

# AUTOMOBILES

## "Toy of Rich" Has Become A Necessity to the Farmer

No Class of People Buying Autos as Fast as the Agriculturists; Show on Auto Row This Week.

Auto Row in Omaha will be a busy section of the city for the next week, as all the dealers have made extensive preparation to care for the visitors who are sure to come to the Ak-Sar-Ben festivities and will take this opportunity to look over the offerings of the various dealers.

The new decorative lighting system of the city has been extended to Twenty-fourth street and the special Ak-Sar-Ben lights are up as far as Twentieth street, so that at night the row is just as light as day. Dealers have arranged to take advantage of this and to keep open house all week to entertain the thousands of visitors.

Dealers have decorated their stores with national colors as well as Ak-Sar-Ben colors and have installed special lights so that the entire row has a gala day appearance. No city in the entire United States has better lighted showrooms than has Omaha. Most of the stores are roomy and are not overcrowded with cars so that those desiring to look over the numerous offerings have ample room to view the new models from all sides and day or night have the best of lights to illuminate all parts of the cars.

**Center of Grain Belt.**  
No section of the country has such a demand for cars as the territory tributary to Omaha. This section is teeming with wealth and Nebraska has more cars per population than any other state of the entire United States.

Iowa now has one automobile for about every ten people and Nebraska goes it one better with one car for every eighth person, and the ratio is rapidly increasing. It is sure to increase faster when this state husks its bumper corn crop which is almost ripe in the Nebraska fields.

The demand for autos in the state has been something phenomenal as there has been no let up since snow left the ground this spring. No matter how early dealers along the row got down to their places of business they found some prospective buyers camped outside their doors waiting for a chance to look over the offerings. It has been one continual bustle all summer, the salesmen busy demonstrating and the proprietors busy getting enough cars from the factory to fill the orders.

**Demand for Trucks.**  
Demand for trucks has also increased by leaps and bounds. Not only is the demand for these from the merchants and jobbers and manufacturers of the large cities, but the country is demanding them, too. Farmers have learned that it is cheaper to buy gasoline for trucks than to feed heavy draft horses to haul their produce to the city.

Use for trucks has increased wonderfully during the last year. During that time the entire city street department has been motorized and now the street washers and flushers have been placed on heavy trucks and trucks are used entirely for hauling material. The fire department has been motorized for some time. Paving contractors use trucks almost entirely to haul the material to their jobs and the delivery systems of the large stores are entirely relying on trucks and light delivery wagons.

**Haul Hogs in Auto.**  
Quite a little amusement was created on the South Side last week when a woman from Iowa appeared in her Studebaker touring car with two large hogs for the Omaha market.

Omaha has become the accessory distributing point for the entire west, dealers out in the state long since learning that they can buy parts and adjuncts of automobiles cheaper in Omaha as they save the express charges from Chicago and other eastern points.

at \$500 or less, when other makers were holding conferences to maintain prices and limit the production of what they believed must always be a rather exclusive luxury.

The passenger automobile is a facility for farmers; a part of the equipment of the progressive agricultural plant. The saddle horse and the buggy horse were farm equipment in the pre-motor period. The town horse was almost wholly a luxury, and one rarely maintained by others than the very well to do.

The farmer's automobile has supplanted his horse not only for passenger service, often not mere pleasure riding, but also for the farm errands and light freight hauling which took up so much time when horses were the fastest means of traveling between the farm and the blacksmith shop, the railroad station, the postoffice, the creamery.

**Trucks for Parcel Post.**  
The postmaster general has issued a statement strongly supporting the Moon house bill authorizing experiments by the Postoffice department in the operation of motor trucks in the vicinity of large cities. The operation of these motor truck routes would add 100 per cent to the value of the parcel post service.

The purpose of the Moon bill is to co-ordinate with the parcel post system the benefits of the millions of dollars already expended and to be expended in the development of motor vehicles and the making of good roads.

Already automobiles are paying more than \$25,000,000 in license and registration fees. Nearly all of this in the country as a whole is spent upon road improvement, but the value of country owned automobiles as educators of farmers formerly content with bad roads is far greater than \$25,000,000 a year in its effect upon farming and the advance of farm land prices.

It is of singular interest to note that the invention of the automobile, which pessimists declared would put mortgages upon homes and cause a great waste of time in pleasure driving, has done more than any single invention to promote the progress of agriculture and increase the welfare of the country.

