

I finally persuaded him to change his mind.

It still seems strange that Carl, who forgave so much of human frailty, should have been made so angry by the malice of one man. Certainly nothing that he did for individuals or the public at large was done with thought of recognition or praise. He never allowed anyone to thank him. Yet he was always ready to help anyone; he listened to all who came.

And all sorts of people came to Carl Fisher. His office and his home were open to the successful and the needy; the great and the unknown, the crank and the enthusiast. Rarely did a day pass that the inventor of some gadget or machine did not make his way to Carl's door. His discovery of Prest-O-Lite had become a legend of American business magic. Fantastic projects were urged upon him, from perpetual-motion machines to mouse-traps.

I have no idea how many inventions Carl financed. One that excited him greatly at this time was Zolene. A man in Dayton, Ohio, claimed to have discovered a gasoline substitute. Carl went to Dayton to talk with the inventor, and he brought the man to Indianapolis to give a demonstration at Speedway.

Gathered around the test car on the brick track that day were Carl, his partner Jim Allison, John Levi, the engineer, who had worked for Carl since the day he delivered our honeymoon boat and had been asked to accompany us on our jaunt to Florida, and a group of famous racers—Tommy Milton, Johnny Aitken, Howard Wilcox and Don Merz. The inventor began his demonstration under a battery of wary, speed-trained eyes. He dropped a handful of white cubes into a teakettle of boiling water. They looked like camphor. Then from his vest pocket he took a small bottle and shook its contents into the mixture.

"What's that?" Carl asked.

The inventor shook his head mysteriously. "That's the secret!" He wouldn't let Carl touch the bottle.

The cooled liquid was poured into the empty gas tank of the test car. Carl slipped behind the wheel and the others watched in breathless silence as the car moved. Carl was able to drive it around the track! When he came back, his voice was low and his