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THE BRITISH COLUMBIA MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

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OPENING OF NEW ALPINE CLUB CABIN ON SEYMOUR MOUNTAIN

On September the 8th, the Alpine Club officially opened its new cabin on Seymour Mountain. Some thirty-one people were present when Dr. Bell, past-president of the A.C.C., declared the Cabin open. Mr. T. Fyles, chairman of the local section, outlined the difficulties that had been overcome by those engaged in the building. Mr. Les Ford, representing the B.C.M.C., spoke briefly, congratulating the Alpine Club on having a cabin so splendidly situated, especially for skiing.

After those present had partaken of a splendidly-cooked venison dinner, prepared by some of the lady members, several parties explored the beauty spots adjacent to the cabin. —R. H.

AN EXTRACT FROM A LETTER FROM THE MAZAMAS

My Dear Friends,

I am writing to thank you on behalf of the Mazamas for the very beautiful rock which we received from you. . . .

. . . The fireplace was unveiled before a crowd of more than two hundred people, and their appreciation was certainly far greater than we had expected. The beauty of the rocks, the massiveness of the mantel, and the sentiment behind the gifts of rocks combined to create a stirring effect.

. . . We have a beautiful mantelpiece; a pure white carved mountain goat, standing on a black obsidian cliff and looking out over the room.

The fireplace really received more comment than all the rest of the lodge. I will

send you some pictures of the fireplace and the lodge as soon as they are available.

Very truly yours,
VERNE L. KETCHUM,
Chairman of the Lodge Committee.

We wish to thank all members who subscribed for this rock on behalf of the club, thereby saving the club from unnecessary burden at this time.

FIRE

It was pointed out at the last executive meeting that in the event of a fire occurring in our cabin while lamps were being filled our insurance would be invalid. With our stoves protected with yukon chimneys, the lamps are our only winter fire hazard. This fire hazard is not great if we all exercise reasonable care; never fill lamps by bug light unless the bug is at a very safe distance. The cabin committee are procuring some instruction cards for the safe and proper operation of the lamps; make a point of studying these when they are posted.

The executive committee have recently purchased four new fire extinguishers, one five gallon La France double acting hand pump extinguisher and three small Pyrene's. There is a Pyrene extinguisher in each room now and the five gallon extinguisher is kept under the stairs in the main room.

We know you will all do your part to protect the club's investment this winter.

THE JANUARY TRIP

Mr. A. J. O. Cooper and Mr. Roy Howard will conduct a trip up Mount Seymour on Sunday, January 10th. The list will be placed in A. C. Phillips' store as usual.

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

The arrangements that our Photographic Exhibition Committee were able to make with the Art Gallery Association were only verbal, and on getting the final answer it was found that the Gallery would not be available until the middle of February. The final date for sending in entries will now be February the 8th.

The two year restriction on pictures applies only to those entered for competition. The committee will be delighted to receive any pictures, not eligible for competition for this reason, as exhibits. The exhibition will, in all probability, be as large, if not larger than the competition.

THE SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

There was a moderately good attendance at the semi-annual meeting, and I think I'm safe in saying that everyone there had a good reason for attending and some more than one.

Summer camp will be held at Garibaldi park this year, leaving O'Hara over until 1933. Garibaldi needs no boasting; the club feel it to be their own special camping ground. It will give the ambitious climbers the opportunity of saving their nickles and dimes for the more expensive camp the following year.

Some people put forward the rather novel idea that every time the club should chance to make a little money on any activity they sponsor that they should repay all those participating in proportion. They suggested no workable scheme for collecting in proportion when there was a deficit, nor did they offer to accept the responsi-

bility of organizing any activity under these conditions.

I presume that the question of the finance of the ski section was settled finally, though I must confess to be a little hazy on the whole subject myself. The matter is in capable hands of Roy Howard though, so we can ski in peace.

THE MOUNTAINEERS' SERVICE

This is too late for an announcement, but the executive committee have received a letter from Bishop Sovereign inviting us to attend a special mountaineers' service at St. Marks Church on December 6th. This is Bishop Sovereign's last opportunity of speaking to us before he leaves for the Yukon.

MEETING OF THE B.C.M.C. SKI SECTION

A meeting held in the Sports Room of the Province Building, on November 16th, for the purpose of inaugurating the ski section of the club, was attended by a large and enthusiastic crowd of skiers, potential and otherwise. After the purpose of the meeting was explained, Mr. Dick Shaich, our instructor, a noted Swiss skier, gave a very interesting lecture on the elements of skiing, and carefully explained the different types of skis, harness and poles used in our particular kind of wooded, hilly country. He answered a large number of questions, and did his best to get everybody started right.

Some twenty members joined the section and paid the necessary fee of \$1.50 for the

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season, which will include a reasonable supply of wax. An equal number signified their intention of joining, so altogether the prospects look bright for a very enjoyable winter.

The Ski Section Room on the plateau is now open for use. The first official trip will be held some time in January.

Further details will be found in another column. —R. H.

EDITORIAL

A member has written to me complaining that he does not agree with the theme of an editorial that I wrote last month. He asked me to publish his criticism, but the powers that be would rather I didn't start a "People's Safety Valve" column.

