

In The Automobile World

JUST TWENTY YEARS AGO

HORSE COULD WIN FROM AUTO IN 1895.

A "Speed Demon" Made 7 1/2 Miles an Hour—The Record Now is 101.86.

Just twenty years ago the most powerful racing automobile attained an average speed of 7.5 miles an hour in the first American motor derby. A few weeks ago Dario Resta travelled 101.86 miles an hour, and the winner of the Astor Cup race is expected to exceed that speed. This great increase in speed is due not only to the development of the racing car, however, but to the scientific construction of tracks and speedways as well.

The first automobile road race was run between Paris and Bordeaux in 1895. A series of trials had been held on the public highway between Paris and Rouen the year before, but they were only tests and not competitions.

It is a peculiar coincidence in motor racing that the first recorded victory in a road race is credited to a Peugeot, while the fastest time ever made in competition, 101.86 miles an hour, was attained by the same make car in the 100-mile match race in the Chicago speedway a few weeks ago. Count de Dion has the distinction of driving the first propelled vehicle on public roads in competition. His "car" was a quadra-cycle, and his "speedway" a Paris boulevard.

Peugeot Winner Then and Now.

In the first recorded race, Paris to Bordeaux and return, the Peugeot was declared the winner, although it did not finish first, the leading car being disqualified for not complying with the rules. The distance was 732 miles. Twenty-two cars started, and nine covered the course. The Peugeot ran the race at an average of 12.2 miles an hour, and finished three days after it started.

The first motor car race in America was held in 1895. It was held by a Chicago newspaper. A car manufactured by C. E. Duryea came off victor, averaging 7.5 miles an hour for a 54-mile course covered with snow and ice. Only two years later Alexander Winton, in his little Winton runabout, set the first American record by travelling a mile in 1.40.

Between 1898 and 1901 several motor race meets were held. They served one purpose, giving the public the idea that a new means of transportation had arrived in the reception of the motor car as a racing engine. Huge crowds turned out to witness the sport whenever a meet was announced.

In 1901 motor racing became more than experimental. Cars had been so perfected that they could finish a race. Their speed almost equaled that of the common object of comparison, the railway engine. On August 26, 1901, at Newport, R.I., William K. Vanderbilt, Jr., drove his Mercedes five miles in about seven and a half minutes, and ten miles in 15 minutes. On November 16 of the same year the automobile club of Long Island held its famous speed trials on the Coney Island Boulevard. In this event Henri Fournier drove his Mors car one mile in 0.51 4-5. This feat caused the greatest excitement all over the country, and was "headlined" in every paper from coast to coast.

Following the Coney Island boulevard contest, trials were held over the South Shore boulevard, Staten Island. They ended in an accident that killed several persons. The year before the Automobile Club of America had promoted a 50-mile road race from Springfield to Baby-

lon and return over the Merrick road, on Long Island.

The Vanderbilt Cup Race.

Early in 1904 W. K. Vanderbilt, Jr., announced his intention of offering a trophy to be contested for on an international basis, not country to be represented by more than ten cars. The first race was run on October 8, 1904, over a course on Long Island, measuring 32.24 miles. The total distance was 284.4 miles. George Heath, an American, driving a Panhard car, won, his time being 5.26.45.

The race was run yearly until 1906, when crowding of the spectators on the course, and failure to obtain militia patrol the road, caused the abandonment of contests on the public highways. A plan to build a motor park way on Long Island was then formulated, and although only a portion of the course was enclosed this was the first American speedway. Contests were held on horse racing tracks at Readville, Empire City, Yonkers, Morris Park and Brighton Beach. About that time straightaway races were run on the sandy shores at Ormonde Beach, Fla., near Atlantic City, and Galveston.

The first specially constructed enclosed speedway for motor racing was built by Locke King at Brooklands, about twenty miles from London. This was a saucer-shaped course, with a cement racing surface of 2 1/2-1 1/2 miles. America's first speedway was built at Indianapolis in 1909. It is two and a half miles in circumference. It had a gravel surface originally. After several persons had been killed in mishaps caused by the poor condition of the track, the surface was rebuilt with vitrified brick. The first races at Indianapolis were short sprints of no more than 50 miles. A speedway was also built at Atlanta, Ga., in 1909. Only a few short-distance races were run. A mile board speedway was built at Play Del Rey, near Los Angeles, Cal., in 1910, but failed to retain the patronage of the public.

Until 1914 Indianapolis had a monopoly in speedway racing. In that year the Tacoma road race course was converted into an enclosed and banked speedway. Sioux City also had a two-mile speedway. Now there are in existence a dozen enclosed tracks, all measuring two miles or more.

The speedway, as well as the car must have credit for the remarkable season of 1914. Indianapolis began the string with the International Sweepstake of 500 miles, won by a Mercedes car driven by Ralph De Palma at an average speed of 89.84 miles an hour, the fastest time ever made on the Indianapolis track.

The two-mile board track at Chicago was then dedicated with a 500 mile contest. Dario Resta, in a Peugeot car, drove at the average speed of 97.5 miles an hour, establishing a new American record. Eddie Rickenbacker won the next two speedway races in a Maxwell car. On a two-mile dirt track at Sioux City he averaged 75.97 miles an hour, and on the new two-mile board track at Omaha he travelled at the rate of 91.27 miles an hour.

WATER TROUBLESOME IN AUTO CRANK CASE.

Carelessness of Garage Attendant Washing Car Responsible.

It is frequently the case, especially with older motors, that when the oil is drained from the crank case preparatory to pouring in a new supply, a quantity of water will be found mixed with it. Normally, this water does little if any harm. In most cases it is trapped somewhere

in the oil system; yet if it collects in any considerable quantity along the oil line it may cause much trouble in winter by freezing, and thus partly or completely stopping the flow of the lubricant.

