

Automobile Section

To-day may appropriately be called the opening day for automobiles in Eastern Ontario. For several weeks back the cold weather has held this country in its grip and made motoring, not impossible, by any means, but uncomfortable for driving. From now until next fall the days will become warmer, the roads will dry up, the grass will become greener and this country will turn from an ice-bound world into one which will rival in climate the far-famed south.

Motoring this year takes its place not as a sport or a luxury, but as an absolute necessity. The gasoline motor of the farm tractor will plough the fields and reap the grain. That same source of energy will in commercial trucks relieve the railroads of much of their heavy work, as well as reduce delivery costs within the cities' limits. In passenger cars it will carry human freight from one place to another, for business, for health, for speed and for pleasure.

This is the industry which the Whig is endeavoring by such issues as this one, to extend in usefulness so that the life of Canada and Eastern Ontario during this awful war will be carried on more effectively, more efficiently and be of greater benefit to the protectors of democracy in Europe.

At first there came the time when dare-devil sportsmen had an automobile so that they could careen along the highways at from twenty-five to thirty-five miles an hour. Then the motor car was put on a business basis by such men as Chalmers and Ford, and it became more generally into use. The wealthy people who were not too conservative to cling to Victorias and broughams bought them as one of many luxuries. Then as competition increased and prices went lower the populace started to purchase automobiles in vast numbers.

Now all of these stages are past. This continent for three years has gradually been moulded into a source of supply of materials to heat the German destructors of our civilization. During these three years the automobile industry was in the melting pot. It has developed as an essential industry and is here to stay. The power of gasoline has come to be an indispensable part of the personal and commercial life of North America.

This year there will be a decrease of thirty per cent. in the production. This means that later on there will be fewer cars obtainable by the buying public. Under the unbreakable rule of supply and demand, and that the material used in the cars will become scarcer, the prices are bound to advance. Already some of the prices are higher. The slogan being thrown out by the well informed authorities is "Buy Now."

In connection with the local situation the Whig is indeed pleased with the prospects. The roads have been continually—though very slowly receiving attention, and now are in fair condition. The city has adopted a plan of pavement which will after the war be adopted as standard for residential streets and be laid throughout the city. In the meantime the Suburban Road Area Commission will continue with maintenance of the country highways. We have now several miles of pavement in various parts of the city, sufficient to permit the heaviest traffic to circulate on good roads.

The commercial use of automobiles in the city is growing rapidly, and in this the dealers see the birth of business which will, in a very short time, be fully as important as the supplying of pleasure cars. There are dozens of firms in Kingston, of all lines of business, now using gasoline instead of horse-power, for more rapid transit. The delivery costs with horses have mounted so high that the motor truck is the only solution. Instead of jeopardizing their business by refusing to deliver goods, many firms have now chosen the motor as their salvation. They are buying a good grade of cars, and as an investment are firmly convinced that it will mean a big decrease in their operating expenses.

The farm tractor is another branch which is growing. This year the Ontario Department of Agricultural has commandeered the supply from the Ford factory, and now offers them to the farmers of Ontario at cost. With this tractor on the market and others by such firms as the International, Case, etc., many farmers will undoubtedly use gasoline to save man-power this season. In the interests of greater production from a patriotic standpoint a farmer should consider a tractor, but with the dollar mark as a guide he will most certainly be buying a motor for his fields.

