

right in front of the charming log-constructed Lodge. After a few enjoyable days there we went on fifty miles to Lake Louise where, ten miles from the station is Skoki Lodge, our home for the next five weeks. Farther from civilization than is many an Alpine resort it yet offered us the same comforts and luxuries of a city hotel. Electric lights, showers, open fireplaces and excellent food, all helped us to "rough it" while we waited for the perfect, clear sunshiny weather which colour movies demand. But even the cloudy days were pleasant when we went out on location to explore different points like Ptarmig and Douglas Glaciers.

During all this time my ideas of Canadian mountains were changing, but comparisons with what I had known in Europe were inevitable. In the Alps, where I'd skied every winter for more than eighteen years, there are no dense woods, and we usually skied in the space between the timber line and the glaciers. Inhabited, as they've been, for hundreds of years, one cannot go far in that country without encountering small peasant huts or ski-lodges.

The Canadian Rockies were not like this, or any ski-country that I had ever known. In a territory seventy times as large as Switzerland, there are practically no houses excepting those occupied by game wardens. The woods are full of game, which one no longer sees in middle Europe. The timber line goes up to the eternal ice. At Skoki we got the best ski-ing on the glaciers and their morains, marvellously long and, for the most part, easy running. The solitude and vastness of the country was somewhat overwhelming, and ski-ing there, I found, was more a matter of mountaineering and exploring than it was in Europe. The absence of the ski-tows in the Rockies gave me more uphill climbing than during any previous season, and I found it the best training period I had ever had.

When the picture was finished we turned back to the east, only to find that the snow had completely disappeared. But I am looking forward now to my second winter in this happy country, so far from Europe and the dark clouds hovering over it.

## Our Lady of the Snows

*By J. Ross Larway*

IN THE not very distant past one of the greatest of our modern English poets, much to our annoyance, called Canada "Our Lady of the Snows." For years afterwards this worthy gentleman was severely criticized for his tactless remark in drawing undue attention to our old-fashioned Canadian winter, which of course was never mentioned by the more discreet when pointing out our national attractions to strangers. But all this has been changed, and changed largely by the sport of ski-ing which has swept the world since the Great War. In Canada it was not until about 1925 that ski-ing began to gather momentum, yet it is now to some extent at least participated in, revelled in would be nearer the mark, from coast to coast. And from this has come the odd, and delightful, result that several of our Provincial Governments and our two main railways, to say nothing of many private organizations, are spending considerable sums of money each year telling the world, and particularly the great nation to our south, that Canada is "Our Lady of the Snows." And so, after all, Hurrah for Mr. Kipling!—if we're a little tardy with our praise, he possibly was a little premature with his tribute.

Having thus begun our subject with the chilly moderation becoming a sportsman, we go

further and venture the prediction that ski-ing is having and will continue to have a tremendous influence on the life and outlook of our nation. To back this statement up, we would ask you to notice the difference in your friends before and after they take up ski-ing. In Canada we are fortunate, or unfortunate, enough (depending on whether you ski or not) to live in a land that enjoys a reasonably secure winter season over most of its area—quite secure, indeed, as you approach the North Pole and its adjacent Arctic Circle. (We add this latter for the benefit of such of our American cousins who think that they cannot safely cross even our southern boundary without an ice-pick and a dog-sleigh). Therefore, once upon a time, since most of us were unable to depart when winter arrived for a sojourn in some warmer country, we could but face the long cold months with fear and dread, and pray that next season something would have happened to soften the heart of our banker and open the gates of the South for us. But now that we've started ski-ing, our whole attitude has changed. The first snowflake is impatiently waited for and treated with-reverence; and once the ground is fairly covered we don't care a snap of our fingers whether our banker has even the semblance of a heart, or the South any gates at

all. Winter becomes far too short, and each thaw is a major disaster. A feeling of sympathy develops in our bosom for those poor unfortunate people who are forced to dwell in a land of perpetual sunshine and no ski-ing.

The thought, therefore, behind these remarks is simply this. Since we are fortunate enough to live in a country that has hills spread over most of its area, and snow at due times over these, why not take advantage of such a heritage and enjoy it to the full? As more and more people ski, and reap the many benefits of this splendid outdoor sport, it can not but have a powerful effect on our national life and tend to produce a stronger and happier race. It has been said that ski-ing, so new to us and so ancient to Norway and other lands, is more than a sport; like cricket for the English, it is a way of life, and gives us a new aspect and a broader feeling toward the world at large. To sit comfortable, not to say huddled up, by the blazing logs of a friendly hearth is all very well in a novel, but for real existence give us powdered snow, a pair of skis, and a constitution capable of enjoying a tumble or two—just to show us how to take the upsets of life in general.

