

if they are someone's business and not someone's pleasure. We have all tried to persuade the Vested Interests to do something of this sort—I have, I know—but they have not been interested, or they have Passed the Buck. Maybe they are now more open to conviction.

In the matter of hotel accommodation, it is difficult not to be libellous. What I think of the small hotels and pubs in the Laurentians, despite genuinely fond memories of them, I dare not put into print. Suffice to say that the Swiss, from the smallest pension to the largest hotel knows how to make his guests comfortable, how to feed them well, and how to make them want to return. Moreover some of them have real Atmosphere: they are really Swiss; they are simple, inexpensive and genuine. In Canada we have an atmosphere, we could be ourselves and be more attractive for it; but there is tragically little attempt made to preserve local color where it exists.

Hotel accommodation I think is something the Canadian Amateur Ski Association and its member clubs could improve in the interests of skiers by a little systematic investigation and inspection; and by awarding published recommendation, that would have to be renewed from month to month, to those conforming to certain standards. This might well degenerate into a racket; but if it was handled con-

scientiously it might result in vast improvements in the standards of cleanliness, cuisine and general service of hotels and boarding houses catering to skiers. Automobile associations have done much this way; we might do likewise.

To recapitulate, then, some of the shiny Brass Tacks I selected in the Alps for Canadian inspection.

You can ski in Switzerland and be sure that transportation facilities will take you to the highest practicable point in the best skiterrain, and that you can get a lift home at the end of the run. You can learn to ski or to ski better and meet people in the ski schools; and you are assured of having good skiing and good fun unless you are a natural grouch. You know you will be looked after if you hurt yourself. You know you will be comfortable and get your money's worth whatever class of hotel you choose.

The national, regional, and community authorities, the transportation companies, the hotels, and the ski clubs all pull together to help you.

All this adds to the well-being of the skier and makes Switzerland a very attractive place. I submit many parts of our own Canada would be better for skiing if we were equally enterprising.



Ski-Heil Jerusalem

(Extract from a Letter of my Nephew Robin Fedden)

I'VE just got back to Cairo from my two-week winter vacation, quite the most interesting trip I have ever done. I left here for Jerusalem first of all. The old town and the mediaeval walls are lovely, but the wrangling sects and the atmosphere of mumbo-jumbo at the Holy Sepulchre are revolting. Nothing Christian about it. The countryside and the peasants, however, do give one the Biblical atmosphere. The shepherds, with their flocks, vineyards, olive trees on the Mount, bare hills, "the road from Jerusalem to Jericho," all these are unchanged. From Jerusalem I drove up with a friend via the Valley of Armageddon and Tyre and Sidon, a perfect mediaeval seaport, to Syria. At Tripoli, we turned inland, climbed 6,000 feet into the Lebanon, reached the Cedars (whence Solomon took wood for the Temple), and skied for a week in five feet of snow—a strange experience, with banana groves below and the Mediterranean shining in the distance. From the Cedar, we skied over into the Anti-Lebanon to Baalbeck, whose Roman temple was one of the Seven Wonders of the Classical World. It's still wonderful today—as large as the Egyptian

temples, it stands on the lowest spur of the mountains, and one gets perspectives of Corinthian pillars against snowy peaks. From there we went on to Crac-du-Chevalier, the largest of the Crusader Castles, in wonderful preservation; a town almost in size, it stands on a hilltop miles from anywhere, guarding the pass through to Homs, Damascus, and Baghdad. All this in the most marvelous really wild country where twenty years ago the people would as soon have slit your throat as said "Good Morning." They are wonderfully good looking, the Lebanese, a fine mountain type, exceedingly simple, and they treat you as an equal. Their costume is most extraordinary: expecting that the Messiah will be born next of man, they wear strange breeches with a sort of sack at the back to be ready each man for the divine eventuality. They speak an exceedingly odd Arabic of their own, but in nearly every village you find some old man now completely reverted to type, but who has spent fifteen years in America, and probably speaks with the broadest of accents. Altogether, it was a most unusual and interesting ski trip.