



Government Publicity Department, photo

Queenstown and "The Remarkables" Mts., Lake Wakatipu

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## The King's Highway

*A Motoring Causerie—By Sancho*

THE British-made motor is becoming a much more prominent object on the roads of New Zealand than it was a few years ago, but it has a long way to go before it gets to where it ought to be. With the big factory shortly to go up in Wellington's suburban industrial area, the American-made car so far as several well-known makes are concerned, will become very much of a local industry. It is true the plant to be erected is only an assembling and body-building plant, but the fact remains that America's trade is extensive enough to warrant a big factory here, whereas the British motor manufacturer continues to be an inaccessible person at the other end of the cable.

GRADUALLY the public is waking up to the fact that the British light car is an economical vehicle that stands up perfectly well to the ordinary run of New Zealand roads. The light car is the leading development in the British motor trade of post-war years. It is a development forced by the British national motor tax of £1 per horsepower per annum, and by the demand of the British purchaser for a vehicle which shall be as economical in running costs as possible. The British light car made its first bow to the public about fourteen or fif-

teen years back, and some of the earliest specimens still survive in this country, flatly refusing to wear out. The writer was out the other day in a ten-year-old English light car which, after about fifty thousand miles on New Zealand roads, was running as quietly and sweetly as one could wish, and making excellent time on the road. Its owner, in fact, remarked that nearly every stranger to whom he gave a lift remarked on the smooth running of the car and gasped when told of its age.

THERE is no getting away from the fact, however, that if English cars are to be sold in quantity in this country the English manufacturer must lay himself out to taken an active interest in the market. There is a tremendous amount of lee-way to be made up, and the idea that the light car is little better than a toy still persists in many quarters, and requires to be combated. The manufacturer also needs to make himself more familiar with the special requirements of our market, and establish much closer contact between himself and the

New Zealand purchaser. With more ginger in the selling end, and more backing and support from his local agents, the British manufacturer could undoubtedly do very much better in this country than he is doing. Once he sets out in real earnest to keep his end up here he will find plenty of support.

AMERICA had its car show in New York soon after the New Year, and the trend for 1926 seems to be in the direction of smaller six-cylinder engines, automatic chassis lubrication, shorter wheelbase, and a great range of colours in the body finish. Balloon tyres are established firmly, but the demand is for six-ply tyres, as the four-ply balloon tyre has been found to have inadequate strength. Apart from four-wheel brakes, the braking generally has been improved on all cars, and even the cheapest have improved the size and width of their brake drums. A dozen or more makes were shown with the new double beam headlamps. In these the long light ray for driving is shortened and deflected downward when another car passes, but without any dimming as

in the past. This result is attained by the use of a second filament in the headlight, placed below that supplying the usual bright light. The driver shifts a switch lever on the steering wheel and the current is shifted to this second filament, which is out of the true focus of the reflector and so placed as to give a bright field of illumination immediately in front of the car, and somewhat broader than usual so that the ditches and sides of the road are well lighted.

ANOTHER feature at the New York show this year has been the return of the roadster and dicky seat. The closed car has now become the standard, instead of the luxury article as it was of yore, but there are always many people who want something different from the usual run, and for them the sports roadster with luxurious equipment is being freely provided by numbers of American makers.

ONE thing to be thankful for in connection with the Dominion's good roads movement is that the extreme distrust of the Highways Board appears to be dying out in the South Island. A year or so ago the board was regarded as a sinister device created for robbing the South

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