

BENNETT DRIVERS HOME

Tracy, Dingley and Lytle Return From Scene of French Race and Talk of Struggle for International Cup—Orlando Weber Makes Sage Observations on Cars He Saw on Trip

New York, Aug. 1—Joe Tracy, H. H. Lytle and Bert Dingley, the American team in the Bennett race, and A. E. Schaff and Orlando Weber, of the Pope forces, who witnessed the contest, arrived on Saturday on the Celtic. They are all, of course, brimming over with stories of the big contest.

Weber dropped in at the MOTOR AGE office to-day, and had much of interest to tell and many observations of value to make. Weber is far from displeased with the showing of the Pops in the great race. He thinks that considering the fact that they came from the longest distance of any cars that competed, and that the repairs were all made in a machine shop, while the French cars were repaired and partly rebuilt, in some cases, at their respective factories, the showing of America was creditable.

"But for such a course," he said, "with 300 turns, 200 of which are dangerous, and hills that are 'climbs to the clouds' in themselves, the three speed transmission is unsuitable. Four speeds ahead are necessary, so that on the fourth the car can run out to 70 or 80 miles an hour. There was not more than 1½ miles of straight-away on the whole course, where one could see the road stretching out in front of him.

"To my mind, the fastest cars in the race were the Fiats, and such seemed to be the general opinion after the race. Lancia, the driver of the Fiat which led until the last round, took the most dangerous curves at awful speed. The Darracqs, without any differential, were all very fast, and I rather expect to see them do something in the Vanderbilt race. Their trouble in the race was tires, on which, of course, the curve-skidding, without differential, was very hard. It was wonderful the way the tires were handled, particularly by Michelin crews. At each of the Michelin controls there were twenty men, who would pick up the car almost before it stopped and lift it on to wooden blocks. The tires were slashed off with a knife and the new shoe with inner tube inside was slipped on its place, partly inflated. An entire set of tires on Thery's car was changed and the car on the ground again in 5 minutes, as impossible as that sounds. The Michelin tires, however, did not stand as much as the Diamonds. Michelin had a new tire with Samson tread, on which the tread did not rise up from the shoe, but was flush with and a part of it. The Diamond tires were wonderfully successful and all the Americans and a lot of Frenchmen became very enthusiastic about them. Considering the distance that they were from home, the Diamond crews took good care of them. Five men were brought over from the United States and some more were obtained in Ireland to handle the tires at the controls. There were seven Diamond controls in command of Cliff Meier and about five men at each control. The knife was used, in French style, to remove the shoe in the quickest possible time, and they also used the snap-spring lugs, which snap tight instead of screwing up in the usual

"There was a good deal of squeezing and scraping to get some cars in under the weight limit of 2,204 pounds. A Richard-Brasier had a wooden bar connecting the steering knuckles. Several cars got in by scraping the mud off the tires, particularly Samson users, who dug out the mud collecting between the rivets and took off their valve caps, to get down to weight. Don't laugh; that's true.

"Only the Wolseley was strengthened in any manner as to the wheels, wire having been wrapped about the spokes from the hubs to the rims. The Darracq of Wagner was equipped with wire wheels."

When asked about the tendencies of the design of the motors in France, Weber spoke strongly of his belief that there would be more valves on top, more jump-spark ignition, and more cars with chain drive.

"There is no doubt in my mind," he said, "about the chain-drive on a high-powered, and particularly on a racing car. The methods of drive on all the cars entered in the race showed the same idea. The only bevel-gear drive car in the race was the Napier, all of the others being double chain drive."

In regard to the cars from abroad that will surely compete in the Vanderbilt race, Weber said:

"When I left Paris I understood that all were coming who had entered; but now I hear differently. I am sure, though, that Wagner will be here with the Darracq, and also that there will be several Panhards at the start."

Joe Tracy confirms the statement of Orlando Weber that the Richard-Brasier people on account of the expense and because they think they would have everything to lose and nothing to gain by competing will not send over either Thery or Caillois. E. B. Gallaher, the importer of these cars, by the way, in view of this statement, says that if it be true he will sail at once for Europe and buy one of the cars and race it with one of his own drivers. Tracy says that he was at both the Darracq and Renault factories and was informed that no cars would be sent over by them. Weber declares that the Darracq was one of the fastest cars in the race and would surely be in the Vanderbilt contest. Secretary Batchelder, of the racing board, expresses no fear that France will not be represented by a full team in the contest, pointing to the fact that the French club will not be likely to forfeit its \$2,500 already paid in entry fees.

As to his own troubles, Tracy had not much to say beyond calling attention to the fact that he was the only competitor who had not had a chance to go over the course in his racer. This, he says, compelled him to devote the entire first round to experimenting with his car, which was too long for negotiating the sharp turns arising every mile or so of the way.

He had trouble with the overheating of his clutch bearing, and once he stopped for half an hour while a change was made of all his tires. The constant pulling at sharp turns was

terrific on tires, and most of the drivers were forced to change once during the race.

Tracy had just got nicely started and was making fast time in the third round when the race was declared finished. He had been the last of the eighteen competitors to start and was one and a half hours behind, otherwise he might have finished the race. He ascribed the poor showing of the Locomobile wholly to his inexperience on the course.

Toledo, O., Aug. 1—As this is the place where the car he drove in the Bennett cup race is made, naturally Bert Dingley headed this way after landing in New York on his way back from France. Dingley got here in time for the meet Sunday, in which he took part. Herbert Lytle, the other Pope-Toledo driver, was also expected, but he stopped off to visit his family in Boston. However, he will report here this week.

"Experience is a great teacher," said Dingley, in speaking of the results of the Bennett cup race. "We Americans have learned a great lesson, and, judging from what we have gained in point of knowledge, the expense is more than overbalanced by the profit. Our failure to win in the great race was due principally to our lack of knowledge beforehand of the true physiography of the circuit. You see, we Americans were not posted on the many irregularities of the Auvergne, or, rather, the Michelin circuit. Had we sent a representative over to carefully inspect the course beforehand, our cars would have been differently constructed. Our cars were of the 50-horsepower variety, while all the other racers were 90-horsepower machines, and even better, Leon Thery's Richard-Brasier being 96-horsepower. The Pope-Toledo cars were built for high speed and not for hill-climbing. Anyone who has a true knowledge of the physical features of the Michelin circuit knows that, to win over such a course, a car must be a special hill-climbing machine, one especially built for endurance runs as well as for speed. All the other machines were hill-climbers, and therein lay our failure to win with the Pope-Toledo machines.

"The circuit was the rockiest, hilliest, down-hill and up-hill course I have ever seen, and I was more than surprised at the record made by the Frenchman. There was not over 10 miles of the entire course of 85 miles that might be termed good, and this distance was found only in sections, at the most 2 miles in length. Had we had the knowledge of the course beforehand that we now have, I do most emphatically believe the Pope-Toledo cars would have won. With this knowledge before the entries were made, we would have struck the French circuit with a much differently constructed pair of machines."

"RIG THAT RUNS" TO MOVE

St. Louis, Mo., July 29—It has been announced that in the near future the "rig that runs," otherwise the product of the St. Louis Motor Carriage Co., whose present plant is located on North Vandeventer avenue, will be manufactured in Peoria, Ill., Jesse French, Sr., head of the concern, having closed a deal with C. W. Constantine and Theodore J. Miller for the Seiberling property at Peoria Heights, paying cash for the building, its contents and six acres of land. The factory is known as the Seiberling plant and was originally built by Monroe Seiberling, who manufactured rubber goods, bicycles, etc.