

A CAPE MAY A. C. EXPLANATION.

When the entries for the American Elimination Trial were announced there was some surprise at the absence from the list of two nominations by the Cape May Automobile Club, it having been exploited somewhat prominently that Charles J. Swain and John N. Wilkins, Jr., two well-known members, would be sponsors for two Stanley racers. From Secretary "Jack" Hiscock comes an explanation that herewith follows:

Editor THE AUTOMOBILE:

A few days prior to the closing of entries for the American Elimination event, it was definitely reported in Philadelphia's automobile circles that Charles J. Swain and John N. Wilkins, Jr., both enthusiastic autoists in the best sense of the word, had purchased "kettles on wheels" of the Stanley type, and, through the Cape May Automobile Club, had challenged for the trophy. But one definite detail came to light immediately following these reports, and this was nothing less than the official list of entries published by the Racing Board of the American Automobile Association, and in this neither Stanley cars nor the Philadelphia owners mentioned had a place.

Perfect quiet had been maintained in the whole matter by the parties immediately concerned until the aspersions cast upon the integrity of the Philadelphians in the premises made their position positively untenable, and now both Messrs. Swain and Wilkins, to say nothing of the Cape May Automobile Club, desire to clear up the mystery.

In the first place, the blame belongs to F. O. Stanley, of Newton, Mass., and verbal and documentary proof convicts him.

"Preliminary negotiations for the purchase of two Stanley steamers, guaranteed to do a mile in thirty seconds, and capable of standing up for the Vanderbilt Cup car journey, were made by Mr. Wilkins and myself with Mr. Stanley early in May," said Mr. Swain at his Philadelphia office last week. "The cars were to be tuned up for the meet at the Readville, Mass., track, and, following the directions from Mr. Stanley himself, we were on hand at Readville on Decoration Day to witness their performances, fully expecting, as we had been assured, that the cars would come up to guarantee. Here is an interesting portion of Mr. Stanley's letter, written to me before I left for the races:

"We are very much pleased that you are coming on for the races, as we are confident we can show you something interesting. There will in all probability be six starters in the race and the starters are divided into two classes. One has H. L. Bowden's 90-horsepower Mercedes, Hilliard's 80-horsepower Napier, and Frank Durbin with one of the Vanderbilt cars (Stanley). The other section has an 80-horsepower Mercedes with Downey as driver, Harding's 90-horsepower De Dietrich, and the other Stanley car, driven by Fred Marriott. We were very much disappointed when the entries were published that they did not enter the 80-horsepower Darracq car which won the Vanderbilt race last year, as we desired very much to give Stevens a dose that he would remember. You can see from the above list that we are up against it in a manner suitable to test the power of the cars.

"We entered one of the cars in the hill climb at Worcester, and the day before the race took the car up and went over the course, but we concluded that it would be very poor judgment to go into the race the next day, as a car of that power if driven anywhere near its capacity would very likely have been smashed up."

"The automobile world knows what happened that day," continued Mr. Swain. "Mr. Wilkins witnessed his so-called world-beater lead Bowden's "Flying Dutchman" for two miles, only to be ignominiously lapped on the ninth circuit. Marriott drove my car against the Fiat Junior, which broke down and so he took the heat. Then Marriott refused to go against the Mercedes in the final, as it was apparent that the car would not hold steam."

"Mr. Stanley had insisted from the outset that we should enter the cars, as he admits in his own letter we had purchased, in the Vanderbilt Cup contest, and we had signified our set purpose of so doing from the outset of negotiations, and, notwithstanding their disappointing showing on that day, he said to Mr. Wilkins, 'Go right ahead as though the cars are a success. What we need is forced draught, and that we will have. You make good with the entries and I will make good with the cars.'

"I wrote Mr. Stanley upon my return to Philadelphia, asking him two or three pertinent questions as to the feasibility of the forced draught and limited consumption of gasoline and water, and this letter, as I subsequently learned from the factory, was forwarded to Denver, Col., where Mr. Stanley had gone entirely unbeknown to Mr. Wilkins or myself. We went ahead with our arrangements, however, as we were thoroughly satisfied that our cars would not only be on hand for the event, but would come up to guarantee, placing absolute reliance upon the assurance of the man responsible for them.

