

dimples deep—always signs of tremendous excitement.

He took Jim Allison and John Levi aside. "Boys, do you realize what this means? Why, it's the biggest discovery since the telephone!"

The usually recalcitrant Jim was for once as enthusiastic as Carl.

Prest-O-Lite, they told one another almost hysterically was a dud compared to this discovery. No more running out of gas on country roads! A motorist would just carry a pocket full of Zolene cubes. And the cost of motoring would be cut almost to nothing! Gasoline at this time was fifty-five cents a gallon and the early cars drank it in extravagant amounts.

The more advantages they thought up for Zolene, the more excited Jim and Carl grew. Only John Levi was dubious. His engineer's brain refused miracles. "Making gasoline out of water is contrary to every law in chemistry," he argued.

Carl and Jim were infuriated by his skepticism. John's objections were further overruled when Zolene's inventor claimed the fluid could also be made with salt water! Carl immediately telephoned one of his Prest-O-Lite managers on the Jersey shore to express a barrel of salt water to Speedway. The astonishing order was filled, and Carl was gratified to find the Zolene mixture worked as potently with salt water as it had with fresh.

John Levi surmised that the Zolene cubes were paraffin made from gasoline residue. It was the mysterious bottle that baffled them. Carl told me, "I'd give ten thousand dollars to find out what's in that bottle. He won't even let me smell it!"

In the end the bottle cost thirty thousand dollars. Carl and Jim bought the formula rights and set up a Zolene experimental plant in Speedway. The Dayton inventor donated his magical cubes, the formula, and, most important, one of the mystery vials.

The newspapers learned of "the latest Carl Fisher phenomenon" and feverish headlines hailed him the Messiah of a people that had become automobile-conscious.

"A discovery beneficial to mankind," one editorial read, "and of secondary importance only to radium."

Carl himself was so excited he built a new boat and named it the *Zolene*.