

## FENDER SKIRTS

The March-April issue of the "Action Era Vehicle" has a well written article on fender skirts which are formally referred to as "rear wheel shields" by the Chrysler Corporation. Realizing that all Airflow owners must have these to make their car complete and recognizing the relatively high cost of obtaining same if and when they are located, we thought it appropriate to set the record straight with regard to interchangeability as well as authenticity.

The observations which follow are accurate and correct to the best of your editor's knowledge, however, we will be most happy to print any corrections or additions which the readers feel appropriate. No attempt has been made to include all the variations appearing on the export models or those assembled overseas.

Fender skirts made for the Airstream models of Chrysler and De Soto, although they look the same at first glance, will not fit the Airflow. They can best be identified by the way they fasten to the fender and by the bottom rear tip of the skirt. The Airstream skirt was fastened by two claw-like, spring loaded gripping units located about 1/3 the circumference from the bottom to the top center. These fasteners gripped the inside rolled edge of the fender. No provisions were built into the original fender to aid in the securing of the skirt, therefore, the fender appears normal without the skirt. Contrasted with the Airflow skirt, the bottom trailing edge of the Airstream skirt is tapered to fit the contour of the fender opening while the Airflow skirt is essentially the same shape at the bottom trailing edge as at the leading bottom edge. Ornamentation is interchangeable between the Airstream and Airflow skirts - remember there was no '34 Airstream De Soto.

Although Airflow skirts were listed as "Special Equipment" in some cases, they were essentially a standard item in the same sense that Bumpers, Bumper Guards, Spare Tire Covers and Spare Tire and Tube were also listed as "Special Equipment." Therefore, I would suggest that they were, in fact, considered standard. I have searched in vain for a factory photo or brochure which displays an Airflow without the rear wheel shields.

The basic skirts are not all interchangeable. The wheel opening on the De Sotos and the smallest Chrysler Airflows is the same, i.e. C-U, C-1, and the C-9. While the skirts for these will fit into the opening, there are additional differences other than the emblems. All Airflow skirts have a raised moulding along the bottom edge, but, the 1934 models had about a 7 inch indentation in this moulding to accomodate the bottom portion of the emblem. Stainless steel trim matching that of the running-board and the bottom of the fenders was fastened over the moulding the length of the skirt. This was not used on the subsequent model years. For the record, pictures used for the introduction of the 1934 De Soto Airflow depict an emblem on the skirt which apparently was never put into production. Apparently a prototype which was changed prior to production. The small skirt measures 31 in. along the bottom while the other skirts measure 31½ in.

So far as emblems are concerned, the '34 De Soto had its own and the '35 & '36 De Sotos used the same emblem. The '34 Chrysler had its own and the '35 & '36 used the same emblem, but the '37 had its own which was similar to that used on the other models of Chrysler in 1937. The De Soto emblems for '35 & '36 are not the same as used on Chrysler for '35 & '36. Likewise, the '34 De Soto emblem is not the same as that used on '35 Chryslers.

In 1935 the De Soto skirt was \$10.00 to the buyer and \$6.00 net to Direct Dealers.