

LONDON LETTER

IN YOUR last issue the Ski Club of Great Britain was credited with a membership of over 30,000. I do not know whether it was the printer or I who was responsible for the superfluous "0," but considering the fact that we have to go abroad to ski and that ski-ing can never become a national sport in Great Britain, I think we may congratulate ourselves that the membership of our Club now stands at 4,070. We have recently been adding about 700 new members every year, but how long this will continue I cannot say.

The great event of the year in British ski-ing was the success of our team at Zakopane.

The International Ski Federation selects one meeting every year for its patronage and this meeting is in effect, though not in name, the European Championship for the year. All the European countries send their crack runners to this meeting. Last year the organization of the European Championship was entrusted to the Polish Ski Association.

The Poles have always shown great enterprise in ski-ing matters. They firmly supported the British proposals for the recognition of downhill and slalom races at the International Congress which was held at St. Moritz last year. They were also the first to suggest that ladies' races should be included in European Championships.

This suggestion was not treated very seriously by the Norwegians, perhaps because there are no first-class lady ski-runners in Norway. None the less the Poles included a ladies' race in the European Championship at Zakopane, and they also included a downhill race which—as a compliment to the British—was run under British ski-racing rules.

Unfortunately the ladies' race was a langlauf, but the Poles very kindly allowed me to enter Miss Doreen Elliott and Miss Sale-Barker for the open downhill race.

Sixty competitors entered for the open downhill race. The Norwegians unfortunately did not enter and thereby missed an opportunity of proving their favourite thesis that a good langlaufer is *ipso facto* a good downhill racer.

Bracken, the British Ski Champion, only missed victory by three seconds; the winner was that well-known Polish runner, Czech by name.

The British entered eight competitors who secured second, sixth, eighth, tenth, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth and twenty-fourth places respectively. Mitchell was twenty-fourth, having broken a ski, otherwise he would certainly have finished in the first fifteen.

The sensation of the meeting, however, was provided by the two ladies, Miss Elliott and Miss Sale-Barker. The conditions were extremely difficult; the snow was wind-swept and crusted and part of the course lay down a narrow glade with dangerous tree stumps. The glade was extremely steep and the snow was very difficult, but the two ladies took it straight from top to bottom without a fall. Miss Elliott finished thirteenth and Miss Sale-Barker fourteenth, beating forty-five men competitors in the Downhill Championship. This must be one of the most remarkable achievements of women in the sphere of sport.

I hope that the Norwegian delegate at St. Moritz, who suggested that women might be given prizes for "elegance" and that it was absurd to expect them to enter for serious races, was duly impressed.

The Poles were certainly impressed, and they gave the two ladies a magnificent reception. On one occasion when they entered a restaurant in the town, everyone present stood up and cheered for some minutes.

I hope that the Canadians will be represented at the International Ski Congress which takes place at Oslo at the end of February, 1930. I was very grateful for their support at St. Moritz, and the British will need all the support that they can get in order to secure official recognition for downhill races.

Meanwhile the Arlberg-Kandahar may be regarded as a provisional substitute for a European championship. The Arlberg-Kandahar Cup was presented by the well-known Mürren ski club, the Kandahar, and it will be held in future alternately at Mürren and in the Arlberg. The Arlberg Ski Club has lent its valuable support to the British in the campaign for the due recognition of downhill races.

The competition in the Arlberg-Kandahar last March was extremely severe. I have never in all my experience seen so many first-class downhill runners together. There were eighty-six entries for this event, which was won by the German, Karl Neuner. There was also a very large entry for the Ladies' Arlberg-Kandahar, including the German and Austrian Lady Champions. Miss Elliott was, unfortunately, unable to compete but Miss Sale-Barker carried the British colors to victory. Her performance in the downhill race was magnificent, and she was over a minute ahead of the next lady. She won the Ladies' Arlberg-Kandahar Cup by an easy margin.

The present writer succeeded Mr. Gerald Seligman in the Presidency of the Ski Club of Great Britain on August 1 and I need hardly say that I shall welcome any opportunity of being of service to Canadian ski-runners visiting Europe or Switzerland both during and after my term of office.

ARNOLD LUNN.

THE KANDAHAR SKI CLUB SONG

Downhill, downhill! This is the racers' song,
From windswept crest
We race abreast
This is the racers' song.
On mountains high and low
Our writing's on the snow,
So downhill, downhill, this is the racers' song.

Take, take it straight! This is the racers' song,
In powder or crust
Run straight we must
This is the racers' song.
In valleys narrow or wide,
Our straight tracks side by side,
So take, take it straight, this is the racers' song.

While snow shall lie, this be the racers' song,
Our friends are foes
Till the race's close
This is the racers' song.
Come, never mind the snow,
Five, four, three, two, one—Go,
While snow shall lie, this be the racers' song.