

Miscellaneous Observations On Pilots, Performances, People, Rigs and Operations At the 21st

By E. J. REEVES

That the combination of Johnson and RJ-5 are unbeatable—was not proven to this observer's entire satisfaction. All the same one would be just 'whistling Dixie' if he tried to win a debate on this subject. After all, there is the score board big as a barn staring you square in the face and any way you look at it Sir Richard's name is all the way at the top. In knocking off his 4th National Championship he becomes the first American to turn the trick. That plus the fact that he holds the world's distance record takes him out of the class of 'Johnny come lately' and keeps him from being considered a 'flash-in-the-pan.'

But it did not keep one from reminding oneself, after seeing the Maxey-Kerns-Prue machine and Ray Parker's improved 'Tiny Mite'—that there were a couple of machines with well over 30 to 1 and at least approaching the RJ-5's performance. Given the weather to their liking and

retractable. The AR is 23. Wing loading is 6.8. Gross weight is 680 lbs. Wing area is 100 Sq. Ft. The span is 48'. The airfold section is 65 sub 3 518 @ equals 0.7. The ship had had only three test flights before being brought to the contest. Its designers had spent two and one-half years of spare-time work in construction. It is

Frank Kerns, designer and builder of the fuselage section of the M-K-P.

Staff Photo



Ray Parker with Mrs. Parker on the wingtip of the slick "Tiny-Mite."

Staff Photo

just a shade of a break—and these two machines might well give Dick and the RJ-5 some serious trouble.

The Maxey-Prue-Kerns ship was probably the newest and most interesting machine in the competitions. Of all-metal construction, the workmanship is not excelled by builders, professional or amateur, of aircraft anywhere. Maxey and Prue did the wing panels and Kerns the fuselage. Its general appearance and plan-form closely resemble Prue's 215 series. But structurally it is vastly different. The wings are three-piece. Dive breaks are fitted to open from the fuselage. The landing wheel is fully

definitely a high speed performer. Maxey, the pilot member of the team, has so far been the only person to fly this ship. He estimates its stalling speed at 55 MPH. However, my observations of its landing lead me to believe that actually she quits at a much lower speed—probably 40 MPH. (Let the readers—if any—keep in mind that these are observations of one unschooled in aircraft design techniques.) Later, we are sure, the designers of this splendid new sailplane will report fully on the development in the pages of this journal.

Another machine that impressed

this observer and caused him to think it might very well go right along with the machines just mentioned—was the Pearl 'Penetrator.' Unfortunately Harry Perl became slightly ill and could not take his machine out. Dr. Sawyer finally got it into the air for the last two days but weak conditions plus his unfamiliarity with the

ship made it impossible to make a comparison.

It is now pretty well established that all of the four ships mentioned—the RJ-5, the Maxey-Kerns-Prue, 'Tiny Mite' and 'Penetrator' are four of America's top performance sailplanes. Just how the Schweizer's new 1-23 series or the 1-26 fits into this figuring would, we guess, make something to argue around the bunk house.

Don Mitchell's 'Nimbus' was another very interesting new and, in some respects, revolutionary, development. Flown by Dr. Sawyer for a few day of the contest before some trouble with the control linkages developed, it did not show too much. The Doc was at some advantage in that he had had little time to shake the ship down. While we would hardly be in any position to argue such things, we would, all the same, question the sharp leading edges which Don fashions for his wings.

The Schweizer 1-23s in the competitions were generally in good hands and showed well. Bikle and Ivans gave their's good flying and Hoverman improved daily in his. Things were for some reason not to the liking of Larry Gehrlein and after the first