



The B. C. Mountaineer

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

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CLIMBING IN THE ROCKIES

Probably that section of the Rocky Mountains lying immediately to the south of the C. P. R. in the vicinity of the Great Divide, a section not more than 15 miles square, is by far the most popular and best known portion of the whole range. The lakes and valleys have long been explored, the passes have been crossed on numberless occasions, the peaks have all been climbed, but the charms of such gems of natural beauty as Lake O'Hara, Lake Louise, and Paradise Valley, and the appeal of the mountains surrounding them can still cast a spell on the mountain pilgrims as thrilling as that which rested on the early explorers 25 years ago.

Only seven names had been submitted for the proposed Club camp at Fitzsimmons Creek. The district, a new one, would be well left in its unexplored state as an appeal for next year's camp. The Director had spent 10 days four years ago around Lake O'Hara, and was still full of praise

of its charms. A suggestion was all that was needed, and the six who could go for the two weeks were unanimous for Lake O'Hara.

At 8.15 p.m., August 11, H. O'Connor, R. E. Knight, B. C. Cayley, B. Clegg, S. M. Millard, and Tom Fyles entrained with 40 pounds of food and regular camping outfit, and 24 hours later found themselves deposited with their belongings in the darkness on the modest little platform at Hector. Arrangements were speedily made with the Brewster Transport Co. to do the packing the following morning. The night was spent in the station building, sacks of oats proving a fair substitute for feather beds.

Early Monday morning the well marked trail, which rises 1,400 feet in seven miles, was followed to the lake. The weather was reported to have been very unsettled; that much rain had fallen was evident by the condition of the trail, but neither mud beneath nor clouds overhead could interfere with the expectant joy as the big mountain forms, one after another came into view.

Lake O'Hara hardly looked its best for the first view. Mts. Huber, Lefroy and Hungabee pushed their heads into the clouds and so reflections were spoiled, but the charm of the district was felt at once. A camping place was arranged on the shore of the lake. Very soon the pack horses arrived. Tents were pitched, a table erected between two trees with an out-look over the lake; a fireplace built, and everything put into good shape.

At 4 p.m. it was suggested that a stroll be taken to view Lake McArthur, about two miles away and 600 feet above Lake O'Hara. An arete of Mt. Schaffer, which mountain separates the two lakes, proved tempting, so the stroll developed into a scramble of 2,000 feet. The splendid view of the surroundings with the first impressions of the gorgeous coloring of the lakes at our feet, repaid all efforts. It is most striking to find a different tint in each of the lakes. Lake McArthur had the deepest blue of all the lakes seen on the trip.

The party did not exactly exult at early rising. Sometimes the first alarm would go at daybreak, about 5 a.m. Traditionally

that ought to have been the starting time for some of the trips, but 7 a.m. became early starting time.

Tuesday, the 14th, the trail was followed along the lake shore en route for Mt. Huber, 11,041 feet, which rises like a tower to the northeast of the lake. The usual route was followed up the scree slopes to the pass between Wiwaxy Peak and Mt. Huber. A traverse was made of scree-covered ledges at about 8,090 feet to the north side of the mountain, then a climb of rock and avalanche snow for a thousand feet to below the glacier tongue.

As none of the party had been on the climb before, some time was lost here owing to keeping too low on the ledges, and later, by considerable amount of step-cutting in ice to avoid the track of avalanches, a large example of which was seen three days later pouring down for 1,500 feet. For some distance soft snow and easy going was obtained, but the steep slope of the peak for the last few hundred feet proved to be ice only, thinly coated with snow, and much step-cutting was again necessary before the summit was reached.

The air was clear and good views of all the surrounding peaks were obtained. Lake O'Hara, 4,400 feet below, with our small tents set beside it, and the C. P. R. camp half a mile further in a green meadow, looked very pleasing. The descent was made by the same route, and camp regained at 7.30 p.m.

On Wednesday, the weather was unsettled again with showers, but very clear intervals, and an easy morning was spent around the lake. A raft moored close by had its charms and many pictures were taken.