Apart from the main charge there is one that I *should* answer in case his opinion is general. "It is rather unfortunate that our worthy editor should feel called upon to use his position to comment in a semi-public press on the views of members expressed in the privacy of our club meetings."

I am sure very few editors have reached the degree of fame so early in their career, when someone will admit that any view they might express might influence anyone into thinking anything that is not right.

It looks as though antagonistic statements are at least positive and cause the reader to realize forcibly just what his opinion is. If I keep it up until the annual meeting, possibly next year we will be careful to select an editor who will always express the views of the minority at a meeting, or at least one who will be careful to say nothing about anything so that no one will think anything about anything.

SKIING EQUIPMENT

The Ski committee has gone very thoroughly into the question of skiing equipment and makes the following suggestions to members interested.

We have obtained six pairs of Northland ash skis, 6½ feet long. Very good value at \$6.00 per pair.

A few pairs of Northland hickory ridge-top skis, 6½ feet long, at \$10.00 per pair.

Samples of these can be seen at Roy Howard's, at 849 Hornby Street.

Woodwards can supply a very good Canadian ash ski at \$7.00 per pair, and maple skis at \$4.50 per pair.

Standard harness for use with nailed boots at \$1.50 per pair. Gresvig harness for use with ski boots at \$3.95 per pair.

Ski boots at \$6.50 and \$7.00 per pair.

Lisle Fraser has some good long skis suitable for tall people, at \$4.95 per pair.

Spencers have a ski boot at \$5.95.

Woods have ski boots at \$5.75 per pair.

Ski poles can be obtained from Dick Shaich (Trinity 2404) for \$2.00 per pair.

Be sure that the skis you buy are not too long.

Please mention the B.C.M.C. when making purchases.

—R. H.

CROWN MOUNTAIN

We have had no official report of the club trip up Crown Mountain on Sunday, November 22nd. It was carried through successfully in spite of a rather breakable crust which made the going rather hard at times. The weather was good and several members took good pictures. The trip was conducted by C. Ledingham, and J. Betts, as leader and endman. Those attending were the Misses Johnston and Sing and Messrs. Henderson, Cooper, Smith and Brownsword, junior.

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FIGHTING MONT BLANC

Mountaineers are always a little disdainful when conversation drifts to mountain railways, and the masses of fixed ropes we hear are fixed to the more popular peaks of the Alps. That these projects are only made possible by the experience of super mountaineers hadn't occurred to me until a club member sent me a magazine containing an article on the nearly completed aerial funicular on Mont Blanc.

Briefly, this is a three section funicular. On the first two sections it is possible to attain an altitude of 9000 feet in twenty-seven minutes from the valley (about 5000 feet actual climb). On the third, not yet completed, it will be possible to reach the actual summit of the Aiguille du Midi at 12,800 feet.

This project was undertaken in 1909 by a French company, employing a Swiss engineer, Maurice de Blonay.

The surveying alone was a tremendous task. Much of it was done by men dangling over cliffs at the end of a rope. At the higher altitudes, the party lived in a small cabin with a floor of solid ice. They were some times isolated for weeks at a time by great storms that prevented them from even opening the cabin door. All their provisions were packed up to them by guides, who took from twelve to fourteen hours for the ascent.

Actual construction started in the fall of the same year. All the heavy materials were carried or dragged up the mountain by men. Some pieces of heavy electrical equipment required the constant labour of twenty-five men for five weeks to raise them 4000 feet. The light cables for the preliminary line took one hundred and twenty-five men an equal time. Every man had twenty-five feet of cable wound around him, weighing one hundred pounds. Roped together in steel they made their way over rocks where the slip of one would have brought death to the whole party.

Difficult enough in itself, the work was made even more terrible by adverse weather conditions; during the early spring avalanches would sweep down, sometimes tearing away cement blocks, iron and steel that had taken months to place.

The final and worst task was to drag up the main cables. All the bridges into Chamonix valley had to be strengthened before it could be taken to the foot of the mountain. It was unwound and dragged over the pylons with auxiliary cables. A failure of the electric power, or a cable

breakage would have meant the fall of twenty-four tons from an actual height of 5000 feet sweeping away in a few minutes the work of eight years, with terrible loss of life.

The first section was completed in 1924, the second in 1927 and the third is nearing completion.

When this is completed it will be possible to attain an altitude of 12,800 feet in less than an hour from Chamonix, and the summit of Mont Blanc will be within the reach of the more ambitious in a day.

A MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

As the Club's financial accounts for 1931 will be closed on December 31st, the treasurer requests that members not at present in good standing remit their dues to him before that date.

MOUNTAINS AND MEN

by L. H. ROBBINS

This is the newest of mountaineering books. It is a collection of stories of the greatest climbs of each continent. The author resists the temptation to make thrillers of the accounts but treats the subject very well, giving full credit to the climbers, and he is not the least bit technical. This omission of technical terms and the necessary brevity of the accounts makes some of them just a little fantastic, notably the story of Kanchenjunga. The first chapter "the Climbers" is a masterpiece of description and very cleverly puts the reader in the right mood to appreciate fully the chapters following. The book is wonderfully illustrated and altogether is a book that one will not only read with intense enjoyment but will want to re-read many times.

—A. L.

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