

In the Automobile World

ABOUT AUTOMOBILE PRICES

WHY NO DROP IN PRICE CAN BE EXPECTED.

Purchasing Value of the Dollar Rules the Price—Sales Far Ahead of Production—Car Shortage Acute.

Many motorists, it is said, are deferring their purchases of a new car, and many prospective motorists are doing likewise, because they anticipate a radical reduction in the price of cars in the immediate or near future. Probably motorists or near-motorists have never been victimized by a more fallacious expectation. The weatheriness of automotedom indicate clearly, so that all who drive or would drive, may read, that prices will remain stable or advance, strap-

holding economists to the contrary notwithstanding. Practically all car manufacturers shortly following the signing of the armistice, guaranteed the prices of their products against reduction until midsummer. Some have since announced advanced guarantees against reduction until the beginning of next year. None, not one, has intimated in any way an intention to revise its prices downward.

There is only one true criterion of value—the purchasing value of the dollar. According to it, cars are cheaper to-day than ever before, despite the unexampled burden of taxes their selling price includes. It is indisputable that the increase in the price of motor cars has not been commensurate with the increase in the price of other products and commodities since 1914.

You can buy a car to-day with fewer loaves of bread, pounds of butter, quarters of milk, tons of coal, feet of lumber, loads of brick, suits of clothes or hours of labor than ever before. Prices of cars are high, but not nearly so high relatively as almost anything else.

The chief reason for the prevailing high prices is the cheapness of money. On this continent the purchasing power of the dollar has been more than cut in half since August, 1914. In other words, prices have advanced approximately 100 per cent. British and French prices during the same period advanced respectively 145 and 230 per cent. (the latest figures for France available are up to April, 1918, when they were 230 per cent.). During the past four years world currency and bank deposits have tripled—exceeding in face value the entire output of all the gold and silver mines of the world since Columbus discovered America 427 years ago. During the past four years, national debts have quintupled. This inflation, coupled with an over-increasing demand growing out of the determination of living and working standards, and the desire to that end maintain or increase its wages, makes a radical downward revision in prices seem but the most idle of midsummer night dreams. True, there were a few exceptions that were singled out by Marx for enormous increases, and with the depreciation of that gory monster declined in price, and may still further depreciate. Conspicuous among these in general peacetime use are steel, copper and other metals, but these only go to prove the rule.

We have little now of unemployment. Contrary to predictions of a wholesale reduction in wages, labor has maintained, and in not a few cases increased, its wage since the armistice was signed, and a labor shortage threatens many centres despite the demobilization of returned soldiers and war workers. Here again exceptions in wage scales but prove the rule.

Distinguished economists tell us that certainly not this generation, and probably none of the succeeding ones, will ever see pre-war prices, and Prof. Irving Fisher, of Yale University, than whom, probably, there is no greater economist on the continent, advises us in a paper read at the conference of governors and mayors that, "we are on a high-price level permanently," and that "to talk of 1913-1914 prices is to speak in a dead language to-day for the new price level is a stubborn reality." The only thing to do in all wisdom is to adjust ourselves to it and accept it as a permanent, not a transient condition. This applies whether we are

going to buy cars or build houses or construct highways. To temporize is but to waste time, and time is very much more precious than money—or life—and both stand to gain much by doing it now.

While most of the motor car companies have got into production even earlier than they had dared to hope for in advance of output. The shortage of cars has been aggravated by strikes. Deliveries are the only thing worrying the trade to-day, many dealers and distributors being sold far in advance of what they are able to handle. It is therefore not surprising that there is no likelihood that this situation will be mitigated for several months. Such factors do not equate downward revisions in prices.—Warren B. Hastings, in the Canadian Motorist.

MAXWELL-CHALMERS MANAGER

Long Time Official of Studebaker and Marmon Companies.

Looking forward to an uninterrupted era of demand for automobiles and with the purpose of developing one of the strongest manufacturing organizations in America, the Maxwell Motor Company, Detroit, has just acquired the services of C. C. Hanch as general manager of all Maxwell-Chalmers interests.

In leaving the Studebaker Corporation after serving a period of years as treasurer, Mr. Hanch comes to Maxwell-Chalmers equipped with all the executive leadership and automobile knowledge necessary to make the Maxwell-Chalmers companies one of the most formidable institutions in the commercial world.

For sixteen years he was general office manager and treasurer of the Nordyke Marmon Company, at Indianapolis, going to Studebaker in 1915. June of last year, through the courtesy of the Studebaker Corporation, he became chief of the automobile products section of the War Industries Board and the same energy, leadership and tremendous results he accomplished for Uncle Sam in the wartime capital will make him an asset of incalculable value to the Maxwell-Chalmers factories and dealers.

Mr. Hanch has been a successful leader in co-operation activities of all kinds and in addition to having served as the first president of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, the new Maxwell chief was president of the Indianapolis Manufacturers' Association, chairman Indianapolis Freight Bureau, vice-president Automobile Board of Trade, vice-president National Association of Manufacturers for the State of Indiana and for the past few years secretary and a director of the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce.

One of Mr. Hanch's most successful accomplishments was the instilling of the movement and serving as chairman of the committee that effected the cross-licensing patent agreement among American automobile manufacturers. Since the armistice Mr. Hanch has been in Europe representing the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce and his keen insight of conditions here and abroad augmented by his versatile experience and familiarity with all the ins and outs of the automobile industry points to the greatest forward leap in the history of the Maxwell-Chalmers companies.

