

AN INTERVIEW WITH HENRY TAYLOR



Motorsport News was fortunate enough to have two correspondents covering the 1965 Shell 4000. On the weekend that the rally finished there was a race meeting at the Westwood Circuit near Vancouver, and we took the opportunity to assess the course and discuss motoring matters with Henry Taylor, who was to race his very fast Cortina the next day. As an aside, we would note that Westwood is a compact, well surfaced circuit that probably favours larger cars. The facilities are sparse but appreciative as we are of the economics of running a racing circuit, we really cannot be too critical. Our interview proceeded as follows:-

M.N. Henry, now that you have competed in the Shell 4000, driven across Canada, and raced at Westwood, perhaps we could ask you for some impressions. First, what do you think of the Shell rally?

H.T. In a nutshell, it is an embryo event with a very fine future. After competing in it, I can now appreciate why North American rallying differs from that in Europe. The aggressive antagonism of the police has to be seen to be believed. Nevertheless, much of Canada lends itself very well to a high speed rally, particularly the Provinces of Quebec, Ontario and B.C.

M.N. What improvements would you suggest to the organizers?

H.T. First, I would suggest that everything possible be done to get the general public on your side. Lower highway speeds are a must, as are speed traps, to enforce them. After a suitable length of time, you will probably be able to increase the 'transport sections' speeds without a public outcry.

M.N. Anything else?

H.T. Oh, yes, many small items, but I do think that the event is already exceedingly well run. I do

think, however, that more marshalls, and therefore even a possibly higher standard of marshalling could be achieved by allowing competitors to come up to checkpoints, and park beyond, as they do in Europe. As it is, a competitor rushes up, says three brusque words, and then disappears again. This is not much of an encouragement, or reason, for standing around for hours on end in (perhaps) terrible weather conditions. More important, the rapport between seasoned competitors and keen club members could not be furthered in a more useful fashion. In addition, if the clocks were uncovered and they WERE a few seconds out, then the competitors could punch in and avoid having to protest. I really think that 'the clock must be obscured' rule is superfluous.

M.N. This rule harks back to the days when rallying was regarded as a party game and blatant cheating was considered as 'funny'. But to proceed, what positive impressions will you be able to speak of in England?

H.T. Those roads that go over the brow of a hill and then turn sharp left or right. There's nothing quite like that in Europe. The accurate placement and efficiency of the checkpoints. The accuracy of the event. The degree of hospitality I have encountered, and last, but not least, the unflagging enthusiasm of the Canadian club members. All these things have impressed me, and would impress other Europeans greatly.

M.N. Would you like to come back and compete again in the Shell 4000?

H.T. Very, very, much indeed.

M.N. Would you recommend it to other European crews?

H.T. Only to drivers. I do not think that a European navigator could win the rally as it is now organized and laid out.

M.N. Do you think that more special stages are warranted?

H.T. If Peter Bone could have conjured up the ten he originally planned for, then I think he would have had quite sufficient for a decisive rally.

M.N. Have you thought of entering the Canadian Winter Rally?

H.T. I would like to have a go at it, time permitting and would appreciate an invitation at a later date.

M.N. Thank you very much, Henry, for giving us your impressions we trust that future years will witness the return, not only of yourself, but of your rallying colleagues from overseas as well.