# Dutee Wilcox Flint the Oldest Ford

# Car Dealer in Point of Service

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Has the Largest Organization For Distributing Automobiles, Trucks and Tractors In New England—Maintains Completely Equipped Service Station in Providence and Twenty Branch Stores in Rhode Island and Connecticut—Is New England Distributor of Fordson Tractors and Head of Oil Company Selling More Than 3,000,000 Gallons of Gasoline Annually.



Dutee Wilcox Flint in His Private Office.

"IN the war and win it fast. Fitting one's convenience to his regular business in order to avoid a patriotic, moral duty is of secondary consideration as compared with winning the war." These pithy statements make up the war slogan of Dutee Wilcox Flint of Providence, R. I., the oldest Ford dealer in point of service and the largest individual distributor of Ford cars.

The writer had camped on the trail of this extremely busy dealer for almost a week in an endeavor to find a suitable opportunity for an interview and thus be able to gain an impression of the personality of the man who has built up one of the largest motor car distributing

and service organizations in America. While superintending the work of photographing his large service station on Allens avenue, Providence, I saw him daily enter into and go out of his private office. Great pressure of business affairs was impelling him toward some definite goal, and no one could have possibly diverted his attention for even a minute from the daily schedule of work he had set out to accomplish. He certainly seemed elusive-not designedly so, but as a necessity, as he is not prone to show even the attitude of evasion. He is fearless, full of initiative, and would always be a leader of men in any line of activity. At last my determination and patience to see the chief was rewarded. He appeared to have forgotten the regular rest period, as he was still forging ahead when others had stopped for lunch. His courteous general mana ger, Benjamin Peckham, saw that the 'coast was clear," and projected me into the vortex of this busy man's affairs, and his relaxation of regular effort was short, for he could allow me only a few minutes of his time, but made special arrangements to give me an hour the next day. At the interview he instantly impressed me as 100 per cent. American, 100 per cent. as a motor car dealer and a creator of efficient motor car service. 100 per cent. all around business man and cheerfully good fellow.

Supplementing the war slogan quoted

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above, Mr. Flint continued with the following short, snappy declarations delivered like the action of a rapid fire machine gun:

"The sooner dealers realize that the most important business before them is to do everything they can to help win the war, just so much sooner will it be satisfactorily finished and the automobile business will be back into its normal condition. I am bending all my energy and resources toward conservation and contributing to the sinews of war, and am sacrificing and adjusting my business as best I can to overcome the disintegration of my former efficient organization, in order to release manpower for the war. This may naturally reduce the productiveness of my service station, but, fortunately, at this time, only in so far as the broader distribution of passenger cars is concerned.

"It will not help dealers or those engaged in other lines of business to complain of the unsettled conditions brought on by the war. It is up to all of us to pull off our coats, roll up our sleeves and pitch in with an earnest good will to apply our energies wherever they will do the most good toward winning the war. When you have an obnoxious job on your hands, the more quickly you clean it up, just so soon will the atmosphere of discontent and uncertainty be clarified. We must work hard and fast to remove the hated barrier to civilization, peace, contentment and legitimate business-and our whole duty now is to help win the war."

## A Pioneer Ford Dealer.

The Ford agency of Dutee Wilcox Flint was organized in the fall of 1904, when Henry Ford was building and marketing a two-cylinder car. Then production and sales were limited to the minimum. If a dealer sold 50 cars a year he was indeed considered prosperous, and Mr. Flint did not average that number of sales annually. Then people had to be educated to the utility of a car and how to carefully operate one. As a pioneer, Mr. Flint had his full share of this promotion and sales work. He is now 35 years of age and was only 21 when he embarked upon the tempestuous sea of the early days of a motorcar agency.

Mr. Flint was persistent and held steadfastly to his Ford agency, backed up with all the ardor and optimism of youth. It can be said of Mr. Flint that he always had implicit faith in the genius and ability of the man out in Detroit

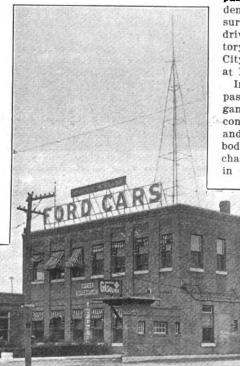
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who was destined to become the big man of the industry. He knew in advance of the great manufacturer's plans to build a light-weight car that would be easy and economical on tires as well as economical in fuel and oil consumption, with minimum mechanical upkeep expense. His faith in Mr. Ford's promise to produce the "Universal" car was not misplaced, as his rapid and wonderful success as a Ford distributor has proven.