"We appeared at a regular meeting of the Cape May Automobile Club, and assured the membership that our cars would worthily represent the organization if entered for the Vanderbilt contest, and a resolution was unanimously passed authorizing such action. Entrance blanks were filled out and two checks for \$1,000 apiece were drawn to cover the entrance fees. There were several days to elapse before the entries closed, and as a final precaution I telegraphed Mr. Stanley, asking when we might expect the cars, and if everything was all right. Remember, we had had no word from him after his sweeping assurance at Readville, and you can imagine my surprise when I received a telegram from the Stanley Motor Carriage Co., saying, 'Do not enter cars. See letter.' Then came a letter from Mr. Stanley himself, dated Eslet Park, Col., in which he stated that owing to indisposition he had been obliged to leave hurriedly for the West and expected to remain there till fall. But here is the vital feature of the communication, so far as we and our cars were concerned:

"In reference to the machines, I fear, owing to my absence and the fact that my brother will be away more or less this summer, we shall be unable to complete them in season for the Vanderbilt races. Hence, of course, you are under no obligation to buy them. I fear this will greatly disappoint you and Mr. Wilkins, as, of course, it does me. There is no doubt but the machines can do all that we expected of them when we have time to put them in shape."

"By receiving the telegram in time we had saved our entrance fees certainly, but with telegram and letter we had lost what counts for a hundredfold more—the confidence of many friends," continued Mr. Swain. "The fact that the club intended challenging for the Vanderbilt Cup with our cars had been published broadcast, and there we were ignominiously thrown down at the last minute, by the one man upon whom we had placed every reliance, and in whom we had every confidence. Of course, we were sorry for Mr. Stanley's illness, but having committed himself so far, surely his own instinct of honor should have carried him through the project. We have written him since then, stating that to protect ourselves and our club something must be said for publication, and fully explaining our position in the disappointing affair, but have not been vouchsafed an answer. The motor public has now the whole matter before it, and we will leave it to judge the true merits of the case."

During the recital of the above facts Mr. Wilkins and Thomas W. Millett, Mayor of Cape May, who presided at the meeting of the Cape May club when the resolution of challenge was passed, were present, and both concurred in Mr. Swain's statements so far as they were personally concerned. With Mr. Swain, they were indignant at the treatment accorded them by the Stanley outfit, and motorists in general will be inclined to side with them.

J. HISCOCK,

Secretary Cape May Automobile Club.

Philadelphia.

ONLY TWO MERCEDES IN VANDERBILT RACE.

According to *Les Sports*, there will be only two Mercedes cars in the Vanderbilt Cup race, one owned and driven by Foxhall Keene, and the other owned by Robert Graves and driven by Jenatzy. The third Mercedes entry is that of C. L. Charley, who is quoted in a cable to the New York *Herald* in this vein:

"The Mercedes house has definitely abandoned speed-racing, and I think that many competing firms will follow the same course. The value of the machine will be made apparent to the public by means of contests in which conditions are more analogous to those met with in ordinary touring."

The Charley entry for the Vanderbilt was to have been driven by Marriaux, and though nothing official has reached the Vanderbilt Cup Commission, it would appear that the Paris representative of the Mercedes did not intend to make good his entry.

BINGHAMTON A. C. WILL SEE CUP RACE.

First among the clubs to announce a run to New York to witness the Vanderbilt race is the Binghamton Automobile Club, of Binghamton, N. Y., which decided last week to start October 2 from that city on the trip. Incidentally, the run to the metropolis will be an endurance contest, and F. E. Barnes, Richard Davidge, Secretary Norman M. Pierce, M. J. Corbett and S. M. Frechie have been selected as a committee to conduct the run and arrange rules for the contest, the winner of which will be awarded a handsome cup donated by Mr. Barnes and Vice-president Faatz.