

## NEWS OF THE WEEK.

**Wright's Final Effort for the 1908 Michelin Prize.**

As we announced last week would be the case, Wilbur Wright made a further attempt on the last day of 1908 to improve upon his record for the Michelin Cup. The fact that he was very nearly frozen stiff on Wednesday, December 30th, made no difference whatever to the carrying out of his intention that he would again do his best on Thursday, December 31st. Accordingly at about a quarter past eleven he had his machine brought out of the shed and made preparations to ascend. Very soon afterwards he made a start, and everything went well for about 40 minutes or so, when he had to come down because the petrol tank was leaking.

Lunch intervened, but afterwards Wright said he would make another attempt, so up in the air he rose again, nothing daunted by the Arctic cold. On and on he travelled through the air, until his record of December 18th, which stood officially at 99·8 kiloms., was broken, and still he continued until, having been aloft for 2h. 20m. 23s., and having accomplished officially 124·7 kiloms., he at last descended.

The course was the same as that employed on former occasions; that is to say, it was triangular in shape, and the total of its three sides amounted to 2·2 kiloms. The start took place at 2 p.m. exactly, and sunset, which terminated the trial as far as the Michelin Prize was concerned, was calculated to occur at 4h. 19m. 33s. p.m. allowing for the difference in longitude between Le Mans and Paris. Wright finished his 56th turn of the triangle at 4h. 19m. 6½s., and the sun set before another lap was accomplished. The flight by which he wins the Michelin Cup is, therefore, 123·2 kiloms. in length, and its official duration is 2h. 18m. 33¾s. After the sun had set, Wright's flight was continued for a distance of 1·1 kiloms. on the course, and 0·4 kilom. returning to the shed, thus bringing the world's record up to 124·7 kiloms. in a duration of 2h. 20m. 23½s. These are, of course, the official distances and times; it goes without saying that the actual distance traversed during the flight was far greater. It is quite possible that Wright may have actually achieved a distance of 100 miles, although that is perhaps an outside estimate.

**The Five Attempts.**

THIS last, which was so successful, was Wright's fifth official attempt for the Michelin Cup, and it is interesting to summarise the series of results. The first important flight took place on Monday, September 21st—almost immediately after hearing of his brother's unfortunate accident—when a flight lasting 1h. 31m. 20¼s. was accomplished, of which, however, only 52m. occurred before sunset. The record for the cup on this occasion was, therefore, a distance of 41 miles only. On September 24th, the record was slightly increased to 54m. 3½s. On September 28th the hour was exceeded in a flight of 1h. 7m. 24s. Two long passenger flights in connection with the Weiller contract intervened at this period, and were 1h. 4m. 26½s. and 1h. 9m. 45¾s. respectively. It was not, therefore, until December 18th that a further attempt was made, and it was then that he accomplished the flight of 1h. 54m. 53¾s., which we recorded last week. Including the attempt which was

made on December 30th, which did not improve upon the record of December 18th, the trials may be said to be six in number.

**The Official Report.**

THE Sarthe Aero Club has sent in its official report to the Aero Club of France relating to the trial on December 31st, and the following are the leading facts which the document contains:—

The trial took place at the Auvours Camp on December 31st, 1908, under the auspices of the Aviation Committee of the Sarthe Aero Club. The track was marked out by three flags forming an isosceles triangle having two long sides of 1,000 metres each, and a base of 200 metres. The word to go was given at 2 p.m. exactly, and the aeroplane left the starting rail at 2h. 0m. 3s. Wright passed the first post, which counts as the start for the Michelin Cup, at 2h. 0m. 32¾s. He accomplished 56 circuits, which is equal to a total length of 123·2 kiloms., in 2h. 18m. 33¾s. duration. The last passage past the starting post before sunset took place at 4h. 19m. 6½s. Sunset at Paris on the date in question occurred at 4h. 11m. p.m., and an allowance of 8m. 33·26s. was made for the difference in longitude.

The signatories to the report are Messrs. Leon Bollée, Durand, Rene Pellier, L. Vernay, Veber, and Bariller.

**What He Has Won.**

By his flight on Thursday, or rather by his series of flights above mentioned, for none of them have ever been beaten, Wright secures the Michelin Prize, which is undoubtedly the Blue Ribbon of aviation at the present time. He becomes the nominal holder of the trophy, which is valued at 10,000 francs, and secures 20,000 francs in cash. In addition he wins the Triaca Prize of 500 francs, which is open to members of the Aero Club of France and members of the Aero Club of America only.

**M. Barthou as a Passenger.**

BESIDES making two attempts for the Michelin Cup in one day, Wilbur Wright concluded his experiences in 1908 by taking up M. Barthou, Minister of Public Works, as a passenger. That official had come specially to Le Mans for the purpose of watching Wright fly, and if possible of flying with him, but it was not until twenty minutes past five that he was able to realise his desire. It was then quite dark, and Wilbur Wright and his passenger only remained in the air for about four minutes.

**Wilbur Wright Gains Weight.**

AFTER giving short flights to a few of his friends, Wilbur Wright, on Saturday, January 2nd, proceeded with his preparations for leaving Le Mans, including the weighing of his aeroplane and himself. The former scaled 364 kilogs., and the latter 71 kilogs., which it appears is an increase of some 8 kilogs. or so on his weight since his arrival in the Sarthe district. As Wright remarked on this occasion, "flying seems to fatten people."

**Wright's Souvenir.**

As a memento of his pleasant stay amongst them, the members of the Sarthe Aero Club are presenting