In the winter of 1905 Mr. Ford brought out his model K six-cylinder car, and Mr. Flint sold 20 of this model in 1906 and 23 in 1907. In the fall of 1906 Mr. Ford produced his first model of the light-weight, medium-length wheelbase Ford, then designated as the model N. The touring car sold for \$950 and the roadster for \$900, f. o. b. Detroit, and it was then considered the "best buy" at anywhere near its price. During the season of 1907 Mr. Flint sold 300 of the model N. Each succeeding year his sales were increased by leaps and bounds, and the sales for the most prosperous year, just preceding the entry of the United States into the war, exceeded 10,000 passenger and commercial cars. Territory Controlled Has 1,250,000 Popu-

### lation.

Dutee Wilcox Flint controls, as his selling territory, the State of Rhode Island and Fairfield and New Haven counties in Connecticut. He operates 20 stores in this territory, with service stations in all of them. Aside from the main assembling plant, service station and general offices located on Allens avenue in South Providence, the location of his sales stores in Rhode Island are: Main salesroom, 172 Washington street, Providence; Pawtucket, Newport, Westerly, Woonsocket, Arctic, Wakefield, Warren and Bristol. Salesrooms



in Connecticut are located at Bridgeport, New Haven, Waterbury, Stamford, Greenwich, Meriden, Danbury, South Norwalk, Wallingford and Derby. This territory has at least 1,250,000 population and it is one of the richest manufacturing sections in America, with thossands of miles of good roads to encourage the extensive use of motor vehicles for business and pleasure.

In connection with the 20 stores, a line of standardized accessories and supplies is carried in each, for the convenience of Ford owners, and only such accessories are carried in stock which are strictly applicable to the Ford car. Distributed among the 20 stores are spare parts valued at between \$150,000 and \$200,000. At the service station in Providence \$40,000 worth of spare parts are carried as standard stock and at the Bridgeport, Conn., service station a like amount of spare parts are carried. Between 500 and 600 bodies, mostly for commercial cars, are a part of the regular stock supply. In fact, the service plant in Providence is operated on the basis of a factory, so complete is the equipment and production facilities, and a number of cars could be built from the spare parts and bodies on hand, if occasion should demand. Concentrating on Service Work and

# Commercial Cars.

Due to the Ford Motor Company's reduction of its production of passenger cars to meet the Government's policy of conservation, as well as the difficulty of securing shipment by railroad, Mr. Flint's allotment of passenger cars has been limited for the past several months, as compared with his former average of 1000 cars per month. Mr. Flint, like many other dealers, had strenuous work to do to secure even a small number of passenger cars to partially supply the demand. In order to secure and make sure of his allotments he resorted to driving the cars overland from the factory assembling branch at Long Island City, N. Y., and from the factory branch at Buffalo, N. Y.

In view of the gradual curtailment of passenger car production, the Flint or ganization, for the period of the war, is concentrating its efforts on assembling and equipping with various types of bodies the regular Ford commercial chassis and the Ford one-ton truck, and in employing the sales force in selling

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The Dutee Wilcox Flint Ford Service Station on Allens Ave., South Providence.

them. This is a branch of the business on which attention can be centered during the war, as the commercial car and truck have not come under the ban of the Government as non-essential. Concentration along the lines of conservation particularly includes service work

for the thousands of Ford owners in Mr. Flint's territory. Although the capacity of the Flint service station is not being used as extensively as it was before the passenger car curtailment, he is enabled gradually to regulate the

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loaded at the door of the assembling department.

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Until recently the majority of the cars distributed by the Flint organization were received at the service stations in Providence and Connecticut points in units and then assembled into complete and service manager, car assembling department, machine shop and repair department, paint shop and garage for the gasoline delivery trucks.

