



Quick repairs at Teheran checkpoint for car No. 29, entered by Ford of Australia.

CHECKPOINT TEHERAN

IT takes more than cars and drivers to make a motor marathon when checkpoints are a thousand miles apart. It took five months for a committee of Persians, Dutch, and British members of the Iranian Touring and Automobile Club to organise the Teheran checkpoint. Their secretary, Sheffield-born Mrs. Pauline Sturgess, a reporter who writes as Pauline Jackson on a Teheran English language daily, told me: "We made our minds this was going to be remembered as the best checkpoint."

Teheran is just over half way along the 6,600 mile Euro-Asian section of the Marathon. It was the first big city after the "killer" night drive over rough tracks and loose gravel between Sivas and Erzincan in Turkey, which left such a legacy of battered suspensions and damaged

transmissions. It marked the start of the longest stage in rallying history—1,400 miles across deserts and through Afghan mountains to Kabul.

With fast driving over the good Persian roads from the Turkish frontier the crews had hopes of much needed rest and servicing before reporting time in Teheran. The site chosen was the Phillips electronic factory east of the Iranian capital, which has the craziest and least disciplined traffic I have ever encountered. The factory's welding and repair shops were set ready with all staff on duty although it was Thursday—the Persian equivalent of Saturday.

Miles before Teheran a police car began leading the first arrival, Dieter Glemser's German Ford at a speed which astonished him along roads specially controlled—and in

some cases closed to other traffic. A police chief travelled midway in the long spreadout convoy of Marathon cars and an ambulance came along in the rear.

I spent 25 hours at the factory checkpoint and it left a blur of fleeting memories. Men with dirty lined and tired faces walking stiffly towards the showers and rest rooms, to emerge spruced up and cheerful hours later. . . . Irish fashion designer Rosemary Smith, scarlet cap covering her long blonde hair, driving in with a newly put on face which must have cost her precious minutes on the road but certainly brought the photographers a-running. . . . Three inexperienced Australian girls driving in their first-ever rally, half dead with fatigue and streaming head colds, near tears when they discovered they had made a tactical error in booking in sooner than they needed. . . . The astonishment of an autograph hunter whose paper thrust through the window of car No. 95 came back with a strange series of squiggles—the signatures of the all-Japanese crew. . . . Then the excitement as the cars lined up again to begin that long exhausting slog to Kabul.

When those who were still on time had roared away into the desert darkness there was the nail-biting anxiety of the latecomers still in trouble and lonely in the near empty floodlit compound. Dr. Wadia, an Indian gynaecologist, waiting hour after hour for new valves for his Lotus Cortina . . . America's only entry, Sydney Dickson working furiously to get his car ready for the road again.

Then there were two disappointments, each of which came near to tragedy. Surrey driving instructor Peter Wilson's crew came back to say their Ford Corsair had turned over twice on the road to Kabul and was out of the Marathon. Then former Oxford rowing Blue Duncan Bray, already hours late through breaking two half-shafts got going again and turned back into the city to fill up with petrol. A few minutes later one of his crew came in to say they had hit a bus which shot, unlit from a side street.

It looked like the end of the Marathon road for three young men who had quit their jobs and invested £3,000 of their own money in their unsponsored entry. But there was a happy ending. The Teheran police immediately took the side of the foreigner, agreed that the bus driver was to blame, called an emergency court hearing at which the British crew were exonerated and helped to arrange for emergency repairs. The Bray crew got going next night and arrived in Bombay 72nd in points—but they were given one of the two extra places provided in the liner Chusan in recognition of their determined efforts.

Yes, it was quite a night in that Persian factory garden.

