

## Douglas MacKay

**A**N OBITUARY, Douglas MacKay would probably have dryly remarked, is rather useless publicity. Indeed, as I write I think he is likely to drop in anytime and make some crack about "not getting sentimental." At his funeral he had wished for no flowers or service.

Writing about Douglas after his death is difficult. He didn't like obituaries and usually kept them out of his distinguished magazine, "The Beaver." That he happened to be killed in an aeroplane crash last January would seem to him to put a definite "Thirty" to his running-copy on life. He had a newspaperman's sardonic humor and, regarding himself, would jeer at any attempt to praise him afterwards.

But he was one who loved skiing and everything it implied, who used his influence to help it in many vital ways; and whose tragic death leaves a sense of emptiness in the hearts of many Canadian skiers. Consequently, however he might object, the "Year Book" must recall him.

He was a grand person and our sport has suffered by his death. He will be remembered at the Canadian Championships at Banff, in Switzerland where the Canadian team wore the blanket coats for which his company is famous, and in the valley where they ski south of Winnipeg and where his own youngsters were getting their ski legs, and in the Laurentians from Montebello to St. Margarets, where there are skiers who have benefitted by the events he has assisted.

From the many things that have been written about him certain fragments seem to us outstanding: ". . . the genius for friendship and the time for a thousand unremembered acts of kindness—acts along with his ready wit and the sturdy independence of his opinions will now be treasured memories among his wide circle of friends . . . a tragedy that so promising a career should be so suddenly cut short . . ."

We think of him as a skier, a dear friend we have had on the trail and with whom we have talked ski shop in camp in the autumn, a silhouette against the sun in one of the best ski photographs taken in Canada in some time. But of course skiing was just one part of him, though perhaps the happiest.

He was a first class newspaperman, had served the Canadian Press in the Gallery at Ottawa, had written one of the best books on northern history and the background of his



company ever produced in Canada, had risen to distinguished executive heights in being progressively director of publicity of the Canada Steamship Lines, of the Seignior Club, and of the Hudson Bay Company.

He was going places. Hollywood had bartered for the film rights of his book on pioneer days of the Hudson Bay Company and he was "getting a tremendous kick" as he put it, out of his visits there. The best brains of the movie industry impressed him, but its antics he found amusing. He had served his community on school boards, and if he had time to go more into public life he would have been a power for much good.

He was happy and successful. He had married a girl as capable as himself as a journalist and writer, and he had three sturdy, charming children. He was a real man.

But so life goes. The true, rounded-out people in this world are few, and the mortality among them is high. It's hard to write about them when they die, impossible to express the depth of our sympathy to those they loved. Far better to write the newspaperman's Finish that Doug would want, and let it go at that: "Thirty."  
BRIAN MEREDITH