On the second floor are the general executive offices of the directing staff, presided over by the general manager, Benjamin Peckham, and

the assistant manager, J.

F. Peckham, Jr., who are systematic and thoroughly trained business men of broad caliber. Here also is located the private office of Dutee Wilcox Flint, and adjoining it is the office of his private secretary, volume of service work

Office of the General Manager, Benjamin Peckham, Who Actively Directs the Staff and Carries Out Mr. Flint's Policies. Accounting Department, Where the Finances Are Carefully Looked After by a Corps of Efficient Accountants. 3—In reground, Tractor Department Manager's Office, and Beyond, the General Offices of the Dutee W. Fiint Gasoline Co., Inc., with the Manager, Alexander R. Frits, at the Extreme Right. Foreground.

according to the number of men available. At present 50 people are employed in the general offices and mechanical departments at the Providence station and 150 people are engaged in the main store in Providence and in the other branch stores and service stations. Before the curtailment of passenger car production 375 people were employed in all branches of the organization. Many of them were road men, and that loss is not felt owing to the greatly reduced supply of new cars.

Mr. Flint does a considerable business in used Ford cars, taking them in only on the established trade basis. All used Fords are put into first-class running order, the cost of such work having been predetermined by his appraisers and the charge is included in the prices at which the machines are sold.

The Providence Service Station.

The Flint service station is located within several hundred feet of the Providence river, on Allens avenue, and has a frontage of 160 feet and a depth of 170 feet. A railroad siding at the front of the building affords excellent shipping facilities for all freight. In normal times Ford car units were received at the railroad siding, direct from the Ford Motor Company's branches, and uncars. Under such conditions these service stations were extremely busy.

The modern service station building is of brick and cement fireproof construction throughout. The front has two stories, with general offices on the second floor and the main entrance is on the ground floor at the side. Upon entering the station one directly faces the parts and supply department, which is enclosed, with serving counter at the front. Here thoroughly trained and courteous clerks promptly serve customers. All parts, supplies and accessories are sold for cash. There is a cashier's office at the end of the counter, where all cash is received and transactions accounted for.

In front of the building on the ground floor is a large office occupied by the accounting department, presided over by Julius G. Ford, assisted by a competent force of young ladies. This office is furnished with all the modern accounting equipment. The system of accounting is free from unnecessary complication, due to all business being transacted on a cash basis.

The other departments in the onestory section of the building are: New car stock department, Fordson tractor department, office of the superintendent Miss McTernan, who has held that position for twelve years. It is said of Miss McTernan that she is all business, with frills and foibles eliminated. It might be stated here that during the busiest periods all correspondence is dictated on the Dictaphone. The executive of-fices are handsomely furnished in mahogany, with all the most modern office appliances and equipment, and are separated by heavy plate glass and entirely enclosed.

The wireless tower on the roof of the service station was formerly used to carry messages back and forth between the service station and Mr. Flint's steam yacht when he and his general manager, Mr. Peckham, were off on recreation trips. This wireless station was disconnected shortly after the United States entered the war and Mr. Flint's yacht was turned over to the Government.

At the side of the building on the second floor are located the executive and business offices of the Dutee W. Flint Gasoline Co., Inc., and the office of Harvey Flint, manager of the Fordson tractor department, who is a brother of the head of the organization. He was especially selected for this department because he has specialized in agriculture. The Dutee W. Flint Gasoline

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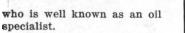
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Co., Inc., although a separate organization from the Ford distributing agency, is more or less allied with the interests of the Ford agency, due to the fact that Mr. Flint felt, from its inception, that he required an efficient and systematic gasoline and oil distributing department to serve his 20 stores and serv-Ice stations. This department is managed by Alexander R. Fritz,



tools they must be returned, and the habit of losing tools in this station has been almost entirely eliminated.

The Flint service station is operated on the basis of standardized operations and a flat rate of charge is made on each operation of overhaul or adjustment. By this system they have been enabled to set a uniform and consistent schedule of prices for



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The machine shop is fully equipped with modern machinery, including lathes, drill presses, acetylene welding outfit and many special tools and other machinery, a general list of which is given below and which will be of exceptional interest to those who seek to conserve in time and labor:

Connecting rod aligning block.

