

THE ENGLAND-AUSTRALIA RACE

MAKING READY

at

MILDENHALL

Events and Arrivals at Mildenhall prior to the Start of the Great Adventure: Nineteen Machines Present Last Tuesday Evening

WITH the elaborate marquees flapping and billowing, two most capacious and entirely empty hangars, and hordes of officials, white-overalled mechanics, and yawning waiters, Mildenhall Aerodrome had taken on a rather dismal aspect by the time dusk was falling last Saturday—the first day of the “reception.” It was something like a Derby Day without a racehorse.

Nobody really expected many machines, but everybody hoped that some would come along. After all, Sunday might provide virtually impossible flying weather, and the Royal Aero Club might or might not give the entire entry a time extension.

Slowly the quite appreciable number of disappointed hedge-watchers drifted away, and an evening haze blotted out the trees on the flat horizon. The few remaining spectators wondered how many machines would turn up on the following day and whether the Aero Club would give definite extensions or not.

Then a machine was heard. After being to the watchers a mere high-wing monoplane, it became quite obviously a Mark II Desoutter. Lt. Michael Hansen had flown from Copenhagen, making a Customs stop at Lympne; a head wind had reduced his speed, for he had left at 9 a.m.

SIR MACPHERSON ROBERTSON, in a message of good will to the competitors, says: “Of the many factors to play their part in the high-speed race, the attempt to reach Melbourne from London in something like three days will inevitably call forth, in the highest degree, the skill, resourcefulness and endurance of pilots; the ingenuity and faithfulness of the aircraft and engine construction; the expert mechanical care of engines that must function almost non-stop half-way round the world; the sustained efficiency of refuelling services during day and night; and the close co-operation of wireless and meteorological stations along a course which crosses three continents and spans the seasons from autumn to spring.”

MacPherson Robertson

His red and black Hermes-Desoutter carried a spare Heine propeller carefully mounted against the port side of the cabin, with an extra tank on the starboard side and a petrol gauge just above and beside the pilot's seat. A reciprocating hand pump is fitted to transfer the fuel to the standard gravity tank in the cantilever wing. Above this tank, incidentally, is mounted the venturi for the turn indicator. Lt. Hansen carried two compasses.

Almost immediately afterwards an unfamiliar drone brought everyone out to watch the diminutive clipped-wing Lambert Monocoupe, *Baby Ruth*. Jack Wright brought it round the aerodrome boundary in true pylon-racing style and not at all according to rules and regulations, and put it down a trifle

frighteningly in the gathering darkness. According to Wright, *Baby Ruth* is named after a candy bar (whatever that may be) in the United States!

The Monocoupe was worth inspection, for it was the machine in which Wright had broken a world's record at 169.8 m.p.h. Since that time its fuselage shape has been altered and a 145 h.p. Warner “Super Scarab” fitted in place of the original “Scarab,” so the maximum speed can be expected now to be something a good deal higher than three miles a minute.



ONE OF THREE: The second “Comet,” entered by Mr. A. O. Edwards and flown by C. W. A. Scott and T. Campbell Black, is taxied up to the big hangar. (Flight Photo.)