

Ottawa Ski Club News

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Two weeks' review.—Some of our more observant readers may have noticed that the mailman did not bring any "News" last week. The reason is that none was issued, and the most charitable interpretation that can be placed upon this slip on the part of your Editor is that he was held up by sticky snow over the week-end and did not reach the City in time to deliver the copy.—Let it be stated, just for purposes of record, that the week-ends of March 2nd and 3rd and of March 10th and 11th were very much like any other week-end we have had since the 17th of January—extremely good. On March 4th, Camp Fortune received the visit of the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable William Lyon Mackenzie King, who was given a rousing reception from a thousand skiers. The Prime Minister was not on skis, although he gave the assurance that he would be next year, but he did perhaps what no one else has done this winter—he walked on foot from Camp Fortune to Kingsmere by way of the Canyon trail. At the luncheon, given to him at the President's lodge, the Prime Minister told the Directors one or two secrets which we are not at liberty to divulge as yet, but which should make every one of our members very happy. The thanks of the Club were offered to the Prime Minister by President Mortureux for his kindness in allowing the skiers of Ottawa the right-of-way through his property at Kingsmere.

The Last Issue of the News.—With this issue—the tenth of the Ottawa Ski Club News—your Editor makes his bow and retires behind the scene. Much as he would like to keep up the good work throughout sunny March and until the last bit of snow vanishes from the hills, yet he must bid you farewell because higher Councils have so decided. To prolong unduly the publication of the News might tempt the winter to remain with us for all time, and this must not be; other interests have to be considered. It seems hardly credible that over two months and a half have elapsed since we first dipped our pen to wish our readers a happy New Year, and if, as we hope, every one of them has had the same sensation of the swift passing of time, then a part of our purpose has been accomplished—that of making the winter one of the shortest and most enjoyable seasons of the year, through the pursuit of a virile and health giving out-door Sport.—With thanks to all those who have helped him in his task, by their contributions, praises or criticism, and apologies for his many shortcomings, your Editor bids you au revoir until the first snow flurries of 1930.

In the meantime, keep on ski-ing.—But "News" or no "News", remember that there will be good ski-ing in the bush, around Camp Fortune, if not around the other lodges with a more Southerly exposure, long, long after the pavements of the City are exposed in their stark nudity. There was splendid ski-ing until the 13th of April in 1927, and until the 23rd in 1928, and there have been so many soft and weak spells during the present winter that a long spell of fairly cold weather may confidently be expected. March came in lame and bleating. March will go out with a roar. Whatever happens to the sooty snows of the City, the snows under the pines of Camp Fortune should remain faithful to the Ottawa Ski Club until the May sun hits them. Then, but not until then, you may put away your blades!

And keep on patronizing our advertisers throughout the year. Let us show them that their confidence in the Ottawa Ski Club News as an advertising medium was not misplaced. Again we bid you earnestly to give them your trade, all your trade, never forgetting, whenever you make a purchase, to mention why you are one of their faithful customers.

A SLEET STORM AT SHAWBRIDGE

Shawbridge, February 28th.

When we set out in the morning the sun was struggling fitfully to break through drifting clouds. The snow was sugary where the surface had melted the day before and frozen during the night. The air was mild and if the sun triumphed today we should certainly encounter sticky conditions. However, a little breeze from the east was a saving grace. We were grateful for its cooling breath as we toiled up the long winding wood road, and gleeful because it presaged fresh snow possibly before the day was far advanced.

Pausing for occasional breathing spaces in the steady ascent, we stood to marvel at the magnificent vistas unrolled to view. Hills upon hills as far as the eye could reach; in the foreground round and clear, rolling back higher and higher until their contours were lost in a misty blur. Wooded patches were etched sharply against the snow; fir and pine in black and inky blue; bare trunks of maple and elm and oak and birch brown and weathered; splashes of burning yellow where dead beech leaves still hung upon massed branches; all blending to tones of slate and purple in the middle distance, then merging into clouds of pearl and smoke upon the horizon. Sheltered valleys lay between, laid out in square fields that ran up the hillsides, dotted with neat farmhouses. Here and there a little cluster of buildings with a slender spire rising above marked a tiny village.

When we reached the height of land at Lake Canorasset, after an hour or so of leisurely climbing, the sun had been definitely vanquished. The changeful clouds had resolved into a leaden grey and snow was falling. It came thinly at first, then in great wet flakes that blew in swirling gusts all around us, and presently turned to sleet. We had come prepared to bivouac in the open for luncheon, haversacks laden with bacon and beans, frying pan and coffee pot, but now the unpropitious elements put the snow picnic idea out of the question. No shelter was available at that point, unless we committed burglary on one of the securely boarded up cottages on the lake shore, so we had to press on. We had about ten milles to go to complete the round trip we had planned. We kept to the cover of the bush where possible, but there were inevitable open spaces where we ran into the teeth of the gale. The track led to the famous mile and a half hill at St. Sauveur, and we had been anticipating the long glide down its smooth slopes. But now it was veiled in storming mist, and with sleet pelting in our faces like stinging nettles, cutting against our eyes like knives, blinding icicles forming even on our eyelashes, we did not attempt to run it straight. The snow had become an uncertain slippery crust upon which it was impossible to keep control; bearing our weight on the level but breakable in spots, so that it could not be trusted for a steep run. Our clothes were saturated and glazed with ice, hanging upon us stiff as a board and clammy to touch. For a couple of hours the storm raged but we held doggedly to our course. We were among the clouds. Thick mists hung low on the close hills and all beyond was obscure. Ice-coated trees swayed in the wind, their clear-cut dignity of the morning lost; instead, they now resembled the gnarled and twisted trunks in illustrations to Dante's "Inferno"; tortured limbs alleged to house the souls of liars and all other shifty individuals. We might indeed have passed into a different world from the smiling country through which we had trekked so blithely a few short hours before.

