

Ski-ing in Australia

IMPRESSIONS OF A VISITOR.

By T. F. U. Lang.

The main ski-ing centres lie in the States of New South Wales and Victoria, and are situated on the Great Dividing Range, which runs along the east coast of Australia. The ski-ing centres lie within an area of one hundred miles, but are not connected to each other. In Victoria, and close to Melbourne, is the first ski-ing ground, Mount Donna Buang, 4,080 feet high, and only sixty miles from the centre of the city. There is no touring to be done here, and the only ski-ing ground is a slope 150 yards long and a chain wide, cut out of the timber. The steepest point is only 21 deg. This run is used as a practice ground by skiers during the week-ends, and, of course, only when there is a good covering of snow. It is an excellent place for practising, but it will never develop into anything else. The country in the neighbourhood is too thickly timbered to justify the expense of cutting down trees to form ski-runs. Lake Mountain, another resort nearby, is also being developed. At the present moment the country is covered with close-growing trees and thick undergrowth, and this resort will also never become good ski-ing terrain, as its area is too small, and the whole district is very flat.

Buffalo Plateau, 4,440 feet, and about two hundred miles from Melbourne, with an area of about 80 square miles, is a resort run by the Government of Victoria, and they have built a large Hotel to accommodate the tourists who go there throughout the year. The country is rather disappointing from a ski-ing point of view, as the runs are all too short and not steep. Mount Buffalo is almost entirely below the tree-line, with the result that nearly all the ski-ing has been made possible by the clearing of timber. Australian timber grows very closely, and ski-ing is extremely difficult in uncleared country. Towards the Horn, 5,645 feet, the highest point of the Buffalo Plateau, the country is above the tree-line, but the slopes are too gradual to give fast running. The country on the Buffalo Plateau is very impressive, huge boulders are to be found everywhere, and the view over the gorge, a sheer drop of more than a thousand feet, is possibly one of the finest sights in Australia.

From Buffalo the next ski-ing terrain lies on the Alpine Highway between St. Bernard's Hospiz, Mount Hot-ham (6,100 feet) and the Bogong High Plains, with an off-shoot to Mount Feathertop. Between Feathertop and

Hotham is a ridge called the "Razorback," and this name explains the rest of the country. A steep drop on both sides of the ridge is encountered for miles. Ski-ing is possible along the narrow ridge, which is frequently swept by high winds, and in consequence the snow is extremely icy, corniced and wind-swept. Here and there is a gradual slope for several hundred yards, but the country is mainly "razorbacked," and ski-ing down the side of the ridge is not only hazardous, but leads into uninhabited forests, out of which there is no way of returning to civilisation except by climbing back, up the odd thousand feet to the top of the ridge. Thus the only ski-ing to be done is along this ridge, and then it is only possible to tour towards the Bogong High Plains. At the present moment the lack of ski-ing huts does not permit long cross-country tours on this ridge. The accommodation at St. Bernard's Hospiz, although fairly primitive, is cheap and comfortable, and is under the management of an extremely enthusiastic skier. At Mount Hotham a new Hut has been built during the last few years.

The Bogong High Plains, situated near Mount Hotham, may be reached fairly comfortably from Omeo. About thirteen miles long and six miles wide, they may be claimed as the best ski-touring grounds in Victoria. Few visits have been made to this district, and further information may be obtained from the *Year Books* of the Victorian Ski Club.

Finally, Mount Buller, 5,911 feet, and about 180 miles from Melbourne, is the newest ski-ing centre in Victoria. Although most of the ski-ing grounds in Victoria were discovered many years ago, it was not until quite recently that huts were built for the encouragement of ski-ing. Mount Buller is reached by a bridle-track. The trip of nine miles is done on pack-horses, over a fairly rough path, and through scenery which is well worth the discomfort of sitting a horse over fallen timber and streams. There is excellent and inexpensive accommodation at the Chalet, under the management of Helmut Kofler, an Austrian, who is running this resort on continental lines. Mount Buller ski-ing is through burnt-out timber, but it is almost on the tree-line and the ski-ing above that is quite good. The area of Mount Buller is only about nine square miles, and it is isolated from any other mountain by deep valleys, heavily timbered. For a few days, ski-ing at Mount Buller would give satisfaction to those who are not cross-country skiers, but there is no place in Victoria except on the Bogong High Plains to appease the wander-lust of the latter type of skier.