Another angle to this noble sport that concerns all Canadians is its value in attracting visitors to us from near and far during the fleeting months of our glorious winter. This is of such practical importance; for our present tourist business, a very substantial source of both income and interest, was unfortunately till lately very unbalanced in that it took place mainly during the summer and all but disappeared in the winter. But with the continued growth of ski-ing, our winter tourist business is already rapidly expanding. This is particularly so in the Province of Quebec, which was the first to realize its importance and to encourage its development. In that Province it has made great progress, especially in the Laurentians Mountains north of Montreal, where it now exceeds the summer tourist traffic. At first the development was largely brought about by a few of the local ski clubs; then some of the shrewder owners of the innumerable summer resorts that are the delight of the continent began to see increased revenues ahead of them, and set out to improve their winter accommodation and to add to the ski-ing facilities around them. As these things had their effect, and the ski traffic increased, the railways became interested and made considerable efforts to advertise the area and improve their train service. By this time the number of skiers had so increased that the Provincial Government, which like all governments has a genius for not sleeping for ever, woke up and started both to develop the country for ski-ing and to make it better known. The result in this particular instance is that visitors from all over Eastern Canada

and the United States now travel to the Laurentians to ski and to enjoy all those other sports that our Canadian winters have to offer. It is said, and like good skiers we believe everything we hear, that on a single week-end over ten thousand skiers will take the trains out of Montreal to taste of heaven in the hills.

Largely owing to the success achieved in Quebec, several of our other Provincial Governments are becoming aware of the fact that there is gold in our snow-covered hills and wealth in our life-giving air; and they are eagerly seeking for ways and means to mine these treasures for the good of all. But there is still a long way to go, and especially is it high time our Dominion Government set itself to take stock of such things, notably of the ski-ing possibilities in its National Parks and elsewhere, and started in on a plan for developing them to the full and attracting to them the attention of that outside world which the aeroplane is bringing closer and closer to our borders. Some definite plan of this sort by our main Government is long overdue because, with a few exceptions, the pioneer work in making Canada known internationally as a ski-ing country has been left on the one hand to the Canadian Amateur Ski Association and its ever increasing member clubs, and on the other hand, as we have already said, to several of our Provincial Governments, our two great railway systems, and individual enterprise. But all this is not enough; for we must insist once more that the help of both the Dominion Government and the remaining Provincial Governments is greatly and urgently needed if we are to do even the scantiest justice to our amazing ski-ing possibilities. The Canadian Rockies, to name but one district, are second to none for Alpine ski-ing, and if wisely and adequately developed would attract skiers to us from all parts of the world. This would mean a huge return on any investment the Government might choose to make. It is reliably estimated that last year on this continent alone more than \$25,000,000 was spent by skiers—including, of course, such things as hotel accommodation and transportation. That is a large sum of money, so why should not we in Canada try to get our share?—the more especially as it is a mere beginning, the end of which none can even guess.

One of the great advantages of ski-ing is that it is, in the main, a sport that is participated in by the many and watched by the few; in a word, it is truly amateur, being very similar in that respect to golf and tennis, or, if you like, to fishing and shooting. This is all to the good, for it is much better for a nation to enjoy a sport than to watch one. Furthermore it naturally gives a much wider field from which to attract visitors.

We are sorry if in the above we have talked too much of making known our national advan-

tages and the especially splendour of our winters. But it is an age of advertising, and he that hides his light under a bushel will never add greatly to others' happiness or to his own bank account; indeed, he may land up in the humiliating position of being unduly conspicuous through never having had his picture on the front page of the papers. From all which may the saints preserve our fair and modest land.

Now that science has been so successful in coaxing skating and hockey indoors, and badminton and racquets must be played during the winter under similar conditions, do not such sports as tobogganing and snow-shoeing deserve some assistance of a more general kind in their brave endeavour to keep our people out of doors at this most vigorous season of our year? And as a national outdoor winter sport for Canadians what can rival skiing? Can not

a child enjoy it on any neighbouring slope, and an expert go a thousand miles to taste it in its perfection and be twice paid? Is it not open to rich and poor, young and old, the skilful and the unskilful? Has not nature herself ordained that it should be our great outdoor winter sport?

May we not conclude, therefore, that every Canadian should do his best to help along this new sport? And would we err greatly if we were to add that a few will easily find any better or more practical way of doing this than by earnestly supporting their local ski club, and through it the Canadian Amateur Ski Association which has worked so hard to further the sport in all its branches? If we all do our part then, to return to the point from which we started, Canada may truly become—at due seasons of course—"Our Lady of the Snows," and that which once annoyed may in the end afford us one of our proudest titles.

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**GROUP OF OFFICIALS AT ANNUAL MEETING C.A.S.A.  
MONTREAL, MAY 28, 1939**



Photo: Frank Schofield

*Standing Left to Right—*

Victor Gagne, *Chairman Laurentian Ski Zone.*  
H. Smith-Johannsen, *Vice-Chairman Technical Board.*  
Harry Wade Hicks of *Lake Placid and Chairman of Cross-Country Racing in U.S.E.A.S.A.*  
Fred A. Hall, *President C.A.S.A.*

Roger Langley, *President National Ski Association of America.*  
Sigurd Lockeberg, *Chairman Technical Board.*  
Roy Herbert, *Chairman Ontario Ski Zone.*  
Paul Desilets, *Vice-Pres. C.A.S.A. (Eastern Division).*

*Sitting Left to Right—*

Harry Pangman, *Vice-Pres. C.A.S.A. (Eastern Division).*

J. Ross Larway, *Hon. Secretary-Treasurer C.A.S.A.*

Albert Laliberte, *Vice-President C.A.S.A. (Eastern Division).*