Piston holder for placing rings and tightening rods to wrist pins.

Triple gear block to hold gears while reaming.

Piston block to hold for reaming wrist oin bushings.

Main bearing cap oil-way cutter.

Cylinder block holder to fit crank shaft.

Cylinder block holder to fit rods and grind valves.

Electric dynamo and engine frame for running in engine, testing for oil leaks, compression, magneto output and to loosen overhauled engine before placing in case.

Transmission and engine case horse to hold these units while cylinder and transmission are on the bench.

Rear end testing motor to loosen gears and test for noise.

Reboring mill for reboring cylinder block to oversize.

Brazing outfit for welding crankcase arms and all other broken parts.

Rear end bench for holding rear end while in the process of being O K'd.

Rear end horses to hold up rear of car while the assembly is on the bench.

Chain hoist traveling on an overhead



-The Largest and Handsomest Gasoline Filling Station of the Dutee W. Filnt Gasoline Co., Inc., Located at Broad and Myrtle Sta., Providence, R. I. 5--The Main and Largest Store, Located at 172 Washington St., Providence. 6--A Section of the Sales Room of the Providence Store. 7--The Large Gasothe Sales Room of the Providence Store. 7—The Large Gaso-line Storage Tanks Adjoining the Service Station, with Several of the Delivery Trucks in Foreground.

> track, to lift engine from chassis and carry to motor bench and testing motor.

The chain hoist is also used to carry dirty engines to a vat of chemical solution, where they are immersed and cleaned of all grease, thus giving the mechanics a clean unit on which to work.

### Specialized Tool Equipment.

The repair department is equipped with a large number of high-speed wrenches and other time and labor-saving tools (see Figs. 1 and 2). The equipment makes clear the extent of specialization carried out in this station and how all lost motion and wasted time are done away with. Most of these tools were specially designed by the Ford Motor Company to fit the particular requirements of overhauling work on the Ford chassis. The rear-end jack shown in illustration (Fig. 1) was designed and built by Joseph Lewis, popularly known in the service station as the highspeed specialist.

All tools and small mechanical equipment are kept in systematic order in a special tool room and are issued to the employees on requisitions made out and signed by the foreman of the shop. When mechanics have finished using the

all work and know in advance just what any operation of overhaul will cost. On this basis the customer can accept or reject it, and if acceptable he knows when he calls for his car what the charge will be. The basic cost of labor on each operation was predetermined by repeated practise on numerous operations, so that it was a simple problem to set a schedule of charges that

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are fair to all. These charges, however, are for labor only, and all parts and materials used on the jobs are charged for extra.

When a customer delivers his car to the service station for any overhaul or adjustment that he may deem necessary, regardless of what he has determined the car needs, the service manager delegates an expert tester to drive the car and determine whether there is anything else that requires attention. If he finds other mechanical defects, he makes a report on the same to the service manager, who, in turn, makes the facts known to the owner. Then it is for the owner to judge as to whether he should include them in his order for work to be done.

The details of the customer's order are placed on a shop order blank, specifying the parts and supplies to be used. Before starting on the job the shop foreman fills in a requisition blank as an order on the parts department for all necessary parts and supplies for the job, and the same are charged to the job. Every mechanic working on an operation is given a time ticket containing the shop order number, the particular operation specified, the mechan-

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ic's name, number and rate per hour he receives, with columns for number of hours, amount and account number. The shop order is in triplicate, first sheet of white bond, second sheet of cream bond and third sheet of Manila cardboard, size 11x81/2 inches. This heading is car-

#### TO THE HIGH-SPEED KEY WRENCHES AND TOOLS AND THE OPERATIONS THEY PERFORM.

Clamp to put on rear springs. Ratch screw driver for putting in screws on windshields and fitting up tops.

ear puller for low-speed gear. Bending bar for adjusting speeds.

8-7-Speed wrenches for putting on running boards. Speed wrench for putting on

fenders. Speed wrench for body bolts. 10 -%-inch speed wrench to line 11-12

trensmission. -Speed wrenches for taking 18-14-

off cones on front wheel. Speed wrench to fit into sockets

in set 23. Speed wrench to put on the hub bolts.

wrench to put on steering Τ. post. Sh-inch T wrench to take 18\_19

out magneto coil. Disc drum puller.