The pre-eminent luxury of the period is adding countless millions to the basic wealth of the United States, as well as contributing to the happiness of country life freedom from the isolation formerly endured with

more or less fortitude by farmers and dreaded by urbanites who, but for that bugaboo, might have been attracted by the compensations of living upon and from the soil.

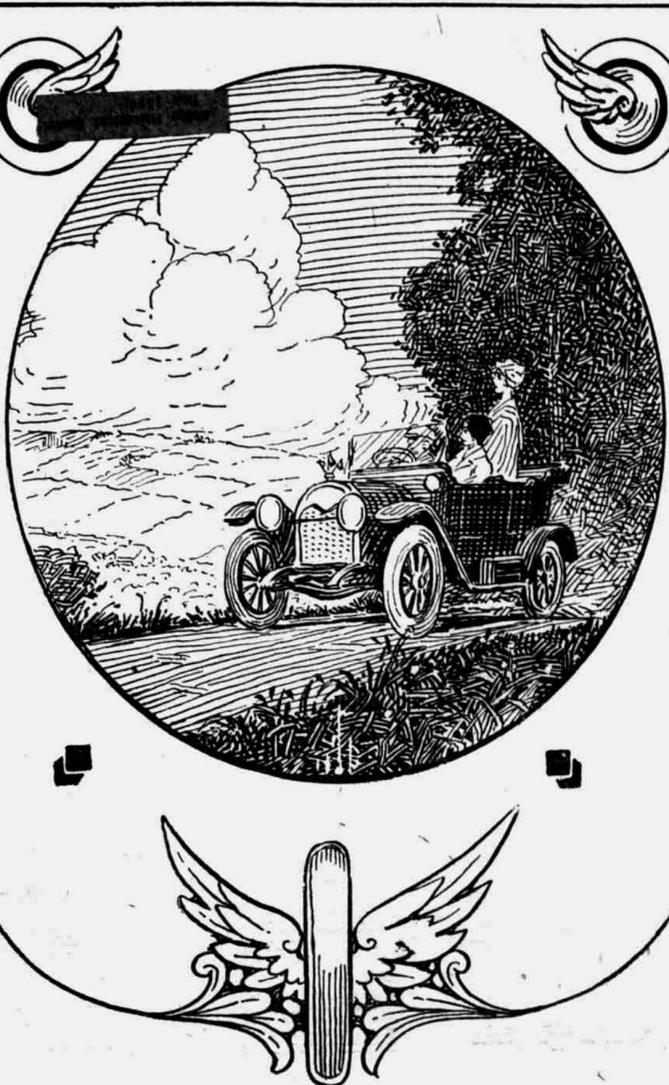
take into account the moneys spent indirectly in connection with motoring, such as the cost of suitable clothing, hotel and traveling expenses while touring, which must add several millions to the total amount.

**Many Are Benefited.**  
The spending this money benefits directly or indirectly a great number of people, especially the industrial classes. The average of direct labor upon the car is small, but this does not by any means cover the entire cost to the manufacturer. There are, in addition to the items of rent and taxes, the heating, lighting and power, the wages of unskilled and skilled labor throughout the works, the salaries of the managers and the staff of supervisors, the highly skilled draftsmen, testing staffs and the clerical assistants who deal with the supplies and keep track of the work.

Moreover, the manufacturers' purchases are high in the way of material which is not raw, but the finished and partly finished product of other trades. When a machine is finished, still more labor is required for its distribution and sale.

**Labor Half the Cost.**  
From first to last over half the cost of a motor car represents labor, while the balance is not manufacturers' profits, but such items as rent, fuel, light, heat, advertising, traveling expenses, office expenses, agents' commissions, depreciation of the plant and machinery. Apart from the cost of cars, if other items are analyzed similarly affecting the expenditure of upkeep, it will be found that each and all pay their quota or share to labor. At least half of the cost of repair and renewals goes to labor, while even such items as garage expenses, registration and license fees and insurance also mean employment of laborers and helpers, collectors and clerical staff.

