



THERE may be a certain amount of confusion in the minds of many motorists when reading about speed record achievements with cars. This is mainly because there are two very distinct types of records which are granted by the International Association governing these events.

Firstly, there are World's Records, which are for the fastest speed ever achieved over a given distance or for a certain duration, using any car irrespective of its size and power.

The fastest car in the world to-day is Sir Malcolm Campbell's "Blue Bird," which covered the measured mile on Daytona Beach, U.S.A., at a mean speed of 272.11 m.p.h. This is a most magnificent "Tour de force" on the part of the gallant driver, and an epic achievement of engineering.

After the record for the measured mile, comes the 5 miles, 10 miles, 50 miles, 100 miles, 200 miles, 500 miles, 1,000 miles, 2,000 miles, and so on. There are also the kilometre distances. We then have world's records for the greatest distance ever covered on land in 1 hour, 3 hours, 6 hours, 12 hours, 24 hours, and so on.

It is not generally known that the World's Hour Record is one of the most coveted and technically one of the most difficult.

By

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Not only does this record carry with it the great thrill of terrific speed, but it is coupled with the factor of endurance. With shorter records one might almost say that the excitement is too soon over, and the question of endurance does not arise. With them it is all strain, and no time is left to settle down and feel the intense thrill of swallowing up the track beneath you, the great rush of air and the constant hum of the mechanism in your ears.

But the problem of tyres is acute, since they have to stand both speed and distance! It is extremely difficult to make a tyre which has enough tread to stand the 60 minutes. For centrifugal force is so great that it is hardly possible to retain an adequate thickness of rubber. Once the tread loosens, it strips suddenly with a report like a rifle crack.

An hour at speeds of over 134 m.p.h. is long enough to test to the full the physical fitness of the driver and his ability to endure the excitement, suspense and uncertainty; and quite long

enough to wrestle with the car if it has the tendency to creep dangerously high on the banking of the track, as some cars often do.

Turning to the other end of the scale, the 24 Hours World's Record calls for a highly trained crew to cope with lightning pit-stops which need not exceed 40 seconds; the total loss of time in pulling up and getting away occupies only, perhaps, just over two minutes. It stands to reason that the longer the car can be kept running at full speed on the track, the better. Thus a heavy car, consuming a considerable quantity of fuel, presents a more difficult problem than the small capacity super-streamlined vehicle which will do the knots required.

When I attacked the 24 Hours World's Record this summer I had a squad of sixteen picked men who stood by at their allotted positions marked out on the track and pounced on the car at a word from the one in command directly it stopped at the appointed place. All spare wheels were deposited on the concrete in marked spots so that the car drew up between them. The fuel was supplied from a large tank mounted on a high tower. In this manner all supplies could be taken on board, the four wheels changed and drivers swapped in a total time of 36 seconds, and

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