Recently there have been perhaps more cars changing hands than usual. Some men have been in financial straits, and have had to dispose of their motors and other valuables at a sacrifice. Such automobiles, however, in most cases, have been snatched up by other men who, although they could not afford to buy a new car, could get one at the reduced figure. The used-car trade is always a baffling source of worry to the manufacturers and dealers, but there is one advantage even in this difficulty. The buyer of a second-hand car, in the large proportion of instances, becomes a permanent motorist, and soon buys a new car for himself. This class of purchaser, therefore, although he is a trouble at first, is worth while looking after. Many of the men who have bought second-hand cars cheap, last fall or this winter, will be among those who will help new business later in the game.

Actual sales in Ontario have been light recently, but they always are in the period preceding the shows. Prospective purchasers wait to see "all the cars in a row." Sales at the Montreal Show were generally reported as being favourable. One thing, however, is sure—for the present at least, there are enough automobile firms in Canada. There are fewer than this time last year, but that should not be taken as a sign that there are good openings. In the United States there has been the same decline. In the early part of 1913 there were 156 manufacturers there; to-day, there are 133.

Automobile shows do not indicate financial stringency this winter. Their managers have outdone themselves in providing attractions and decorative embellishments. The Toronto Show, this week, will be another blaze of glory, enough to attract crowds simply as a spectacle. Montreal also was elaborate, and as for the American exhibitions, one example will suffice. At the recent Chicago Show, held at the Coliseum, the decorations on the ceiling, consisting of detail work in black and gold, criss-crossed with black lines, and featured with huge scrolls, were begun last July, and completed only in January!

## The Manager's Sudden Call

*And How Motor X Beat the World's Record for Efficiency*

By AUGUSTUS BRIDLE

**I**N a long line of uncranked motors never yet introduced to a spark plug or an oil-can there was one that for convenience we shall call "Motor X." She looked like all the others, felt like them, and so far as the makers could tell was identically the same as the regular motor made every day and installed every day in the average four-cylinder car that goes out for the road test from that Canadian factory. Motor X was an average, democratic machine, subject to all the limitations of a gasoline engine. Her patents are held in the United States and protected in several European countries as well as in Canada. There are thousands of such motors in automobiles on more than two continents. But Motor X, like many hundreds of other such machines, was made in Canada. She was designed for a Canadian car.

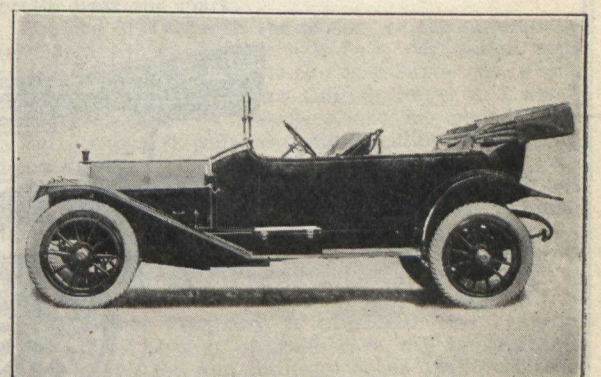
The makers suddenly decided that Motor X should as nearly as possible be sent to the devil; not for any misdeeds, for she had never turned an R. P. M. The reason was—to find out what Motor X amounted to in the world's work.

On Wednesday, Jan. 14th, this motor was suddenly lifted from the stock line-up, chucked on a truck and wheeled away to a small room by an open window. She was hastily timbered up, was strung with wires and water-ropes and flanked with three fans. A canvas was chucked over a pole, making a kind of tent, under which for thirteen days and nights the motor stood up to her test as a motor never was tested in the world before.

At four o'clock on Wednesday afternoon she was all rigged up ready to start. Gasoline was piped into her. The spark plugs went in. The current was ready to switch on to the magneto. The water pressure was adjusted to supply the resistance

of brakeage to determine the horse-power that this little four-cylinder, rated at 28 h.p., might be able to develop on her way up to the high speeds. A corps of experts from the School of Practical Science, University of Toronto, were on the spot to conduct the test and to record its findings in the cold arithmetic of science.

The basic idea of the test was not, however, to satisfy science, but to demonstrate of how much real value Motor X would be when installed in a car ready for the roads. It was necessary to compress into less than two weeks two whole years of hard driving at the rate of about 6,000 miles a year, which is above the average rate. It was decided to do this so far as possible under actual car and



The Russell six-cylinder Phaeton model.