

best foreigner, Nykanen of Finland took 19th place. The winner of Class B was Rolf Kaarby and of the senior class Ole B. Andersen. Birger Ruud headed the list in the juniors, followed by Reidar Andersen and Ole Ulland. The ladies' cup which is always presented to the best jumper in the combined classes went to Sigmund Ruud.

The Winter Sports Week was finished off on Monday, March 3, with the 50-kilometre race. Sven Utterstrom of Sweden duplicated his victory of 1929 at Holmenkollen by beating Arne Rustadstuen of Norway. His time was 3.53.14, just 53 precious seconds ahead of his rival, with A. Paananen and M. Lappalainen, both of Finland, 3rd and 4th respectively.

The National Travel Association, with the co-operation of the Norwegian State Railways, invited a group of foreign delegates on a five days sight-seeing trip ending at Trondhjem, where the Norwegian Ski Championships were held the following week-end. Director G. B. Lampe was in charge and we returned to Oslo the following Tuesday morning with many happy memories.

I will forever be indebted to the officials of Norges Ski Forbund (The Norwegian Ski Association), Foreningen til Skiidrettens Fremme (The Association for the Promotion of Skiers), and Baerum Ski Club for their hospitality and valuable advice, and also to the official judges for their kind co-operation while I was studying ski jumping at the various competitions.

I had barely a couple of weeks for private business and was unable to spend much time with my relatives, much to their disappointment. For several reasons I was unable to prolong my stay in Norway, and sailed for Canada on March 27 with the hope that the experience of my trip would be of benefit in my connection with the ski sport here.

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## SKI-ING IN AUSTRALIA

By HERBERT H. SCHLINK, M.B., Ch.M., F.R.G.S.

*Vice-President Ski Club of Australia*

IT AFFORDS me great pleasure to acquiesce to the request of your Honorary President, Mr. H. P. Douglas, to write an article on Australian ski-ing for the Canadian Year Book.

It will no doubt surprise most of your readers who regard Australia as a tropical country to learn that we have large and excellent snowfields in this country. These, however, are confined to the south-eastern corner of our continent. A range of mountains runs from New South Wales into the neighbouring state of Victoria, interrupted only by the Murray River Valley. It follows the curve of the coast line and is not more than eighty miles from it. One hundred miles of the New South Wales sector and fifty miles of the Victorian have an average height of about 6,000 feet and are snow-covered for five months of the year—May, June, July, August and September. The greatest width of this snow-bearing country is near the interstate border on the New South Wales side and is known as the Kosciusko plateau. It provides a field of three hundred square miles and contains the highest peak in Australia, Mount Kosciusko, 7,328 feet. This peak was named by Count Strzelecki, who made the earliest recorded ascent in 1840, from a fancied resemblance to the tomb of the Polish patriot at Cracow. The chief peaks in the Victorian sector are Mount Hotham, Mount Feathertop, Mount Buffalo and Mount Buller, all over 6,000 feet high. These ranges provide the only fields on the mainland of Australia but the island of Tasmania further south provides many good snow areas as does the north and south islands of New Zealand.

At the extreme northern end of the New South Wales sector, locally known as the Snowy Mountains, is the small mining town of Kiandra and it was here that the birth of Australian ski-ing took place.

Round about 1860 this town had an active mining population of some ten thousand souls. The officials and miners used to leave it in the early sixties

each winter because the place became snowed up. About this time some wandering Lapp, Telemarken or Krain peasant must have found his way to these goldfields and taught the inhabitants the advantages of ski in crossing the snow in winter. This instructor probably came from the province of Krain near the Adriatic, because the Kiandra ski has the same primitive binding and the inhabitants to this day adopt the stick riding which Valvasor described in his history as characteristic of the Krain peasant.

