



Photo: G. Morris Taylor

Ski School for members of the Alpine Club ski camp, Tonquin Valley, Jasper Park

Ski-ing in Central Alberta

By Douglas A. Arbuckle

IN THE central section of Alberta, running from east to west, ski-ing is confined mainly to three districts—the Edmonton area, the Camrose district, and the mountainous Jasper region to the west. Edmonton, being the most populous district, has naturally the largest ski fraternity. The city, straddling the wide Saskatchewan valley, is most happily situated from the skier's viewpoint. Here we may find a ski terrain that is only to be excelled in the mountains to the west.

The growth of ski-ing in Edmonton has been amazing. Some six years ago one might see the odd skier wending his way along the river bank, but if one happened to be seen in the downtown section of the city people would stare as at some peculiar freak. Now, on Sundays and holidays, the river banks are black with thousands of skiers, young and old, and in the central part of the city no one gives a second glance (except probably to the feminine members of the various ski clubs).

A few years ago ski-ing in Edmonton meant fastening one's feet through a leather thong attached to two pieces of wood called skis and trying to maintain one's balance while sliding down a hill in whatever direction the skis decided to go. Now, however, such terms as

gelandesprung, vorlage, christianas, stems, snow-plows, etc., are common language on every skier's lips. The skier's time is now spent not in a wild uncontrolled ride, but in the perfection of his technique so that at all times he is under perfect control.

Tournaments are now held regularly and last winter Edmonton saw several of Canada's expert skiers in action, among whom we might mention Peter Vajda, former Swiss expert, and Chet Edwards and Stan Ward, both of Banff. Enthusiasm is maintained at a high pitch within the various clubs by having club competitions, outdoor get-togethers, etc.

A few of the larger clubs in the city are the Edmonton Ski Club, the Voyageurs Ski Club, the Eskimo Ski Club, the University Ski Club and the South Side High Ski Club. Jumping has its large number of enthusiasts too, and on Connor's Hill, in south Edmonton, we find one of the few flood-lighted ski jumps in the Dominion. Here, on a dark night, one may thrill as skiers come hurtling out of, and then back into, the inky darkness, carrying with them blazing fireworks.

Edmonton was, I believe, the first city in Canada to conduct a city-wide instruction in the fundamentals of ski-ing—a campaign initi-

ated and carried out by the Edmonton Journal, with Reg. Rault, ski professional, acting as chief instructor. This campaign has met with great success, and last year over six hundred children, between the ages of eight and fourteen, were given instruction in ski-ing technique. At the end of the season a tournament was held, and the proud young winners in the slalom, cross-country, and downhill events were presented with their ribbons and badges. In this way the standard of ski-ing in Edmonton is bound to rise sharply within a few years. Adults, too, are given the chance to receive expert instruction, and at least several hundred must have availed themselves of the opportunity last winter.

South-east of Edmonton lies a small but

bustling town—Camrose and there the descendants of the Swedish and Norwegian settlers have kept alive the sport of their forefathers. Camrose is interested mostly in cross-country and jumping, and it is in these two branches of ski-ing that residents of this region are most proficient. Many of Alberta's premier jumpers and racers hail from the Camrose District.

The towering ramparts of the Rockies are first sighted some one hundred and forty miles west from Edmonton, but the traveller must continue his journey for eighty miles before he reaches the mecca of North-Western sportsmen—Jasper. This beautiful little town has long been renowned as a summer mountain playground, but its winter potentialities are just beginning to be realized.

