

SKI-ING IN SWEDEN

By COUNT C. G. D. HAMILTON, Goteborg, Sweden

BEFORE the reader puts on his ski for a reconnoitring tour among the happenings of Swedish ski-sport during the past winter, it may be of interest to learn something about the organization of the ski-sport in Sweden.

There are two central organizations, comprising the whole of the country, both with sub-district organizations and associations. One would perhaps think that this dualism would be to harm, but it is on the other hand just the opposite. The Swedish Ski Association, founded in 1908, is the ski-sport section of the Swedish Gymnastical and Sport Association's State Federation, which administers the official leadership of competitors in Sweden, whereas the Association for the Promotion of Ski-ing in Sweden, ("The Ski Promotion"), founded in 1892, since the foundation of the Swedish Ski Federation, particularly administers the propaganda for the ski-sport. Any questions which may arise and which may contemplate any state subventions are administered by a "delegation," elected by both organizations, and consisting of two members from each organization, supplemented by teachers from various institutions.

The Ski Promotion lays particular stress on this its work through the spreading of knowledge about the ski-sport among the young people of the nation, and tries to attain its object through the collaboration with the teaching staff. Instructive courses are arranged for these teachers, followed by special courses for securing information about mountaineering as well as qualifications for the leadership of ski excursions in the mountains. The Ski Promotion has published yearly, for thirty-six years, a propaganda book called "On Ski," which at present has a circulation of about 18,000. The Ski Promotion also devotes its time to the winter tourist life and owns tourist stations at Rämshyttan (South Dalecarlia), at Storlien (by the Norwegian border in Jämtland) and at Riksgransen (by the Norwegian border in Lappland).

With regard to the competitions of the country, the Ski Promotion co-operates with the Swedish Ski Federation, on the board of which it puts a certain number of members without election. In addition to this the Ski Promotion arranges itself, competitions at Fiskartorpet, where this association owns large ski jumping establishments for the use of the young people as well as sporting men for training and competitions.

The most important events in Sweden are of course the National Championships. There our best known skiers meet, after first having qualified in the district championships, for the worthy mission of fighting for the honour of being the country's best skier. A review about this competition is given at the end of this article.

The Fiskartorps day, with its competition in combined and jumping events, is considered the second greatest ski-sports day, perhaps the greatest with regard to the jumping competitions. At this yearly event the competition takes place for the Fiskartorps Cup, considered to be the highest distinction which can be awarded a Swedish ski jumper. The same jumper can only win this prize once.

Another well-known ski race is the Vasa Race, which has now been arranged these last seven years by Idrottskamraterna in Mora, a small town in the county of Dalecarlia, for the celebration of a historical ski-running feat 400 years ago. Many sceptical voices were raised against this event when first arranged in 1922 over the course from Salen to Mora—a distance of over 90 kilometres. As to the sporting value of this race, which is held partly over easy ground and partly on roads, opinions will probably always remain divided. But one can never dispute that this race always has and always will fill a great mission, far greater than what one had hoped, a mission for the

ski-ing from a promotional point of view. The day on which the Vasa Race takes place has become a meeting and festival day for the people of Dalecarlia, and a far greater event than the so much praised midsummer festivals at Mora, Rättvik or Leksand. The Vasa Race has already reached the knowledge of the general public far outside of the borders of Dalecarlia and is most popular among them and the runners. The start is simultaneous, so one can follow the race at the various controls. Through the radio broadcasting hundreds of thousands of people are informed about the result, and the race has been witnessed by many prominent men, once by the Crown Prince, another time by the Archbishop, a third time by the Premier, etc.

In conjunction with the mentioning of the competition programme, it should be noted that there are arranged every fourth year the so-called Northern Games in Sweden, when ski-ing competitions are organized by the two named central organizations.

For the school children of the country, there are arranged in Stockholm yearly winter sports meetings, often with over a thousand participants, at which competitions are held in ski-running over various distances, jumping in different classes, field shooting on ski, skating, running, as well as figure skating, skate-sailing and a threefold contest, comprising running, skating and field shooting on ski.

THE INAUGURATION OF THE FISKARTORP JUMP.

Taking last winter's happenings as they come we find ourselves on a sunny Sunday, January 29, 1928, on the stand at Fiskartorpet to watch the international competitions in combined and jumping.

