

Mexico in the Centennial Year of Its Independence

IV.
(Editorial Correspondence.)
SALINA CRUZ, Sept. 28.—(Special.)—While the United States has been building the Panama canal to meet the certain demands of the near future for world commerce, Mexico has not been blind to the situation nor neglectful of its opportunities to contribute to the solution of this biggest transportation problem. In its isthmus of Tehuantepec Mexico possesses the narrowest strip of land separating the Atlantic and Pacific, with the exception of Panama, that exists between the two Americas, and to utilize this great natural advantage it has constructed, and is now operating, a transcontinental railroad connecting Atlantic and Pacific ports and actively competing for oceanic traffic. This great undertaking is not, strictly speaking, one of the public improvements commemorating the centennial year, having been finished and dedicated with due official ceremonial in 1907, yet it is the most striking example of Mexico's effort to keep abreast of twentieth century progress exemplified in the various national demonstrations, and it is but natural that as guests of the Mexican government, our editorial party should be invited to inspect this across-Mexico route and its terminals, although it is not on the beaten path for tourists.

The isthmus of Tehuantepec lies in almost the extreme southern part of Mexico, reaching as far south as sixteen degrees north latitude, which is about 1,000 miles north of the equator. At its narrowest part it is approximately 126 miles wide as the crow flies, but to make the trip by rail one must travel a distance of 190 miles. This because of the in and out windings of the road to ascend and descend the steep grade required to cross the divide, the back of the Cordilleras, which here at its lowest is 700 feet above sea level. The country through which the railroad passes is thoroughly tropical on the Atlantic side. When it reaches the high levels the vegetation thins out and on the Pacific side, except along the rivers, the vegetation is semi-arid because of the rare rains and high winds.

We had a delightful trip from Mexico City south through picturesque valleys and inspiring mountain scenery with glimpses here and there of three snow-capped peaks, Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl, and still further southward Orizaba, all of them lifting their heads above the clouds and piercing the sky up to from 15,000 to 18,000 feet. The sight of white-capped mountains under a summer sun was not entirely new to me. I having been photographed on the top of Pike's Peak in July and having spent on the Alpine Ridge in August, but the novelty of a single view embracing towering palms, delicate orchids and tropical flowers at the base, our well known trees and familiar vegetation in the center and perpetual frost at the top, indeed striking and must prove memorable.

The junction of the Tehuantepec railroad was made at Santa Lucrécia, whence we continued to a little station called Minatitlan, which is the site of a large oil refining plant, with 6,000-barrel capacity, put up by R. Peacock & Son, limited. It had the crude oil from their own wells in the oil fields at various points on the isthmus. We departed from our special train here and boarded a steam tug which was to take us down the Coatzacoacoas river to the harbor at its mouth, which is twenty-four miles distant, and which used to be on the map by the name of Coatzacoacoas, but which now in deference to the difficulty foreigners might have in pronouncing and spelling it, has been relabeled Puerto Mexico.