Since there are ski-ing grounds for skiers, then there

must be the usual Clubs which seem to thrive in every snow district. In Victoria, the most important and the only big Club is the Ski Club of Victoria. Founded in 1924, it is an independent body of skiers, who have done excellent work in erecting huts in the Victorian Alps. Another Club of rising importance is the Melbourne University Ski Club, which is not affiliated to the S.C.V., but whose members are given the privileges of associate members.

Ski-ing in Victoria has been given tremendous publicity for many years by the Government Tourist Bureau. This Bureau organises parties to Mount Buffalo, where, in woolly caps and pull-overs of vivid colours, and with snow-balls darkening the sky, they enjoy the privileges of seeing the winter sports! But the Ski Clubs are really enthusiastic about the improvement of their ski-ing, and each year many new converts are gleaned from the "woolly brigades." Ski-ing is still in its infancy in Victoria, and the standard is not very good. Enterprising publicity, which cannot pass unmentioned, was the broadcasting of several ski races and a film taken of the Championships which was shown almost immediately in several cinemas in Melbourne.

Kosciusko is the oldest and most important ski-ing centre in Australia, 300 miles by train and car from Sydney. The Victorian ski-ing grounds have only recently been developed, and it is at Kosciusko that ski-ing was first introduced under European conditions. Actually, it is known that the townfolk of a mining town called Kiandra were using locally-made ski in the early fifties. Years ago Kiandra was a thriving town with a population of several thousands. To-day it is a desolate village with less than fifty inhabitants. In the winter Kiandra was frequently cut off owing to heavy falls of snow, with the result that it became imperative for some type of snow-shoe to be made, and it is interesting to note that, although methods of ski-manufacture were entirely unknown to many at Kiandra, nevertheless the inhabitants made ski out of Australian woods, and used them with a certain amount of success. They discovered the difficulty of lateral play and made their ski with literally hundreds of grooves. The name "butter-pat" grooves may give a literal translation of what is meant. The question of bindings was never successfully overcome—the sole means of keeping the ski on the feet was with a leather toe-cap, and by arching the toes it was possible to secure the ski in a fairly precarious position. Ski sticks were unknown for many years. A locally-made wax called "moko" was used with excellent results, its composition being similar to that of Klister. Progression uphill was overcome by the skier taking off

his ski and crawling on them with his hands and feet. Ski-jumping was also attempted. The insecurity of the primitive binding was a great disadvantage, but quite an amount of success was gained over small jumps. Ski were known as snow-shoes, and a Snow-shoe Club formed.

In 1909, the first winter sports Hotel was opened at Kosciusko, and at the same time the Kosciusko Alpine Club instituted. From that year until the present day ski-ing has improved slowly. Norwegian ski were imported, and a definite move made for the encouragement of ski-ing. The Hotel lies at a height of 5,000 feet, and the Summit, 17 miles by road, at a height of 7,328 feet. The country near the Hotel is all thickly timbered, and every ski-run has had to be made by clearing the dense undergrowth and trees, or by utilising the frequent natural clearings and plains. The slopes are not steep, although the Grand Slam, the practice slope near the Hotel, was at one time considered highly dangerous to take straight from the top. Distances are extremely deceptive to those who are used to the wide, open spaces of Switzerland, and, although passes and mountains appear to be many miles away, actually, they are quite close and easily accessible. The slopes, too, are not exceedingly steep, and the fact that Kosciusko has never experienced an avalanche may demonstrate this point. Cornices are extremely frequent, made by the high winds which seem to prevail there, partly due to the sea-coast being only sixty miles away. Another reason why the winds affect the snow more over the Kosciusko area is because the valleys are in no place more than 2,000 feet below the top of the Main Range. In parts the vertical difference is not more than four hundred feet. Consequently the snow is usually wind-swept, and not infrequently does snow fall in quite a heavy wind. But it is difficult to form a correct opinion of the snow if the abnormally bad season of 1930 is to be considered the usual condition at Kosciusko. Night temperatures usually fall to 17 deg. Fahr., while during the day there is frequently a heavy thaw. Deep powder-snow is rare on account of the warm climate, and this is not surprising, as the latitude of Kosciusko is equivalent to Gibraltar in the Northern Hemisphere. During the season of 1930 snow fell at infrequent intervals in May, June and the beginning of July, but there was no snow near the Hotel, and it was necessary to walk four miles from the Hotel before it became possible to ski. During the latter part of August a heavy fall at the Hotel was recorded, but it did not remain for many days owing to the lack of foundation. Thus 1930 was possibly the worst year for ski-ing at the Hotel. Small drifts of snow in sheltered places were all that could be

