

very sincerely yours:

AS OF 4 P.M. on July 11, we have known that there will be a Mercedes-Benz plant in the United States and that the most popular versions of the Daimler-Benz line will soon be coming to U.S. customers out of Detroit, not Stuttgart. The news was released a week later along with the long expected announcement that the rocky Studebaker-Packard Corporation was purchased by Curtiss-Wright. The Studebaker part of the combine will still continue to operate as such, and the excellent Packard manufacturing facilities will be used to turn out several versions of the Mercedes line under license. Not since the days during the thirties when Rolls Royce was manufactured in Springfield, Massachusetts, has a foreign car been built in this country. Volkswagen almost did it, but reneged at the last minute, selling their New Jersey plant at a small profit. Mercedes may well stick, however; they have only to retool an existing plant to begin operation.

To Mercedes: Best of luck! And to Curtiss Wright: Please do the job right — it's a wonderful car.

One day not too long ago, Griff Borgeson and deponent were checking out one of the more glamorous pieces of machinery along California's Highway 101 near Santa Barbara. The day was perfect and we were snoring along close to, but below, the state speed limit thoroughly enjoying the day and the car. Motoring thus conservatively we slowly overhauled one of California's ubiquitous and efficient Highway Patrolmen. A few moments later there came that chilling low growl from a barely-tapped siren button, the growl that says "pull over, pal—you've pulled a boner."

We weren't kept in the dark long. It wasn't an error of commission but one of omission. The car had no front license plate, and California is one of the states requiring that both tags be displayed. Since the car wasn't ours we weren't cited, but the officer pointedly asked us to tell people that sports cars are no exception to the two-tag rule. So here it is, gentlemen: If your state says two tags are required, it means just that, sports car or family hack. If you don't have a front bracket, buy one or build one, but put that tag on the aiming end of your car: you'll save yourself some big, round dollars that way. For instance, at a recent race meet the patrol nailed some 92 sporting types who had neglected the front plates and the sovereign State of California raked in a cool \$920 in the space of a few hours thereby. A nice, clean haul that any state can use.

A buck for a bracket or ten for being without it. It's your money—take your choice.

While we were getting the above information, we also got a few more nuggets from the patrolman. One concerned the difference between operator and driver.

Pointing to the cars streaming by on the busy highway, the officer remarked:

"Count a hundred of those cars. Assume that all of them are driven by licensed operators. How many of these are drivers? Figure it at one percent and you're being generous." It wasn't, he went on to say, that people were naturally careless, they just lacked opportunity or incentive to improve beyond mere legality.

The officer was no rookie; he'd spent 10 years watching traffic along that stretch of road and he obviously had reason for the remark.

Apparently he's not alone either. A continent and an ocean separates him from the Police Driving School at Hendon, England where much the same thinking is obviously in evidence. The feeling has resulted in the formation of a recognized body to be known as the Institute of Advanced Motorists. Admission to this group is by two-hour test administered by the same instructors who examine the English motor cops. So valid is the test procedure that successful completion automatically rates the new member an initial cut of 15 percent in his insurance rates. This cut will go progressively to 30 percent over a period of a couple of years. Here is the opportunity and the incentive handed out on a constructive basis and right where it be felt the most—in the wallet. We could use some of that right here.

john christy.

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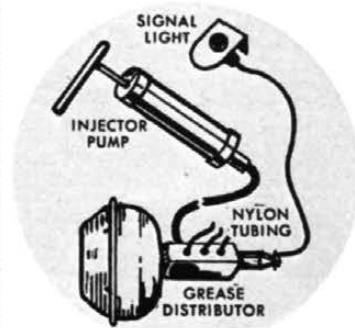
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