Then, when we were almost within sight of our goal, the storm subsided as quickly as it had come. The rain stopped,—the air cleared and from the top of the long hill which we had climbed in the morning we could see our way to the bottom. But the crust was still treacherous and we had to make a cautious descent, checking and stemming all the way. Crossing the last field to the house, we saw that the leaden veil of the sky was rent, with rainbow patches showing through. There would, no doubt, be a splendid sunset. But we did not stay out to see it. Warmth and food were close at hand and just then they were much more important than any further manifestation of Nature's moods. We were content to call it a day.

—E. O'C.

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Tid bits and comments.—That modest young man, Clair Severt who covered nearly five hundred miles on skis to come and see us endeared himself to all those who had the good fortune to meet him during his short stay in the Capital. Long distance skiers are made of good stuff and Clair is one of them.—Quite a series of timely and interesting publications are being prepared by members of the Club and will soon be issued. Among these are “The Gentle Art of Eating Before, After and Between meals, with Answers to the following Queries: “When do we Eat?” “When do we Eat again?” “Why don’t we Eat right now?” by George Br. “How I connected the Merry-Go-Round with Mud Lake and tamed the Opopogo in 1935, by T. J. M.—Joe and his gang felled a number of trees to widen the trail in the Kicking Horse Pass. What do you think came up? Why, the owner, of course, and maybe he was not wrathful!—One of the secrets the Prime Minister told during his recent visit has leaked out: The day is not far distant when the members of the House of Commons and the members of the Senate will hold a joint session at Camp Fortune. Mr. Garland, M.P., has been out a number of times surveying the trails and locating the bumps and as soon as his report is in, the members will take to ski-ing. Oh! boys! There is going to be some work for the Night-Riders after that session!—Illusions die hard, and the illusion that the trip to Camp Fortune by the monotonous way of the Kingsmere Road and the Penguin is shorter than by way of the Canyon trail from the Meache’s Lake Road is one of them. Twice already, starting by the Canyon ten minutes after the Penguin bunch, and going along very leisurely, Your Editor has overtaken the Penguin Party on the top of the Bald Hill.—A letter signed “One of the Martyrs” and saying some very nasty things about the tea served at Dome Hill, which, it appears, is always much too hot and too strong, has been referred to the Director of the Cafeteria, A. B. West. One of the Martyrs quotes the following conversation overheard at the Lodge: 1st Skier—“Looks like rain to-day.” 2nd Skier—“Yes, it usually does, but there is a faint flavour of tea.”

Ski Exchange.—Found, child’s leather mitt, Call R. 474.—Found on Pink Lake trail, 1 black leather cap, with ear tabs, 1 grey woollen glove, 1 leather mitt, call C. 1229-W.—Lost a pair of ski poles with steel rings, likely taken by mistake from the Dome Hill Lodge, call Q. 2812.

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Coming Events.—His Worship Mayor Ellis, who has been doing a bit of practising on the Kingsmere Road, will tempt the Great Adventure on Sunday, March 17th, and come to Camp Fortune, wearing the Shamrock. The squad in charge of bump No. 23 on the Canyon are hereby notified.—On Sunday, March 24th, at Camp Fortune, weather permitting, the Club will entertain His Excellency Jean Knight, French Minister.—Thursday night excursions to the Dome Hill Lodge will be kept up until the snow goes.—If the Ladies of the Club desire to have a Consolation Race, let them apply to Louis Grimes, Q. 1443.—The Club Annual Banquet and Dance will be held shortly after Easter. You will be notified in due time.

A kind word from the Prime Minister.—"I shall always look back on the day as one of the happiest I have ever enjoyed in the open, and shall always gratefully remember your generous hospitality. May I take advantage of this note to congratulate you and your Directors on what you have done to popularize ski-ing among the young people of our Capital. It seems to me that, in this, you are rendering the country a much larger and more enduring service than perhaps you will ever know.—W. L. Mackenzie King.