found. The country near the Hotel is most uninteresting from a ski-ing point of view; the ski-ing really commences about five miles further up the road, but the slopes are quite good for practising. An excursion of two miles to Dainer's Gap was at one time considered quite a good day's expedition, but now cross-country ski-ing has become popular, especially with the Ski Club of Australia, and no other Club can claim to have explored the country beyond the Snowy River and north of Mount Twynam.



THE CHALET, WITH STILWELL RIDGE.

Until last year Betts Camp was the only Hut which was "bewirtet" during the winter. Situated nine miles from the Hotel, it formed the last link in the chain of huts from Kiandra, and was just as uncomfortable as the others. Any serious touring always commenced from this Hut, and for many years it has withstood the furies of the tempest and humanity; but now its days are numbered, as a new building has been built, two miles away. Thanks to the timely intervention of the Chief Secretary, a Chalet has been built at last below Charlotte's Pass in an excellent position. Constructed in three months, it marks the beginning of a new page in the history of Australian ski-ing. A complete description of the Chalet will be found in *The Australian Ski Year Book* for 1930. For the moment the present structure will serve its purpose, for it has become the centre of ski-ing. With accommodation for only thirty-six, the Chalet was overcrowded, and it will be imperative to build additional living quarters as soon as possible. The Chalet is run on very ambitious lines, and is possibly the only building of its type in the world at the present time. For many years every attempt to build a hut, either by private enterprise or under Government con-

trol, was turned down until 1930. It was extremely fortunate that it was ready for this season, as the necessity for such a hut was immediately proved by the entire lack of snow at the Hotel. Without the Chalet the future of Australian ski-ing would have suffered enormously, and any assistance from the Government might have been delayed for many years. Visitors to the Chalet must remember the excellent work done by the pioneers of ski-ing at Kosciusko. But for their persistent clamouring in the right direction possibly the Chalet would never have been built.

Little more need be said about the Hotel; it has served its purpose for the past twenty years, and now the Chalet has inevitably taken its place. The ski-ing between the Hotel and the Chalet is extremely uninteresting and monotonous. On either side of the road rise small hills where downhill running is far too short to justify the time wasted in climbing to the top. There is little or no downhill running between the Hotel and Charlotte's Pass, and the latter is only five hundred feet above the Hotel. The journey of eleven miles usually takes more than three hours and crosses two extensive plains—the Perisher Plain and Betts Plain.

The Chalet is within five miles of the Summit, and about the same distance from the rest of the Main Range, as far as Mount Twynam. The ski-ing on the Guthrie Range, with Charlotte's Pass as the gateway to the Main Range, forms an excellent practice ground. The country is just on the tree-line, so that ski-ing among the timber, as well as high-speed ski-ing on the open range, may be obtained. Betts Plain is an excellent site for Langlauf racing—a miniature Engadine valley. This season two Langlaufs were set from the Chalet. One portion was appropriately called the Fexthal.