2-Valve reseaters. Mossberg socket end wrench 21-22 set.

Flywheel wrench.

Wrist pin wrench. 7—34-inch speed -%-inch speed wrench for taking off engine stud bolts. 38.27. Speed wrench to tighten fen-

ders. Speed wrench to take off radi-

ator. peed wrench to take off cylinder head.

wrench for different need nockets.

.Valve grinder. .Speed wrench to put on brackets for rear fender. Speed wrench to put on top

rests.

Speed wrench to put on brack-

ets for rear fender. peed wrench to put on differ-ential driving gear.

Speed wrench to put on dash bolts.

-Speed wrench to put on rear wheels.

wrench to put on rear Speed spring perches. peed wrench to put on brake

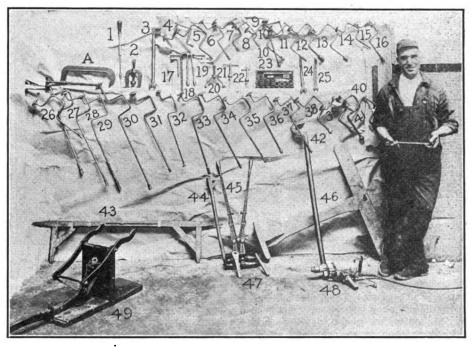
shoes.

ool to straighten front axle. Gauge to line up front wheels. .Tool to straighten front fender brackets.

- Bolt cutters Gauge to measure distance be-
- tween headlights. -Tools to put on head and side-47

lights. -Electric drill. -Jack to place under differential housing and raise rear end.

ried on the triplicate sheets of the shop order: "Shop Order. Description of car, owner's name and address, work authorized by, shipping instructions, shop order number, date of order, date wanted." Then follow the head "In-structions," and a number of blank lines for details or order and blank lines, "Signed, Inspector," "Approved, for owner." The following clause is on the



-High-Speed Wrenches and Other T ools Used for General Overhauling and for Building Up a Ford Car Complete. Jose ph Lewis, Popularly Known in the Serv-ice Station as the High-Speed Specialist, Is at the Extreme Right, Holding a Main Scraper. Bearing

original order signed by the owner: "I agree to pay for the above work in cash when ready and understand that prices quoted are for labor only, parts extra."

At the bottom of the original order is this clause printed in red: "Customer Note: All repair work is strictly cash. Estimates are for labor only, parts additional. Customers' cars operated by our staff at owner's risk. Not responsible in case of loss by fire or theft. We are not responsible for loss of tools, switch keys or other articles left in cars." The second sheet is for the shop clerk and has the same heading as the original order, excepting at the bottom of the sheet is this: "Note: When job is completed and cost is computed, shop clerk will promptly return this order to office." On the back of the second sheet of the shop order, which goes to the shop clerk, is a form in which is carried a description of the parts and supplies used, cost and selling price and the time and cost of labor required on the job. These details are recorded on this cost sheet by the shop clerk and then it is turned into the billing department, and from the charges thereon the customer's bill is made out. The third sheet of the shop order is held by the shop foreman until the job is completed, when it is turned over to the shop clerk.

Metal Department and Body Shop.

In connection with the repair department there is a first-class radiator repair department, where all kinds of radiator repairs are made by experts, and a sheet metal department that is equipped with a cornice brake and metal folding machines, and here fenders and mud guards are repaired and the facilities

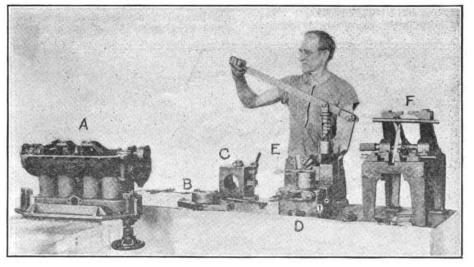
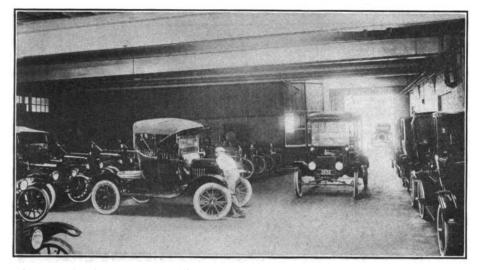


