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EDITORIAL

A HARD PROBLEM WITH A SIMPLE SOLUTION

It was not altogether without a good result that Farmington's business men recently went through an experience with a "high-pressure" advertising solicitor from Indiana, who found selling in Farmington easy, but collecting hard, when it was discovered that his promises had not been kept. Those of his customers who sought satisfaction from the "publisher" of the "commercial review," obtained some when he spent the week end in the county jail, and they, as well as others, enjoyed the unusual good fortune of having their money refunded.

It was a rare ending indeed, for only "once in a blue moon" are the patrons of an advertising scheme which turns out differently from the representations on which it is sold, able to even locate the salesman, let alone collecting what they have paid him. And even in this case, chance played a large part in the apprehension.

So many and so varied are the "stunts" for "fly-by-night" "advertising" put before the business men of small communities that it is not surprising that many succeed. The busy merchant, harassed by hordes of promoters of such schemes, far from having time to investigate either the "idea" or those behind it, frequently accedes to the "salesman's" importunities in order to be rid of him.

(The problem has vexed business men always but it has become particularly bothersome since good roads and the automobile came to the aid of the promoter's "game." The individual merchant often feels helpless. And yet the solution, tried and found immensely effective in hundreds of communities, is so simple that the wonder is that every community does not put it into effect. It involves merely appointment of a local committee, either through a chamber of commerce, a service club, or by agreement of the merchants among themselves, to pass on all propositions referred to it by the merchants. Every business man displays in his place of business a card with wording about as follows: "Solicitors for advertising or other purpose must bear a card of endorsement from the committee. The space being filled in by the name of the organization in charge, or merely with 'merchants' committee."

The plan has worked well in smaller towns as well as in large cities. The time required of the merchants serving on the committee is not extensive. One reason is that the mere display of the cards drives away many promoters whose propositions will not, as they themselves fully realize, stand rigid inspection. The merchants' committee quickly comes to distinguish a worthwhile proposition from a "wild-cat" scheme. The latter soon come to know those towns where merchants are alert to protect their time and their money. If the plan did nothing else than to inform the "promoter" fraternity,

it would be of considerable profit to every merchant in the community.

SOMETHING WORTH TRYING

The recent suspension of the bus line from Pontiac to Ann Arbor through Walled Lake, leaving the latter community without transportation, brings into the fore again the problem of transportation which has troubled not only the people served by that line, but in many other sections nearby. It raised again the question of how it will be possible to serve communities developed largely by the private automobile, but not completely cared for by it.

Residents of the several developments along the Orchard Lake road, north of Farmington Junction to Maple road have felt very keenly the lack of transportation since the trolley service was discontinued. That regrettable event has been followed by a lull in development that can be expected to end only when some means of public conveyance, on frequent schedule, begins operation again. In the one case the trolley car has failed to pay, according to the reasons assigned for suspension, and in the other case it was buses, of the large "de luxe" variety. One type of vehicle, utilized widely in other sections of the country, and particularly in California some years ago, has not been tried in these sections. It is an enlarged automobile body, of sedan or touring car type, preferably the former. The chassis is that of a large motor car, with a special long frame and a body of sufficient length to accommodate 12 to 16, and in some cases 24 passengers.

Such a vehicle does not cost a great deal more than the regular automobile. It is much less expensive, both to buy and operate, than either a trolley car or the larger buses, can make good time, and if rightly built, is comfortable and safe.

It is quite possible that this type of vehicle might well succeed on those routes where passengers are not as numerous throughout the day as in the more populous sections, and where small investment and economy of operation are controlling factors.

THE PROSECUTOR'S REAL JOB

So common has become the misconception of the duties of one of our most important governmental offices, that of county prosecutor, that a true statement of the business of prosecutors is as welcome as it is rare. Such a statement, recently made by Assistant Prosecutor Charles J. Wilson to a jury in Farmington, indicates that not every prosecuting attorney's office has come to consider, as many citizens undoubtedly believe, that the prosecutor's chief business is to secure convictions.

Assistant Prosecutor Wilson told the jury that it was his job, not necessarily to see that the defendant was convicted, but primarily to see that justice was done; that he represented the people of the State of Michigan, not merely

the complaining witness; that he was in duty bound to present the strongest possible case for the people, but not to convict a man who was not guilty.

Too often have prosecutors held the other idea—that theirs was a battle against everyone about whom a complaint might be made. And almost universally throughout this country, are prosecutors judged by the number of convictions they obtain in proportion to the cases tried. For this the people, the prosecutors, and the legal profession must share the blame. But there appears some hope that we are on the way to correcting the evil when a prosecutor or a member of his staff takes occasion, even though rarely, to set the public mind right on what the prosecutor's job really is.

"IT'S UP TO THE DRIVER"

These remarks by the Clarks-ville (Miss.) Register make it apparent that the grade crossing problem is not peculiar to any one part of the country:

"For every grade crossing that is eliminated, three are created, according to railroad statistics. The new ones come in with the creation or improvement of new highways, cutting through new streets and extension of railway lines.

"At the same time that this danger is tripled, the number of automobiles in the country is constantly being increased. The result is that the railway grade crossing difficulty becomes more dangerous year by year, despite all efforts on the part of government and railway officials to the contrary. Fool-proof crossing devices have been tried to little avail. The human element still has to be relied on.

"That human element lies in the soberness and watchfulness of the auto driver. He should remember that railway trains can fly and that he's bound to cross their tracks or almost any highway. It is therefore obligatory on his part to watch for trains, to slow down, get into low gear and cross tracks carefully.

"The single automobile can be more easily controlled than a great powerful locomotive running at high speed and pushed on by tremendous momentum. The match, therefore, is all to the loss of the automobile."

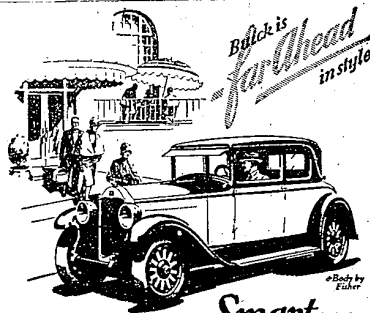


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