

A NEW BEGINNING (1920 – 1929)

1927

More than 52,000 motor vehicles were in operation on the territory of Czechoslovakia, and the main roads measured 8,500 kilometres. Finally, the luxury tax on large cars was lifted as well, but on the other hand, tax on motor vehicles was about to be imposed: 200 crowns per year for a motorcycle, and 1,600 crowns for a car with engine capacity of up to 1.5 litres; above this limit, the rate was graded so that an owner of a five-litre car had to pay five thousand crowns a year. This tax was intended for the benefit of the newly established Road Repair Fund.

The Automobile Club of the Czechoslovak Republic (AKRČs) had more than ten thousand members; the number had increased fivefold over the past five years.

Coachbuilder V. Brožík achieved great success on June 19th, by entering two of its cars for a beauty contest held by the Austrian Automobile Club. Brožík won the first and third prizes in an international competition of seventy-eight models made by body builders from all over the world.

XIX. INTERNATIONAL MOTOR SHOW, September 3rd to 11th

As far as size is concerned, this motor show was even more significant than the previous one. This was thanks to the fact that local car manufacturers were extravagant in their participation. Škoda brought forty-five cars, including six licensed Hispano Suizas. Attention was drawn to the Škoda 350 six-cylinder slide valve engine as well as to three types of licensed steam Sentinels, with payload of 5, 6 and 7 tons.

That year, Praga produced five thousand automobiles in each of the twelve consecutive months for the first time. It displayed a new type of Grand eight-cylinder in-line engine, which was meant to challenge the

competition. Walter of Jinonice, known for its high quality, offered its customers a convertible with a radiator plated with gold.

Tatra introduced a new T 57 four-cylinder engine that would be produced in various modifications for the next twenty years. Experts were enthusiastic about Tatra trucks, mainly due to their chassis with a single support tube. Wikov of Prostějov came to Prague for the first time, bringing a 1.5-litre four-cylinder engine passenger car. Another exhibition novelty was a VIL-type A. Fross-Büssing six-ton lorry made by the Prague company Liberta.

The aircraft factory Aero obtained a licence to produce bodies for the Weymann model. In total, twenty-eight cars from different brands, including an eight-cylinder Bugatti, were equipped with Aero bodies at the motor show. Till then, a body had meant timbering first and foremost – a stiff structure of thick ribs made of a hard wood, mostly with a sheet-metal covering. An integral part of the body was the seats – the timbering was subject to high stress caused by the weight of the passengers. Bad road conditions as well as imperfect suspension soon made the body frame joints loosen so that the body lost its strength, apart from sometimes even an unbearable groan produced by wooden elements rubbing together in the joints. Weymann presented a simple solution. He fixed the seats directly onto the chassis, and though he also made a body out of wooden elements, he used considerably thinner ones. The main point was that the ribs not only did not rub together, but they also did not touch one another, because there was a gap of one or two millimetres between them, and they were interconnected through sheet metal angles. The frame was mostly covered with Fabrikoid (a waterproof fabric made of cloth coated with pyroxylin) – a kind of artificial leather. Such a construction principle had long been used in aeronautics where Weymann also worked, and which was also one of products manufactured by the Aero factory.

Sport

The 11th Zbraslav to Jíloviště Uphill Race (8th May) had a tragic prelude: manufacturer Havránek of Prostějov crashed in his Bugatti during the practice. His mechanic Skopal died on the spot, while Havránek passed away a couple of days later. For the first time, the race was forerun by cyclists who followed in the footsteps of a tradition from the 1880's, when a bicycle race used to be held up the hill, Cukrová hora (Sugar Mountain) as Cukrák was then called. The motor sport competition had already reached its climax, registering 111 entries, and the results also deserved some credit. Heusser in a five-litre Steyr set a new record at 2m59.9s. He is said to have driven as fast as 200 kph.