Taking all the expenditures of owners of motor cars, the benefits to the industrial classes must exceed in the aggregate a billion dollars annually. If the average of the wages and salaries of all engaged in the motor trade and other connected industries be taken into consideration as a thousand per annum, it means that upwards of 2,000,000 persons obtain their employment by that industry and that something like 5,000,000 of the population are directly or indirectly supported by the manufacture of motor cars. Then there remains a very important item of depreciation which, although not one of direct-out-of-the-pocket expenditures is one, nevertheless, representing a loss of capital and should therefore be included. If this were done, it would add another vast sum to the total, so that if these items are considered it is certain that at the present rate of increase the gross expenditure upon all branches of motoring will before the present year in over reach the enormous sum of over \$10,000,000,000.



## Auto Exports Are Greater Than Before War Started

Value of Parts Sent Abroad Is More Than When European Nations Started to Fight.

In the twelve months ended June 30, 1917, this country exported \$27,284,932 of automobile parts, not including engines and tires, or actually a greater export value in parts alone than the total value of passenger cars and trucks shipped abroad in the year before the war. Automobile exports for the year ended June 30, 1914, totaled \$26,574,574.

Automobile exports in the 1917 fiscal year ended June 30 totaled \$90,958,243, composed of \$42,337,315 worth of commercial vehicles and \$48,620,928 of passenger cars. In the preceding year the total was larger (it was the record year), being \$97,465,811, composed of \$56,805,548 of trucks and \$40,660,263 of passenger cars. It will be noted from these figures that again the normal situation has been established of larger exports of passenger cars than of trucks, a situation which was upset in the 1915 and 1916 years by the war demands for American trucks on an unprecedented scale.

**Continues to Increase.**  
In the year before the war we exported 784 commercial vehicles valued at \$1,181,611 and 28,306 passenger cars valued at \$25,392,963. How this pre-war volume of automobile exports compares with our exports since the war began is shown below:

	1917	1916
United Kingdom	\$18,608,442	\$26,147,882
France	14,991,460	19,127,904
Canada	15,036,757	7,239,151
Russia in Europe	6,371,982	16,686,874
Australia	4,213,874	4,442,840
West Indies and Bermuda	4,072,647	3,822,912
British East Indies	3,517,351	2,307,729
Argentina	2,432,256	2,098,592
Chile	1,982,828	874,777
Mexico	1,823,975	409,700
Denmark	1,011,182	86,384

A significant point in the above table is the large taking of American automobiles by Canada. Some of this total may be for re-export, but it is a fact that several of the leading American companies are finding a very ready market for their product north of the border. Canada before the war took more of our motor output than any other country.

## Ten Billion Dollars is Price U. S. Pays for Autos

More Than Four Million Motor Cars Registered During the First Six Months of Current Year.

By EUGENE M. TRAVIS, New York State Comptroller.

More than 4,000,000 motor cars of all descriptions were registered in the United States during the first six months of the current year. Of this number 88 per cent were passenger cars and the remaining 12 per cent commercial, and nearly all were built in this country. A recent United States commerce and industry report shows that the number of foreign cars imported into this country during the last six years has been negligible—less than 20,000—while over 43,000 cars valued at \$18,000,000 have been exported since January last.

As a matter of statistics, 94 per cent of the cars used in this country are of American make and it can safely be computed that they aggregate a present value of nearly \$5,000,000,000. The statistics further show that about \$600,000,000 was spent upon the purchase of about 800,000 new cars by American motorists last year and to this sum are yet to be added the values of the accessories, the supply of which forms a very substantial branch of the motor car trade.

**Not an Expense.**  
But the annual expenditure for new machines, large as it is, is not all the expense, as the cost of running is heavy, witnessed by an industry which motoring has built up, namely, tire manufacturing, which is becoming almost as large as the motor car building trade itself. Next to the tires is the cost of gasoline and lubricating oils, which is among the heaviest in the motorists' expenditures. Besides the cost of repairs, renovations and periodical overhauls amounts to many millions, which, added to this, is the sum of the annual registration and license fees, reaching \$25,000,000 so far this year, will amount to a sum exceeding \$35,000,000.

Statistics reported by the United States bureau of roads indicate that approximately \$80,000,000 was expended for highway improvement last year by the several states and largely for the benefit of the motorists.

Garage service aggregates a large sum, although perhaps the heaviest expense of all is in driving and care of the cars, which has opened a new calling of vast extent. The actual number of professional drivers licensed in this country during 1911 reached nearly 175,000 and since that time their number has increased twofold. If the wages of this number were fixed at the rate of \$15 per week and the compensation of others employed about the car were added the total would reach upwards of \$5,000,000 annually. But these figures cover only the direct expenditures upon cars and their operation and do not

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