

# MOTOR NOTES

## SERVICE IN MOTOR TRUCK INDUSTRY

Service, the much discussed problem of the motor truck industry, was the subject of a strong address by Alvan Macaulay, at the convention of the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce in Detroit. Mr. Macaulay, who is vice-president and general manager of the Packard Motor Car Company, pointed out the need of public education on this important subject, and indicated that, in justice to themselves and their business, the manufacturers must sooner or later adopt a uniform service policy. He said in part:

"The term 'service' was adopted by motor car companies in the early imperfect days of motor car development, when manufacturers were all exceedingly sensitive on the subject of repairs. It would have been better, I feel sure, to have handled the situation straight out from the shoulder, calling repair departments by their right name."

"The term 'service' at present covers three branches of work as I see it: "First—The correction, at the manufacturer's expense, of defects in material or workmanship, for which the manufacturer is properly held accountable."

"Second—The repair of vehicles that have deteriorated throughout use or abuse."

"Third—An indefinite something beyond legitimate repair work which is performed gratis for the purpose of showing the broad-gauged goodwill of the motor car manufacturer toward the owners of vehicles."

"The good-will element of service varies widely with different manufacturers, and even with the different dealers of the same manufacturer. It is supposed to cover a multitude of things the manufacturer will do gratis for anyone who purchases his vehicle, and which he is under no obligation, morally or otherwise, to perform, but which he does or agrees to do because it will make his patrons talk of his liberality; in other words it is good advertising."

"I think it is correct to say, therefore, that 'service' consists essentially of repair work and advertising."

"In the absence of specific promises to his patrons the manufacturer's obligation extends only to the point of delivering to his patrons cars or trucks of his standard of material and workmanship. There is no obligation upon him to deliver a perfect vehicle, especially since such a vehicle has probably not yet been devised. But there is a strong obligation to deliver to patrons that quality of material and workmanship which he has previously established as his standard of excellence."

"Beyond this point we are under no moral obligation, and what we may do additional constitutes the advertising element of service. Up

to the point where moral obligation ends and service for advertising purposes begins, there should be little difference of opinion among us. But when we enter the good-will or advertising element we vary widely in our common ground which it is advisable for all manufacturers to stand upon, assuming it to be true, as I believe it is, that every one of us is quite willing to go the full length of his moral obligation."

"Assuming that we have delivered to an owner a vehicle fully up to our standard, the amount of service he is satisfied with depends in general wholly upon what he has been led to expect. You well know from experience that your dealer who promises the most to his owners is not necessarily the dealer who has the most satisfied owners. It is not even true that the dealer who actually does the most for his patrons is the one who has the most satisfied owners. The fact seems clearly to be that that dealer has the greatest proportion of pleased users who, at the time of making his sales, explicitly and carefully makes it unmistakably known to his patrons exactly what they will receive in the way of free service, and who thereafter promptly and efficiently makes good his promise."

"It is a truism that cannot be denied that in the long run patrons are better satisfied to pay a fair price for service work if it is done immediately the need develops, and if it is thoroughly well done at the first effort, than with careless, slipshod repair work, for which no charge is made."

"No other branch of industry with which I am familiar gives, as a general proposition, so much in the way of free service as our own automobile business."

"What kind of service is promised you when you buy a yacht, or a gun, or a locomotive, an installation for your power plant, machine tools, an elevator, or what not? In all of these lines we expect the manufacturer to make good if he sells us an article that is below his established standard of excellence. Also, we know perfectly well that if we ask him to do something more we shall expect to pay the bill for time and materials, and in reasonable profit. Custom has educated us what to expect, and we accept the result without any feeling but that it is only fair and right to pay the bill."

"Some of the troubles connected with service grow out of the difficulty of maintaining uniformity in the various dealers' establishments and among the various manufacturers. The case is found frequently in every city where a new dealer locates and starts in to create a clientele. In order to quickly secure a following he makes large promises as to the

liberality of this service, and for a time, at any rate, he does give more than other established dealers can afford to give. The pressure is very strong upon the established dealers to meet the attractive service conditions dangled before the public eye by the newcomer. So temporarily, in that town, a new standard of service is established, which cannot be permanently maintained, because the margins of the business will not permit it."

