

THE TORONTO SKI CLUB

WHO WE ARE AND WHY

EIGHT or nine years ago in Toronto the occasional ski-runner who crossed High Park or journeyed up the Humber Valley was looked upon with awe in the light of an intrepid adventurer. There were but few runners in those days, and in passing they would merely nod curtly to one another, actuated solely by the recognition that here was a "brother of the snows."

But even then was there foreshadowed the present popularity of the sport in Toronto. The æsthetic charm of ski-ing had an irresistible appeal that continually tempted outdoor lovers, and each new recruit added his voice in praise of the "planks."

Finally, in the winter of 1922 a small group of enthusiasts in the city banded themselves together, more or less as an experiment, under the name of the "Telemark Ski Club," in view of their proposal to adhere to the principles of the Telemark school of ski-ing of Norway. The object was to scientifically study the theory and practice of ski-running, as well as to reconnoitre the districts affording the best running under varying weather conditions, which, locally, are sometimes capricious.

Such activities were quite self-contained, and practically excluded the social aspect of organization, but later proved to be too specialized to foster a large club and representative of the community.

When it was perceived that this first breath of organized ski-ing with its attendant publicity was creating enthusiastic sentiment for a representative Club among the ever-increasing devotees of the sport, it was unanimously deemed expedient at an open meeting of the Telemark Club to reorganize the society, and, with the original Club as a nucleus, to fashion it after popular dictates under the more explanatory name of the "Toronto Ski Club."

This was done in the late winter of 1922-23, and has amply been justified, for what with the subsequent publicity given the Club, in which connection the Press has been very sympathetic, a large number of new converts has been made, until there are to-day eighty-five members, with almost as many immediate prospects.

The reorganization did not entail a disparagement of technical efficiency in ski-ing, but rather did it broaden club activities to embrace all angles of interest, so that while there is provided a Club hike through High Park on "Ladies' Night" once a week, with subsequent refreshment, and a fast senior hike once a week and every Sunday a Club tour to places farther afield, there has also been created a series of three tests through which members can qualify for third, second and first class membership. The requirements of each test are gradually made more difficult, with the idea that when a member is skilful enough to pass the last test he is, for all intents and purposes, a finished runner.

Such distinction, with the award of appropriate insignia upon successful qualification will lend, it is believed, an added zest to the practice of ski manœuvres, and will provide an incentive to study of the technical structure

of ski-ing, a knowledge of which is so obviously essential to the competent ski-runner.

To promote interest in this phase of the sport and to prepare members for these tests, it has been arranged to hold classes of instruction once a week. This, we believe, to be rather a bright idea, since we have discovered at times a certain reticence on the part of the less initiated to make their *début* under the eyes of mixed company. A separate practice field, one for men and one for women will be set aside with experienced supervisors, so that expert advice and tuition will be readily available to all those who are interested. This provision is also supplemented by the maintenance of a large Club library of ski literature to which are constantly added all the latest text books and Club annuals.



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The predominant note of the organization, however, is the spirit of good fellowship which pervades every corner of the Club, and a special committee has been created to see that this feature be well nourished. The "Good Fellowship" Committee undertakes to make everybody known to everybody else, to see that everybody is enjoying himself and that the horizon has never anything but a roseate hue. They also plan to distribute a celluloid membership button into which a small card is slipped and which will carry the member's name, his office or class, and his nickname, so that anybody desiring to get acquainted with our worthy President, Mr. H. T. Cliff, for instance, can sidle up to him, and, making a brief note to be sure of his identification, can, with appropriate demonstration, exclaim, "'Lo, Sam ! Howsa boy?"

The Club has given special thought to the entertainment of members of other Ski Clubs who might be visiting Toronto, and the "Good Fellowship" Committee is prepared at all times to take them under its wing, introduce them around, see that they lack nothing in equipment, and that they enjoy all the privileges of any other member.

The Toronto Ski Club takes this opportunity to extend a cordial invitation to all out-of-town ski-runners to drop in and participate in club activities as sincerely welcome guests. Visitors should communicate with either Mr. H. T. Cliff, the President, at Lakeside 7344W, or with Mr. W. R. Binch, the Chairman of the "Good Fellowship" Committee, at Elgin 5121, who will look after their welfare and supply them with a guest badge.

No much more efficient vehicle for spreading propaganda for the sport has been found than the younger gentry, and the Club has an enthusiastic junior branch which "does its stuff" in the afternoons and on Saturday. The young ladies and gentlemen have a couple of instructors and are given considerable encouragement because they mean eventual new blood for the organization.

Among the members are a number of jumpers, notably M. G. Putman and George Solberg. The latter holds the record on the Winnipeg Hill, and Mr. Putman, who was formerly of the Montreal Ski Club, represented Toronto last year at the Montreal and Ottawa Tournaments, when he won considerable distinction. Proposals are under way to arrange a local jumping hill which will facilitate practice and have a decidedly salutary effect on jumping standards.

Other features include the camera squad, which, like all true "Brothers of the Shutter," goes around snapping anything and everything, and who has arranged to contribute the negatives to the Club, so that anyone can obtain prints at a nominal cost of any young lady that he may wish.

Local competitions are not yet on a sound basis, but there is already established a cross-country race, and it is planned to inaugurate several other events in competing for suitable trophies.

The Toronto Ski Club has not been long in existence, but it looks as if it were on the right path, if enthusiasm is any prescience of success. We have also to be indeed grateful to the other clubs and the Canadian Amateur Ski Association for their sympathetic attitude. There certainly is a remarkably strong bond between those who worship Ondurr-dis, the Norwegian Goddess of Ski.