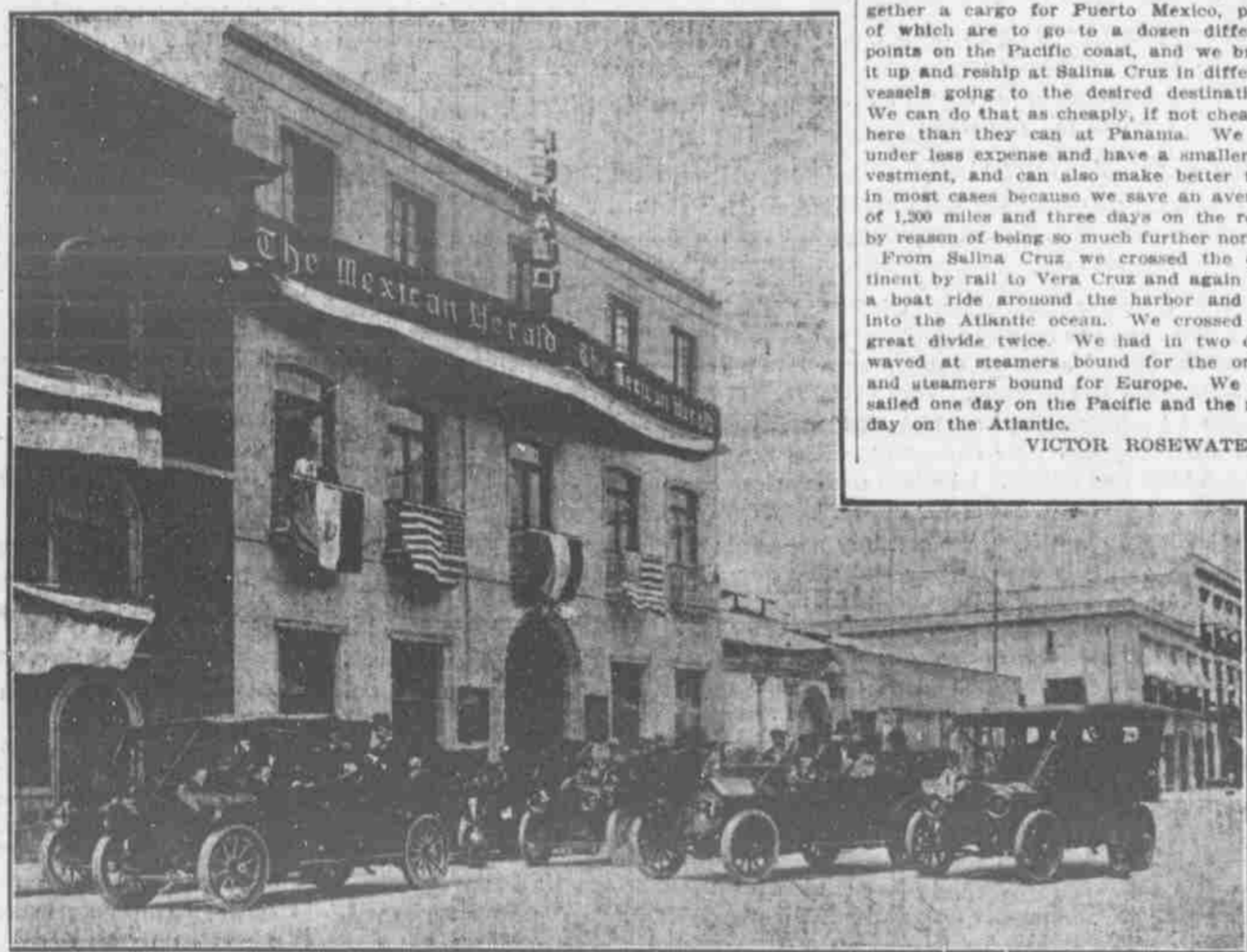
The Coatzacoacoas river is a typical tropical stream, such as we read about and see pictured in books of travel. It is wide, placid and limpid. It is bordered on both sides with dense tropical verdure, showing widely separated shades of green. Here and there are open spaces that have been cleared, sometimes with cattle grazing and now and then a building or a cluster of huts peeps out from the higher ground. Water fowl are plentiful, chiefly black and brown birds of the parrot hawk variety and only occasionally were sandy plumage, and whole flocks of blue and white heron. Two or three crocodiles were accommodating enough to show themselves for our benefit. Small floating islands of water hyacinth, all in purple bloom, let us

pass them, highly colored butterflies flitted by, but wild beasts and tree-climbers were conspicuous by their absence. Although the temperature was torrid a refreshing breeze came up from the water. The sky was almost cloudless and we could not have hoped for a better day.

Down the river we went past the docks and wharves, mooring the steamers loading and unloading with busy electric cranes, past Puerto Mexico and out through the breakwater into the Atlantic ocean, or rather the Gulf of Mexico, where the swelling waves notified us that we were floating on the open deep. But not very far. Back again we came to the wharves to inspect the harbor works and warehouse equipment. As we were informed, the Mexican government has been constructed several steel wharves, each with a warehouse of foot long by 110 feet wide capable of storing 10,000 tons of freight each and equipped with the most up-to-date lifting machinery, all operated by electric power. Vessels of the deepest draught can come right up to the pier, and we saw big ocean steamships, German, British and American, taking on or giving up cargoes.

