



"EITHER we flatten out the Alps or the Alps flatten out us!" that was the motto jokingly adopted by the members of the M.G. Alpine team. There was an underlying seriousness about it, however, for it was a real job of work, and failure we could not afford to risk.

The International Alpine Trial is the most exacting reliability test to which any standard touring car can be subjected; it is really, in effect, a five days' race over the worst roads and the highest mountains in Europe, and any car that can even complete this trial must be a pretty sound vehicle.

It has been said for so long that British cars are of no use on the Continent that some of us had begun to believe it. Last year the trial was a comparatively easy affair and nearly everyone who completed the distance won a Glacier Cup—not that they did not deserve them.

But this year the event had been made considerably stiffer; the average speed for the 1,100 c.c. class, for instance, was 42 kilometres per hour—just over 26 m.p.h. Not a very high speed for those of us who average 40 or more on journeys at home. I may say that I was of this opinion myself before the Trial started, but the first couple of hours showed me that it was not

so easy, but confoundedly difficult, to average that speed up narrow lanes and dangerous mountain passes and, just as bad, down them.

This speed had to be averaged up the timed passes, a matter next to impossible with the great majority of cars. And for every ten seconds below that average speed a mark was deducted. It meant driving hard all day, taking every advantage of those all too rare straight stretches for a burst of 70 or so, and, incidentally, any car which is not capable of a quick seventy is not much use in the Alpine Trial.

The M.G. Magna team was entered for the Coupé des Alpes, the manufacturers' team award which was for the team of three cars losing least marks during the event. Against us we had the now well-known team of

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Singer "Nines," and a team of the famous Ballila Fiats; those who remember how fast were the Ballilas in the Mille Miglia will also realise that we were up against a pretty stiff proposition.

We were a merry band of adventurers that crowded aboard the Townsend Auto-ferry that

morning. Our team consisted of No. 112, W. E. C. Watkinson and H. A. F. Ward-Jackson, who took a Magna through the trial last year and knew something of what was before them. Then there was No. 113, L. A. Welch, a few years ago motor-cycle trials champion in this country, and who knows the Alps backwards, and his brother, D. F. Welch, who also has had experience in the Alps with motor-cycles and three-wheelers. Then there were my husband and myself (No. 114) who had motored in the Alps before, but had never even thought of anything quite so terrific in the way of mountain passes as we were to see later.

The cars consisted of those same M.G. Magnas which, captained by Alan C. Hess, had captured premier position in the Relay Race at Brooklands the previous Saturday. It had been a rush to get them ready, for obviously foreign fuels would be useless with the fairly high-compression ratio used for the track, and the engines had been changed, and wings, running-boards, and screens replaced. But, except for the Bonora quick-action filler caps, all three cars were perfectly standard production models.

The run down was without particular incident, although the