The Main Range extends from Mount Kosciusko to Kiandra, a distance of about seventy-five miles, and has been explored by the very enterprising Ski Club of Australia. Any information as to the ski-ing beyond Mount Twynam may be found in the *Australian Ski Year Books*. It was not possible to make any long tours this season as the weather was very unsettled. Between Mount Kosciusko and Mount Twynam the country is above the tree-line, and at first sight might appear to be a glacial area. It is thought that at one time the country was covered with glaciers, as there are distinct relics of moraines. All the mountains are above the 7,000 feet level, and it is possible to get quite good running of varying degrees of steepness from every peak of the range into the Snowy River Valley. The longest run is on Mount Twynam, with a vertical

descent of 2,000 feet. The ski-ing on the whole is not steep, but cornices and rocks, forming natural hazards, make it the best mountain for racing and downhill ski-ing in Australia. Carruthers Peak with a descent of 1,500 feet and about two miles long, is not so good for racing, as it necessitates no turns at all and is not so steep. Even a complete novice can take it straight from top to bottom without a fall. Mount Clarke and Mount Lee are steep in parts, but are too short for racing, and this is general throughout Kosciusko and elsewhere. The runs are all too short and not so steep as the runs in Switzerland, and Kosciusko can in no way rival Switzerland, although it is



SEAMAN HUT, SHOWING ETHERIDGE RANGE.

the best ski-ing area yet developed in the Southern Hemisphere. Cross-country ski-ing is extremely interesting and the country is always safe from the menace of avalanches; cornices are apt to be troublesome at times, and they are to be found in the most unforeseen places, not always along the ridge of a mountain, but quite often between rocks; and at times it is extremely difficult to see them, so that caution is always advisable when ski-ing on the Main Range.

The snow at the Chalet was quite good, except on one occasion when an extra heavy gale made enormous furrows on every slope. Soft snow was entirely lacking, but excellent hard snow with a top-dressing of dry powder formed by the frost was usually found every fine morning. Perhaps the quantity was not so abundant as of former years, but it was quite sufficient throughout the months of July and August. The weather was unsettled, and there were never perfect conditions for more than three

days at a time. At the end of this period clouds usually formed over the whole of the Main Range, and with a strong wind snow began to fall. On several occasions it was not possible to reach the Chalet or even to return to the Hotel. To be lost on Betts Plain in bad weather would be extremely dangerous, unless the fence, the only guiding line, which led directly to the Chalet, was found. Suggestions of numbering the snow-poles along the road have been made, and this would simplify the journey to the Chalet in bad weather. On one occasion several skiers were literally blown uphill by the wind.

But although the weather was unsettled, it did not have very much effect on the various races for the Amateur Championship. A complete account will be found in *The Australian Ski Year Book* for 1931, but it may interest a few to know that every event was held under extremely unpleasant weather conditions. The Jumping and Slalom were held on the first day in a fall of snow, and made the Slalom very cut up after several competitors had run the course. The light remained bad throughout the whole day. It did not have very much effect on the jumping which was competed for on distance alone. In consequence the style shown by the majority was pathetic, and in future years style as well as distance should count. There is no reason why the F.I.S. rules should not be observed, as there are two qualified judges of the B.S.-J.C. at Kosciusko every year. On the following day the Downhill and Langlauf were held in a blizzard at the Chalet. It was impossible to find a course far from the Chalet, and the fog and general discomfort, as well as the fact that several competitors were obliged to return to Sydney next day, resulted in the Downhill race being run off on one of the practice grounds. The fastest time recorded by two fairly inaccurate stop-watches was nineteen seconds, and two runs were allowed so as to make the event appear to be some sort of a Downhill race. In the afternoon the Langlauf was held, under possibly the worst conditions ever seen for such an event. The course, which had been set only three hours previously, was completely obliterated, except for a few direction flags. On Betts Plain racing was comparatively pleasant compared to the hurricane which was encountered on top of some mountains. The actual Championship was won by John Collins, a skier who is well known in Switzerland; his jumping and steady running in the Slalom proved a great asset to him, and time did not permit a bigger jump to be built, so that the good qualities of his jumping could have been shown. It was unfortunate that the Championship had to be competed for in the extremely bad weather

