

CONSIDER SPEED TRAGEDIES

Precautions Being Taken to Preclude Accidents in the Future.

SPECTATORS ARE CARELESS

It Has Been Shown in Accidents That They Do Not Take Precaution to Keep Out of Harm's Way.

NEW YORK, Oct. 1.—The killing of twelve persons through automobile racing at the state fair grounds at Syracuse on September 16 has called the attention of the whole country to the conditions under which such speed contests are held. Unknown to the general public, motor car racing has attained so great a popularity that races with record-breaking drivers are the chief attraction at fairs held on tracks scattered throughout the United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In the last two years the American Automobile association has sanctioned contests on the only three speedways especially constructed for motor racing: on fifty-eight dirt tracks, chiefly mile and half-mile tracks; on four beaches, and on ten road race courses. Now that the people of this city have learned that they are to have a two-mile motorcade within easy reach on the Jersey meadows, the question is being asked what precautions will be taken for the safety of the public and the drivers. The architects are now preparing the plans for the arrangement of the grandstands and parking spaces, and in view of the Syracuse accident they have been told to take even greater precautions to secure absolute safety for the public. The three motor speedways already built in this country provide for the safety of the spectators largely by keeping them at such a distance from the tracks throughout their whole circumference that a car plunging from the course cannot crash into a crowd, as did Lee Oldfield's racer at Syracuse. On practically none of the fifty-eight dirt tracks, used for both motor and

horse racing, are similar precautions taken, the public being as willing to expose itself to danger as the promoters of the races and owners of the dirt tracks are to allow it. The contest board of the American Automobile association has a rule that all dirt tracks on which races are sanctioned by it must have the dangerous turns safeguarded by a fence at least thirty feet from the outer edge. It is said that this rule has not always been observed, but the accident at Syracuse occurred at a point which was not considered as dangerous as the sharp turn nearby, where a supplementary fence had been erected.

The Syracuse Accident.

"The Syracuse accident may be taken as an example of the public's desire to be right where the danger is," said Fred J. Wagner, who is official starter of the American Automobile association at all the important motor racing meets and who was officiating at Syracuse when the accident occurred. "Twice I went to that crowd on the backstretch and warned them of their danger; they only jeered me and stuck to their places, for that was where they wished to be. At that point a second fence had been built to keep them from hanging over the edge of the track, and the police protection was insufficient to move them back to a position of safety. There was more criticism when I held up the racing for a half hour and more for the sake of the public and drivers, because a portion of the track had been watered contrary to my orders."

"When the car of this man who calls himself 'Lee Oldfield' went off the track I did not know that anybody had been killed until some persons came over and asked why I did not stop the race in respect to the dead. It was because of respect for the living that I did not put an end to the racing then, for my experience has taught me that the morbid curiosity of people will lead them to endanger their own and others' lives when a driver goes off the track, and the stopping of the racing affords them the opportunity to rush in a mob to the scene of the accident."

"Some people will undoubtedly raise a cry that all automobile racing should be

stopped because of this Syracuse disaster," continued Mr. Wagner, "but that does not necessarily follow. The public is safe on the specially constructed motor speedways at Indianapolis, Atlanta and Los Angeles, and safety would be assured spectators at dirt track races if the promoters and track owners—who think that horse racing is going to have its day again—would erect barriers all around the track to keep the crowds thirty feet back from the tracks."

Small Tracks Discarded.

On account of the danger connected with the exceedingly sharp turns on half-mile tracks, the contest board of the American Automobile association some time ago announced that beginning with January 1, 1912, the board would sanction no more racing on them. At the contest board's office the following was given out in regard to races held under the association's sanction:

"The dangers connected with racing on dirt tracks have been recognized by this board, and its efforts have been directed toward reducing them to a minimum. This can be attained in two ways: The first is our requirement that all dust, which at one time was the worst feature of dirt track racing, be laid by means of crude oil or calcium chloride, so that the drivers may see to guide their cars."

"The second method in reducing the danger consists in keeping the crowds back from the track at least thirty feet. It has been found impossible to require that this be done all the way around the track, for the promoters and owners absolutely refuse to do it. If such a rule were formulated or if the contest board refused to sanction any more automobile racing on dirt tracks practically all the drivers would become outlaws and automobile racing in this country would be in a chaotic state because of unscrupulous promoters and drivers."

