



The Automobile on the Farm

FIVE years ago in western Canada, it must have seemed apparent to the watching public that the farmer and the automobile were possessed of temperaments which, in the divorce court would have been termed incompatible. Recent developments, however, indicate that the farmer is taking to autoing like a duck to water, and is just as much inoculated with the mania for a car as is the city dweller. He has handled gasoline machinery, understands the rudiments of engineering, and is more capable of handling a car than eighty per cent. of the towns folk.

The farmer is beginning to turn his money and the products of his great wheat fields into pleasure. In the spring of 1904 there were two little red cars and one motor cycle in Winnipeg. The automobile was regarded then as but a freak invention, scarcely considered seriously by the townsmen and the country folk. But a remarkable change has been effected since that time. Where there was one car in western Canada then, there are five hundred today and it is expected that there will be one thousand a year hence. Already this spring the Winnipeg agencies have received orders for nine hundred and twenty-five cars, valued at over one million dollars at a conservative estimate. This number represents strictly the spring trade and all the cars must be delivered before June 1, but nearly as many more will be handled during the season. Indeed one firm can show invoices for seven hundred and seventy-five cars for their western trade, and they are handling practically only the output of their own factories, where other dealers are handling several makes of cars. Another agency has on order cars to the value of \$430,000, and declare that the difficulty which they

have to face is not the one of disposing of those but to get more to supply their summer orders.

Dealers throughout the three western provinces have had the same experience, and it is predicted that Alberta will be a close second to Manitoba in the actual number of cars sold. Out in Calgary one agent has placed fifty orders for one make of machine, and it is argued that by next fall Edmonton will have more cars in proportion to her 30,000 population than any other city in the west or even in all Canada. The little city of Moose Jaw is affected with the craze and everyone there is talking of motoring. Thirty cars have been placed there in single order.

Automobile Advantages

Needless to say that such a remarkable development of the city and town trade in Western Canada has had the effect of educating the farmer to the pleasures and advantages of the automobile. It will give him the coveted joys of the city even as it has already made the country with all its sweet pure air and rest and peace accessible to the worn out son of the city. It places him in closer touch with his neighbors, with the church, the store, the lecture platform, concert hall and school. It establishes his prosperity in the community with a consequent return in the respect paid by the residents of the vicinity. The average farmer loves speed and here he will get it to his heart's content, for during the greater part of the year prairie trails are in excellent condition.

The experience of the American farmer may undoubtedly be taken as prophetic of what the Canadian farmer is to undertake. But a few years ago the antagonism to the automobile was as deep, in the

heart of the American as it has ever been in this country. Times have changed there now and the change is due to the automobile. The farmers of the great western plains were the first to see the true benefits which must accrue to them from the use of the motor car, and it is in the west now that the most use is being made of this new convenience. The Canadian west is following suit and numbers of cars have been sold in the small towns. Some of these with a population of less than 500 have purchased seven or eight cars.

Speaking of the quality of cars demanded by the trade, one of the dealers in Winnipeg said a few days ago, "There is not a car made today that is too good for the westerner. The majority of them have money and they want to spend it like sailors ashore. Of course the number who can really afford to purchase the big \$6,000 or \$8,000 machines are comparatively small, but all demand comfort and reliability. \$2,000 will be about the average which may be struck for the entire trade. The \$3,000 car is said to be just as good a seller as the \$2,000 one, but, if a man cannot afford to pay that much this year, he intimates that he will buy one around twelve or fifteen hundred, and then trade it or sell it next fall or spring and secure the car he wants. The farmer is a good customer and the western farmer is nearly always a satisfied customer. Western Canada is infatuated with the automobile. It will soon be more common on the streets and trails of the prairie than Red River carts were a few years ago, when those time-honored vehicles were the only means of transportation. No other line of trade and industry can point to the same expansion or the same buoyancy as the automobile business at present."

The Motor Car in the American West

Many are the uses to which the farmer is applying the motor car. In the American west it has been found that the gasoline motor will operate ploughs and harvesting machinery and will do several times the work of a team of horses. "In Iowa, Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska," says The Horseless Age, "the

automobile is shelling corn, turning cream separators, furnishing power to do the family washing, hauling calves, wheat and produce to market; rounding up herds, dragging dirt roads, hauling the doctor, taking the farmer to political meetings, agricultural lectures and the homes of his neighbors."

There are said to be five hundred cars in use by the Kansas farmers alone, for the auto has found in the prairies of the western states, a loyal friend. The Iowa State Agricultural College has introduced into its curriculum a course in the handling and repairing of the automobile, which measure is a tacit recognition that the automobile has won a place in that locality. A case is related of a farmer in Kansas who broke a gasoline engine one day while he was using it in running a corn sheller. He took it from its place, brought up his automobile, connected the belts to the wheels, elevated the latter from the ground and started the engine. The corn sheller did more work that day than it ever did before and with the result that this farmer spent the season going through the country shelling corn for his neighbors with his engine.

Gasoline is Misunderstood

In connection with the subject of automobiles, it will not be amiss to explain that gasoline is the most maligned and mistreated substance known to chemistry. It is commonly regarded akin to nitroglycerin in its explosive qualities, to the extent that some people refuse to ride over a tank of it. At the same time it is splashed about carelessly in filling tanks, and allowed to run into drains and saturate wooden floors and then blamed when it follows its natural tendencies.

First may be considered the explosiveness or non-explosiveness of gasoline. It is unfortunate that the engines in which gasoline is used should be so commonly called "explosive" engines. Their true name is "internal combustion." As this distinction indicates, gasoline never explodes although it may burn with great rapidity and violence.

Properly speaking, an explosive is a substance which, without the help of

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