**FRANK
GOLDSWORTHY**

TEHRAN to KABUL

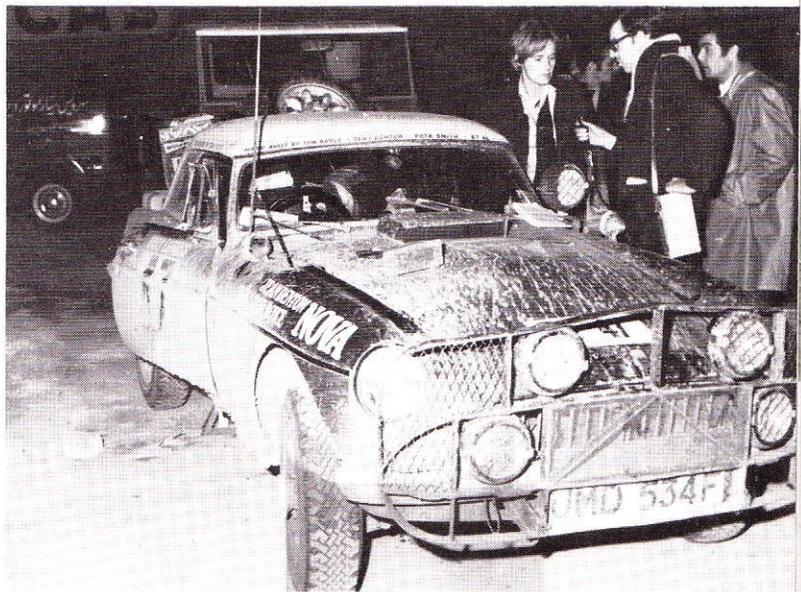
TRIP WAS ZEROED ON LAST SECTION !!!

PETROL on RIGHT - SUPER. 2.96

(ROAD STARTS CLIMBING) ↗ ! 11.44



Royal Navy crewed B.M.C. 1800 sets out for Kabul.



Crew member of No. 41 reports conditions in Teheran.



Crew of No. 73—a Ford Lotus Cortina—give interview.

They completed the journey to Sivas wearing goggles, but it was freezing cold.

A fractured oilpipe brought the stately progress of the 1930 Bentley to a halt. Driver Schellenberg said: "It took us hours to find a Turkish garage that understood what needed to be done. But we decided to do the job properly as this is a valuable car and we didn't want to break it up."

Graham White, secretary of the British Automobile Racing Club, had the unluckiest break of all. After negotiating tortuous roads and flying stones without a scratch, he fell down a pit at Sivas control while searching for a lavatory. After being given a pain-killing drug, he pressed on, but eventually at Erzincan officials decided he was too ill to continue and took him to hospital.

Control in Sivas was a quagmire, with drivers and cars slipping in thick mud round the service station. John Sprinzel, still going strong in his M.G. Midget, the smallest car in the rally, said as he pulled in: "I think at least half of the survivors here will be knocked out before we reach Kabul."