It is probable that race carnivals were conducted late in the sixties but it is fairly certain that in the late seventies they were properly organized and well established as annual fixtures. In fact there are records of the foundation of the Kiandra Snow Shoe Club in 1878, nine years before the first Ski Club was formed in Christiania or Oslo in Norway (1887). During the winter months of June, July and August this once famous mining town is snowbound, the mail is brought in from the snow line by a man on ski and the children are forced to use ski to attend school. Thus it is easily understood why the



VIEW OF HOTEL KOSCIUSKO, WITH THE FINISH OF ONE OF THE PREPARED COURSES ON THE LEFT

activities of the Snow Shoe Club were confined to the inhabitants of the district and that it was only in the nineties that residents of Sydney and other parts of New South Wales commenced to make annual trips to the miners' carnivals at Kiandra. These new city ski recruits formed a club called the New South Wales Alpine Club in 1897, but its membership was never very numerous and it ceased to exist once the Government opened its newly erected hotel in 1909 at the Kosciusko end of the Snowy Mountains. Good roads and better facilities for transport immediately shifted the scene of ski-ing activities to the new hotel and a vigorous and active club of novices, the Kosciusko Alpine Club, soon took all the ski limelight of the state, and Kiandra with its dwindling population and lack of visitors sank into oblivion. However, the latter still continues to hold its annual carnivals. Enormous numbers of skiers now visit Kosciusko each year and many new clubs have been formed. First the Ski Club of Australia made its appearance in 1920 with the express object of opening up the whole of the snow country. The Hotel Kosciusko is situated

about seventeen miles from the chief peak of the Ranges and is 2,328 feet lower. This new club was largely instrumental in opening up all the country between the base hotel and the summit and explored the whole of the eighty mile ranges between Kosciusko and Kiandra. Since the inception of this club many other clubs have been formed. The Millions Ski Club, the University Ski Club, Kosciusko School Ski Clubs, the Public Service Ski Club, the Royal Automobile Ski Club and several others.

In 1928 all the more important clubs of New South Wales combined to publish a common Year Book, and soon after the Ski Council of New South Wales was formed as the governing body of the sport in Australia. Under its auspices all championship events are held and standard tests similar to those held by the British Ski Club are conducted and class badges awarded. The Ski Club of Tasmania has now affiliated with the Council and negotiations are in progress to get the Victorian Clubs to affiliate, so that there will be one controlling body in charge of all Australian ski-ing activities.

On the Victorian sector ski-ing started somewhat later than in New South Wales. About 1890 an Alpine Club was formed at the township of Bright near Mount Buffalo. However, it confined its activities mainly to mountaineering in summer, but shortly after its formation two miners who had had experience of ski-ing at Kiandra took small parties to Buffalo and the high plains in winter. However, not until the Government Chalet was built at Buffalo some time after the opening of the Kosciusko Hotel in New South Wales did ski-ing become at all popular with the public of Victoria. At that time the Ski Club of Victoria became active and has controlled the sport in that state ever since.

At Kosciusko we have always suffered from the fact that the hotel was built too far from the Main Range. Although most years provided ample snow, the hills have only a moderate height and are covered with dense wood which necessitates courses being cut through the timber. It also meant that any exploration of the Main Range had to be done at considerable risk as the explorers had to remain away from their base for days at a time and were forced to carry sufficient rations for the whole period. There were only a few badly equipped huts which acted as safety zones in case of bad weather. In point of fact two men lost their lives by a blizzard overtaking them in 1928.

This unfortunate happening and the importunities of the clubs at last moved the authorities and this year a well equipped hotel, capable of accommodating fifty skiers, was opened at Charlotte's Pass twelve miles above the Kosciusko Hotel and one thousand feet higher. It is situated just where the timber ceases and the unwooded ranges start. No trees are found above 6,000 feet in Australia. Thus it is now possible for the skier to leave the Chalet in the morning and be on the Main Range within the half hour, where an unlimited number of steep and long runs exist for his day's amusement. He can go more than half way to Kiandra over glorious unwooded mountains with very little ice formation and no crevices or avalanches. It also provides a number of natural jumping hills which need no clearing and very little ground work and gives a magnificent range of Slalom courses outside the very door of the hotel. Further we are now able to hold downhill races of over 2,000 feet.