All these competitions were included in the programme at the inauguration of the new establishments at Fiskartorpet belonging to the Ski Promotion. These were completely renovated during the summer and autumn in 1927. Instead of the old jump with the wooden tower, a new and modern establishment with a tower of concrete and top hill of steel construction was erected. The profile (vertical section) of the hill has been considerably improved. The tower is higher, and the hill, below the jump has now a gradient of 33 degrees, as against previously scarcely 30 degrees; and now jumps of about 45 metres with good style are possible. The height of the hill from the foot to the edge of the jump is vertically about 30 metres, and the top of the tower is about 52 metres above the average level of the Laduviken. The height of the tower is 22 metres. The total length of the hill from the tower to the O-level is approximately 140 metres, of which 72 metres are on the hill below the jump. This hill is thus about the same size as the world famous Holemnkoll Hill in Norway.

In the tower there are rooms in the two first flats for changing, with heated shower baths for the competitors. The top flats will be used for a Swedish Ski Museum, which will be opened for the public some time this year. All these premises are furnished with electric light and central heating.

Attached to the tower there is a so-called "storstuga" (great room) erected for the young folks. There is an open fireplace, and in this room the youngsters may eat their food, and are served milk, coffee, etc.

The ski-jumps and other establishments are generally kept open to the people and school children in Stockholm and vicinity as often as possible. One may therefore believe and hope that the establishments at Fiskartorpet will be a stadium for the ski-sport, and a centre for the ski-sport in Stockholm and for the country for many years to come.

The inauguration of the jump was a real sporting festival, and the presence of the Royal Family gave it even more splendour. The President, Colonel Ivar Holmquist, bid the royal guests welcome. The young H. Schon, from Stockholm, made the inauguration jump, which through its perfection in form was greatly applauded. The Norwegians dominated and the three first prizes in the combined and the four first in the ski-jumping were taken home by Kai Rusten, Hans Engelsrud, and Lorang Anderssen in the combined;

and Ole Gulie, Olof Kaasa and Lorang Anderssen in the jumping. Further competitions were arranged for old boys, of which several were present at the inauguration of Fiskartorpet in 1904.

The new jump proved to fully come up to all the expectations, and although the snow conditions were not particularly favourable, jumps of up to 44 metres were made.

THE STUDENTS' WINTER SPORT MEETING

This took place on February 5, 6 and 7 at Fiskartorpet and Saltsjöbaden, the field-shooting over grounds north of Stockholm and the skating competition at Ostermalm's sporting ground. Almost 1,000 entries were received from 72 different institutions, from Kiruna in the north to Karlskrona in the south, representing youths of from 13 to 20 years. The general opinion was that these competitions were most successful, and would be followed by many good results. Members of the Royal Family have for many years in succession taken an active part. The present Crown Prince, as well as his brother, Prince Wilhelm, have participated in the jumping competitions at similar meetings, and Prince Gustaf Adolf has repeatedly received many distinguished prizes for being among the best.

This year Prince Bertil was the principal of the meeting, making a new record for the 500 metres skating race, 52.9 seconds. The school which Prince Bertil belongs to, the Lundsberg School, won the King's Cup in the three-contest competition, which includes skating, ski-ing and field-shooting. The meeting closed with the distribution of the prizes, when not less than 461 prizes were given away, amid a storm of applause from the youngsters.

THE FISKARTORPS DAY

This year's Fiskartorps Day took place on February 11, with the jumping as usual at Fiskartorpet, whereas the langlauf in the combined competition had already been concluded during the previous day at Saltsjöbaden. Mr. L. E. Moberg, B.A., who had just returned home from the International Academical meeting at Cortina d'Ampezzo, where he was successful in winning the combined competition, won the langlauf and also the King's Cup. The Fiskartorps Cup was won by Mr. Schön, who finished first with 18.62 points. Further six men reached over 18 points, from which it is understood that it was a keen fight. This meeting offered much of the greatest interest and according to the press its marked success even surpassed the inauguration meeting, as regards arrangements, etc.

THE VASA RUN

The fight for the victory in the Vasa Run is always most keen. Only this year a competitor was successful in being victorious for the second time. This race has almost every year resulted in a new record time, this with the exception of the third and present year.

It may perhaps be of interest, in this connection, to mention the various successors, from the first year 1922, when E. Alm for the first time took home the magnificent cup in 7 hrs. 32 mins. 49 secs. The following year this time was reduced by one hour through O. Lindberg in 6 hrs. 32 mins. 41 secs. In 1924 Lindgren finished first in 6 hrs. 53 mins. 26 secs. Next year Utterstrom won a most popular victory in 6 hrs. 3 mins. 55 secs. which time everyone expected would be untouched for many years, but when Hedlund last year passed the butt, most heartily applauded by his fellow countrymen for being the first dalecarlian to win, it appeared that he had run the 92 kilometres in 5 hrs. 36 mins. 7 secs. In 1927 K. Petterson was successful in 6 hrs. 19 mins. 32 secs.

