

Today's Cars Cost More; Industry Replies They Are Worth More

Detroit—Ask an auto owner what he wants most in a new car and he'll tell you: Lower prices. Price tags are becoming increasingly important in car merchandising as the postwar car shortage wanes.

But the prospect for substantially lower prices without the sacrifice of some equipment isn't very good right now. Undoubtedly there will be numerous price revisions between now and the year-end, but they aren't likely to be of sizable proportions, especially among the more popular priced makes.

The postwar car boasts many engineering and styling advances that were conspicuously absent in 1940 models. So making a true comparison of car prices today with those of the pre-war era is difficult.

In dollars and cents today's lowest priced models cost about twice what they did a decade ago. But most of today's new car buyers wouldn't be satisfied with a new 1940 model. Ten years have brought many improvements.

The advances have made for greater comfort, safety and economy. So to say flatly that a Chevrolet, Ford or Plymouth car costs twice as much today as it did a decade ago is not strictly accurate.

Probably you don't get many more gadgets than you did 10 years ago. But you do get a much better engine, better brakes, a greatly improved steering mechanism and better tires.

Generally the engine compression ratio is higher. That's important because it improves riding and driving and provides greater fuel economy. Many engines have self-adjusting valves. That, too, helps power output.

Steering gear ratios have been increased. Bodies are sturdier. In both instances this means greater safety. More riding and driving comfort result from the lowered center of gravity common to most current models.

You get a much better ignition system in today's automobile. Some ignition systems are described as completely waterproof. If you've ever had a rainstorm short out your spark plugs you know what a good ignition system means.

The auto makers maintain that today's car is a much greater dollar value on all counts than was the 1940 model. They probably wouldn't have much trouble proving that if they set out to do so.

It isn't any secret that the auto manufacturers are constantly trying to find production economies, while they are doing this, however, they are spending millions of dollars each year in engineering research.

And engineering research looks chiefly to the improvement of their product.

There may be some things the various auto makers feel they cannot put into today's models because of costs. But they are not withholding anything of major consequence any longer than is necessary to thoroughly test it out.

It has been suggested in some quarters from time to time that the industry has been withholding a greatly improved carburetor that alone would increase fuel mileage. To this the industry's engineers reply that the carburetor alone doesn't determine fuel economy.

If they had such a carburetor, they add, the manufacturers wouldn't be spending millions of dollars developing higher compression engines or re-designing engine combustion chambers.

JOBLESSNESS
According to government economists, by 1960, the nation will have to provide jobs for about 70,000,000 workers, instead of the 60,000,000 at the present time, but the increase in labor force apparently has brought about no corresponding rise in job openings in recent months. Over the nation, 7.1 per cent of all workers covered by jobless insurance were out of work in mid-February, compared with the national average of 25 per cent unemployed in 1933, the worst year of the depression. Full employment committees have been organized in fourteen states to funnel new business into hard-hit communities.

STUDENTS
Student enrollment in colleges and universities before the war totaled less than 1,500,000. This figure has risen to 2,500,000 for the current academic year and, according to Dr. Earl J. McGrath, United States Commissioner of Education, will reach 3,000,000 in less than a decade.



RHODODENDRON HEADS—Eugene Nelson, left, was elected as editor of the Appalachian State Teachers College Annual for 1951. He is from Mooreville. Serving with him as business manager will be Miss Tommy Sue Moxley.

INCOME TAX
Cash income tax payments, tallied on March 16, the day after the 1949 income tax return deadline, totaled \$635,379,897, according to a Treasury report. The single-day tally amounted to more than 5 per cent of total collections of this kind throughout the preceding eight and one-half months of this fiscal year, which began on July 1.

CRIMES
The FBI reports that 1,763,290 serious offenses during 1949, or an average of a crime every eight-and-a-half seconds of the year. In an "average day," 293 persons were killed or assaulted. On that same "average day," there were 162 robberies and in excess of 1,100 burglaries; also more than 440 automobiles stolen, in addition to 2,800 other thefts.

Soybeans Will Not Be Under 1950 Controls

North Carolina farmers who are concerned about what to plant on the land formerly planted to cotton and other crops that are more closely controlled this year might do well to try soybeans.

There will be no acreage controls for soybeans this year, according to Herbert W. Johnson, in charge of soybean variety studies for the North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station. And, he pointed out, if farmers do not overplant in 1950, production controls can again be avoided in 1951.

soybeans for grain in North Carolina last year will probably be increased this year, Johnson said. Most of the soybean acreage is normally planted during the first three weeks in May, but a substantial acreage will probably be planted during the latter part of June this year after an early crop of potatoes or small grain.

Research work at the Experiment Station shows that the average yield of soybeans in this state is less than half of what it should be. To obtain a good return from soybeans the grower should strive for the maximum production per acre. Research emphasizes the importance of the following: (1) Have your soil tested, and lime and fertilize according to recommendations, (2)

Prepare a good seedbed, (3) Plant plenty of good seed of an adapted variety, and (4) Control weeds.

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