

Modern Motoring

A Review of the British Motor-Car Industry

Better Value for Money

TECHNICAL writers of recent articles in English papers have not been backward in expressing their depreciation of the fact that the British motor industry has allowed foreign cars and foreign competition to seriously challenge British supremacy.

In reviewing the last great motor show in London, Mr. Gordon Aston, one of the foremost experts on motor-car construction, has some very pertinent remarks to make that are well worth reprinting here for Dominion motorists to ponder over.

While admitting that British cars are doing better than ever before, which is good for the private owners, Mr. Aston remarks: "... We can hardly shut our eyes to the enormous number of foreign motor vehicles that are running on our roads to-day. In the case of the popular American six-cylinder cars of low price, of which there are a couple of outstanding examples, my opinion is that they deserve the vogue that they have achieved, and I wish I could see some intention on the part of British manufacturers to produce similar vehicles. Obviously, there is a huge demand for a cheap and good six-cylinder, preferably with a closed body, but so far we have done nothing at all towards supplying it."

Superiority of Small Cars

IN the case of the numerous foreign small cars, the article goes on to say, which came to us from France and Italy, the writer remarks:

"I am at a loss to understand the position. We may not, over here, be able to produce the best in all classes of cars, but in the light car category I maintain that the British vehicle is supreme. Those who buy imported stuff are definitely not getting as good value for money as they can get at home."

From this point on we have made excerpts from a lengthy article, of a more or less technical nature. However, what follows will, doubtless, appeal to our readers.

With regard to the motor show itself, it brings forward very little that can claim the interest of an innovation. This is not because no progress has been made, far from it, but rather because motor makers

senses, would buy a new car after August at the latest, and also, what was far worse, that the private owner would find his vehicle suddenly superseded and depreciated out of all knowledge. Things are much better



MRS. NEWLYWED: "Well, tell him to take it back. I ordered a parcel marked C.O.D., and he's waiting at the door."

MAID: "Please, mum, there's a man from the fishmongers with flounders."

have become more sensible and now introduce their new designs as and when it best suits them to do so. Thus, quite a number of important new models have made their appearance during the last few months. Formerly they used to consider it a sacred duty to produce something entirely new each time the show came round. This was possibly the silliest policy imaginable. It meant, in the first place, that no one in his

now, for improvement takes place a little at a time, and the "date" of a car is neither so arbitrary nor so overwhelming a factor in its value as it used to be. Already, for instance, there are numbers of genuine 1926 models on the road, though there is quite a lot of 1925 yet to go. Perhaps it will not be long before we cease to differentiate cars in this way, and, instead, refer to the "series" to which they belong.

TAKING the exhibits as a whole I should say that the most conspicuous development is in the direction of better value for money. As a matter of fact, there have not been many notable price reductions. It is rather that makers have improved their cars, particularly in respect of body-work, front-wheel brakes, and equipment generally, and have kept them at the same price. An extraordinarily good car, wanting no detail to make it thoroughly road-worthy and complete, can be bought to-day for an astonishingly small sum of money.

In the realm of the moderate-sized "family" car, the production of which is far greater than that of any other type in this country, it is abundantly evident that there is "room for all." Britons are inherently individualistic, and the mere fact that their next-door neighbour has an 11.9 h.p. Asterisk induces them, rather than otherwise, to go in for a 12-h.p. Apostrophe, so that they will at least have something different. Meanwhile the former, by being turned out in huge quantities at an attractive price, is spreading the gospel of motoring far and wide. In England, at all events, it is abundantly evident that however large his scope of operations may be, no single manufacturer can "collar" any particular class of car and make it peculiarly his own province.

Visitors to the show can hardly fail to be struck by the number of "straight-eight" cars on view. Most of them came from the other side of the Atlantic, but there is no lack of European support for this new principle of engine design. Some authorities are convinced that it is a type with a tremendous future, but I, myself, am not so certain of that, particularly when I find makers such as Rolls-Royce and Bentley content with six-cylinders in their latest luxury cars. It is perhaps easier to make a good eight than a good six, but I really do not see how a good six can be much improved upon.

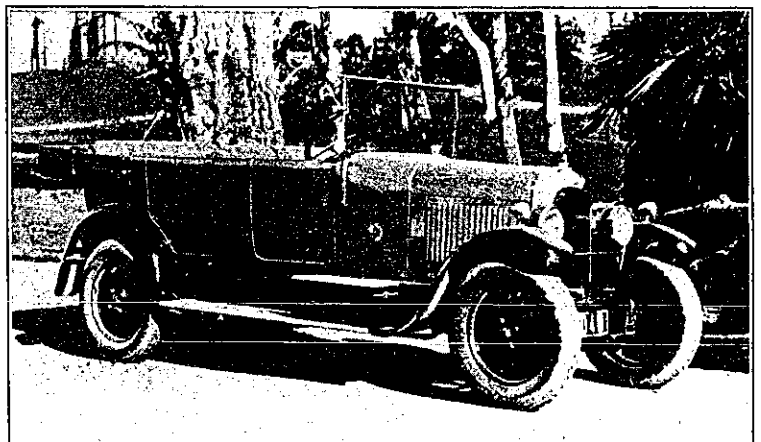
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