

MOTORING & CYCLING.

(CONTINUED.)

At a meeting of the Wellington Automobile Club it was intimated by a member of the committee that the South Island associations were endeavouring to form a South Island union. It was decided that the secretary should write all associations in the South Island pointing out that such a course would seriously interfere with the work of the present New Zealand Automobile Union, inasmuch as the objects of the two unions could not possibly be other than the same. The committee hoped that the South Island associations would not take any hasty action in this matter, and suggested that the subject could be thoroughly discussed at the next meeting of the New Zealand Automobile Union.

The resolution passed by the Wellington City Council prohibiting motor traffic in the main streets of the city, except such motor vehicles as have business in those streets, does not find much favour with motorists. "No motorist will go along Featherston Street or Jervois Quay because the surfaces of the roads are too bad," remarked a motorist to a "Dominion" reporter. "If the City Council would put the roads in order motorists would use them gladly in preference to Lambton Quay, Willis and Manners streets. They won't go over this 'rough stuff' to have their lives bumped out of them. If the City Council would do the work here suggested, it would be the first step towards relieving the congestion in the busy streets. With regard to the proposal to prevent our using the main streets of the city, I doubt if the idea is practicable, and whether the resolution passed by the City Council is not ultra vires. It is doubtful whether anybody has power to stop traffic in any public street. If they try to prevent us from going through the public streets we will take the matter up very seriously, and it is possible that a Supreme Court action will be taken to test the validity of the City Councils prohibition. I am quite certain that the most dangerous portion of the city is Grey Street, with its carrier stand. The stand is licensed for 14 carriers, but one day last week I counted 32 vehicles there. Furthermore, when the Grey Street stand is full, and carts are standing endwise on to the parcel post entrance to the Post Office, I defy any motorist or other vehicle driver to get through the street. The situation of the Courtenay Place express stand is also dangerous. Motorists always encounter trouble at that spot owing to children continually running in and out behind the vehicles. We have been to the City Council before about this carrier-stand question, and have received a sympathetic hearing, but the carriers go to the Labour members and they get their way. This carrier question will have to be dealt with. There are upwards of 700 carriers licensed in Wellington, and they all crowd into the busy parts of the city. Licenses are still being issued to taxi-drivers, and these have to be provided for. Year after year the streets of Wellington become more crowded, but nothing is done to help to solve this very serious problem of the regulation of traffic."

A party of motorists who left Napier for Woodville recently had a sensational experience which brought the trip to a precipitate end. Endeavouring to cross the river near Ormondville, to which the approach is a very treacherous one, the car got out of control, with the result that it was capsized, landing upside down on the adjacent bank. Miraculously the occupants escaped without a scratch.