Fig. 2—Form Machines for Holding Pieces of Work. A—Cylinder Block Holder for Scraping in Main Bearings. B—Triple Gear Holder for Reaming. C—Piston Holder for Reaming Wrist Pin Bushings. D—Piston Holder for Fitting Rings to Pistons and Rods to Wrist Pins. E—Main Bearing Cap Oil Groove Cutter. F—Con-necting Rod Straightening Machine.



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New Car Stock Department, Where New Cars Are Held Until Delivered to Owners and Branch Stores.

are sufficient to make new fenders and guards if necessary. They also have a body-building shop where special commercial bodies are made to order; and their paint shop is as complete as all other departments. All special iron work is done in the service station. In fact, their facilities and organization of specialists are so complete that one would imagine himself in a regular motor car factory. There has been nothing overlooked or omitted that would afford the most satisfactory service, and the perfect, simple system under which it is operated has greatly reduced the cost of service to Ford owners in the territory served by the Dutee W. Flint distributing agency.

Mr. Flint has instilled into his organization a perfect order of cleanliness and neatness. At quitting time all nooks and corners of all departments must be thoroughly clean of all waste, oil and water. The same order of neatness is maintained in all the offices of the staff --no desks littered with papers, as there is a file for every important paper.

A considerable number of the Flint organization entered the service of their country. In order to instill into those remaining the necessity of more than ever concentrating their efforts and to help keep intact, as nearly as possible. the efficiency of the original organization, the following persuasive appeal places in the service stations and stores and the men showed a spirited response:

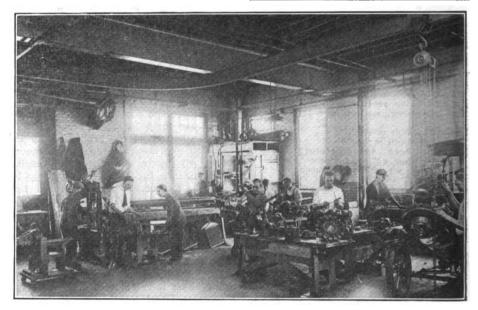


# WAR AND SERVICE

LABOR IS SCARCE. OUR MEN ARE BEING CALLED TO SERVE THEIR COUNTRY. WE SHALL NOT REPLACE THOSE WHO LEAVE, BUT SHALL ASK THOSE WHO ARE LEFT TO WORK HARDER AND SO DO THEIR SHARE.

WILL YOU BE CONSIDERATE? IT IS ONE WAY YOU CAN HELP.

DUTEE WILCOX FLINT.



A Section of Repair Department Where Units of the Car Are Overhauled. Note the Chain Hoist in the Foreground on the Right, Holding an Engine Just Lifted from a Chassis. This Chain Hoist Travels on an Overhead Track That Encircles the Entire Shop and Heavy Units Can Be Lifted and Carried to a Number of Lecationa.

was printed in blue and red on a large white card and posted in prominent



Parts and Supplies Department in Service Station.

New England Distributor of Fordson Tractor.

Dutee Wilcox Flint is the New England distributor of the Fordson tractor manufactured by Henry Ford & Son. Harvey Flint is the manager of the tractor department. During the past several months the tractor and its working units, a No. 7 Oliver plow and a disc harrow, have been transported on a fiveton Pierce-Arrow motor truck over sections of New England. This truck is provided with skids for unloading the outfit and it is manned by several experienced operators to handle the demonstration work.

Demonstrations of the tractor have been given to large numbers of farmers and prospective dealers. Mr. Flint, in carrying out the initial policy of Henry Ford & Son, in introducing the tractor during the summer has been contributing this great tractor educational work at his own expense and selling the trac-

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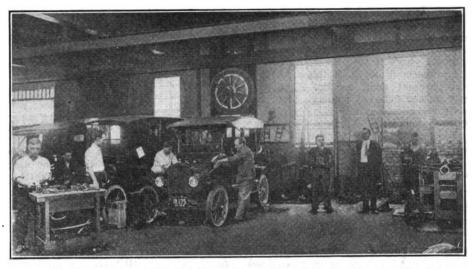
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tors to farmers at the cost price, \$750. He is distributing 500 tractors at actual cost in order to encourage the immediate use of Fordson tractors to greatly aid in increasing farm production and materially help to conserve and increase the resources of New England.