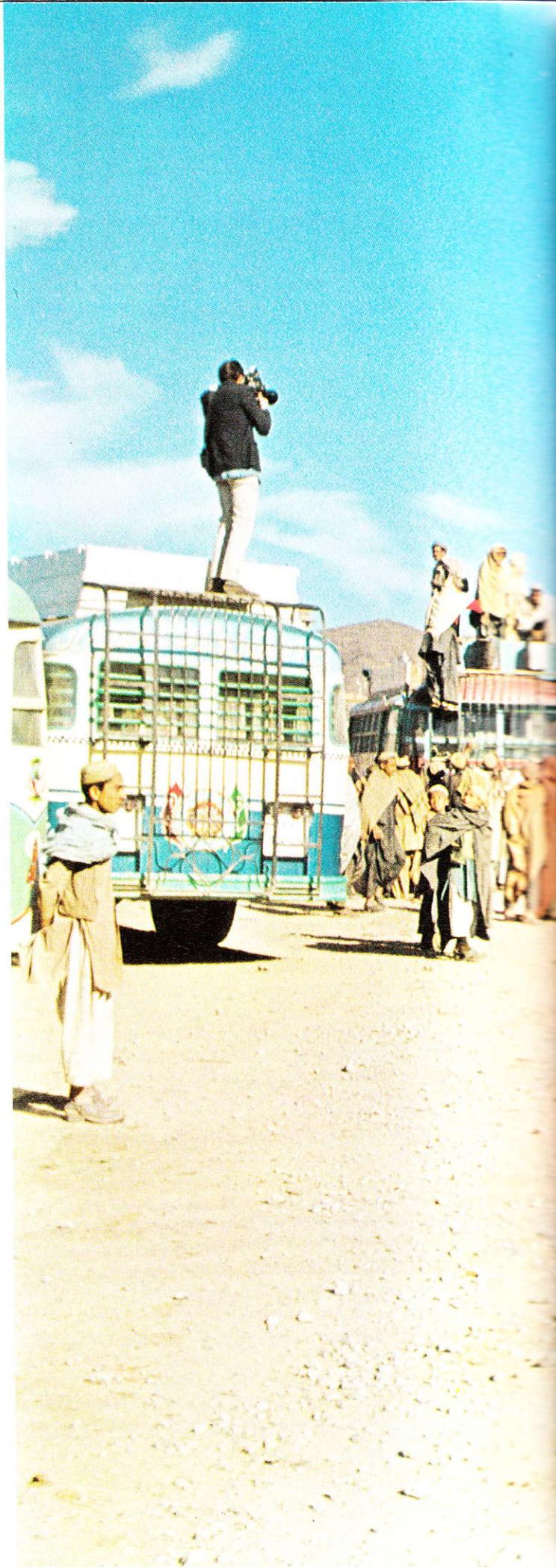
Directly ahead of them now was the first big "killer" section—the fast 170-mile run up a winding mountain trail to Erzincan in the dark. Up till now there had been an alternative southern route. But tonight the problem was solved—rains had completely washed away the southern road. Everybody had to go north. Even the most optimistic competitor expected to lose points. Yet it was here that Roger Clark made his break from the rest of the field, completing the section at an average of nearly 60 miles an hour to lose only six minutes in time. His nearest rival was Simo Lampinen in a German Ford, eight minutes behind.

The full horror of that night, with rain, sleet and snow, and a terrible pounding for the cars, only emerged when the count was taken next day. Dave McKay, in one of the Sydney Telegraph Holdens, said: "We came to a blind crest. George Reynolds said the road went left, David Liddle thought it went right. I went straight ahead. We ended up in a paddock, narrowly missing three other cars which had also ploughed off. But we were still mobile—unlike the tiny Dutch Daf which had holed the sump."

Bobby Buchanan-Michaelson's Mercedes ran off the road and damaged its gear linkage. To repair it, co-driver Max Stahl lay on his back in three inches of mud while the others protected him from sleet at 4,000ft above sea level. Then it was discovered the radiator was pierced. Bobby hitched a lift on a lorry 40 miles to Erzincan to locate a repairer. Then he rode 40 miles by taxi to get the dismantled radiator, took it 40 miles back to Erzincan to be welded, then 40 miles back to refit it in a blinding snow-storm.

Doug Morris in a Vauxhall Ventora had to go to hospital after a jack slipped when he was working under the car,

East meets West, the old meets the new: Marathon cars chase through a village on the North-West Frontier, tribesmen watching, cameraman at work.





but he was allowed to continue after treatment. This section also ended the valiant drive of the Bentley boys—Patrick Lindsay broke his shoulder when the car slithered down an embankment.

More trouble came on the road to Teheran. Duncan Bray spent hours getting a half shaft replaced on his Lotus Cortina, then within two miles hit an unlit bus which shot from a side street. The crew went to court, and the bus driver was ordered to forfeit his wages. The car, thought at first to be a write-off, went on after a heavy lorry was used to pull out the battered front.

TEHERAN —KABUL

ALL Thursday afternoon, as the temperature dropped to freezing, mud-caked cars streamed into Teheran service station to be handed over to mechanics, while weary drivers headed for showers and foam mattresses. An exception to the dust-covered faces was Ireland's Rosemary Smith, immaculate as ever with blonde hair falling over her shoulders below a scarlet cap. She and her French co-driver, Lucette Pointet, were the first women's crew in their Lotus Cortina.