conditions which prevailed, as much depended on its success. But in future years it will be necessary to wait for settled weather and not hold the events on specified dates. Much has been learnt from this first Championship, which will be invaluable on future occasions. Mount Twynam should be the Downhill course, the Slalom on Charlotte's Pass, the Jumping on a new jump which is to be built opposite the Chalet and where the longest possible jump will be about 30 metres; and the Langlauf on Betts Plain. The Langlauf was much too short, its length being not more than ten kilometres.

The standard shown in the Championship was not good, with one exception—Collins—who has learnt his skiing in Switzerland, and he should not have any difficulty in retaining the Championship for several years to come. But the general standard of ski-ing at Kosciusko is not good; there are several steady third-class runners, but none is up to the standard of the second-class qualifying test.

Ski-jumping has never had very much prominence until 1930, but with the return of Dr. Laidley from the home of British ski-jumping at St. Moritz, a definite start has been made under his supervision to encourage the sport in Australia. An A.S.-J.C. has been formed, and its success is inevitable.

Formerly ski-racing at Kosciusko was not an inspiring event. The Downhill Championships consisted of a short descent over easy country, and it was usual for the heaviest and fastest-waxed ski to win. Indeed, the story is told of the same pair of ski winning the same race on six different occasions, and there were six different skiers using this famous pair of ski! Their races have been of this type since 1910, and now there is no reason why they should not be more difficult, as the Chalet gives easy access to country where Downhill racing should be held. Langlauf has been introduced, as the country is well suited to this type of racing. Slaloms have been set from time to time, but it is unfortunate that they are not made more difficult. Ski-ing in Australia can and will improve only if steep running and difficult Slaloms are insisted upon. One Slalom set on Charlotte's Pass was an excellent course for the improvement of ski-ing, but it did not prove popular with the majority, as they implied that it was too difficult and went away to a gradual slope where an easy course was set.

The Summit race must not pass unmentioned, as it is a typical Dauerlauf; the present record for the thirty-four miles is just over six hours. It seems probable that any member of the B.L.C.'s first team could reduce this re-

cord with comparative ease. Every attempt is made at night, as the day temperature is far too severe on wax and the vitality of the competitor.

The administrative side of racing and tests is governed by the Ski Council of New South Wales, which was formed in 1928, so that co-operation between all the Ski Clubs might be brought into effect. Each Club, on being affiliated to the Council, may send a certain number of representatives to it, so that matters of ski-ing can be discussed to every Club's advantage. The Ski Council has been in operation for two years, and, through its foundation, tests, races, and all technical matters of ski-ing have been discussed and put into motion. Consequently all the ski-ing tests have been standardised, and racing recognised on more ambitious lines, with the exception of the Ski Club of Victoria, which is not affiliated to the Council, and whose tests and races are not on the same principles as those of the Ski Council. The Council's tests are somewhat similar to those of the S.C.G.B. before the latter were revised a few years ago. Lack of vertical height and steepness accounts for the tests being shorter. Reference to the *Year Books* of both the Ski Council and the S.C.V. will enlighten many as to the merits of one administrative body rather than several Clubs with different ideas.

Racing is perhaps more popular with the Kosciusko Alpine Club, as they are a Club who have not attempted very much touring, and whose policy is racing rather than touring. But up to the present their racing has consisted of the types mentioned above. The Ski Club of Australia, on the other hand, is more a touring Club than a racing Club, their annual Club Championship being their only racing event of the year. Undoubtedly this event was the most successful of all the races held at Kosciusko in 1930; the weather was perfect, and the only unfortunate occurrence was the inaccuracy of the official stop-watches. This defect, however, will have been rectified before next season. There are several other Clubs who go to Kosciusko every year, among them the Sydney University Ski Club and the Millions Ski Club. Perhaps in a few years time it will be possible for the Universities of Melbourne and Sydney to hold an inter-University ski meeting there. Besides those Ski Clubs who have gone to Kosciusko annually ever since their own formation, there are the officially conducted parties arranged by the New South Wales Tourist Bureau. These parties usually stay for a week at a very reduced tariff, but no assistance is given to the Ski Clubs on these terms, with the exception of the Sydney University Ski Club. The charge of 30/- to 35/- a day is