"The great speed attained by the high-powered cars of the day makes it impossible for absolute safety on dirt tracks. In their desire to win, drivers are liable to go so fast that skidding and the plowing of wheels into the dirt may cause a tire to be thrown on the sharp turns. If a car goes off the course the chances



Thirty-five hundred miles of rough and mountainous roads, including the distance from the Rambler factory at Kenosha to Boston and return, by a roundabout route, is the test to which the Rambler Cross Country, the new popular \$1650 car, is to be put in an exhibition run now underway.

The picture shows Charles T. Jeffery, president of The Thomas B. Jeffery Company, bidding Al. Reeke and Walter Simkin good-bye as they left Kenosha

as it will not pass beyond the thirty-foot limit. In case it does, the people, being kept at that distance from the track, have a far better opportunity to get away than if they were standing right up next to the track's edge."

Practically every accident in which spectators have been the victims, especially

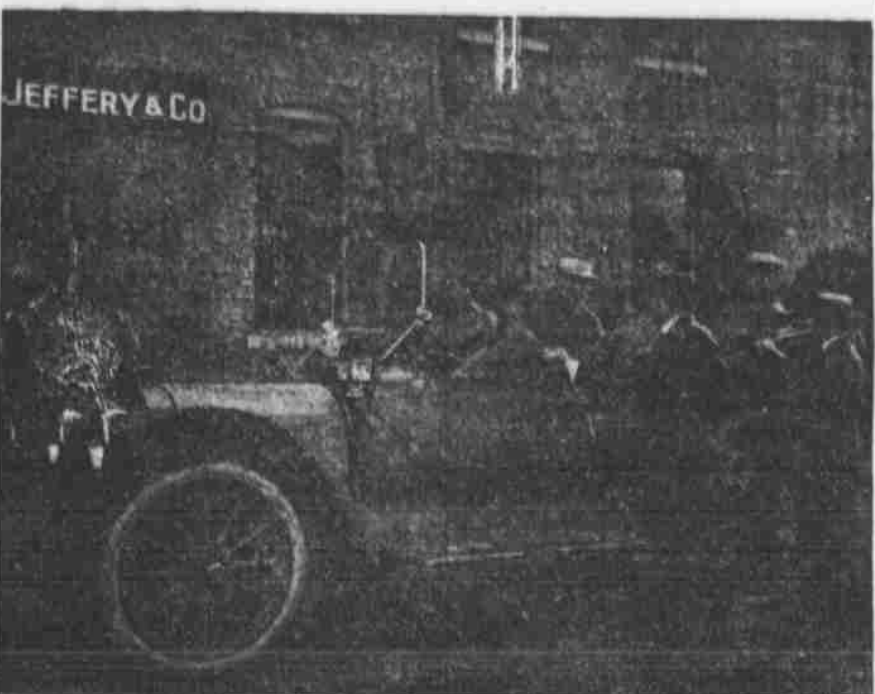
in the flag bearer of the Rambler line for 1912.

The route is from Chicago to Cleveland, Pittsburg, Philadelphia, New York, Boston and back.

This new model is a 38 horse power, five-passenger with 120 inch wheel base and 36x4 inch wheels and tires. It is finished in nickel and the color is English Purple Lake. It is long, low and roomy with drop frame and front axle set for ward and straight line torpedo body.

the Syracuse disaster, has demonstrated that the spectators will not look out for their own welfare. This fact is realized by the contest board of the American Automobile association, racing drivers and the promoters of race meets, no matter whether or not they show it by going to extra trouble and expense to

START 3500 MILE TEST



take care of the public. If the motor-club of the Metropolitan Speedway association is to be a success from all points of view the prevailing opinion of the automobile world is that the construction of the track, barriers, grandstands and parking spaces makes absolutely impossible the chance of a single spectator getting anywhere near the inner or outer edges of the track. The speedway plans at present call for the accommodation of 200,000 spectators, which amounts to just 100,000 more than the largest number of persons that ever attended a single sporting event in this country—the 200-mile race at Indianapolis Speedway on Memorial Day last May. The directors of the Metropolitan Speedway association believe that the immense population in this vicinity justifies their preparation for more than twice as many persons; should that number gather at the speedway to watch automobile racing it will be necessary for human ingenuity combined with concrete walls, ditches and passageways beneath the course to protect the public, in view of its incapacity to safeguard itself from the dangers of the track.

