

“Kaiser Flyer # 2”

Doomed from the beginning?



Henry J. Kaiser was one of America's most successful industrialist. His ship-building efforts during World War II are legendary. He was a brilliant, self-confident and very aggressive businessman. He knew what he wanted to do and resented anything that got in the way of his goals. But, these attributes would led to a situation that would haunt Kaiser in his automobile business.

During World War II the President of the United States, Harry Truman, attempted to Nationalize the steel plants for the war effort. This included Henry J. Kaiser's large plants. The steel workers at all the plants were threatening widespread strikes. The strikes would have deprived the war equipment factories of their critical ingredient - STEEL.

Truman went so far as to actually issue an Executive Order for the Government takeover of the steel plants but the order was overturned by the Supreme Court.

Kaiser was one of the few who vigorously fought against Truman's effort to Nationalize the steel plants. Both the politicians and the powerful war plants, which included General Motors, Ford and many pre-war auto parts manufactures, never forgot or forgave Kaiser for going against Truman's attempt to "keep the steel coming" for their factories. The lack of steel would have threatened GM's and Ford's ability to meet their lucrative war production contract goals. This one fact alone alienated Kaiser from influential and powerful Government officials, major parts suppliers, and the country's two largest automobile manufactures. Of course, all the suppliers, including General Motors and Ford, would later deny any such attitude toward the Kaiser-Frazer venture but history tells a different story.

Kaiser, himself, had unknowingly help to set the doomsday course of his later failure in the automobile business. He could not overcome this combined overwhelming opposition to his post-war new automobile venture. The co-operation from both parts suppliers and the other major automobile manufactures that would become so critical to Kaiser's new automobile company was not to be.

There were many other factors that ultimately led to the demise of the Kaiser-Frazer Automotive venture. Some, as this one, were under the control of Henry Kaiser himself, and some were not.

The Kaiser-Frazer motor cars were probably doomed from the beginning - - -

- - - what a shame.