On Aug. 12th the motor truck, loaded with the tractor outfit, was started on an educational and dealership campaign. The schedule of this trip covered 35 counties, with an approximate distance of 2600 miles to be covered. The Flint tractor distributing agency will carry a complete stock of tractor repair parts and maintain an unexcelled mechanical service at its service stations in Providence and Connecticut. Other tractor service stations will be established with the largest and most centrally located sub-agents.

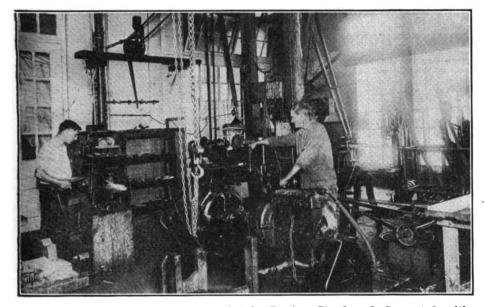
3,000,000 Gallons of Gasoline Sold Yearly.

The Dutee W. Flint Gasoline Co., Inc., is a separate company from the Dutee



A Section of Repair Department, Showing Mechanics Working on Chassis.

Broad and Myrtle streets, Providence, was designed and built in the Flint service station. The company's sales of



Machine Shop, Showing Engine Installed in Testing Stand and Connected with Electric Testing Motor.

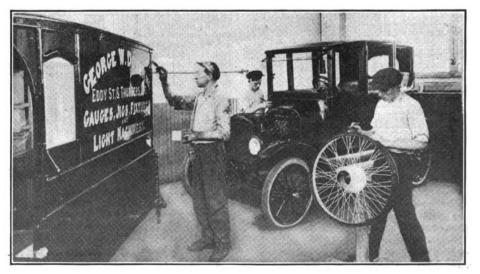
Wilcox Flint motor and tractor distributing agency. The gasoline business organisation and distributing facilities have been developed gradually during the past five years. It was started in a small way only to serve the numerous Flint branches. Its growth was natural and the expansion of the service was rapid, made so through the efficiency of serving not only the retail trade, but numerous motor car agencies and large operators of trucks. Alexander R. Fritz, an expert oil man, is the manager of this department. The company also specializes in the very best grades of lubricating oil.

The gasoline company operates eleven gasoline filling and lubricating oil stations in Providence and vicinity. Their pumps are driven by electric motors, the supply of gasoline being pumped from the large storage tanks into reserve tanks and from these tanks cars are filled by gravity. The large two-cylinder pump shown in the illustration of their latest and handsomest filling station at gasoline average more than 200,000 gallons a month, or approximately 3,000,000 gallons annually. In order to transport

this large quantity of fuel to their service stations and large gasoline users the following motor tank trucks are continually operated: Four Pierce-Arrow tank trucks of 1650, 1460, 728 and 720 gallons capacity, respectively, and one Ford tank truck of 345 gallons capacity.

The railroad siding in front of the service station extends alongside the large gasoline storage tanks that are located in a brick-walled and concrete pit adjoining the service station, affording convenience in running off gasoline from oil tank cars into the storage tanks. The company also receives gasoline from boats at the State pier, located several hundred feet from the gasoline storage station. In the pit are four large tanks, each holding 25,000 gallons, and six tanks, each holding 10,000 gallons, making a total storage capacity of 160,000 gallons; and underneath the floor of the service station are three tanks holding about 22,800 gallons more. The development of the gasoline business by Mr. Flint would make an extremely interesting chapter in the business life of any man, but now that the battle has been won and Flint's gasoline is acknowledged to be in keeping with his standard of quality, he is satisfied to sell that product, and others can do the worrying if they wish.

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Paint Shop, Where All Fine Jobs of Painting and Lettering Are Executed.