In some cases the water may come from a careless garage attendant, splashing water on the motor so forcefully that it gets into the crank case through the breather pipe. Usually, however, the water comes from but one place, the cylinders above.

It is one of the products of combustion, and is also drawn into the cylinders with the air in small quantities. It is also charged that it is sometimes entrained in small quantities with the oil as a result of imperfect settling after certain purifying operations.

If the piston rings are loose and the cylinder walls worn, as is the case with motors that have been run a great deal, part of the explosion will leak past the pistons into the crank case. This is cool, and allows the water vapor, or steam, to condense. In the course of a few months' running this condensation may total a pint or more, and mystify the owner when he draws the oil off.

CITY INSPECTS GASOLINE SUPPLY.

Los Angeles Guards Against Inferiority By Watching Supply Points.

Public inspection of gasoline sold to motorists through the medium of a city oil testing laboratory is being successfully carried out in Los Angeles, which is the only city in the world that has thus far taken up the task of prohibiting adulteration of gasoline and enforcing a system of fuel oil testing.

The large number of motor cars in Southern California, where the number of machines owned per capita is greater than in any other section of the country, has made it expedient for Los Angeles to adopt this system of municipal gasoline inspection.

The inspections have been carried on for the greater part of a year. The practice of adulterating gasoline with cheaper oils is believed to have been stamped out. Refiners whose products failed to comply with the standards have been directed to improve the quality of their goods or refrain from selling in the city.

In the early part of 1915 the Los Angeles department of oil inspection drew up specifications for petroleum products, including gasoline, benzene, engine distillate, kerosene, stove distillate 33 degrees Baume, and furnace distillate 28 degrees Baume, and provided that such commodities sold by dealers within the city should comply with these standards. Refiners, marketers, jobbers, and retailers are included under the supervision.

Method of Analysis

Fractional distillation methods are used, with additional flash, sulphur, and used for analyzing gasoline and kero-acid tests for the latter. The gasoline specifications require that "twenty per cent. of gasoline shall distill over at a temperature not exceeding 260 degrees Fahrenheit; the residue shall have a specific gravity not greater than .7887—i.e., not heavier than 47.5 degrees Baume." Both straight run distilled gasoline and blended or compressor gasoline are admitted.

City inspectors are sent to filling stations, garages, refineries, grocers, and all points where petroleum products are sold.

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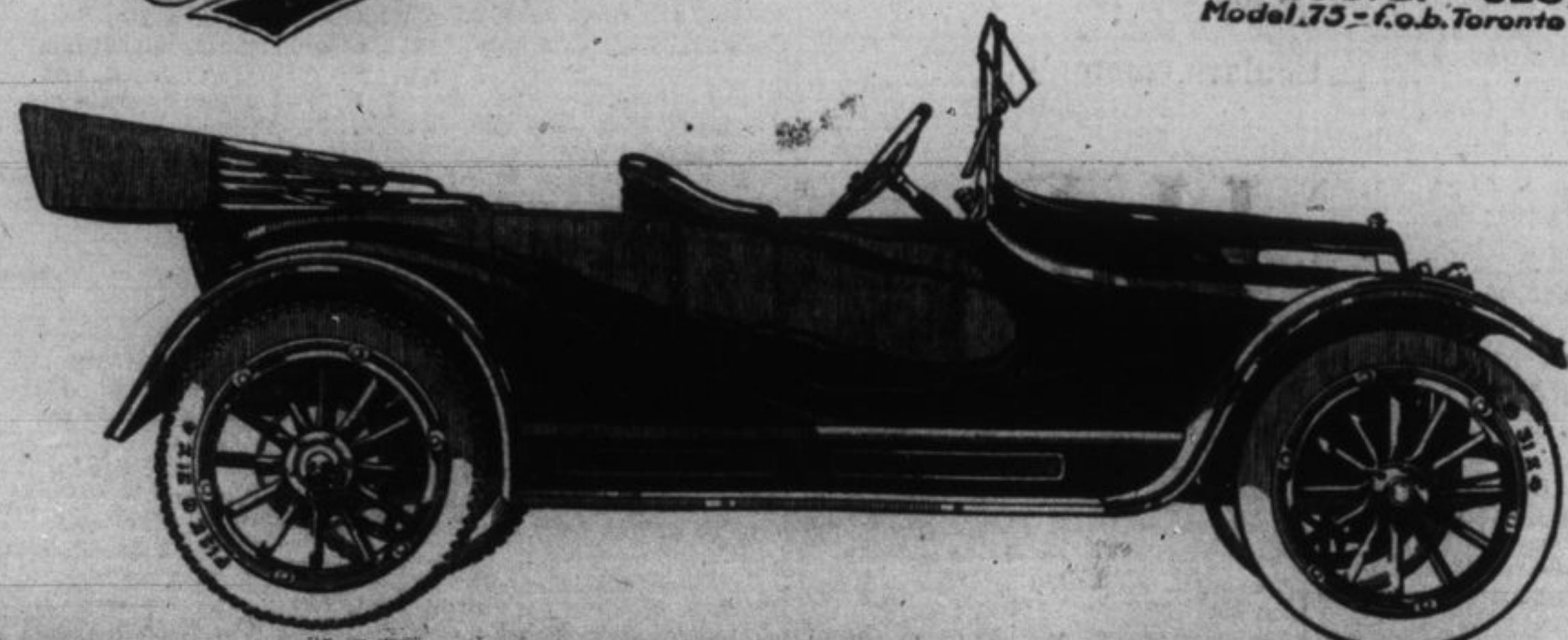
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