Jasper has always offered wonderful ski-ing in the high country, above timber line; but up to three years ago, when the Jasper Park Ski Club was formed, there were not the necessary trails to reach this ski country easily. Three years ago the Jasper Park Ski Club started clearing the north slope of Whistler Mountain and the first year's activities netted a practice slope and slalom hill 2,000 feet long. The second year netted the club a downhill run of two miles in length with a vertical drop of 2,200 feet. This year the club, with the assistance of Peter Vajda, have laid out and completed the only ski run in Canada which meets FIS standards. The work of clearing this run was done by the National Forestry Program Youth's Training Camps. This run is three miles long with a vertical drop of 4,600 feet; descending from the summit, the first mile of the course takes you through open country above tree line; the lower two miles are a series of open meadows and trails averaging 100 feet in width. The present practice slope and slalom hill have been widened to 600 feet, 2,000 feet long, with a vertical drop of 650 feet. This new trail makes it possible for the skier to enter the high country directly behind the Whistler Range, which extends some twenty or thirty miles through the Alplands into the Tonquin Valley. This Jasper Park Ski Club has an over-night cabin

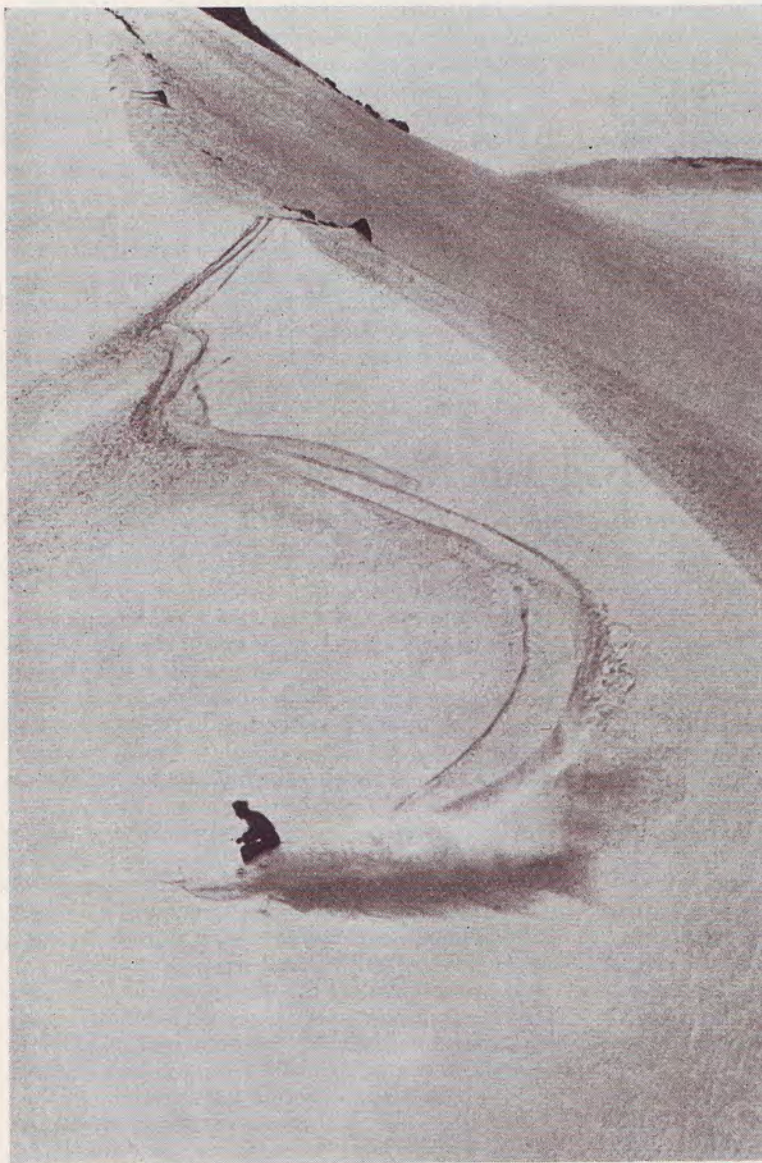


Photo: G. Morris Taylor

The moraine bordering Frasier Glacier, Tonquin Valley, provides slopes for the most daring

halfway up the downhill course and another cabin in Whistler Creek basin, directly behind Whistler Mountain.

