

A WORD TO TRIALS TYROS

Continued from page 163.

driver? How best can the route card, maps, town plans, time schedule, watches, pencils, and scribbling blocks be carried? Where is the personal kit to be stowed and what is the most convenient size for suit-cases? The emergency kit of tools must be available at a moment's notice—adjustable spanner, plug tester, tyre pressure gauge, two sizes of screwdriver, plug spanner, set of spare plugs, and combined gauge for plug gaps and contact breaker gap. Whe'l changing "by numbers," army fashion, will have been practised beforehand; and while the driver obtains jack and wheel brace from their respective positions, the passenger is already at work on the spare wheel fastening.

Every experienced trials competitor has his own particular scheme of organisation, but a beginner will not go far wrong if he takes the following as a basis, making such alterations as circumstances indicate are necessary.

The driver must take command throughout, and accept the sole responsibility for failure or success; this implies that nothing of importance may ever be "left to the passenger," and removes all risk of misunderstanding and argument as to "whose fault was that?" Yet after giving careful instructions in every detail, and then relegating duties, the driver is entitled to expect intelligent assistance and practical advice from his passenger.

Have an attache case—of some light-weight material—about 14ins. by 9ins. by 4ins. inside measurements, for the safe custody of all documents, maps, and paraphernalia required en route. During the trial, this attache

case is in charge of the passenger, who assumes responsibility for the safety of its contents. En route he extracts such documents as may be required, replacing everything in the attache case should he leave the car, even momentarily. Articles that are in constant use, e.g., route cards and a scribbling block—may be carried temporarily in the cubby hole, but only for the time being, as this is too risky a place for anything of value, especially during the night when things suddenly and mysteriously "go missing." Town plans should be fastened in an inexpensive loose-leaf binder, or with a strong paper clip, so that after passing through a town the appropriate plan may be removed and placed at the back of the file, thus bringing to view a plan of the next town on the route card. As a scribbling block, there is nothing better than sheets of paper 8ins. by 5ins., fastened to a sheet of thick cardboard (about 9ins. by 6ins., or slightly less) by one of the "John Bull" type of paper clips. As one sheet is filled with notes—and writing grows large and very straggly, when the driver is "beating it" along a straight, fast stretch, to make up time before the next control—a slight pressure releases the clip and enables the completed sheet to be placed at the back, bringing in place of it a fresh sheet for further notes.

The fifth commandment insists upon *somebody*—driver or passenger it matters not—memorising the details of the route.

In the Monte Carlo Rally, for example, competitors should learn off by heart the chief towns. In the London-Edinburgh, memorise the hills, their names, gradients, approximate length and chief features, and their exact position in relation

to each other and the nearest towns. Only by experience does one find out the enormous saving of time and anxiety which results from a properly memorised route.

The sixth—and last, commandment, for I have not sufficient space here to cover every aspect of the subject, deals with that all-important and vital factor, TIME—in capitals, please Mr. Printer, on account of its influence upon trial results. Too much care cannot be paid to this aspect; and as the result of long and involved preparations for trial driving, I have decided that nothing less than four clocks or watches are essential. Now, everybody cannot be expected to fit four clocks on the dashboard as a permanent feature of the car, so I suggest that two pocket watches should be placed opposite the front-seat passenger, and two opposite the driver; in each case the right-hand watch shows actual time; and the left-hand watch the time at which the car is due at the next control or stopping place. There are ready-made fittings which will ensure these watches being kept steady and in a convenient position, without damaging the instrument-board. In a coupe or saloon, watches are easily mounted above the windscreen, otherwise, instrument-board mounting is the only other alternative.

Of these six commandments, "which is the greatest?" you may ask. For the novice in competition work, I say the first—study and digest the regulations; undoubtedly, ignorance and misunderstanding, more than anything else, lead to disqualification. And if a competitor digests the regulations, then he is much more likely to make careful preparations—and that, of course, implies the other five commandments.