Puerto Mexico is an ancient town which is said to have been completely rebuilt by the installation of a modern drainage system and the filling in of swamps and made a special object of concern for the government sanitary corps with a view of redeeming it from its former bad reputation as a sink-hole of filth and disease. Presumably the improvements mentioned are real and notable, but there is room for a whole lot more. If the town has a new drainage system it has not yet discarded its old scavenger department, the burghers, for I counted fifty-two of them rooting at dusk on one roof, with other roofs similarly burdened. The mosquitoes there are big and black, and the fleas particularly active and efficient. I do not believe any of our party bought anything there, barring a couple of jaguar skins, which appealed to the man representing a magazine devoted to outdoor sports.

From Puerto Mexico we retraced our way by rail to Santa Lucrécia and then on up the slope by a serpentine line that could be best described as the double twist. At Puerto Antonio, the crest of the divide, are located the shops, general offices and hospital of the Tehuantepec railway. All new, clean and attractive looking



AMERICAN NEWSPAPER MEN IN FRONT OF THE OFFICE OF THE MEXICAN HERALD, CITY OF MEXICO. —From a Photograph Taken During the Recent Celebration.

buildings, put here because the place is high, dry and healthful and abundantly supplied with pure water. It doubtless costs the Mexicans quite a little money, which could otherwise be saved, to paint the repair shops and offices away up here, where every pound of material and supplies must be transported from one coast or the other and lifted up 700 feet, and for this consideration for the comfort and convenience of the employees, the Mexican government, which is responsible, should, at least, have a few credit marks.

Not far beyond Rincon Antonio is a station called San Geronimo, which has a connection with the Pan-American railway, the one in which a Nebraska fellow citizen, D. E. Thompson, is interested as promoter and chief proprietor. From the train we caught we took the switch track that led to the Pan-American, which runs eastward to the Guatemalan frontier and which it is expected will eventually be built on through the Central American states. By way of parenthesis it might be interesting for me to say that the recent report that this road had been sold by Mr. Thompson and his associates to the Mexican government is staunchly denied by those who ought to know down here. I was given the positive assurance by C. R. Hudson, who is in charge of the Mexican national railroads, that no such purchase had been made, and that the only deal so far consummated with the government is a contract for operation.

The next stop was at Tehuantepec, the largest and most important town on the line, after whose inhabitants the whole isthmus derives its name. Tehuantepec has an almost exclusively native population and is a picturesque gem among Mexican cities. We reached Tehuantepec in the afternoon and remained there over night and well into the morning, and our experiences and observations would make an interesting story, which I may yet write. That, however, is a story of a different kind and has nothing particularly to do with trans-isthmian transportation.

The Pacific port of the Tehuantepec National railway is located at Salina Cruz, sixteen miles further on, where a deep water harbor has been constructed with a second inner harbor, by the erection of breakwaters of solid concrete masonry along a coast where previously it was practically impossible for a ship to make land

in safety. We walked out on one side of this break-water, which extends half a mile from the shore line like an artificial stone sidewalk ten or twelve feet wide buttressed with heavy reinforced concrete slabs weighing forty tons apiece. The walk was long and hot with the tropical sun beating down upon us, leaving its mark, as I afterwards ascertained, in sunburn and blisters. It would have been much more comfortable to have traveled that sea wall in an automobile, and it could easily have been done, if only the auto were provided.

Salina Cruz is equipped with four wharves and warehouses of the same size, capacity and construction as those of Puerto Mexico. The wharves and yards are connected with tracks forming practically a belt line, crossing a bridge between the inner and outer harbors, which automatically rises like a railway gate to let the boats go through. There is also a dry dock for ship repairs. In one of the warehouses I saw in transit, sewing machines, rocking horses for the Christmas trade, farm machinery and barrels of printer's ink consigned to Mr. Hearst's San Francisco Examiner. Ships were loading and unloading here and the docks presented a busy scene. The agent in charge of traffic, H. E. Moore, who accompanied us, assured us that the business was steadily growing. Sixteen different steamship lines making one port or the other either occasionally or regularly.

