

What Kind of a Fellow is an Automobile Dealer?

A message to the public from a man who has had business associations with thousands of automobile dealers, and has known them personally over a period of twenty-two years.

PERHAPS you've had difficulty in securing a new automobile since the end of the war. Of, if not, you may have a friend or relative who has experienced such difficulty.

There's been much talk about "premium" prices for cars, and about buyers having to take unwanted accessories.

Perhaps you're of the opinion that the automobile dealer is in business only for today, and that he's been out to make a "killing."

I'd like to rise to the defense of Mr. Automobile Dealer.

I feel that I'm qualified to rise to his defense. I know the automotive industry intimately, and I'd like to present some facts about automotive retailing.

There are 40,000 automobile dealers in the United States today. The great majority of these men were in business BEFORE Pearl Harbor. Those who have secured dealerships since the war were carefully selected by manufacturers on the basis of character, automotive experience, and capability of serving the public.

Are these business men any different from any other class of business men? I don't think so! I know that the majority of the American people are honest and law-abiding citizens. And I KNOW that the great majority of automobile dealers are men of integrity—men who intend to STAY in business and serve the public—men smart enough to know that only those who SERVE well, SUCCEED well.

What are the FACTS about automobile deliveries since the end of the war?

Within a period of a few months after V-J Day, production of new cars started. Then what happened? There were material shortages and work stoppages!

Dealers who had stayed in business throughout the war (with no new vehicles to sell) and who had done a magnificent job of servicing essential cars and trucks, found new vehicles coming to them slowly.

But the general feeling of dealers was that there would be no more than a year of shortages, and most dealers were preparing for an early return of the so-called "buyer's market."

Dealers made every effort to deliver new cars fairly according to need—and at fair prices. A high percentage of dealers, to my certain knowledge, set up quotas for veterans, doctors, clergymen, and public health officials.

Then what happened? Soon the PUBLIC—you and you and you—started raising the prices of both new and used cars. How? The way you've always established the price of any article in a free market—by the simple law of supply and demand.

Very soon, dealers noticed that many new cars (which they had delivered in good faith at so-called "list" prices) were being resold by the original buyers at a profit.

Ask most any dealer and he'll tell you that many a person who "needed a car desperately" found within 24 hours that he needed a quick profit more than the car. Of course, there was nothing unlawful about all this. This is still a free country and a man can sell his property if he pleases.

In an effort to halt this practice, many dealers insisted upon buyers signing a repurchase contract which required the owner to resell only to the dealer within a specified time. I cite all this merely to show the lengths to which dealers went in an attempt to deliver cars fairly—and at fair prices.

What about USED cars?

Dealers had long lists of customers, including veterans, who wanted used cars. But new cars buyers suddenly wanted to sell their own used cars. (How different from before the war!) They wanted the "top dollar" for their car—let the DEALER'S waiting list for used cars take care of itself. Can you blame the dealer for trying to obtain a certain percentage of trade-ins? What would YOU have done if you were a dealer?

How about "unwanted" accessories? Many a dealer hesitated to "push" accessories on those first postwar cars—and what happened? When the new car came in for free service under the warranty, Mr. Dealer noted that the car was equipped with accessories... purchased from someone else.

Now, of course, there have been some dealers who have been unethical in their dealings, but THE PERCENTAGE OF THESE DEALERS IS LOW. There are NO dealers who have violated any law because no dealer "forced" anyone to take a certain car at a certain price with a certain amount of accessories on it. No buyer HAD to take any deal. All he had to do was say, "No."

It's no secret that, since the end of the war, car manufacturers have received many letters of complaint from owners about their dealers. I am confident that all manufacturers investigated these complaints. I have personal knowledge that, in the case of one manufacturer, these complaints have been carefully investiga-

ted, and in the great majority of cases, when BOTH sides of the story were heard, the complaint was found to be unjustified.

There are 37 million motor vehicles in use today in the United States, more than ever before in our history. This great industry—this widespread use of motor cars—was built on the solid foundation of mass production. But mass production would have been of no avail without the mass DISTRIBUTION provided by the automobile dealers of America. Manufacturers and dealers have always striven to get cars into the hands of the ultimate consumer at the lowest possible cost.

In the early days of the industry, cars were sold for cash, and dealers wanted no used car trade-ins. Such a policy, had it continued, would have greatly restricted the use of motor cars. But America's dealers, competing with each other for YOUR patronage, offered budget payment plans. They took in trade the used car which the owner would have had difficulty in selling. To sell this used car, they usually took ANOTHER used car in trade. These used cars had to be reconditioned, displayed, advertised, and sold. All this in order to complete the sale of one new car.

It has been the automobile DEALERS' mass distribution "know-how," experience, and facilities which have made possible the use of 37 million motor vehicles in this country. They have contributed in great measure to our prosperity as a nation. They will CONTINUE to contribute.

What kind of a fellow IS an automobile dealer?

I'll tell you, because I know him. YOU know him, too. He's your friend and neighbor. He's an independent business man, the same as your grocer, your druggist, your department store owner.

He's a typical example of American enterprise at work. He wasn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth. Most dealers started their careers as mechanics or as salesmen, working for someone else.

You'll find automobile dealers at the forefront in civic affairs—wherever you go. They are members of Rotary, Kiwanis, and other public-spirited clubs. They are prominent in Red Cross and Community Fund-raising efforts. They are leaders in Boy Scout and Y. M. C. A. activities.

Mr. Dealer is your friend and mine. He has served us well—in war and in peace.

I congratulate him on a job well done.

Signed—Ross Roy,
President ROSS ROY, Inc., Detroit, Michigan

This advertisement is presented by your three progressive automobile dealers in Kings Mountain.

REYNOLDS MOTORS
Dodge-Plymouth—Dodge Trucks

VICTORY CHEVROLET CO.
Chevrolet Cars—Trucks

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