

## Friends of Kosciusko

The name of Sir Joseph Carruthers is inseparably linked with ski-running in Australia. Not that he is a ski-runner. I do not think he has ever had a ski on in his life—nor do I think he has ever made a trip to the snow country in winter. But, being entirely uninterested personally in the sport, he yet had enough sympathy and far-sighted vision, when Premier of N.S.W. in the first decade of this century, to smile with fatherly approval upon schemes for the opening up of the Kosciusko country which, at that time, were almost universally regarded as fantastic extravagances doomed to ignominious failure.

I do not know that I have ever met a man so careless of ignorant criticism as Sir Joseph, nor so serenely capable of pursuing uninterruptedly a set course in spite of bickering and opposition. Having made up his mind that the opening up of the Kosciusko district was a good thing for New South Wales and so for Australia, he went straight ahead, and let neither opposition, ridicule, nor expense deter him. He built the road from Jindabyne to the Summit, and erected the Hotel Kosciusko, and made various other improvements in the surrounding country such as the provision of that delightful little fishing box The Creel at Thredbo, which was really the forerunner of all the tourist accommodation at Kosciusko. In this work Sir Joseph had an able and enthusiastic helper in the late Colonel Vernon, then Government Architect, one of the greatest public officials who ever served Australia. How well Sir Joseph has been justified by history! What was to be a ludicrous white elephant has proved not only a most profitable undertaking for the State, but also a valuable asset for Australia. Had the country's destinies remained in the capable hands of Sir Joseph Carruthers it would be even more profitable still. For the time has long passed when a second hotel should have been built at Kosciusko and more generous services provided to cater to the wants of the ever-growing tide of winter sports enthusiasts. As it is to-day, more people are turned away during the snow season than can be accommodated, and a second and even a third hotel would very soon find their accommodation taxed in the same way. But men like Sir Joseph Carruthers are hard to find.

As Premier of New South Wales he left an indelible mark, and future historians will have little difficulty in placing him in a niche as one of Australia's greatest public administrators. I am glad to say that he still enjoys good and vigorous health, and as I write these lines is on his way to Honolulu to represent the Commonwealth at

the Captain Cook celebrations on Hawaii. Here I have no doubt he will foregather with my old friend Alexander Hume Ford, one of the world's noted men, an unselfish international worker of great repute. Ford is an old friend of Kosciusko, and it will be remembered by ski-runners that the run above the Kerry and the Grand Slam courses at the Hotel Kosciusko, leading to the Gates of Heaven, was cleared at his suggestion, and named in his honor the Alexander Ford Glissade. It is interesting to recall in connection with these two famous men that another celebrity was connected with Kosciusko in the person of



A SNOW SCENE NEAR THE HOTEL KOSCIUSKO.

Lord Chelmsford, then Governor of New South Wales and afterwards Viceroy of India. It was Lord Chelmsford who opened the hotel in 1909.

I suppose one could go on indefinitely adding to the gallery of friends of Kosciusko. But one name must not be omitted. George Bell, now gathered to his fathers, was one of the first members of the Kiandra parties, and when we transferred to Kosciusko he was ever in the van. He was one of the most industrious of men. His work had injured him to long hours, lack of comfort and disappointment, and had bred in him a supreme contempt for all the little irritations that so often dominate the temperament of weaker beings. George

Bell was a press photographer; but he was much more than that. He was a photographer in his own right, and so vivid was his personality and so unselfish and sterling his character, that he was a welcome guest in every quarter of N.S.W. where he was known, and that embraces practically the whole of it. He will be well remembered by Sam Hordern, Reg. Todman, Charley Bennett, and the rest of the happy band who made the second tour into Kiandra in 1906. Tom Scott, a well known Australian sport and a good fellow, who was universally liked, was with this party. He died at Galston a few weeks ago. Though George Bell was never an accomplished skier he



Snow lies deep on the summit road all winter. The spring sun dissolves most of it; but on some sidings it remains deep and immovable until attacked by the shovels of the road staff. This illustration shows a cutting through the snow made in early summer to open the road to the summit.

took to the sport like a duck to water, and many a weary trek he has made through bad snow laden down with heavy cameras and boxes of plates. Oft-times have I been pressed into the service of carrying some of the boxes of plates, and have cursed photography and all its works. Yet in spite of all the hard work and unaccustomed conditions, George Bell never failed us on the snow, and his pictorial record played a very important part in popularising the sport and incidentally the tourist district of Kosciusko. Although his work was

never adequately recognised, officially, it stands as a monument to him, and enshrined in the memory of all ski-runners who knew him is a grateful picture of one of the most obliging, good-tempered and hard-working companions of the tour and a good fellow in any situation and any company.

C. D. Paterson must also have a place in this gallery. He was head of the Tourist Bureau for years while the development of the Kosciusko skiing fields was in its infancy. He remained long enough to see their successful establishment. Now he pursues other activities, and is not seen so often on the snow as we would like. His breezy optimism, plucky outlook and indomitable good temper in face of devastating irritations have endeared him to thousands of friends, and these qualities which make him a popular personality played no little part in making the Kosciusko venture the success it is. There were times when the outlook was very bleak, and, though it seems difficult to imagine now that the enterprise was ever in jeopardy, there were occasions when it required all the pluck and energy of stalwarts like Charles Paterson to see it through. I have been out with Charles in bad weather on the Main Divide and would not ask for a better companion in a tight place. In addition to many other activities, he is president of the Surf Life Saving Association, and has done some splendid work for that most commendable organisation. Just now he is away with his popular wife, on a visit to Honolulu, to attend a Pan-Pacific Congress organised by our friend, Alexander Hume Ford.

And there are many others who could be classed in the category of good friends of Kosciusko. If they do not see their names mentioned here they must not think that either they or their services are unappreciated or forgotten. Just a few who stand out for special reasons have been touched upon; but the list could be extended to such length that it would soon be beyond the purpose of this publication. To all our good friends, named and unnamed, the Ski Year Book extends its greetings.

—Percy Hunter.

“The British Ski Year Book” is a veritable treasure store of interesting information regarding skiing in all its phases. Its Editor, Arnold Lunn, is not only an undoubted authority whose word establishes the law, but, like Ithuriel with his spear, he touches lightly and makes any story he tells entrancing. The “Year Book” is the best ten shillings worth we have seen for a long time, and all our ski-runners should get it.