extremely heavy, for the general comfort at the Hotel and Chalet. This charge is also made during the winter season at Mount Buffalo. A reduction of at least a third of the tariff would be greatly appreciated, and then it might be considered value for money, so far as the Hotel and Chalet are concerned. But at the moment the Hotel and the Chalet are not making any profit for the Government, and it is necessary to charge this exorbitant amount.

Those who visit Australia for ski-ing will find Kosciusko an excellent place, on a smaller scale than Switzerland. The ski-ing grounds of Victoria are not so impressive, and it would be best for them to see and judge for themselves. It is advisable to take ski, waxes and complete kit, as the duty when buying winter sport articles is very high, and the hiring of ski from the Hotel unsatisfactory. Steel edged ski are recommended for the Australian conditions, and they will prove invaluable to touring and racing on the icy snow which is so prevalent in the Southern Hemisphere.



SMIGGIN HOLES HUT.

A Reply to Mr. Lang

By Stewart Jamieson.

I have had the advantage of seeing Mr. Lang's excellent article before publication; always an unfair advantage, one feels, because Mr. Lang has no opportunity of seeing a reply. That should be explained first, in fairness to Mr. Lang. And for that very reason one must allow every possible latitude and the widest interpretation to all Mr. Lang's statements. Nevertheless there are certain inaccuracies which require correction, and all the more so since it is possible that the article may appear in other ski-ing journals. We are a very small ski-ing community, conducting our racing and touring on grounds which by some standards are indifferent; so that our affairs can be of little interest to the outside world. But if it should happen that they do attain publicity it is necessary that criticism should be informed and accurate before it can have any value. Therefore it is proposed to deal with a few debatable points that occur in Mr. Lang's article.

First, let me say that they are only minor points and that with the general nature of the article I have nothing but the heartiest agreement. Mr. Lang came here in the rôle of a critic and was asked, and expected, by the Clubs and the Ski Council to criticise. He said boldly, without fear or favour, what he thought of the fields, the organisation and the standard of ski-ing. That was expected of him, and we should have been disappointed with a sugar-coated pill. He told us things that a section of the ski-ing community here had been arguing for years and which were by last year generally accepted. We were prepared for adverse criticism and welcomed it in the spirit in which it was given, obviously a helpful and thoughtful spirit. It is sincerely to be hoped that it will help us to return from our sinful ways to the straight and narrow path that is annually laid down by the Technical Committee of the S.C.G.B.

But we are not altogether repentant sinners. There are several respects in which we differ, after consideration, from British methods, on the ground of the variation of our national conditions from those obtaining elsewhere. Mr. Lang has been prone to accept such variations as, first, a necessarily Bad Thing *per se*, merely because they are variations from Holy Writ, and, secondly, as variations due to lack of consideration or understanding. We reply, with equanimity, that both these grounds are wrong. The M.C.C., doubtless, regards with pain some of the methods

of the Australian Board of Cricket Control. The Board, doubtless, finds the feeling mutual. Neither body would dream of criticising the other on its own local criteria. One cannot help feeling that the words "Australian conditions" involve a knowledge of Australian ski-ing history. Acquaintance with the heart-breaking struggle to force standards higher and higher, in the face of both indifference and the fact that, at Kosciusko, at least, one has to go out of one's way to get to difficult racing country, would probably have softened Mr. Lang's heart to an admission that one cannot go the whole way at once. The Ski Council has been in existence only three years, in which time it has raised the standard of organisation probably to that obtaining in Switzerland about 1922. Another year will see us up to date. It is not at all a bad record, and past history should always be taken into consideration before applying standards of criticism which are based on an ideal. Nevertheless, we want the ideal and are indebted to Mr. Lang for showing us where and how we fall short of it.