"Another condition that makes against uniform service is the almost irresistible temptation of the dealer to favor the influential buyer."

"Education along broad lines of fair and uniform dealing untainted by influence or pressure."

"At the beginning of Packard's existence we were very liberal, indeed, I could cite you many instances of free repairs after three or four years' use of the car, but gradually it became borne in upon us that what was given for nothing was not appreciated, and only whetted the appetite for more. The gratuitous element of service work in a large measure, lost its advertising value, because many others promised a great deal more than we could possibly perform. The second-hand trading problem loomed large on the horizon margins narrowed, and we realized that it was time to reform our service policy upon a business basis, under which we would fully and completely discharge all of our moral obligations to our patrons, and even go somewhat beyond that for good measure, but also, on the other hand, to definitely limit the gratis work expected of us."

"The basis of our new policy was a complete, thorough advance understanding with our owners as to just what we would and would not do. We have not restricted our written service policy from what it was before. As a matter of fact we have enlarged it. The essential difference is that we have cut out indefiniteness by a clear, concise definition of what we will do gratis and what we will charge for. And the new policy we have proven will, if firmly adhered

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"CAN MANUFACTURERS ADOPT A STANDARD SERVICE POLICY? Of course they can, but they won't probably until the absolute necessity is brought home to them through the financial showing of their dealers. It will come in time as a matter of self-preservation. I hope it will come soon, because the margin of profit from the manu-

facture and sale of gasoline vehicles is narrowing rapidly under the intensive competition.

"I believe all manufacturers are ready to adopt a standard service policy as soon as they are shown one that is in successful operation, and which is fair to owners and possible of being carried out by the dealers. Our experience with our new dealers' policy indicates that we have taken a long step in advance. It is showing excellent results, and after six months' experience with it we have not found that we want to change it. Any change brings complications, but the difficulties have no been serious, and the policy has been successful in every case where a dealer has really tried to establish it."

**Markesfeldt Girl Puzzle to Doctors**

Still Denies That She Was At Shelburne in Girls' Home

The Toronto News says:—"A puzzle to her employers, to her acquaintances, to her fellow-workers and to the police, Louisa Markesfeldt now provides a baffling problem to the Government doctors who have been examining her mental stability since she was remanded to the Reception Hospital from the Women's Court last Friday."

During the six days she has been under the doctors' observation "the girl of mystery" has positively and consistently denied any knowledge of Shelburne, or of any of the various persons who have identified her as the Dr. Barnardo's girl who was sent out to this country from London in 1907, and who has since been under the supervision of the Margaret A. Cox Home for Girls at Peterborough, while she has worked as a domestic servant at various small towns of the province. So positively, indeed, that the doctors themselves are tempted to believe her rather than the evidence to the contrary.

"I suppose there is no doubt that

she was at Shelburne," said Dr. Harvey Clare, speaking with a touch of doubt in his voice to-day.

**Had Been Identified.**

The Daily News assured him that Mrs. C. E. Morgan, her mistress, had instantly identified a photograph of the girl as the Louisa Markesfeldt who had worked in her house from April to September, 1914, and that The Daily News reporter, who followed her in Shelburne, Berlin and Earnescliffe found precisely the same characteristics, heard the same stories in kind as those Louisa Markesfeldt told to the Toronto police. She was identified without equivocation by responsible persons, yet the girl positively denies the identification.

While Dr. Clare declined to state positively to The Daily News to-day what conclusion the examining doctors had arrived at regarding her, "I don't think she is any fool," he said with conviction. "She seems to be very clever along some lines."

"The girl is one of the most interesting cases I have ever met," he said, adding that the three doctors were meeting in consultation on the case to-day. Their report will be delivered to-morrow.

"She's a good talker," said the doctor laughing. "It's a good job she's not engaged to some poor fellow," or she would "talk his head off," it was suggested, and the doctor agreed."

After grieving for his family lost on the General Slocum eleven years ago, George Feldhusen, suicided in New York.

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