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NEW INVENTIONS • MECHANICS • MONEY MAKING IDEAS
GUS WILSON tells what to do

When Brakes Won’t Hold

Greasy Linings and Poor Adjustment
Add to Danger of Quick Stops on Road

By MARTIN BUNN

FINE snow swirled along the frozen ground as Gus Wilson, hunched beside a telephone pole, waited impatiently for a crosstown bus.

"Taxi, mister?" called a voice as a snow-covered sedan came to a jerking stop in front of him.

A white curtain of snow hid the driver’s face but as the door of the car swung invitingly open Gus recognized Ned Rankin, one of the best customers and boosters the Model Garage ever had.

“What’s the matter, Gus, afraid to drive in the snow?" Gus Rankin grinned.

“No, just giving the car a little overhauling," replied the veteran mechanic, "and I've had so much other work, I didn’t have time to finish it.”

“Well, I’m in luck, running into you like this," said Rankin as Gus climbed in beside him. "I was going to stop in and see you some time today. My brakes are on the blink. You heard them squeal when I stopped just now. I’ve got to stand on the foot pedal to stop the car. I want you to put on some of that dressing that makes brakes hold.”

“We don’t keep that sort of stuff; it’s only a makeshift anyhow," replied Gus. "Why not stop in at the garage and let me look at your brakes. Are the linings very old?"

“No, they’ve been in only about four months," said Rankin. "They can’t be worn out already.”

"Weak brakes can come from lots of things beside ordinary wear," Gus informed him. "The linings get glazed over, or dirt gets imbedded in the fabric, or maybe the linings get coated with grease or oil.”

“The funny thing is," went on Rankin, "they hold fine when I first start out in the morning. But by the time I’ve driven a few miles they begin to slip.”

“Sounds like grease on the linings,” Gus said.

WHEN they reached the Model Garage, Gus drove the car to the rear where his repair bench was located. Joe Clark, Gus’s partner, and Rankin stood close by as Gus donnéd his overalls and went to work.

“If brakes hold when they’re cold and slip when they heat up, it’s generally a sign grease is causing some of the trouble," Gus murmured as he removed one of the wheels and began scrubbing the grease-coated lining with a stiff brush soaked with gasoline. "Grease from your rear end has been leaking out. I’ll have to put new grease retaining washers on when I get through, or you’ll be having the same trouble all over again.

“Lucky for you, these linings aren’t so bad. Sometimes so much grease gets on the brakes that a grease bath doesn’t help. The only thing to do then is reline.”

“Does water have much effect on brake linings?” Rankin asked.

“T’ll say it does," Gus replied, "and it acts in two ways. If the linings just get moist, because the car has been left in a damp atmosphere, they’ll grab and let out awful squeals. If they get wet through, they won’t hold at all.”

“WATER’S an easy thing to get rid of, though," Gus pointed out. "All you’ve got to do is run the car for a short distance with the brakes partly on; the heat of friction will turn the water into steam and leave the linings perfectly dry.”

“Remember that old touring car I had some years ago,” Rankin recalled. "Every time I’d put on the brakes, they’d chatter like a couple of pet parrots. What caused that?"

“Generally, chatter is caused by loose parts," said Gus as he put a wheel back into place, "but a broken anchor bracket or loose lining rivets will cause it too. Sometimes the brake linings get sticky and chatter, but a gasoline bath will generally remedy that.”

“The hardest chatter to locate comes from poor adjustment. If the end of the brake band or shoe is forced into the drum, the lining binds at that point and generally sets up a howl. To be right, the pressure on the lining should be tangential to the drum," Gus explained.

Rankin grunted as he picked up a scrap of brake lining (Continued on page 100)

GUS says: When installing spark plugs, use gaskets and be sure that each plug is screwed tightly in place. If the plugs are set at an angle or placed in the side of the motor, install them so the grounded electrodes are on the bottom side. This is particularly important on motors that pump oil. If the grounded point is placed so that it is on the top side, the excess oil will drop on the plug, drip on the insulated point, and foul it.
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