Why Farmers Buy Cars.
"Talk about the purchasing power of a farmer," writes a rural Gray-Dort dealer to the factory, "not so many years ago I sold a man a wagon, and he gave me six hundred bushels of corn in payment. If he had taken the trouble to bring around his six hundred bushels, at several different periods during this year, I could have given him in exchange a car, a wagon like the one he got before, a manure spreader, a plough, a disc harrow, a gasoline engine, a mower, a steel range, a riding cultivator and three hundred dollars in cash."


Motor Truck Industry Advancing.
Many prominent business men have stated within the last few months that the war has advanced the truck industry at least ten years over what its normal increase would have been. Thousands and thousands of men from all parts of the world who were on the fighting line in Europe saw the wonderful performances of the motor trucks, how they actually revolutionized military manoeuvring. These men are returning to their homes, and, of course, cannot help but advocate the use of motor trucks.

Canada Good Market For Tractors.
According to figures compiled by Dominion authorities, more than eight thousand tractors were shipped into Canada by United States manufacturers during December and January. During the year 1918, 21,691 American-built tractors were exported to Canada, 12,805 in 1917, and only 3,692 in 1916. Canadian tractor makers, however, are insisting on the replacement of the import duty, as but a few hundred tractors were made in Canada during 1918, chiefly because of American competition.

"They Say"
That the truck production for the current year will be approximately 350,000 vehicles.
That the motor car industry is approximately 100 per cent. oversold.
That a shortage of trucks is imminent which will parallel the near-famine in passenger cars.
That the Wolseley Motor Car Company of England—a Grant Vickers subsidiary—will locate a Canadian plant in or near Toronto, and that the Dodge Brothers of Detroit will do likewise.

Do You Know?
Do you know that there are half as many cars in use in Canada as in Great Britain and Europe combined, and that England owns nearly as many cars as France and Germany combined.

A tree producing cotton said to be free from caterpillars has been discovered in Madagascar.



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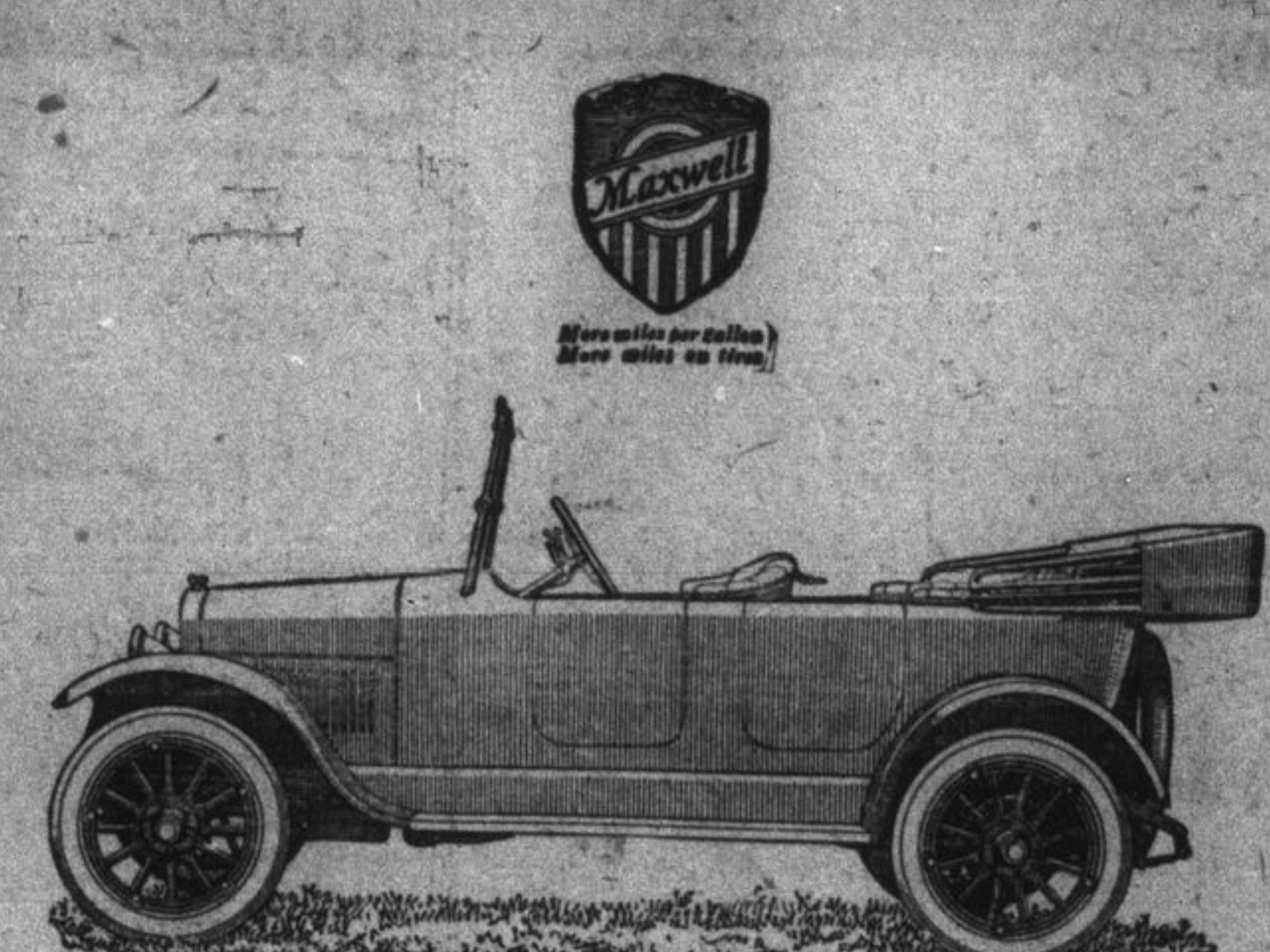
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