



A Word to Trials Tyros

THE word "reliability," as applied to Club trials, is something of a misnomer nowadays, for reliability is one of the modern car's most outstanding features, hardly necessary to demonstrate. Yet the reliability trial increases in popularity every season, for even if cars are reliable, the driver can make a grievous error, while his passenger—or pilot, or navigating officer, call him what you will—has been known to err in a calculation!

The reliability trial organiser must lay down certain hard-and-fast regulations, otherwise every entrant would qualify for a "gold," with disastrous effect upon the club balance sheet. The first commandment, to be observed by all reliability trial entrants, then, is this: study and digest the regulations. Note why and how penalties are incurred, and the number of marks which a driver loses for breaking this, that, and the next regulation. As for the ones which involve disqualification—underline with red ink and learn them off by heart. Even the most experienced competitor may be caught napping, for, naturally, the regulations vary with each event, and every organiser has his own little traps,

all nicely baited to catch the careless—but not necessarily the novice—entrant.

Next in importance, to the novice-entrant, at any rate, is the keeping of records. In trial work of any kind, the more quickly you gain experience, the better your chance of being high up in the list of finishers. So during the first few events, insist upon copious notes being taken: notes about the car and its equipment—or lack thereof; about the route, with the times of starting and arrival, and speedometer reading, at each town, check, and control; notes about anything and everything that may come in useful for jogging the memory at a later date.

Then after the trial, this information must be re-written

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and kept as a permanent record to which reference can be made when preparing for another event this or next season.

The third and fourth commandments are concerned with preparation. According to some people, of course, the only preparation required is a cheque in payment of the entrance fees.

It should not be necessary—only experience proves that it is—to say that the car must be in perfect order, recently greased all round, with sump cleared out and replenished, rear axle and gearbox drained and replenished, cooling system swilled out and refilled, and all the other regular maintenance work carried out, as if for a 3,000 mile tour. Special attention must be paid to those accessories or components, which, if found inoperative at the conclusion of the trial, involve a more or less severe penalty. In some rallies, for instance, marks are deducted for inefficient electrical apparatus, so competitors are advised to fit new bulbs all round, examine all the wiring and renew any parts the insulation of which has been chafed, top-up the battery and grease the terminals, examine all fuses, clean the electric horn mechanism, and adjust if required. Make a list of all the jobs which must be done and then set about each one systematically. Don't run the slightest risk; adopt the old Scots policy, "mak' siccar." So much for preparation of the car.

As for the front seat passenger—his duties; and to what extent is he to guide and advise the

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