They were closely followed by a Volvo driven by racing driver Jennie Tudor-Owen. Her co-driver, 21-year-old Anthea Owen, said: "That trip from Sivas to Erzincan was awful. It was only thanks to Jennie that we got through in one piece and only 62 minutes late."

Spectator interest was building up with every mile the cars travelled East. Teheran was no exception. Tens of thousands packed the streets to cheer competitors on. One driver said: "The whole of Asia Minor seems to have gone Marathon mad." Another said: "Many of the locals had never seen cars drive in the daytime with their headlights on as a safety precaution. Some of the young blokes had fun roaring up and down the streets emulating us."

By 2 a.m. 80 cars had reached Teheran. One late arrival was the 17th/21st Lancers' Landrover. Lieut. Michael Thompson said: "Everything is going fine. We are just not fast enough."

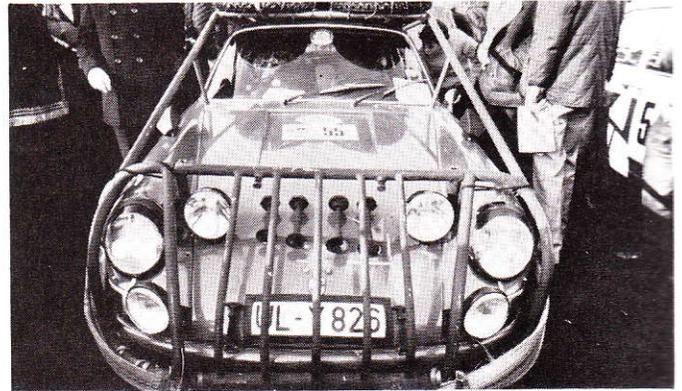
By then crews had already set off on the longest single haul of the marathon—the 1,500-mile stretch to Kabul, capital of Afghanistan. Again the alternative desert route had been closed because of flood damage. Only the Northern route through the Elburz Mountains was open.

Disaster struck soon enough. In the small hours Peter Wilson's crew returned by taxi to say their Ford Corsair

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*At the start:
Bengry's Ford Cortina GT.*



*Well protected:
Herrmann's Porsche 911 from Kenya.*



*Eight-lamped: Wilson's BMC 1800.
Below: A Russian Moskvitch entry.*



	↪ !	43.61
AND THEN	COL 8300'	
BAD SURFACE For	200 yards	49.51
ROADWORKS - 4 !	(100 yards)	50.55



Entry from France:
Boucher's Simca 1100.



Paddy Hopkirk's BMC Mark II
entered by British Leyland.



There goes the Army:
Major Hemsley's Rover 2000.



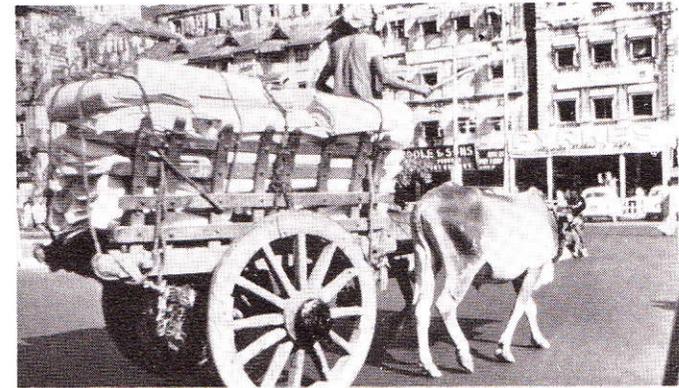
Cortina GT entered by Avon/RAF,
driver N. Colman.