"We make traffic wherever we can get it," says Mr. Moore, "meeting the conditions with which we have to compete. No, we do not cut rates, but our regular rates are fixed with a view to getting the business. They are a little lower between New York and San Francisco than the rates that are exacted by the overland railroads, and we beat the railroads in time right along. We sometimes take freight under guaranty of twenty-six days, which includes transportation by boat to and from our ports, transportation across the isthmus and safe delivery at destination.

"Will the Panama canal destroy our business? Emphatically no. I hardly think it will seriously interfere, although that will depend somewhat upon the canal tolls which are imposed. If the Panama tolls are on the same basis as the Suez tolls, the canal will not trouble us except for shipload consignments. But full cargoes are not the rule. You see, a vessel can get together a cargo for Puerto Mexico, parts of which are to go to a dozen different points on the Pacific coast and we break it up and re-ship at Salina Cruz in different vessels going to the desired destinations. We can do that as cheaply, if not cheaper, here than they can at Panama. We are under less expense and have a smaller investment, and can also make better time in most cases because we save an average of 1,200 miles and three days on the route by reason of being so much further north."

From Salina Cruz we crossed the continent by rail to Vera Cruz and again had a boat ride around the harbor and out into the Atlantic ocean. We crossed the great divide twice. We had in two days waved at steamers bound for the orient and steamers bound for Europe. We had sailed one day on the Pacific and the next day on the Atlantic.

VICTOR ROSEWATER.

Another South Dakota Temple



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, SIOUX FALLS.

SIOUX FALLS, S. D., Oct. 8.—(Special.)—The City temple, the name conferred upon a handsome new First Baptist church building which was dedicated on Sunday with elaborate exercises, is one of the finest edifices of its kind in South Dakota. It adds one more to the fine church buildings of Sioux Falls, and as shown by the accompanying illustration, the building would do credit to a city several times the size of Sioux Falls.

This new structure, complete, represents an expenditure of about \$50,000, and the fact that it was dedicated practically free from debt reflects credit to the energy of Rev. H. R. Best, pastor of the church, to whose personal efforts largely is due the erection of the new edifice, and to the generosity of the members of the church and other residents of Sioux Falls who contributed to the fund for the erection of the building.

CUTICURA CURES STAY CURED

First Father is Cured of an Eruption that Burned and Itched Day and Night. Then Baby is Cured of a Distressing Rash.

Neighbors Pleased to Find a Sure Cure for Skin Afflictions.

"I suffered for eight years with what the doctors called the 'seven year itch.' This was like small red pimples such as form on the face but they burned and itched, day and night. These pimples were from my ankles up, but mostly on my thighs and arms. I tried doctor after doctor but their medicines brought no relief. But at last I struck the right treatment—this was Cuticura. I bought a set of Cuticura Remedies—Cuticura Soap, Ointment and Pills—and a few applications brought relief. When I had used about half the set I was nearly cured and after using two full sets I was well and best of all, I have stayed cured."

"About four months ago, our baby began to be covered with a rash and his head with a spreading sore. Back of the ears, the back cracked open and the poor baby would scratch till it bled. He wailed, cried and could not sleep. Then we bought a set of Cuticura and with a few applications the burning and itching ceased, baby stopped worrying and could sleep. When this single set had gone we had no use for any more as baby was never troubled with the disease again. The neighbors who saw the condition of the baby all asked what cured him and when we told them, they were surprised and pleased to find a sure cure for these skin afflictions. Edward H. Carter, 823 North 37th St., Camden, N. J., Mar. 6, 1910."

A single set of Cuticura Soap and Ointment is often sufficient, rendering it the most economical treatment for afflictions of the skin and scalp. Sold throughout the world. Potter Drug & Chem. Corp., Sole Props., 125 Columbus Ave., Boston, Mass. Get Mail Free, latest Cuticura Book on Treatment of Skin and Scalp Affections.

