

# Correspondence on Current Topics.

*Letters from readers intended for publication should be written on one side of the paper only and should be as short as the subject will permit. Publication of a letter does not imply editorial endorsement of the opinions expressed. Every endeavour is made to give a fair hearing to opposite views on various subjects.*

## The Accident at Kop Hill.

### Mr. S. F. Edge's Views.

I gather that various people have been thrown into a state of panic through the relatively trifling accident that occurred at Kop Hill recently, but surely it wants very little imagination to realize that this, and much more serious accidents, are likely to occur at these hill-climbs as so many of them are at present arranged.

The following is what I wrote on April 27th, 1922, or nearly three years ago:—

"On Saturday, 1st April, was held the first big hill-climb of the year, that at Kop Hill, and although some individuals had many successes, I think the organization wants very serious modification for the future, as the principle of allowing the same car to compete in an almost unlimited number of events seems to be quite unsound. I consider that each car should be definitely allotted to its particular class, and not allowed to run in any other. Hill-climbs should not be so arranged that the maximum number of ascents possible should be made by every competitor, but should be so arranged that the minimum number of ascents should definitely decide the winners of all the events.

"One must never forget that these hill-climbs are still held upon public roads, and although of immense interest to considerable numbers of people, it must not be overlooked that those interested are but a very small number of our population. It must not be forgotten that with the speeds now attained, in these hill-climbs of 60-80 miles per hour at times, there is an element of danger to spectators, and if we had a bad accident we might easily get very serious limitations where hill-climbing motor competitions are concerned. We ought to feel that these are allowed by the goodwill of the people as a whole, and they should be conducted as quickly as possible, and with the minimum of inconvenience to all other road users.

"In other words, where the high road has to be used for our tests, we should occupy it for the minimum of time necessary. The rules in regard to each class should be definite and clear, so that a competitor is clearly in or out of a particular class. I am afraid club secretaries err on the side of wanting to put up a big show for the afternoon sport, but the time has arrived, in my opinion, for our governing body to intervene and lay down quite clearly the limitations and regulations that are necessary."

This is certainly interesting in view of the present panicky

legislation which is suggested. Nothing is easier than to stop things. It is not in the interest of the motor movement that hill-climbs should be stopped, but they should be so arranged and modified that unfortunate happenings need not occur.

What we want our ruling body to be is a builder, not a dynamiter.  
S. F. EDGE.

### Lack of Organization.

As one of the spectators at the Kop Hill-climb I must protest against the remarks contained in your report regarding the responsibility for the accident which occurred.

In this report the responsibility is thrown upon the spectators, and I think it is only fair that a spectator's point of view should be put before you.

I do not remember having attended a hill-climb where the organization was worse. The chief effort made to control the spectators was by means of one or two officials, who walked up and down the hill appealing to the onlookers to keep clear of the road. This was done by practically all the spectators, but, naturally, the grass banks at the side were crowded.

Surely the obvious and simple thing for the organizing club to do was to erect stakes and ropes at the dangerous points, so that the spectators might know the line beyond which it was not safe to approach. If this had been done, I feel sure that the spectators would have kept clear of the road.

What little efforts were made seemed to be directed towards increasing the danger as far as possible. On the upper slope of the hill, for instance, a policeman was very energetic in clearing the spectators away from the inside of the bend and sending them across the road to the outside of the bend, which is, of course, the danger spot, and exactly where the Bugatti accident occurred. No one seemed to be able to understand why such zeal was shown in crowding the utmost number of spectators at the most dangerous spot. If the accident had occurred ten minutes sooner, nothing less than a catastrophe would have resulted, and the responsibility would clearly have been on the organizing club.

In this respect you are perfectly correct in the editorial comment which is made on Mr. H. P. McConnell's letter, and your remarks ought to be borne in mind by the organizers of all such events.  
T. H. BROOKE.

### Why the Croydon By-pass is Not Used.

There has been a good deal of discussion by the R.A.C., A.A. and others concerning the desert-like appearance of the new Croydon by-pass road. The explanation of this is very simple to all true motorists.

At first when the virgin soil of this secluded and almost ethereal spot was besmirched by an army of noisy and charm-dispelling motorists all was well. But soon we of the motoring fraternity realized that this spot was apparently haunted by two, and sometimes three, fairy forms, who often indulged in graceful nymph-like dances accompanied by much waving of a gossamer scarf which, it is interesting to note, had all the outward appearance of the modern handkerchief. These dances, I may say, were often followed by the sudden appearance of the king sprite, who was clothed, or should I say sheathed, from head to foot in dark and fearsome blue. Graceful as one of the larger African hippopotami, he would sweep upon us and demand our right to invade his kingdom at a speed exceeding, etc., etc. Now I feel sure that all motorists will second me in the suggestion that these fairy folk be removed to other lands where they may enjoy their pastimes and be even nearer to some spot where they may sip their nectar, that delectable beverage only comparable to the more modern beer, in peace and solitude.

Seriously, this road which is built for the use of fast traffic will never be used to any extent until the police cease

to stop people travelling at a pace which, allowing for the road, is far safer than on any country road I have ever seen or heard of. At present it is seldom one sees more than two or three cars at a time, but the police trap is kept up constantly.  
A.A. 226936.

### The Speed of Public Vehicles.

Notice is again drawn to police activities and our out-of-date laws relating to speed, etc.

Might I, as an experienced motorist draw the attention of your readers to the speed of public conveyances. I refer to the buses and our pest, the tram.

I have frequently checked the speed of these vehicles, and on the last three occasions have found the bus travelling at 24 m.p.h., 22 m.p.h. and 27 m.p.h., and the tram at 21 m.p.h., 26 m.p.h. and 32 m.p.h.!

Surely this is excessive and dangerous for huge, unwieldy vehicles, especially when carrying a large number of passengers.

Our authorities would do well to turn some of their superfluous zeal in this direction, rather than prosecute the motorist who, in nine cases out of ten, only "speeds" on a clear road. I suppose there is a limited speed for public vehicles.

It is really time the "motorists" got together and fought out the matter. Perhaps a deputation, headed by the A.A., to Parliament would be a suitable beginning.  
M.A.D.G.