Dollars Your Car Can Save You

By MARTIN BUNN

An ARGUMENT between two customers that threatened to develop into a regular fight was in progress just outside the Model Garage. Gus Wilson stood it about as long as he could.

"Hey! You guys outside there!" he shouted, bungling on the side of a convenient pail with a monkey wrench to emphasize his remarks. "Isn't it hot enough around here without you two spilling all that extra hot air? Joe, see if you can't shoo 'em away."

Joe Clark, Gus's partner in operating the Model Garage, and the bookkeeping member of the firm, went to the rescue.

"What's it all about?" he interrupted as, pencil in hand, he confronted the two argumentative gentlemen.

"Ted, here, is shooting off a lot of bunk about how his car doesn't cost him anything to run," said one of them.

"But it isn't bunk, Mac," protested the other. "I know what I'm talking about. Don't I pay the bills?"

"Just arguing won't get you anywhere," said Joe. "Why not do a little figuring and see how it comes out in black and white on paper? If I understand you right, Ted, here, is convinced that his car doesn't cost him anything to run, while you, Mac, claim that's a lot of applesauce and that your car is running you straight to the poorhouse. Is that the sense of it?"

"You've got it," Ted agreed.

"But, Joe," Mac protested, "Ted can't possibly be right. You can't spend money and have it, too, you know. That's—"

"Just a minute, Mac," Joe broke in. "Let's settle this thing on paper—not with chin music. You've both got the same kind of car and you got 'em about the same time, so we ought to get some pretty interesting figures out of this. Let's get Mac's story on paper first. How do you figure your car's making your pocketbook so limp?"

"It's as plain as the nose on my face," Mac asserted, subconsciously scratching that rather prominent feature. "I drive about six thousand miles a year, and you've told me before that it costs at least eight cents a mile to operate a car like mine. That makes four hundred and eighty dollars right there."

"All right, I've got that down," said Joe as he noted the figure on a piece of paper. "Anything else you can charge against the car?"

"Lots," grumbled Mac. "Every time we go out for a ride on Sunday we invite some people to go with us, and I get stuck for dinner for the crowd. Every time I drive to a show in the city there's a parking charge added to the cost of the tickets. Because we've got the car we don't have to take the last train home and that means we go to some restaurant instead of raiding the ice box after we get home."

"Then we wouldn't belong to the country club if we didn't have a car to go back and forth."

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so what I spend at the club ought to be charged
against the car—and, believe me, it's plenty!
That car doesn't do anything else but take us
to places where we can spend money!

"Hm," grunted Joe. "You seem to make
out a case. What have you got to say, Ted, for
your side of the argument?"

"Well," Ted began, "I drive about as many
miles as Mac does, so I guess I owe the four-hundred-
and-eighty-dollar figure to me. But, for the
sake of money in lots of ways."

"As for instance?" questioned Joe, jiggling
his pencil.

"On vacations, for one thing," Ted
explained. "If you want to put down some
figures, you can start with exactly fifty-six
dollars. Eighty-five cents railroad fare with
last summer. That's what the ticket for
the wife, the two kids, and myself would have cost
on my vacation. Then you can put down at
least four dollars more that we saved on ex-
pressage by carrying our baggage in the
car. Also, because we had the car and didn't have
in hotel all the time, we were
satisfied with a cheaper hotel farther from
the beach. That saved at least twenty dollars on
the hotel bill. And we found a beach where we
could swim and get into our bathing suits
in the car. Every time we did it we saved just
one-fifty in bath house fees. Figure all that up
for a two weeks' vacation! This year we're
going motor camping for our vacation and we'll
save still more."

"THAT'S nearly a fifth of your car expense
already offset by saving," Joe commented.

"How do you account for the rest?"

"It's kind of hard to give definite figures,"
Ted said slowly. "It's principally in getting
our fun out of the car instead of spending
money on more expensive amusements. Nearly
every clear Sunday we go off on a picnic in the
car. That doesn't cost us anything for food,
and the wife says it's cheaper to get up a
picnic than to cook Sunday dinner. Then,
since we've got the picnic to look forward to on
Sunday, we don't bother to go to the movies
or Saturday night as we used to before we got the
car. The savings that way ought to come to
quite a respectable total during the course of a
year."

"Before we got the car I used to hang out
with a bunch of fellows from the office Saturday
afternoons. Usually we went to a matinee, got
shot some pool or something, and what with
one thing and another I generally spent at least
three or four dollars. Now I head for home
right after the office closes, have a bite to eat
at home, and we go for a ride; or, if the wife is
busy, I spend the afternoon washing and
polishing the car."

JOE'S pencil was busy for a few minutes.

"By Jinks!" he exclaimed. "Looks to me as
though you'd come pretty close to justifying
the entire car expense."

"If I haven't," Ted grinned, "you can put
down a little something for doctor's bills saved.
I've noticed that we don't have to call in the
doctor quite so often now that we spend more
time outdoors."

"Well," observed Joe, "far as I can see,
you're both right in this argument. Each one of
you is looking at it from a different view-
point. It only goes to show that a car will help
you to spend money if you're inclined that
way, or it will help you to save money if you'll
let it!"

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needs solving? Let Gus and Joe
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