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Defects in Nebraska's Taxation System

Old Tubal Cain was a man of might in the days when the eagle had no crown. By the fierce, red light of his furnace bright—
The strokes of his hammer rung.
But we are told that after Tubal Cain had spent many years fashioning the sword and the spear, he paused and looked upon the destruction of life and property wrought with the instruments that he had fashioned, and his heart relented and he laid down his hammer and took it up again only to produce the plow share and the plow. Likewise, the writer, for some time "Trouble Man" in the treasurer's office, having charge of delinquent personal taxes, and in this capacity he was said to be a man of might. With icy fingers and flinty heart he gathered in delinquent taxes with accumulated interest, over the protest of the taxpayer that it was through no fault of his that the tax had not been paid when due, and he did this without a quiver or outward sign of compassion. But it soon became apparent to me that the enforced collection of personal taxes could not be made satisfactorily profitable to the city and county and began to study the cause of the delinquency of taxpayers, and soon became convinced that in the majority of cases the fault was due more to our tax system than to the fault of the people.

It is not necessary to say to a taxpayer in Omaha that our method of creating and collecting taxes is confusing and unsatisfactory, for you need only in consult your own experience, and if this does not convince you, just listen to the cry of your neighbors. In my capacity of trouble man it was my duty and privilege to hear complaints and explain certain troubles that arise in the minds of the taxpayer, and but for my private opinion that our tax system was one of the worst that could be imagined, I would have been astonished at the number of people who are utterly at sea on the subject of their taxes. I need not enlarge upon this fact, for how many are there who have not been called upon to pay taxes after having fully believed all taxes were paid, or had real estate sold for taxes when it was supposed to be clear? If there was only an occasional person confused on this subject, we could presume that the fault was his, but when the confusion is common to practically all the people, it is evident that the fault is in the system.

As soon as I became convinced that the fault was in the system I began to look for a solution. I was in position to study the needs of the office with which I was connected with people who had complaints, either imaginary or real, gave me an opportunity to study the subject from the taxpayers' view point, and, combining this with the study of the tax laws of other states, soon

made me an enthusiast for a revision of the tax laws for Omaha and Nebraska. One day, after relieving a friend's mind of a maze of confusion on this subject, he said to me: "Dysart, if you want to do something useful for your city, for God's sake figure out a common sense system of taxation for Omaha." I replied that I was sure I could do it, but was not sure I could make any one else think so. He replied: "Start something that has merit in it and you will see how well you will be supported, for there is no one thing that the people of this city are more anxious for than for an improvement in this particular thing." This conversation was the beginning of a thought that resulted in the production of this series of articles. My purpose in publishing these letters is to give the people an opportunity to express themselves and make suggestions. It is needless to say that we expect to propose a solution, gathered partly from our own experience and partly from a careful study of the laws of other states, but we desire to get your suggestions and ideas, so that when our work is finished it will be as near what it should be as our combined efforts can make it. We desire your suggestion, and your criticism is especially solicited.

In speaking of the faults of our tax system, I shall speak only of those faults that are inherent in our system and avoid all mention of faults peculiar to any particular administration. In fact, I shall assume that each administration has been the best that could have been given under existing conditions, for I am convinced that the most efficient administration can do nothing more than minimize the evils that become abominable under less efficient administration.

The treasurer's office is peculiarly the people's office. It is the one public office that practically all the people must visit. The one office where the people are directly inconvenienced by inadequate service. It is the office where the rights to their property and the title to their homes are involved. Of all the offices within the gift of the people, this should be the office where the people could receive the most painstaking attention and most courteous treatment. And yet, it is not true that this is practically the only public office where the people are obliged to stand in line and work up to a position at a window, and then be ground through with about as much dispatch as cattle in a loading chute, oftentimes receiving what seems to them a stilted explanation of the troubles that are on their minds. The conditions never alter, whether the administration, as many appear to believe, but is largely due to the fact that we have so many different kinds of taxes, due at so many different times, that people

are obliged to keep going to the office over and over again each year, instead of being able to ascertain at one time what their tax for the entire year would be.

The person who owns simply a small home is obliged to pay four items of tax each year—two on his real estate and two on his household effects. If any special taxes are levied on his property for street improvements, etc., these will constitute additional items. This not only makes it necessary for people to make repeated visits to the treasurer's office, but brings them there in such numbers during tax-paying periods that it is almost impossible for them to be waited upon. It frequently happens that taxpayers stand in line without being able to get waited upon until they become discouraged, or other duties call them elsewhere, and they are obliged to go away and return at another time, with perhaps no better result. It was this condition that first convinced me that we were working at the wrong end in the collection of personal taxes. The time to collect taxes is while people are in the office for the purpose of paying them. Under our present system, by our service at the counter we literally drive people out of the office and then send collectors out to try to drive them in again. If it were made possible for people to pay taxes with any degree of comfort and certainty, the amount of delinquent taxes would be greatly reduced. It is the common cry of the delinquent taxpayer (and in most instances true) that he has tried to pay his taxes, and thought he had, and it was through no fault of his that they were not paid.