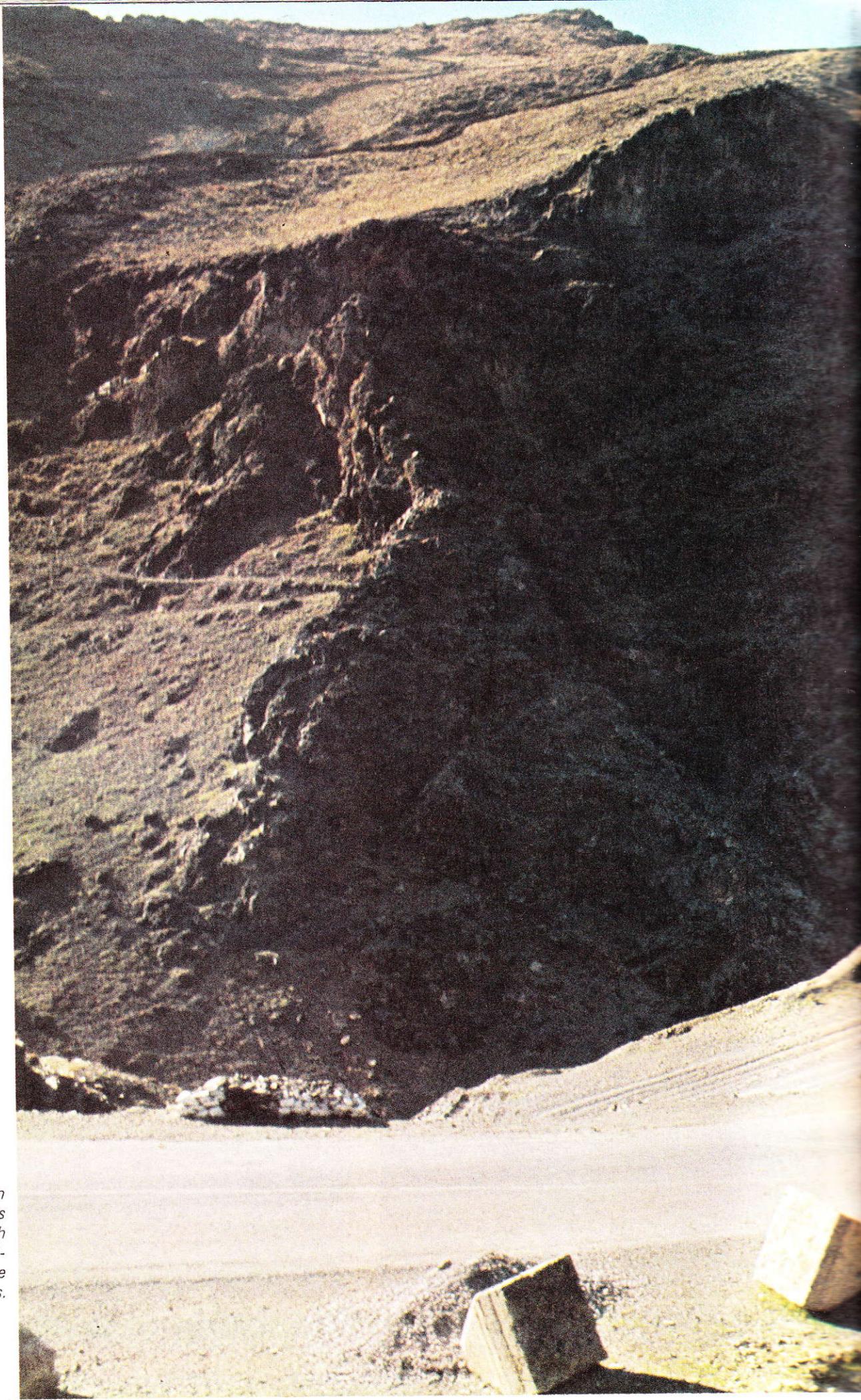


Above: Swiss Blick Racing Team.
Below: Staepalaere's Ford 20 MRS.



Above: J. G. Tallis's Volvo 123GT.
Below: Not an entry—an impediment.





*Tribesmen
watch as cars
sprint through
the magnifi-
cence of the
Khyber Pass.*