One of the best trips in the district is a circuit of five passes which can be made in a two-day tramp—over the Abbott Pass to the head of Lake Louise valley, then by Mitre Pass to Paradise Valley; from here there is a choice of two passes, the Sentinel or the Wastach to the Valley of the Ten Peaks; then the Wenchemna and Opabin passes lead back to Lake O'Hara. Abbott Pass, 9,588 feet, is the highest, and on its summit is the newly opened Alpine Club hut.

In order to lighten the packing on the trip around the passes a special trip was made with food to the hut on Wednesday afternoon, fuel for use on the way also being carried. The trip was made first by the trail to Lake Oeesa, then up the steep slopes of over 2,000 feet to the pass. The journey took over four hours. A heavy rain shower was encountered half way up the steep slope, and near the top the scree was very trying, so that it was dark before the cabin, which had been in sight for over an hour, was reached.

The cabin is a wonderful affair, built of stone, with a large living room and two rooms with beds for six people on the lower floor, and sleeping accommodation in the roof for fifteen more. Beds, mattresses, and blankets are in abundance. The living room has a large cook stove and all necessary dishes and cooking utensils. The room is panelled and has several enlarged photographs on the walls. A night was spent in this delightful shelter whilst the wind whistled through the pass outside. The morning broke with gorgeous coloring on the peaks. The windows on one side of the hut look down into B. C., and on the other into Alberta, and Mts. Lefroy and Victoria rise on either side of the pass another 1,500 feet.

The objective of the day was Mt. Victoria, 11,355 feet. From the pass it is only necessary to gain another 1,800 feet of altitude, but the highest point of the mountain is at some distance, and the ridge is very narrow. The climb began right at the hut. Rocks and scree slopes or ledges lead upward for a thousand feet until the narrow ridge is gained. Luckily, soft snow still clung to the knife-edge ridge and only a few steps had to be cut. A few feet down on either side the ice was only thinly covered, and any snow disturbed by our kicking steps would start small avalanches and leave the ice bare. The ridge has often been described as a monotonous one, but for us every step of the way was a new discovery, and full of interest. All the way, too, this skyline trip followed the divide between B. C. and Alberta; the views down to Lake Louise and the mountains around and beyond it, and

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to the Lake O'Hara or Cataract Valley on the other side were charming. The day was very clear, the nearby mountains looked their best; the Sellkirk Range bounded the view westward; Mt. Assiniboine peeped out beyond the Ten Peaks and Mt. Ball. Northward the Yoho and Wapta Glaciers and many peaks and glaciers whose names could be only guessed at, formed an enchanting view. An hour was spent on the summit. Boats could be seen on Lake Louise and much activity around the Chateau.

The climb had taken four hours; it took two and a half hours to regain the hut, and at 4 p.m. we scurried down the steep scree slopes back to Lake Ocesa and reached camp at 6.30 p.m.

The next day, Friday, Mt. Odaray, 10,165 ft. was climbed; this rises directly from the meadow behind the C. P. R. camp to the west of the Lake. The trip gave another most interesting day as the weather was at its best again. A little extra scramble was obtained by climbing from the glacier to the ridge to the west of the usual route as stones were bounding down the gully usually climbed.

Saturday, the first stage of the trip round the passes was made, and another night spent at the hut on Abbott Pass. Sunday, the weather turned dull and showery, but the trip was continued down to the Victoria Glacier, then up the Lefroy glacier, and over the Mitre Pass to Paradise Valley. At one point, by clinging too close to the shelter of Lefroy we almost became targets for a shower of falling rocks and had some little excitement in making efforts to avoid them. Steps had to be cut most of the way up to Mitre Pass; this was slow work when loaded with packs. Camp was pitched in Paradise Valley on the site of an early camp of the Alpine Club. Clouds covered the tops and the valley did not look its best. A large deer came grazing within sight of the camp during the evening.

Monday was a cool day, but leaving Messrs. Knight and Clegg in camp the remaining four climbed Pinnacle Mountain, 10,062 feet. Some difficulty was experienced owing to the mist. Two anchored ropes at difficult points in the climb have taken the sting out of a mountain that was attempted on a number of occasions before being conquered.