Two of the most important principles of taxation should be to collect the tax at the least cost and with the greatest convenience to the taxpayer. We certainly are as far from both these principles as we could well be. We are practically duplicating our tax records, and doing almost double work in preparing and collecting taxes, all to no useful purpose, and by so doing are causing this inconvenience to the taxpayer in the kind of service he receives.

Naturally it is the small taxpayer who suffers most from these conditions. The large taxpayer learns to systemize his work so as to save some of this annoyance. But the small home owner, the laborer and professional man who attempts to go in person and pay his taxes becomes righteously indignant when he finds that he must stand in line while perhaps a dozen others before him are being waited upon, and we cannot blame them if they learn to dread the thought of paying taxes. It is the duty of every government to give the greatest assistance to those who need it most. In this particular we are falling short to a degree that will surprise even ourselves. If it is possible for us to reform our tax system so as to make it possible for people to pay their taxes with

certainty and convenience and at the same time save the county and city thousands of dollars a year in the way of expenses and loss on account of faults which will be explained later, it certainly is our duty to do so. To this end your co-operation is asked. Address suggestions or inquiries to me at 76 Omaha National Bank building, or telephone, or call in person.

BOYD DYSART.

KILLEN BOOSTS OMAHA AND ALSO FOR BEATRICE

Says People of the State Are Proud of the Progress of the Metropolis.

D. J. Killen of Gage county, who some months ago came very near running for the republican nomination for governor, is among the Al-Sar-Ben visitors who came boosting his home town. Killen has just removed from Adams to Beatrice and opened a drug store.

"Beatrice is booming," said Killen, "and it seems to me that every merchant is doing a big business. We have an automobile factory which is working over time. The Lueben Hay Baler company has recently increased its facilities, and the Kree Hardware Manufacturing company has erected a new building to care for its increased business. In fact, in all lines of business there is a big increase over the previous year and the growth of the city is gradual and sure."

"Our growth, however, is nothing compared with that of Omaha. I am a pretty frequent visitor here, and every time I come I see some new buildings going up. Omaha is a wonderful city and the state is proud of it."

Discussing politics, Mr. Killen said Gage county would roll up a big majority for Charles H. Sloan, republican, for congressman.

The Key to the Situation—Bee Want Ads.
New Minister from Sweden.
STOCKHOLM, Oct. 8.—Count Ehrensvard, Swedish minister to Belgium, was appointed today minister at Washington in succession to M. Lagercrantz, resigned.

Hod's Sarsaparilla

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Get it today in usual liquid form or chocolate tablets called Sarsaparilla.

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The 15-30 H. P. Stearns model sprang into instant popularity when it was first placed upon the market—and it has steadily gained in public opinion with each successive season.

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Many motor car owners, intent upon securing the utmost in motor car construction, yet not desiring the carrying capacity of the larger Stearns models, have sought the 15-30 type. In every quality it is the proportionate equal of the larger Stearns cars. Rated at 15-30 horse power, the motor develops full forty, giving speed and power far in excess of that ordinarily required.

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The ability of the 15-30 Stearns to negotiate rough and tortuous country roads and its worth as a hill-climber not be bettered, these qualities proving the correct balance of weight and power. The 116-in. wheel base, compact power plant and double-prop frame permit the mounting of bodies of ample size with exceedingly low hung doors, while the long and flexible springs smooth out the roughest roads. The 15-30 model is a Stearns in everything that the name implies—power, speed, flexibility, ease of control and quietness in operation. Well balanced and highly efficient, the car is ideal either as a touring car, toy tonneau runabout (with removable tonneau), limousine or landaulet.

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15-30 H. P. Touring Car—\$3,200 30-50 H. P. Touring Car—\$4,600

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30-50 H. P. Touring Car

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