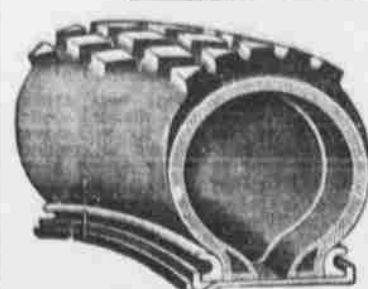
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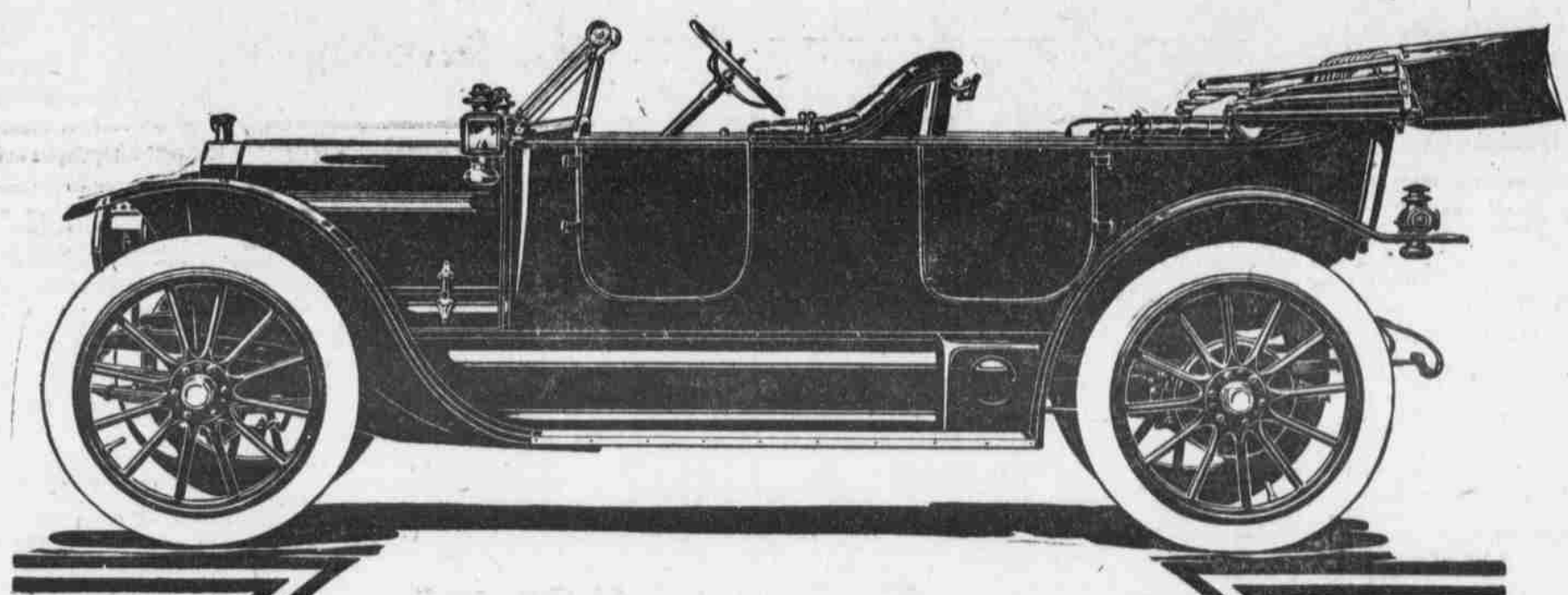
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It's Here

Rambler

It's Here

1912-Cross Country-\$1650



IT'S 38 horse-power, five-passenger, with 120-inch wheel base and 36x4-inch wheels and tires. It's long, it's low, it's roomy. Low, with drop frame—long, with front axle set forward and straight line torpedo body. Roomy, with 27 inches from front seat to dash and 30 inches from seat to seat in tonneau. No outside door latches. Enclosed ventilated front and hooded dash. A car of exceeding beauty, finished in English Purple Lake—it's a rare shade of deep maroon—trimmed in nickel. Radiator to conform to body lines, high and distinctive in appearance. Fenders with sweeping grace. Powerful brakes. To drive this car is exhilarating. It runs like a spirited horse. You touch the throttle and it's away. It's the Rambler Cross Country and the flag-bearer for 1912.

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Rambler Motor Car Company 2052-2054 Farnam Street Omaha, Nebraska

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