

THIS is the Centenary Year of the Principality of Monte Carlo, and the survivors of the 35th *Rallye Automobile Monte Carlo* will have thoroughly deserved the chance to relax and share in the celebrations planned. Perhaps the entry list is down on previous years, but the quality is there and should result in a tremendous struggle for the all-important outright win and for the coveted manufacturers' team award. The absence of the works Saabs is to be regretted but obviously the Swedish concern was convinced that even with its top crews Group 1 would see the front-drive two-strokes outclassed by more powerful rivals and the 1.18 points per second penalty too great to overcome.

Although the organizers believed implicitly that favouring Group 1 cars would encourage private entrants the opposite has been the case and it is difficult to forecast anything other than factory domination in the 240 or so crews which were due to take the depart today (14th January), from the nine starting points. With the French meteorological department forecasting wintry conditions in the mountain regions Group 2 and G.T. entrants may find their handicap too severe and they will be lucky to find one of their numbers in the top ten.

Naturally the Monte is as big a gamble as ever but one cannot avoid tipping a front-drive car to win, judging from past results when plenty of snow and ice has to be encountered. With the introduction of the DS21 Pallas, it could quite well be a Citroën year despite the obvious crew strength of B.M.C., with such ice and snow experts as Rauno Aaltonen, Timo Makinen and Paddy Hopkirk. The Citroën contingent is also a strong one, and includes Jean Guichet, Robert Meyrat, Jean Claude Ogier, Jean Rolland, Claude Laurent, Henri Marang, Paul Coltelloni, Guy Verrier, Pauli Toivonen and Lucien Bianchi—all possible winners. Lancia cannot be underrated, with such experienced rallymen as Jorma Lusenius, Ove Andersson and René Trautmann.

However, Henry Taylor's Lotus Ford Cortina crews could upset the front-drive challenge with such splendid drivers as Peter Procter, Vic Elford, Bo Ljungfeldt and Roger Clark. Sheer power, of course, may favour the Mustangs to be driven by Henri Greder, Henri Chemin and the Spaniard, Leo Villamil, the first-named, however, being the only really experienced man. Triumph's challenge is in the capable hands of Jean-Jacques Thuner, Roy Fidler and Simo Lampinen. Rovers rest their hopes on Bill Morrison, Sobieslaw Zasada, Geoff Mabbs and Anne Hall. Rootes' main effort should come from the Imps of Tiny Lewis, Rosemary Smith, Henri Ziegler and Peter Bolton. Should, by chance, G.T. cars find conditions favourable, one must not overlook the Sunbeam Tigers of Peter Harper and Andy Cowan, and a formidable array of Porsches headed by Robert Buchet, Gunther Klass and Henri Perrier, not forgetting Tony Fall's M.G.B. Renault could do quite well, with such men as Jean Vinatier, Guy Clarou and Jean Colas.

The o.h.c. Opel Kadetts seem to lack crew strength, and the same could be said for B.M.W., apart from Rob Slotemaker. It is interesting to see Matra Sport in the list, headed by racing drivers Jean-Pierre Beltoise and Jean-Pierre Jassaud. Volvo and Alfa Romeo are dependent on private entries, as are

# MONTE CARLO RALLY

## PREVIEW

Wintry weather forecast in mountains—Really tough eliminating tests prospect—Citroën favourite for outright victory

By GREGOR GRANT



TIMO MAKINEN'S Mini-Cooper S being tested on the B.M.C.'s new roller brake prior to being dispatched for the rally.

Photo: George Phillips.

N.S.U., Fiat and Simca.

Next week's issue will contain a report and pictures of the preliminary stages.

Times of broadcasts on the Monte Carlo Rally are as follows:

**B.B.C. TV:**

Wheelbase, Friday, 21st January, B.B.C. 2.

**B.B.C. Radio:**

15th January, Sports Service, 1-1.20 p.m.

15th January, Home Service, 11.10-11.20 p.m.  
From 16th January onwards (up to and including 20th January), 11.02 p.m.-11.15 p.m.

**I.T.V.:**

Reports included in news. The start and finish will also be shown.