I propose to restrict controversy to the chief points in Mr. Lang's article which I find debatable. To go into a mass of minor detail would be to detract from criticism and probably to involve arguments on points which Mr. Lang, were he now in Australia, would be quite willing to concede.

The first ground on which I join issue with Mr. Lang is his tacit submission that the ski-ing grounds of Australia are confined to Victoria and New South Wales. Reference to the map of Tasmania in this issue, drawn by Mr. Chapman and showing the immense wealth of ski-ing country available there, should be sufficient to answer this point. The potentialities of Tasmania for ski-ing are probably greater than those of any other State, and no review of ski-ing in Australia is complete without reference to them and to the excellent work of the Ski Club of Tasmania in opening up the fields.

The history of ski-ing at Kiandra is rather sketchily dealt with by Mr. Lang, and the following notes may serve as a slight corrective to this.

The first ski at Kiandra were made by Scandinavians (see Mr. Hughes' article) and the methods were learned from them. The amazingly high standard of ski-ing at Kiandra is explained by some people on the theory (interesting but not yet corroborated) that it resembles the ski-ing style of the Norwegian country villages of the first half of the 19th century, and it certainly was derived therefrom. It has since undergone no other than local modifications. The Kiandra instep-thong (not "toe-cap"

as Mr. Lang calls it) was devised for a special reason. The ski were used chiefly by miners on short trips of a few hundred yards. When, later, the country became pastoral long tours alone were demanded of men who were out after cattle, and it was maintained in Kiandra for many years that a binding without heel-strap was safer; since they held that a heel-strap binding gave more chance of strained ankles, together with the consequences thereof, to a skier by himself miles from help. I believe the same thing is to be found in the back country of Scandinavia. A single long stick was used for many years (see again Mr. Hughes' article) and it can scarcely be said that sticks were ever unknown to Kiandra runners.

As for progress uphill by taking off ski and crawling on them on hands and feet, I must admit ignorance! I tried to do it on a grassy bank after reading Mr. Lang's article, but the results were poor. Mr. Hunter informs me that on Charles Kerry's first ascent of Mount Kosciusko in winter the party came up the soft snow from Friday Flat to Dead Horse Ridge by putting their hands through the bindings and pushing the ski ahead of them, their feet being free. I presume that Mr. Lang refers to this method, but have never heard of it being used at Kiandra.

Coming now to Kosciusko, I find that Mr. Lang affirms that the Grand Slam practice slope was at one time considered highly dangerous to take straight. I cannot remember that anyone ever considered the Grand Slam as anything more than a normal nursery slope, varying between 25 deg. at the top and 15 deg. at the bottom; except when it was not properly covered with snow, when I should not ask my worst enemy to take it straight.

Then we are told that "an excursion of two miles to Dainer's Gap was at one time considered quite a good day's expedition." By whom? There are always (even in Switzerland) people who consider a two miles' trip a good long run, but are they really representative?

Nor can it be said that the Ski Club of Australia alone can claim to have explored the country north of Mount Twynam. The Kosciusko Alpine Club, for instance, has always specialised, as a Club, on racing, but individual members had done much exploring in the years preceding the Ski Club's organised expeditions. See the numbers of the K.A.C. *Year Book*, which ceased publication when the Ski Council's *Year Book* came into existence.

