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HINTS FOR THE MOTORIST

ALBERT L. CLOUGH

Ford Timer Defects

Don't Look For Good Results From A Worn Out Timer

WHEN YOUR FORD ENGINE gets to "dropping stitches," especially when at high speed or when the spark lever is in a particular position or if one of the coil vibrators takes to buzzing continuously, at times, look to the timer and its wires. Take the cover off the timer and carefully wipe all dirt off the track over which the roller of the revolving part runs, oiling it with a half-and-half mixture of engine oil and kerosene. This will give the roller and the four steel segments a better contact, unless, through lack of oil and long usage, the fibre and steel track has worn uneven. If it has, the roller will jump and skip over some of the segments, without touching them, thus preventing some of the plugs from getting current, particularly when the engine is running fast. A badly worn timer had better be replaced and the new one can be prepared for a long time if it is frequently oiled. Try the individual timer wires with the fingers. If any one of them seems to have a limp place in it, the copper conductor has probably frayed or entirely broken within its insulation and is giving trouble by making only uncertain and occasional connections. The frequent bending of these wires, when the timer is rotated by the spark lever, causes them occasionally to give out. Note whether the individual wires have rubbed against the pan or some other metal part enough to wear through the covering or whether they are so oil-soaked as to destroy the insulation, for if they have there is likelihood of the current short-circuiting, in which case certain cylinders may miss or fire out of time. If any of these defects are noted, a new timer cable had better be substituted, care being taken to connect it so that, at both ends, each wire of a certain color attaches where the wire of that same color was formerly attached. Always be sure that the four thumb nuts at the timer are screwed down tightly on their respective wire ends and that the timer wire binding nuts at the coil box are secure.

CLUTCH-OPERATED TRAFFIC SIGNAL



F. W. asks: Would it be feasible to connect my rear traffic signal, so as to indicate "stop," when the clutch pedal is pushed instead of when the foot brake pedal is operated? I don't like the idea of showing the "stop" sign every time I check the speed of the car a little.

Answer: No doubt the required mechanical and electrical connections could readily be made to bring about this change. If you use your engine as a brake and release the clutch when you are actually going to stop your car, your signal would give fewer false "stop" indications under your proposed arrangement. It would, however, show "stop," momentarily, when you shifted gears, unless the adjustment were so made that you could push the pedal far enough forward for gear changing purposes, without closing the electrical contacts. If you are accustomed to throw your clutch on unnecessarily or to coast with it released, we fear the warnings given would

be even less dependable than with the customary arrangement.

INEFFECTIVE EMERGENCY BRAKES

R. E. M. writes: The emergency brake of my 1920 car has never worked well enough so I could depend upon it, and I always put low gear in, when I leave the car standing. Just now the local police are making everyone have both their brakes tested. What had I better do? Several times I have instructed the people at my garage to fix it, but they never have done so.

Answer: The emergency brake on cars of this model is properly designed and generally works effectively. We believe yours can be made to do so, when properly adjusted. You better take your car to an authorized service station of its manufacturer and stay with it until it is demonstrated to you that this brake not only can lock both rear wheels, but also is free from "drag," when it is released.



When The Circuit Breaker Works

If Notices Of Electrical Trouble, Which Must Be Rectified At Once

IF THE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM of your car is not provided by fuses, that burn out when there is a short-circuit in the lighting and horn circuits, there is probably a circuit-breaker included in the equipment to furnish equivalent protection against burned out conductors, fuses and the discharge of the battery. You may have a circuit-breaker on your car and not realize it, as it is an unobtrusive little affair, usually hidden behind the instrument board. The most common kind operates, on a heavy short-circuit, and automatically reduces the intensity thereof, by rapidly interrupting the unintentional current which is flowing, thus keeping it within comparatively safe limits. In doing this it makes a peculiar whining or buzzing sound. If, sometime, when you turn on a light switch, you hear this raucous buzz and the lights don't come on properly, you will know that the circuit breaker is doing its duty of keeping your wiring from "going up in smoke," and you will throw off the switch immediately. If it was the throwing on of the headlight-switch that started the racket, you will at once know that there is a serious ground on this circuit, which is letting a dangerous current pass. Possibly, when you follow the wires along, you will find where the conductor is worn bare and is touching some metal part. If so, you can separate the conductor from this grounded part and thus make a temporary repair. If you don't see anything wrong, you can detach the wire of one headlight, at the connection-board, and if this permits the other lamp to burn, without starting another "buzz," you can go on "with one eye," deferring repairs until a more convenient time. On some cars, the horn circuit and even the ignition circuit are under the protection of the circuit-breaker. There is another form of circuit-breaker which absolutely interrupts the supply of current from the battery, when a short-circuit or heavy overload occurs. There is a small handle or button, somewhere about the cowl-board, by which the instrument can be reset and the supply of current resumed, when the short-circuit has been removed.

RESETTING MAGNETO



M. R. writes: My 1908 car has run all right until lately, when it began firing on two cylinders only. I removed and cleaned its high-tension magneto and the engine seemed to run well when I first replaced it, but soon the water started boiling and backfiring commenced. I think the ignition is timed late, but I do not know how to advance it. What can you tell me as to this?

Answer: We suppose this magneto is driven through a coupling, having adjustment for angular position. The following procedure should enable you to retune your ignition. Turn the engine over until the piston of No. 1 cylinder is exactly at top stroke and both valves are closed. Turn the magneto shaft until the distributor brush is on the segment with which is connected the cable to No. 1 spark-plug and until the platinum points of the interrupter are just on the point of separating (the spark lever being at full retard). Without moving either engine or magneto, connect up the coupling or otherwise establish the drive. A slight change in the timing can be effected by lengthening or shortening the rod from the spark lever.

which positions the breaker-box of the magneto.