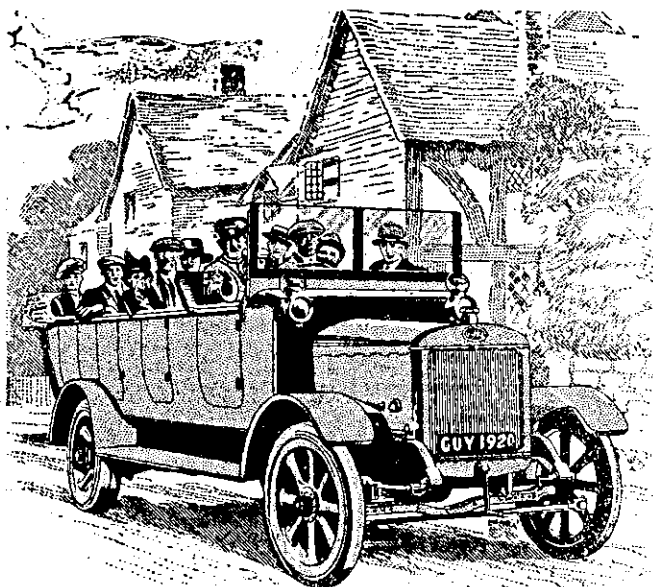
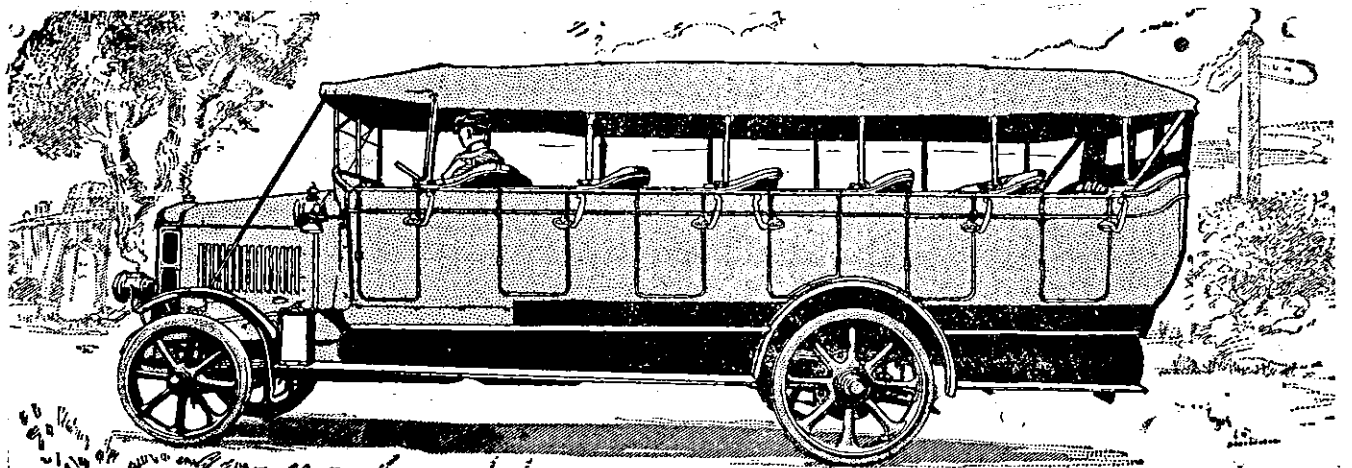
The London "Times" Trade Supplement recently published a letter received from Germany by an important British firm, offering German-made cycle tyres and tubes. The letter stated that "owing to the low labour costs in Germany these tyres and tubes will be turned out at figures representing from 10 per cent. to 20 per cent. under those at present being quoted by the British and American manufacturers, taking into consideration that a German workman capable of working in the tyre industry is paid 100 marks weekly, equal to 18s. at the present rate of exchange. Seeing that wages seem to be one of the cardinal factors in this manufacture, it is only natural that under these circumstances it will be very difficult for another country to turn goods out at anything like a competitive figure, wherefore it should be in your interest to overtake part of these deliveries having goods stamped with your own trade mark." This is the class of competition that not only English but Australian manufacturers will have to contend with unless due provision is made to scotch the evil.

Sometimes motorists are concerned over the erratic or wobbly steering of their car. Even when the front wheels are in alignment, and the steering has been overhauled in the workshop, the trouble is still in evidence. An English expert has found that in most cases the insertion of metal or fibre wedges between the front axle and the road springs overcomes the trouble. It is an easy and inexpensive matter to test the cure on any car showing this defect. First experiment should be made with a pair of wooden wedges, and when the right size is determined by the simple process of elimination, then metal or fibre ones can be made for permanent fitting, because wooden ones will probably split in time. The wedge with the thicker end in the rear should be inserted from the back of the front axle after loosening off the spring clamp bolts. The effect will be to rake the stub axle forward. The best method to secure wedge in position is to make it broader than the spring itself, and at the edges cut semi-circular notches for the spring clips to pass through. This will preclude wedge slipping out. Of course, this method will not cure every case of wobbly steering, but it is certainly worth a trial where other adjustments or alterations have failed to effect their purpose.

A curious device invented to prevent car thefts, took the form of a locked clip provided with a large spike or stud. This was intended to be fitted round the tyre and rim, so that if the car was driven off, a traceable track would be left along the road, while there would also be a clattering to draw the attention of all passers-by to the fact that the car was stolen. In considering a thief resisting device, one must be sure that it will not redound on the owner's own head. For instance, a lock to the steering wheel of Ford cars is an arrangement which has frequently been applied, either to render the wheel unmovable or pulling the steering out of action, enable the wheels to revolve freely. The latter device would appear to possess dangerous possibilities in the case of an owner forgetting to lock it solid before starting. A good plan to safeguard the car is to pass a chain round the gear and brake levers, so they cannot be moved independently. This would render driving out of the question. An arrangement for locking the steering is another, so that while the car can be wheeled, it cannot be driven. A device to lock the gear lever in neutral is satisfactory, but it requires to be strong, for a long lever gives considerable leverage if the thief should attempt to break the lock.

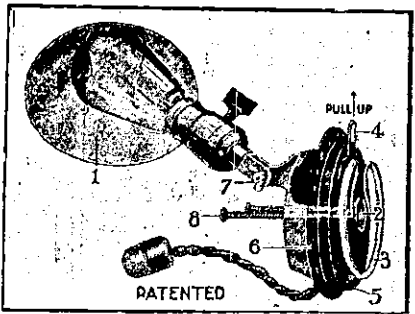
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