

Motoring and Aviation

Effects of Recent Transport Strikes.

OUR ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT.

Colonial readers are, by now, well aware that the Old Country has been undergoing the inconvenience incidental on the recent strike of railway and general transport workers. So completely have the usual means of transit been disorganised that the public generally have been at their wits' end how to transact their accustomed business.

One of the immediate results of these strikes has been that the demand for commercial motor vehicles has increased immensely. It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good, and in this case it is the motor manufacturer who has profited by the misfortunes of others. From all over the country commercial vehicle orders have been pouring in, and the demand is, already, far in excess of the supply. One firm, I am informed, has received orders which will keep their present plant fully occupied for at least three years.

The strike has demonstrated to wholesale firms and to cartage contractors that it is vitally necessary for them to have autonomy in the matter of delivering goods. The cessation of the railways has been the means of compelling them to overcome whatever fears they may have had as to the potentialities and of the value of motor traction. In other words, they have been literally "pitchforked" into buying commercial motors for their own use. The result is that the "Trade" has received a stimulus which is likely to put it in a position which it might not otherwise have occupied for many years to come.

In this item of news there lies a moral. It behoves the New Zealand business man to put aside that futile habit of attempting to compute on paper the relative merits of horse and motor traction; and to do more than merely "flirt" with the latter. Let him believe the sound truth that the modern commercial motor is an economical and reliable article, and is, in fact, something more than the potential successor to the horse. It has "made good" in the face of extreme odds. He who takes it up now runs little risk of making a bad investment—always provided he chooses the right type of vehicle and one eminently suited for his specific service.

A Glut of Old Cars.

In a wayside inn in the Midlands of England, I met a dealer, a few weeks ago, who made a specialty of second-hand cars. He was a Londoner in a big way of business, and he told me a doleful tale of the difficulty, nay, the impossibility of getting rid of old pattern cars of high

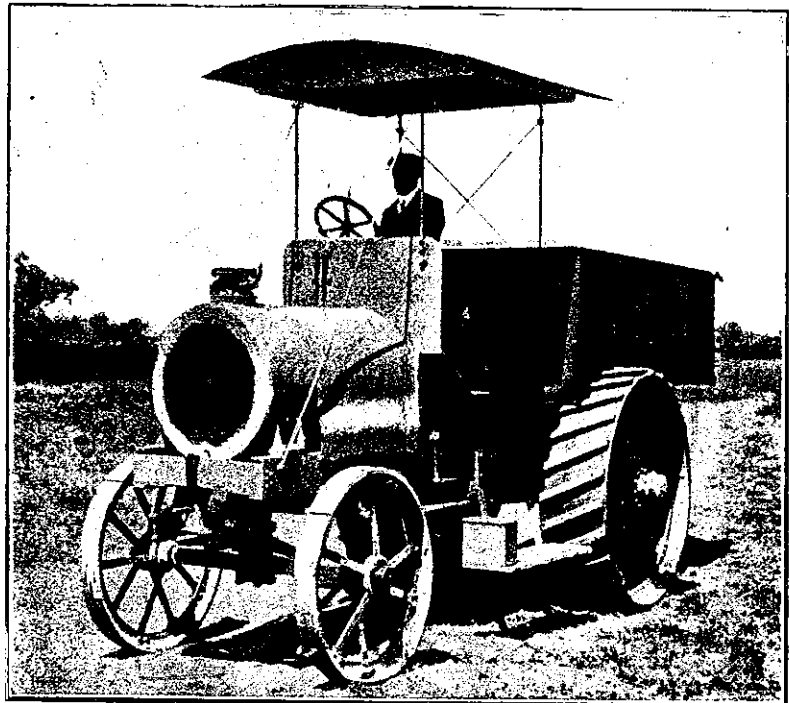
horse-power. The sale of such cars has practically ceased, and London garages are so full of them that dealers are forced to ask rent for their storage.

As a rule, the dealer in second-hand cars is quite prepared to store them free of charge, in the expectation of being repaid by his commission on the sale; but the market for old cars of forty horse-power and over has become so restricted that even a liberal commission off the sale price would not pay the storage charges for a fortnight.

It is not altogether due to the fact that the popular demand of the moment is for

ated, and increase rapidly as horse-power (i.e., bore) increases. So heavy is this burden that it has practically stopped the sale of the 40/50 h.p. car of a few years' antiquity.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has come in for a fine lot of abuse on account of the inequity of his motor taxation scheme, and it is on the tapis that we may soon expect a complete revision of the scale and basis of the duties. A good suggestion—much mooted just now—is that cars themselves should not be taxed, but that the duty on the petrol they consumed, which is at present 3d. on the



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a car of moderate horse-power. There is still a big field for high-powered motor cars among that class to whom expense is no object, and who must have a limousine bodied vehicle, irrespective of the price. Indeed, the manufacturers who have confined themselves to the production of cars of this class, as for instance, the Rolls Royce Co., have not been able to keep pace with their orders.

But between the forty and sixty horse-power car of to-day and its prototype of a few years ago there is an immense difference. The modern car gives "all" the power it is rated at, but not so the older car, with its short stroke and big bore.

This, at first sight, would hardly seem justification for the extraordinarily depreciated value of the big and old car. But when it is explained that the benign Government imposes a yearly tax on cars which is computed on the bore of the engines alone, it will soon be realised why these vehicles are now almost "two a penny." These license duties are gradu-

gallon, should be increased a certain amount. This would result in making the car user, not the car owner, pay the piper.

Glorified Chauffeurs.

A writer in a new work on aviation asserts that most of the present day flying men are only "glorified chauffeurs." The only pity, to my mind, is that they might faithfully answer to this description, for it is in ignorance of their engines and of speed matters generally that most aviators fail. Many of our flying men are recruited from the ranks of the sons of wealthy men, and so the success of those who soar to the limelight is often due to naught else but the unseen preliminary work done on their machines by some, for the time being, unknown French mechanic. The great Vedrines was, eighteen months ago, the humble mechanic to the actor-airman, Lorraine. The latter made many good flights, but none can doubt that their successful issue was