This year's Vasa Run was held on March 11, and created quite a new sensation, in that two runners, Hedlund and Utterström, soon after the start left all the other competitors behind and passed the winning post hand-in-hand, after having previously made an agreement to make it a "dead run" and to be both declared as winners. The referee, however, gave his decision in

favour of Hedlund, and the Swedish Ski Association has confirmed this, after having dealt with the official protests. The two runners' time was 5 hrs. 33 mins, 23 secs., thus a new record for the 90 kilometre race. Almost 150 runners were entered in this race.

AN OLYMPIC SKI VICTORY

February 14, 1928, was a great day in Swedish ski history, when Sweden took revenge over Norway from Chamonix in 1924. At this meeting the Norwegians secured the four first places in the 50 kilometres run, with the Swedes before the Finns, but in St. Moritz it was the Swedes who triumphed. Norway was sent back to number four, by Hedlund (5 hrs. 52 mins. 37 secs.), Jonson (5 hrs. 2 mins. 30 secs.) and V. Anderssen (5 hrs. 5 mins. 46 secs.), all Swedes, Kjelbotn (5 hrs. 14 mins. 22 secs.), the best Norwegian, and as number six the first Finn, Lappalainen, who won at the Northern Games in Stockholm in 1926, in 5 hrs. 18 mins. 33 secs. This was a really great success for Swedish ski men, and the most important since the never-to-be-forgotten runner, Haldo Hansson, defeated the Norwegians as well as the Finns in 1913. The victory was a well-deserved triumph, following a long and systematic course of training and careful preparation.

The Swedish Winter Championships are, as stated previously, the most important happenings in Swedish sporting life. In conjunction with the same there are arranged the national field shooting, trotting races, etc., lasting generally for about one week.

The ski competitions comprise Dauerlauf and Langlauf over: 50 event, 60 kilometres, 30 kilometres, 10 kilometres for women and 20 kilometres for juniors, as well as relay-races; jumping and combined competitions. There is in addition often arranged a county match for students over various courses.

The relay race is probably not very well-known to the readers. This race is typically Swedish and arises from the time when the relay was used for spreading state summons round the country. Each club may enter with three regular and three reserve runners. The course is divided into three distances, and it must be stated before the start which men are to run respective distances. The first men carry the relay to the second men, the second men to the third, and the third men to the goal. The length of the course is kept secret up to the time of the simultaneous start of the first men, and the other men receive instructions about half an hour before the expected arrival of the first man. This race is a reconnoitring one and no other means than skis, sticks, charts and compass may be used.

This year's championships took place at the city of Sundsvall, where once the Swedish sporting cradle had been rocked. Already in 1870 there had been arranged races for youths at this place and some years later for older people, women as well as men.

The Swedish Championships have not less than three times been held at Sundsvall, a community particularly interested in all winter sports.

The victors in the various ski competitions were—50 kilometres: J. Lindgren, Lycksele I.F., 4 hrs. 16 mins. 28 secs. The same club won the team prize for the best 3-men team in 13 hrs. 37 mins. 50 secs. 30 kilometres: Sven Utterstrom, Boden, 2 hrs. 25 mins, 8 secs. The best 3-men team was Lycksele I.F. in 7 hrs. 37 mins. 41 secs. The same club also won the best results with 2-men and 5-men team in respectively 4 hrs. 59 mins. 6 secs. and 12 hrs. 58 mins. 56 secs. Miss Astrid Bylund, Selanger I.F., won the women's 10 kilometres run in 56 mins. 34 secs. and the team prize was also taken home by this club in 2 hrs. 59 mins. 21 secs. The national race over 20 kilometres for juniors was won by Hugo Wicksell, Gustafs, in 1 hr. 29 mins. 12 secs. The relay race was taken home by Stugsunds I.F. in 11 hrs. 31 mins. 25 secs. The air-line distance of the course was 110 kilometres. The combined competition was won by Sven Eriksson, Selanger, while the team prize went to Friska Viljor in Ornsköldsvik. The jumping prize was also won by Sven Eriksson and the team prize by Friska Viljor, Ornsköldsvik.