

lengthened, the snow became too soft and sticky on the lower reaches of the course. Unfortunately, on the two days previous to the race, it had been colder with consequent faster snow conditions, so that gates set on those days called for too much turning on flat slow stretches the day of the race.

Because the course setters went up the trail early in the morning on the fourth before it seemed apparent that the day would be warm, the flags on the lower flat sections were not weeded out to fit the new snow conditions; but this was the only cause for dissatisfaction that could be heard among the panting racers at the finish.

Thus, the first Giant Slalom actually took place—a well run race—and a reasonably good test of the idea. With this in mind, I would like to set forth a few of the more indirect problems which I, as a racer, feel will generally affect ski-ing if such races are used to replace the point-to-point downhill races of today in the interests of safety.

Stressing the value of safety should be watched very carefully, in that I think progress in ski-ing depends on a certain amount of initiative in the races. Five years ago, race courses considered safe and easy today would have been deplored as difficult and dangerous. If the type of controls used in the race on April 4 become a feature of practically all the races run during the year and replace most of the straight races where initiative and a certain amount of "ski-ing beyond oneself" are necessary, American skiers will cease to progress as rapidly toward the European degree of perfection as they have—may cease altogether. It seems to me that racers may become technically very good skiers, but fail to recognize not only the possibilities of the course, but their own possibilities for development, because of the limits which someone else has set. That someone else, or those who set courses, may very soon become outdated in their ideas and necessarily feel concerned for the racers' safety.

A few years ago, two minutes and fifty seconds for the Taft Trail, or a schuss the bottom two-thirds of the Head Wall, would have seemed foolhardy. Today, the better U.S. skiers think nothing of it and are qualified performers in such runs. If, in all races for the last few years, controls had made such speed and gumption in attempting these records impossible, I believe very few skiers would have learned to ski as fast as they do today and enjoy it with safety.

After all, downhill racing is a sport which, because of its very character, is dangerous to the participants. By attempting to make arbitrary rules for those who do not like the idea of endangering themselves, one penalizes the very ability of those who race. A foolhardy racer sometimes wins a race safely and often does not either win or come in safe, but such fools very soon learn that the chances are poor, and that the penalty is not worth the goal.

Skiers, like all sportsmen, do not attempt more and more difficult things except under strain of competition, whether in an organized race, or just in competition with a friend. One of the greatest means of producing ski-ing progress is through the emulation of the best racers. The reason that faster and faster times are made every year is because someone finally dares to ski a little straighter than his predecessor. If he succeeds, his route is generally adopted, and ski-ing ability goes up another notch. If he fails because of his inability or the impossibility of his route, ski-ing ability is not retarded but finds another place to improve itself.

If we are to have controlled downhill races in the interests of safety, let them be what the name implies—controls in dangerous areas where foolhardy speed might bring a penalty far beyond the importance of the race. If we are to have slaloms as long as downhill races, let it be remembered that they are purely and simply overgrown slaloms. They cannot in any way replace the downhill race or the benefits which it produces to the growth of ski-ing ability.

### *New Developments at Morin Heights*

**U**NDER the sponsorship of the Municipality Association of Morin Heights, "The Alouette Ski Club" has been formed, around which future local ski activities will centre. During the summer a large amount of development work has been done under the direction of Herman Johannsen. This comprises a sporty half-mile downhill run with a drop of five hundred feet on the eastern slope of Hurtubise Mountain. At the foot of this is a good beginner's jump, and adjoining a practice and slalom hill one thousand feet long and two hundred feet wide. Numerous trails have been cut and marked, all sufficiently varied to be of

interest to all classes of skiers. Many of these trails connect Morin Heights with most of the ski centres in this part of the Laurentians, and all of them commence practically from the heart of the village.

There is every assurance that a ski tow will be installed to make less laborious the access to the downhill course, practice hill and upper level trails. An innovation in the formation of a Ski Guides Corps will be undertaken to provide instruction for the village youth, stimulation of their interest in competitive ski-ing, and the proper maintenance of the district's ski-ing facilities.