This year the Ski Council held the Championship of Australia near the new hotel. It was decided in four events, a Slalom a Langlauf, a Downhill Race and a Jumping Competition. The events were conducted under the F.I.S. rules and the points scored were marked according to the latest tables published by that body. The events were keenly competed for by a large number of skiers and resulted in a win for John Collins, an Australian and late member of the Cambridge Olympic team at St. Moritz, who scored 355.99 points in the four events, with Thomas Lang, an English visitor, an Oxford University skier and member of the British Ski Club, etc., second with 322.01 points.

Since the Council formulated the Australian ski-ing tests according to British Ski Club rules instead of each club conducting their own tests the standard of ski-ing has much improved. A Jumping Test has also been included and this has encouraged the younger members to practice this much

neglected side of Australian ski-ing. Hitherto very little jumping was done and even now it is much below European and American standards, but a start has been made and we hope one day to be able to send a team to compete in some of your jumping events. The visit of our Secretary (The Ski Club of Australia), Dr. John Laidley to Switzerland last year has given a great impetus to this branch of the sport.

When one considers that most Australians have to travel hundreds of miles to reach the snow and most are able to spend less than a month on it each year it is surprising that the standard of Downhill, Slalom and Langlauf is as high as it is.

Our longest Langlauf is the Summit Competition, a distance of thirty-five miles, involving a climb of 3,000 feet. The record is 6 hours 9 minutes. As competitors usually have only ten to fourteen days on the snow before entering we must consider this a fair time for the distance and the nature of the country they are required to traverse.

This year the Ski Club of Australia spent the whole of its season at the new hotel and held its sporting events there, chief of which is the Pauss Cup presented by the late Norwegian Consul, Olaf Pauss. This was run in three sections under F.I.S. rules, Slalom, Langlauf and Downhill, and was won by Thomas Lang an experienced European skier and the winner of many racing events in Switzerland. The Downhill was the longest we have yet run being between two and three miles over a descent of about 1,500 feet. The course was windblown and difficult over steep non-stop country. Lang completed a no-fall descent in 4 minutes 10 seconds. It is interesting to compare his time with the next five Australian runners who had one or more falls:—A. O. Davy, 4 minutes 40 seconds; P. D. Braddon, 4 minutes 41 seconds; J. W. Laidley, 4 minutes 48 seconds; M. H. Thomas, 4 minutes 50 seconds; A. Moulden, 5 minutes 10 seconds.

Dr. Lennox Teece presented a cup for this section of the Pauss Cup and we consider it the best downhill race yet run in the Australian Alps.

I trust that this short and scrappy account has given you some idea of the country available and the standard of ski-ing existing in Australia at the present time. For twenty years I have watched the progress made from the old primitive Kiandra to the latest Norwegian and Swiss ski and bindings and have seen the stick riding abandoned for the Aarlberg-Murren style of running, watched the ever improving standard brought about by the introduction of the British Ski Club tests and Slalom racing and have come to the conclusion that Australian ski-ing is being conducted along the right lines and that the day is not far distant when we will be able to send a team abroad worthy of competing in international events.

Now that the Canada-Australia Steamship Companies are contemplating cutting down the journey between Vancouver and Sydney to two weeks it might be possible to arrange an interchange of visits in the near future. We can assure any visitors from your country a hearty welcome and good snow sport during the months of July and August.

Wishing you a most successful season. Ski Heil from Australian skiers to their Canadian brothers.

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## RECENT EUROPEAN SKI JUMPING RECORDS

Mr. Alex Keiller, President of the British Ski Jumping Club, kindly sends the following interesting information. In February, 1930, Hans Badrutt, a great Swiss jumper from St. Moritz, made in Italy an official standing jump of 74 metres (242.7 feet). Shortly after Fritz Kauffman of Grindlewald made a standing jump of 75 metres (246 feet) on the Neue Bolgenschanze at Davos, Switzerland. Less than a fortnight later a Norwegian (name unknown) jumped 80.5 metres (264.09 feet) at Chamonix, France. Our Canadian amateur record, unofficial, is the standing jump of Nels Nelsen, on the Revelstoke hill, 73.12 metres (240 feet).