Hurrah! The Devonshire Cup has come back to the fold. Sometime in the dim past, at the request of the Ottawa Ski Club, the Earl of Devonshire, then Governor-General of Canada, gave a silver trophy for the City Ski-Jumping. Arthur Pinault, of our Club, was the first to have his name engraved on it. Then the Cliffside Ski Club won it and kept it for seemingly endless years, our best man always being one foot behind the winner, or one fall ahead. It remained for **Wilfrid Poitras**, our staunchest ski jumper, to turn the table. At the last Championship meet at Fairy Lake, Poitras came first among thirty-five competitors, twenty-nine of whom wore the badge of the O. S. C., thereby winning the title of Champion of the City and the Devonshire trophy. Names of first eight men, all Ottawa Ski Club) W. Poitras, E. Fillman, R. Vincent, C. Clarke, H. Bagguley, A. Cousineau, C. Denis, C. Bambrick. Landry and Saunders made the longest standing jump (104 feet).

And Bud Clark is Champion Ski runner of the City!—That man Bud Clark, who wrested the Quebec Championship at Three Rivers, the Ontario Championship at Camp Fortune, and who was only seconds behind Ex-Olympic champions at Shawbridge, has again added to his laurels by winning the City Championship at Camp Fortune and Lady Willingdon's trophy in a hard fought race on March 3rd.—Names and time of winners: B. Clark 1.39.39; H. Worden 1.40.07; J. Oliver (C.) 1.43.53; L. Grimes 1.44.49; H. Bagguley 1.44.49; H. Douglas 1.45.28; Geo. Hamilton (C.) 1.45.33; J. Currie 1.46.54; P. Wright (C.) 1.53.17.

Colonel C. B. Amory, of the U.S. Army, writes:—I had the good fortune to visit Ottawa on "New Year's day. I joined the Ottawa Ski Club as an Out-of-Town Member. I have spent a number of dollars during my life, but that is the best dollar I ever spent.

On February 23rd, I started for Camp Fortune. I met a young man on the bus going to Chelsea. Robert Dun was his name, I believe. I shall long remember him. If all young men had his courtesy and forbearance, police forces, armies and diplomats would become "de trop."

Your recent bulletin mentioned that on that date the trails were **unusually** bumpy. Glad to know it. For some of those bumps on the Canyon gave me a magnificent if fleeting view of the country. I frequently had the sensation I used to get in my younger days when out west I would try to ride some bad bronco. However, I arrived at Camp Fortune, Pink Lake etc. Fall yes, but a glorious time.—Hope to visit you next winter and for a longer time.

Lost on Wrightville car March 9th, Lady's Fawn Suede ski mitts. Phone Q. 1479.—Lost on George's trail, Grey ski cap, junior badge attached No. 207 and Dome Hill badge No. 8. Please return to McGiffin's, Sparks St.—Lost on Sunday, March 3rd, near Wrightville, one leather helmet. Please return to 141 Sparks St.

"MORE FULLNESS"

Sir,—I ask the privilege of a little space in your valuable circular to correct some impressions conveyed by an article appearing in the last issue of the "O.S.C. News," entitled "A Full Day." Your correspondent, it would appear, wields the goosequill with greater facility than he does his bamboos. In fact, his ability with the pen suggests his identity and excuses his official position in the Club.

My "grouchiness" does not deny your correspondent poetic license in describing our very enjoyable little jaunt to Wakefield, but I have always had a notion that poetic license is limited to exaggeration and does not countenance intentional ambiguity and calumny.

The intentional ambiguity of which I complain is well exemplified by your correspondent's remarks concerning the Big Dipper. George did remark that there was water in the Dipper and that "he" had sat down in it, but the "he" to whom George referred was none other than your last week's correspondent. High up on the further rim of the Dipper where George may have sat down there was no water, I assure you. Rather I would say there was ice or rock.

Now as to George's grouch—that was put on as a psychological experiment. It worked like this—the others were made to believe that they were doing better than George and in that way they forgot their inferiority complexes and were sustained in their efforts towards the goal. Only modesty prevents me from accepting a martyr's crown. And furthermore, a six foot square shack would afford me no opportunity to vent a real grouch.

Lastly. I am reputed to have said, after Wakefield was reached, that we had skied 40 miles. I tell your correspondent that that is nothing but a (word deleted as unparliamentary.)—George.

A visitor from New Haven writes:—

Again I want to tell you how much we appreciate your splendid hospitality. From the moment of our arrival members of your Ski Club gave us a wonderful time. We were well guided over your best trails by your expert trail blazers, lunched and danced at your camps, bumped over your best (worst) bumps and hand every chance to study your effective organization.

You said you would welcome a suggestion and here it is. Organize a publicity committee to work with the C.N.R. and let people from the States know that Ottawa is the most active ski-ing center in the world and that your club has at its disposal expert guides. Every year thousands go to Placid, Quebec and New-Hampshire to find their holiday spoiled by wretched ski-ing conditions. Ski-ing is becoming more and more popular with us and why should not Ottawa become the Mecca for the lovers of Winter Sports?

It took me two years to find a really ideal ski-ing place in the Laurentians at Cochand's Chalet in St. Marguerite, but most people from the States want the luxury of a large hotel and well layed out trails which you have in abundance.

If you need any help in the States in putting over any propoganda I shall be glad to assist.

A. R. Diefendorf.

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