

experts, with the mistaken idea that what is best for the Class A competitor must also be best for the beginner. The extremely stiff boots, rigid bindings and heavy skis used in downhill and slalom racing have broken more ankles for "pleasure" skiers than they have ever won races for experts. Reports of Brigade men who have bound sprains and splinted fractures at every ski tow in the Laurentians mark "downpull" as the danger point to the skier of average ability.

Complete organization for the prevention and care of accidents will of necessity be a gradual process but a start has been made with the first aid posts operated by the St. John Ambulance Brigade which have been increased in number as conditions made it necessary. A special committee was formed in the Zone last year to organize this work and more particularly to finance it. A campaign for funds through the sale of badges to skiers was a complete success and the money raised in this way was sufficient to pay all expenses of the season's work and leave a balance which has been put into equipment. Ambulance sleds will replace makeshift toboggans and handsleighs at half a dozen points this winter and arrangements have been made, with the co-operation of Mr. Victor Nymark, for a permanent first aid station at a location central to the three tows at St. Sauveur. The building will have accommodation for three "stretcher-cases" and with the new ambulance equipment will obviate much of the handling that was a serious problem in other years.

The complete ambulance unit comprises a snow-proof sled enclosing a standard removable stretcher with full length cushion and blankets, all housed in a shelter to protect it from the weather. The sled itself is a toboggan with a rigid frame and small hardwood runners to prevent side slipping. It has a brake attachment suitable for either packed or loose snow and fittings for as many traces as may be necessary for it to be pulled without the workers having to remove their skis. For the present this equipment will be placed only at the principal ski centres but additional units will be added as funds permit. The complete unit, including shelter, represents an outlay of approximately one hundred dollars.

A campaign for funds similar to that put on last year will get under way as soon as the season opens and the First Aid Committee foresees no difficulties that cannot be overcome by a certain amount of work, in raising the \$1,250 that will again be the objective. This amount will cover the expenses of operating the first aid posts for the season and will leave a surplus for the purchase of additional

equipment. Within three years we should have completely equipped first aid posts at all the ski tows, downhill race trails and practice slopes—wherever skiers gather in large numbers.

The next step will be to place ambulance sleds and first aid equipment at strategic points on the cross-country trails and to arrange telephone communications so that an ambulance sled may be brought to the scene of an accident at any point on the skier's map within a reasonably short time. We may even look a little farther ahead and see patrols covering the big slopes and the trails, using telephone or visual signals from hilltop to hilltop.

Most of the foregoing is concerned with the care of accidents, but there is as much or more to be done in education for accident prevention. The ski schools have already made great strides and anyone who learns the fundamentals properly, and a little caution with them, is unlikely to get into trouble.

Downhill courses and cross-country trails are being improved year by year as turns are widened and brush and obstacles removed. These improvements and the development of technique have already resulted in a marked decrease in the number of accidents to skiers in competition. It is only when the demand of the steep and twisting downhill course for skilful control at every turn and pitch is mistaken for a challenge to blast the course wide open that rush calls go out for the nearest Brigade member.

There is no better way for a skier who has learned the essential turns to gain control than by constant practice on the slalom courses. Several ski clubs have greatly raised the standard, not only of their own members but of unattached skiers who use the same slopes, by setting out practice slalom courses every weekend. Many a skier who was beginning to have a dangerous opinion of his proficiency after a few successful swooping rushes down Hill 70 is considerably taken aback when he tries the slalom course to find that his control is practically non-existent at speeds in excess of five miles an hour. Running a course in full control whether the time be fast or slow brings a satisfaction and an exhilaration at least equal to the hair-raising thrill of charging down the slope wide open and with a fine disregard for the climbers. Who would compare the pleasure of the swift downrun followed by even the neatest and least painful of purlers to the smooth flowing sweep of linked turns?

When we are all willing to test our ability and to accept our limitations in the art of skiing as the point from which to begin improvement, we shall begin to see a steady decrease in the number and severity of accidents.

The Alpine Inn at St. Margarets, one of the oldest and most popular all-year resorts in the Laurentians, burned to the ground in November. Rebuilding started immediately and a newer and larger Inn will be ready early this season.