TRANSMISSION TROUBLES

E. Van H. writes: There is too much lost motion in the drive shaft of my car, and there is sort of a hum when the engine is holding back on down grades. Also, high gear sometimes slips out, when the engine is pulling hard. Any suggestions you can make will be appreciated.



Answer: Replacing worn parts of your universals will probably remove the greater part of the lost motion. Slipping out of the high gear clutch may be due to its teeth being badly burred, which might also add to the play in the drive. Other causes of slipping out are: Failure of the locking plungers to act positively, failure of the direct clutch members to engage fully, caused perhaps by the shifting mechanism having become bent. Also too much end play in the clutch shaft. You better open the transmission, inspect the clutch members, note the action of the locking device and see that the shafts do not have too much endwise motion. The bevel pinion and gear are driving with the backs of their teeth, when a car is coasting, and the hum is different from that heard when the engine is pulling. You may as well tolerate it.

Questions of general interest to the motorist will be answered by Mr. Clough in this column, space permitting. If an immediate answer is desired, enclose self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Free Opinion.

It was on a Western railroad that the following dialogue took place. The conductor had been his rounds and had taken a seat beside a very quiet and unassuming passenger. "Pretty full train," finally observed

the passenger. "Yes." "Road seems to be doing a good business." "Oh, the road makes plenty of money, but—" "But what?" asked the passenger, as the other hesitated. "Bad management. It is the worst-managed line in this whole country." "Is that so?" "That's so. The board of officials might know how to run a sideshow to a circus, but they can't tackle a railroad." "Who is the biggest fool in the lot?" "Well, the superintendent is." "I'm glad of that," said the passenger, as his face lighted up, "I was

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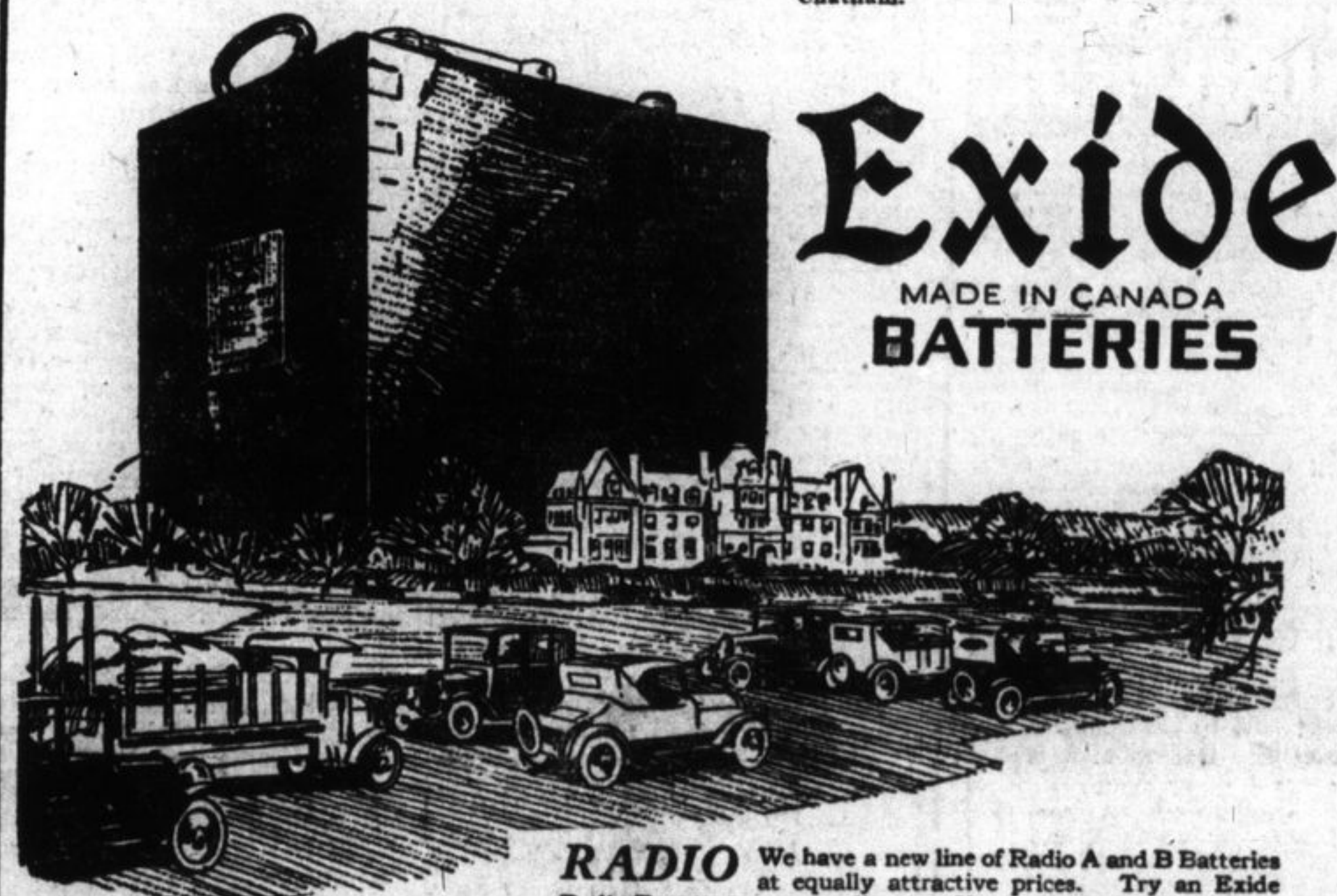
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afraid you would say it was the chairman of the board." "Suppose I had?" "Well, I'm the man!" God has two thrones, one in the highest heavens, one in the lowest; have brought many a difficult thing to pass. —Van Dyke.