

Club, is much to be desired, but is, I fear, far too Utopian at present.

The few first-class guides, every bit as fine as the crack European guides, are much booked-up in advance, and inexperienced strangers may be put into the hands of any odd man around the hotel irrespective of his knowledge of mountain-craft. This, of course, only applies to the very crowded and would-be European resorts; in the smaller places, especially those managed by past climbers, the consideration

and care of all types of party leaves nothing to be desired.

The mountains are the greatest playground and means of all-round physical development that a nation can have, and the powers that be should make it their duty to render them easily, cheaply, and safely accessible for every citizen. They have made the fortune of the nation in Austria and Switzerland, and there is no reason why they should not do so in New Zealand as well.

Observations on Girls' Competitive Ski-ing

By Alice MacFarlane

THE SKILL and the style of our Eastern Canadian girl skiers has improved remarkably during the last five years. This progress is due I think, mainly, to the competitive side of the sport and to the assistance and encouragement of a group of elder skiers.

To find more than a dozen girls who could even ski passably would have been a rather difficult task five years ago, today I am sure that there are several hundred. Of course the sport has grown tremendously and the equipment changed considerably. Long semi-racing skis and long poles, that occasionally gave you a black eye or knocked a few teeth out, were the vogue. Nowadays the short broader ski with metal edge and secure downhill harness and the light cane ski-pole that barely reaches your hip give you a feeling of control and unity of body and ski.

Around Montreal there are a group of about thirty girls who gather nearly every week at ski-meets during the winter. These competitions consist usually of a downhill and slalom race of a type harder than those of the high school boys, but slightly simpler than those of the highly trained collegians. I would emphasize that we have not had the advantage of coaching and training by ski professionals, as is the case in every other country, but have picked up whatever slim knowledge and skill we possess by daily observations, serious concentration and sheer determination. When the time comes that systematic coaching and training is available there will be still further improvement.

A good tip in downhill racing is to try and memorize the trail as you ascend so that when you close your eyes you are able to visualize every turn, twist or bump, and the best way to run the course. Use your own judgment and do not pay too much attention to the other competitors' ways and means of running the race.

Girls have a well-known tendency to sit down when they think they are travelling a little too quickly. There is no reason for this if you are skiing under proper control. When necessary to check your speed, try a few control turns (skis well edged into the side of the hill), but if you have lost control and are falling, a slide on one side to the slope of the hill will barely stop you and you are up and on your way again; whereas backward or forward falls take so much longer to regain your balance and often result in a bad shaking up that hinders you for the rest of the race. Be sure to have your knees well forward so that most of the weight is on the ball of the foot then you have an even distribution of weight that will give you good control.

Ski technique is what really shows in slalom racing. Here, too, it is necessary to study the flags carefully and when running the race keep your mind always on the pair ahead of you. The advice of a Swiss ski professional, a beautiful skier herself, is to concentrate, because after watching some of our girls race, she said that often they would lose the thread of their thought and it nearly always resulted in a fall or penalty.

Everyone who saw Miss Pembauer, the Austrian skier who won the Canadian Ladies Open Championships last winter, race will never forget her. So lithe, quick and graceful she seemed to fly down the hill, her body and skis in perfect rhythm, co-ordination and a finish that is lacking in most of us. We are still a long way from the expertness of the European skiers, but I think with more contact with these girls our own skiers will take a long stride forward as there are without doubt Canadian girls with courage, speed and a natural tendency to ski, who after coaching and training will become fine proficient skiers, and in the future Olympic Winter Games, Canada will be well to the fore.