Mr. Lang remarks that the jumping in the Amateur Championship was judged on length alone. The inference is that this was done because the officials knew no better. Actually, it was the considered judgment of the Council that jumping should be judged on either—(a) dis-

tance alone, or (b) distance and style, and this decision is at present incorporated in the Council's rules. It was the result of long and bitter discussion, and is, of course, open to possible variation in the future. Both the "two qualified judges of the B.S.-J.C." referred to by Mr. Lang were on this occasion engaged in the competition and were not available for judging. It is interesting to notice that the same controversy rends British jumping circles (see Lunn's "History of Ski-ing," reviewed in "A.S.Y.B.," 1930), and that the British Jumping Championship of 1930 was also decided on length alone. (See *Year Book* of S.C.G.B., 1930). So there "was some reason" why the F.I.S. rules were not observed. The whole question is still under discussion, but it was as the result of a deliberate policy that the Jump was decided on length alone. However much one may differ from that policy (and I differ myself now, having seen the light some six months ago) one cannot dismiss it as the emanation of untutored minds. Nor can one say, as Mr. Lang does, that the style shown was pathetic, simply as a result of the fact that the judging did not count style as a factor. That is a question of coaching, not of judging, and is an argument that style is wrong; since, if style (on this argument) were directed towards maximum length and stability, then a jumper not judged on style would, nevertheless, strive to obtain the best style merely in order to obtain the best safe length. Mere judging on style does not, *per se*, improve style. Only coaching does that.

With reference to the Downhill race he remarks that ". . . two runs were allowed, so as to make the event appear to be some sort of a downhill race."

Without knowing myself the reasons of the officials for having two runs in this race, I should, nevertheless, be inclined to think that it was not for the rather paltry reasons given by Mr. Lang, but simply (a) to eliminate, so far as possible, the element of chance in running on a course which was, by unfortunate necessity, admittedly too short, and (b) to allow for a larger margin of error in the watches and thereby ensure a closer approximation to correct results. To do so was, in the circumstances, merely commonsense. The infinite difficulties attending the running of these events are made obvious in Dr. Laidley's interesting commentary in this issue.

"Ski-jumping," we learn from Mr. Lang, "has never had much prominence until 1930. . . ." It had, of course, been a prominent feature at Kiandra for many years; at Kosciusko it first came into favour some years before 1930, with the Kosciusko Alpine Club; and it was largely for the purpose of coaching in jumping that that Club brought

Mr. Aalberg to Kosciusko in 1927. The first annual Club Jumping Championship was held in 1929, and was won by Mr. V. G. Wesche. Members had by then been practising for some time and there were eight entries in this, the first Club Jumping Championship held in Australia.

Then, again, Mr. Lang sets up another controversy. "One Slalom set on Charlotte's Pass," he says, "was an excellent course for the improvement of ski-ing, but it did not prove popular with the majority, as they implied that it was too difficult and went away to a gradual slope where an easy course was set." Once more I join issue. One must walk before one can fly. The Slalom in question was up to first-class Swiss standards, and "the majority" does not learn a new type of race on first-class courses.

Since Mr. Lang's article was written the Tests have been revised to accord more closely, both with our own conditions and with the latest revisions by the S.C.G.B. One can hardly, therefore, argue with him on this point. But on his statement that the K.A.C. races have been chiefly of the type he mentions earlier in his article, one cannot remain silent. Reference to past *Year Books*, and, more particularly to the 1930 *Year Book*, will show that this statement is wrong. He has, one feels, generalised on a knowledge of Club racing gained in the worst season on record.

Lest it should be thought that I have chosen only minor and unimportant points for criticism, and that I disagree with the rest of Mr. Lang's article, let me reiterate that I entirely agree with his general thesis. I sincerely hope that when he next skis with us (and that we all hope will be soon) we shall be able to show distinct improvement in standard and organisation. We shall always be handicapped by the shortness of Club seasons and by the nature of our country, but we can, and will, go much further than we have done. Finally, I must point out that this reply to Mr. Lang is entirely the expression of a personal viewpoint, and has no official sanction whatever.

Mr. Gerald Seligman, whose work as Editor of "Ski Notes and Queries" is so well and favourably known to all ski-runners and who contributes an entertaining article on Falling to this issue, concludes by saying: "With your permission I am going to publish this article at some later date in the little journal edition over here, 'Ski Notes and Queries,' and if you should receive any interesting suggestions to improve our knowledge of a subject which some of us have had ample opportunities to study but to which we have not given much thought, perhaps you will allow me to reproduce them."