The area opened up by the development on Whistler offers wonderful ski terrain, with runs with a 2,000-foot vertical drop. The Tonquin Valley offers unexcelled ski-ing conditions. The Alpine Club of Canada have a ski hut there. The Maligne Lake country offers the tourist skier a trip of more than 70 miles through the Alps and this country is well supplied with ski chalets at intervals, operated by Fred Brewster, Ltd. and the Maligne Lake Ski Club. Summer ski-ing is also available on the glaciers on the Maligne Lake Mountains. The Columbia Icefields offer wonderful ski-ing for twelve months of the year with a Chalet operated by the Brewster Transport Co.

This summer, while the Youth Trainees were busy clearing the runs, the club members constructed a ski cabin at the half-way mark on the downhill run. The camp in Whistler Creek basin was enlarged and improved. The executives of the club were busy working with Peter Vajda planning this new run.

The Jasper Park Ski Club made plans for the first summer ski race to be held in Canada, on the slopes of Mount Athabasca at the Columbia Icefields. This meet was cancelled on account of the war in Europe. If conditions will permit, this meet will be staged during the summer of 1940, during the first week in July. Even though

the meet was cancelled, more than fifty skiers drove up from Edmonton, and with a good representation from Jasper, Edson and Banff Ski Clubs enjoyed the ski-ing on the glacier, and a banquet was held in the evening.

The developments on Whistler Mountain were so rapid during the last three years, that some 500 to 600 skiers can now be accommodated on the practice slopes and runs. Plans are being made in Edmonton to run ski trains this winter. The Jasper Park Ski Club executive are planning on building a ski tow on the practice slope to be completed in the near future.

A closed tournament for Jasper skiers only is held annually for the Creelman-McNicholl and J. A. Wood trophies. Later on there will be the Jasper, Edson and Blue River meet; also Zone competitions during the winter, and we hope to be able to hold the Dominion Championships here in the very near future.

The future plans of development call for six more downhill runs on Whistler; a cabin site on Macarrib Pass; a road from Jasper village to Whistler Creek basin; ski tow from the end of the road to the summit of Whistler Mountain, which will enable the skier to make a complete traverse of the Whistler Range; a chalet is also to be built in Whistler Creek basin. A race could also be run from Indian Ridge, giving a vertical drop of 5,700 feet, which would be the largest in the world with the exception of the 6,000-foot Parsen course at Davos, Switzerland.

Hostelling on Skis

By Phil Tyas, National Secretary, Canadian Youth Hostels Association

SKI TIME is Hostel time because the facilities provided by the Canadian Youth Hostels Association tie in so closely with the fun of ski-ing.

Youth Hostels were established to encourage young people to get out and about in the great outdoors—to go hiking and biking in the warmer months and ski-ing in the winter. When locating hostel sites attention is always given to insure that the picturesque kiking country for summer time shall also provide suitable ski runs when the snow falls.

Canadian Youth Hostels are now firmly established in regions across Canada. Nova Scotia is well away with a loop through the Annapolis Valley which stretches out to the chain through New Brunswick. The Monteregian Trail running south from Montreal through the picturesque villages of the Eastern Townships links up with the American Hostels in the State of Vermont, and makes the marvellous Green and White Mountains ski-ing districts of New England within easy reach of Canadian enthusiasts. Another chain runs north to the Laurentians through Shawbridge as far as Lac Mercier where great ski-ing developments have taken place

recently and a ski lift on Mont Tremblant is to be open this year.

In Ontario too, full advantage is taken of the ski trails with hostels at Summit, the ever popular Glenville, and for this season a new hostel is being opened at Chalk Lake right in the heart of the Dagmar Ski district. The hostels are not confined to Toronto vicinity alone, for they stretch up through Muskoka and as far as North Bay.

The hardy soul who ventures further afield will find hostels inviting him to the skiers' paradise of Banff and all the famous foothill country of the Rockies, and a chain of excellent hostels on the other side of the mountains runs down to the Pacific coast.

Accommodation at the Canadian Youth Hostels is always clean, comfortable and well supervised. The rules of membership are few and simple, and are based on self-service and consideration for others. Charges are within the reach of all; the standard twenty-five cent overnight fee and twenty-five cent meals do not overtax even the slimmest pocket-book. For those who choose to carry their own lunch cooking facilities are provided.