



A Small Town—A Large Business —An Upstanding Dealership

By JOHN PROUT

I'VE never crossed the Sahara desert nor seen one of the much advertised oases that every regular desert is supposed to have, but I know something of the sensation the swarthy Egyptian must experience as he applies the brakes to his twin-hump dromedary and hauls up under a friendly palm tree to slake his thirst in the sparkling waters of the pool that's always a regular part of the picture.

Not that the six thousand miles I've covered thru Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin have all been barren in the matter of sales . . . They haven't. But among other things which the present state of business has produced is a most formidable list of new excuses why dealers can't, or won't, buy stocks of accessories. Every fellow is certain that his particular spot on the business map has been singled out for the target of every evil influence that can prey upon good business and honest effort—I mean, most of 'em. But not all.

Take Albert Radtke, of Zachow, Wisconsin, as the shining exception.

I'll tell you about Zachow first, for it can be disposed of in a very few lines. Zachow is a village of 250 souls about 25 miles northwest of Green Bay. It consists of a depot, post office, a store or two and RADTKE'S establishment. There is nothing unusual about the sur-

rounding territory—mainly farming and dairying. That's Zachow.

But, Albert Radtke's Chevrolet Sales and Service establishment is something else. In fact, it's the oasis I had in mind in the first paragraph. Here in this little village, not even on a main state highway is one of the most modern Chevrolet Sales and Service institutions I saw anywhere in central Wisconsin.

A new brick building with 80 feet frontage and 100 feet depth, modern to the last detail. The eight large single plate glass windows in front are skillfully trimmed by Mrs. Radtke. The front looks more like Michigan Avenue. Their sales room is a credit to most of those in large cities—the floor is full of new Chevrolet cars. The accessories are displayed in a seven-unit counter. This, too, gives evidence of the artistic touch of Mrs. Radtke. The shop, as you've already guessed, is just as modern as the most approved equipment can make it.

The Radtke place was busy!

"How's business?" I asked after I'd regained some composure.

"Business is good," Mr. Radtke informed me. The very lack of exuberance convinced me he wasn't kidding himself.

"How many cars do you sell?"

"About two hundred per year." Still no hilarity. Just matter-of-fact.

"How many per what?" I wasn't certain I was hearing things right.

"Well, we've sold eighteen hundred new Chevrolets in the past nine years," Mr. Radtke remarked as tho

he was talking about bushels of corn per acre. "We may fall a little short this year. We've delivered only 86 new cars up to August first, but if *business keeps on getting better*, we'll make our two hundred."

"How many salesmen do you employ?" I was looking for the catch.

Here Mrs. Radtke answered: "We don't have any salesmen since we quit the drawing account plan. Albert and I just sell them."

You ask me how this young couple can keep a home, raise a family, operate this business, and sell 200 new cars a year, and dispose of the used cars on top of that?

I tell you I don't know *how*. I simply know they *do*.

BUT, if I did know exactly how they do it, and could tell you here and now, I don't think I'd do so. Accomplishments like that aren't copied. They're created.

They know everybody for miles around. They sell cars to people in cities near them—and the cars come back for service and accessories.

I drove to the next town and asked a dealer: "How's business?"

"There ain't no business to be 'howed'" was his opinion. He was right. There wasn't in his place.

Why was the Chevrolet business good in Zachow? Why was there none in the next town?

The answer is as old, and as evident, as business itself. It's good for a paragraph that I'm not capable of writing.

Why don't YOU write it, and tack it upon your wall?