As there was only one tent, 6 ft. by 7 ft. 6 in., carried on this trip (the others having been left by the lake) there was a tight squeeze that night for floor space but it was managed successfully. Tuesday morning a brief spell of sunshine coupled with highly colored clouds tempted the earlier risers, but the sunshine did not stay very long. The return was to be made to O'Hara, so everything was again packed and carried over the Wastach Pass to the upper end of the Ten Peaks Valley. Here the packs were left behind and a trip made down the fine trail until views were obtained of Moraine Lake; but the day was quite dull, clouds hung low and again did not show the valley at its best. The trail continues right to the top of Wenchemna Pass at a very easy grade. The first members over the pass saw eight goats grazing at the head of Prospectors Valley but these were quickly out of sight. The short rise to the top of Opabin was made with eager expectation of returning to the camp site at O'Hara. Short rations only had been issued on the last day and it felt like returning to the land of plenty. Thoughts of bread instead of hardtack and other dainties in the shape of macaroni, cheese and pancakes as a change after pork and beans proved very aduring. Imagine then the disgust, when, tired with carrying packs, about 7 p.m. the old campsite came into view, but what was the matter with the tent! It was soon found that a bear had made free with the food in our absence. The tent was torn to shreds, the precious bread and the bacon had departed, the cheese had also tempted

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bruin, and a trail of prunes and raisins led into the bush where some of the delicacies had been consumed. Luckily, much of the food was canned goods and the hard-tack had been spared. So we settled down again to pork and beans with cornmeal pudding and jam thrown in and being hungry thoroughly enjoyed them.

Wednesday, another perfect a.m. for weather, was the last day at O'Hara. Half the company preferred to lay around camp and it was 9 a.m. before the other half got off for a climb up Mt. Ringrose. Good progress was made to the foot of Opabin glacier, then up a scree gully which divided Yukness from Ringrose, then up the west arete of the mountain. For rotten rock, Ringrose took first place. Stones could be heard falling at all times down the western face. The arete, though rotten, was free from falling rocks and a most enjoyable climb was made to the top of the first peak, 10,650 feet, where views were gained over into Paradise Valley and of the upper part of Mt. Hungabee. The late start made it impossible to continue to the second and highest peak as an early start had to be made the following morning out to the railway. Early Thursday morning a heavy thunderstorm passed over the camp. At 7 a.m., however, everything had been packed up and farewells said to the beautiful lake. Half way down the trail a heavy hailstorm was encountered, and just as the station buildings at Hector came into view another tremendous storm came on.

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Have you paid your annual dues yet? If not, please remember also your subscription to "The Mountaineer" should accompany your remittance.

ANNUAL DINNER

The sixteenth anniversary of the founding of the Club will be celebrated by the annual dinner, the date for which has been set for Saturday, Oct. 27, as the actual anniversary falls on Sunday. Full particulars with reference to the dinner will be announced in the October issue of "The Mountaineer." It has already been decided that the new lantern slides of newly explored mountains will be shown.

ALPINE CLUB DIRECTOR BEREAVED

Sympathy is felt for Mr. Arthur O. Wheeler, Director of the Alpine Club of Canada, in the bereavement caused by the death of his wife at Banff. Mr. Wheeler has performed sterling service in the promotion of mountaineering in Canada, and as the father of the senior mountaineering organization, indirectly he has placed all other bodies of climbers in his debt by his unceasing efforts to maintain the highest ideals in all things connected with the mountains. His latest effort along this line is for the formation of a national parks association to protect the national playgrounds from spoliation by power companies and other interests whose projects would ruin natural beauties forever.

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On behalf of the Club members the Executive Committee has expressed sympathy toward Mr. R. T. Leah, whose father died recently.

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Any Club member going to Seattle in the near future is requested to call upon Mrs. Jos. Hazard, of the Mountaineers, and bring back a gift of lantern slides awaiting the B. C. M. C.

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