

WARNS AGAINST CAR BOOTLEGGING

Better Business Bureau Describes Practice

A family recently started east from California in a new automobile of popular make. Between Los Angeles and Cleveland their car was wrecked and the members of the family injured, but not seriously. The car was so badly damaged that they decided never to drive it again. The car was sold to a used car dealer who had it repaired so that it "looked like new." That self-same car was, as a matter of fact, offered for sale on a used car lot by an unauthorized dealer and bought by a deceived purchaser who thought he was getting a factory-new car through unauthorized sources.

Such instances as the foregoing led the Cleveland Better Business Bureau to issue an advertisement from which the following is taken:

"In used cars there is, of course, a wide open market but in the purchase of new cars the warning is to buy them from authorized, enfranchised dealers.

"There are other practices by unauthorized dealers against which the buying public is warned. In some instances cars of obsolete model and type have been offered as new, current models. This is apt to occur at the close of the model season. Then cars which are in a style a year old are misrepresented. When such models are in the hands of authorized dealers they are advertised for what they are and sold at a discount. But when such cars find their ways onto the lots of unauthorized dealers misrepresentations sometimes are made and purchasers are out of pocket. They are, it is true, not used cars but neither are they new cars of current models.

"Buyers looking too hard for bargains are warned to be on the lookout for converted taxicabs. The Better Business Bureau requires passenger cars which have been in taxicab service to be advertised as such, but unscrupulous dealers sometimes try to get away with it otherwise by advertising such vehicles merely as used passenger cars without letting the public know they have had thousands of miles of use in taxi service.

"The Better Business Bureau has found also that the automobile bootlegger frequently indulges in such nefarious practices as "packing" finance charges. A campaign against such practices has been successfully waged by the bureau and the Cleveland Automotive Trade Association, the dealer members of which are pledged not to add unjustified amounts to the time payment charges to cover up supposed discounts."

Unauthorized dealers indulging in such practices have come to be known as "bootleggers" because they are offering for sale misrepresented and illegitimate merchandise. While Cleveland has been kept comparatively clean from such methods due to the vigilance of the Cleveland Automotive Trade Association and the Better Business Bureau in co-operation with local newspapers, the warning has been issued to keep any further victimization to a minimum.

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