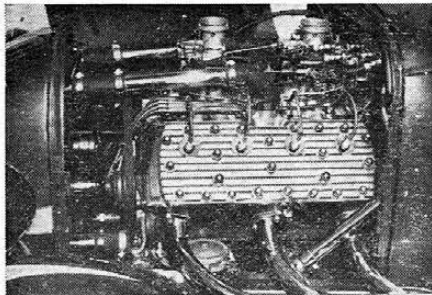




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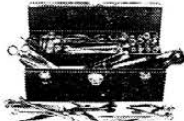
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THE CURRENT ISSUE

THE special feature story on the performance of Ak Miller's hot rod in Mexico, which appeared in this magazine last month, has received unusual attention from readers. Numerous letters are arriving daily, all praising the car and its crew. Many of the comments note the fact that **MOTOR LIFE** was the first publication, in or out of the motoring field, to report the full story and grant the achievement the recognition it deserved.

As far as publishing the story first is concerned, we have a confession to make: before the race even started and at a time when most observers were scoffing at the hot rod and predicting that it wouldn't finish the first leg, the story was in preparation for **MOTOR LIFE**. We felt that regardless of its finishing position, the car was especially significant and that future races in Mexico will be seeing much more of hot rods.

The series of features on the 1954 cars which occupy many pages in this issue of **MOTOR LIFE** is another example of advance planning. The job of collecting information on new cars before they are announced to the public is no easy task. Every detail, no matter how minor it is, remains a jealously guarded secret which the major auto makers are reluctant to release.

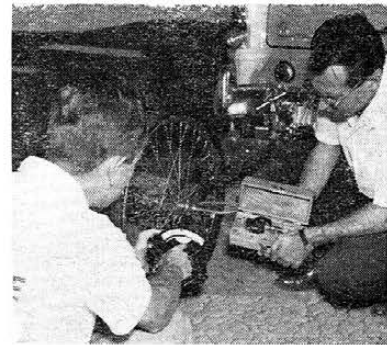
Most of the credit for the completeness of this report on the '54 cars belongs to two of the most highly skilled automotive writers and reporters in the business. They are Roger Huntington, who is justly famed for his accurate and lively technical articles, and Sydney Keith, a veteran staffer of motoring publications who has had additional background on Detroit newspapers and as a publicist for one of the major auto manufacturing companies.

Last-minute alterations in car production schedules has caused one or two deletions from this overall report, but we feel that the comprehensive statistical tabulations and the analysis will be helpful reference material for all who are interested in automobiles.

One of the most interesting chores in preparing reports for **MOTOR LIFE** are the regular road tests which are conducted each month. Occasionally, however, we are embarrassed by someone who refers to our efforts as "research." To use this term, which carries scientific connotations, is mis-

leading. Our crew prefers to be known simply as testers, experienced drivers who take a perfectly tuned car out and put it through its paces.

The methods, nevertheless, are exceedingly accurate. The sight of an electric fifth wheel trailing a test car is a familiar one to most readers. But few have seen the instruments which are watched inside the car. A glance at the accompanying photo will provide a rough idea of the set-up. While many minor measuring devices are employed, the most important gadgets are the electric speedometer on the left and the elec-



tric revolution counter at the right.

The first accurately registers the true speed of the car, while the second counts precisely down to the tenths of a foot the exact distance traveled.

The third item of equipment, shown on page 38, is the fuel-flow meter, fixed to the side window. With this container, one-tenth of a gallon of fuel is measured and fed into the carburetor for mileage checks.

With the figures obtained through these instruments, plus the results of the detailed inspection and driving impressions, the test reports are designed so that you can evaluate the car yourself and make correct comparisons when the time comes to do so.

One of the stories scheduled for the current issue was crowded out at the last moment. It was a road test of a Mexican road race Lincoln, furnished by Ray Crawford. As the 1954 Auto Directory began to assume larger proportions than anticipated, it was necessary to omit the report.

However, we'd like to let you know that, as one phase of the test, the Lincoln was entered in the sports car hillclimb at Willow Springs, Calif. Driver Marvin Patchen, without an opportunity to become familiar with the car, won his class hands down.

THE EDITORS