

Selmer Norwegians at Work and Sport

By C. Klaussen

[Those of us who have had the pleasure of association with our Norwegian friends cannot but feel a little sad now that the time for their return home is near at hand. Their presence in Australia has been the source of a great stimulus to ski-ing, particularly in langrenn and jumping events; so, too, their efficiency in the organisation and running of contests. And who among us, having enjoyed their hospitality at Munyang or Guethga, will not recall the warm welcome and friendly smile that met him on arrival at either camp?

As we say "cheerio," Carl Klaussen, to you and your countrymen—may we also say "thank you," and express the wish that you carry back to Norway as happy a flood of memories of your stay in Australia as we will cherish of your visit to our snowlands. Ski Hurrah!—Ed.]

SINCE the last issue of the Australian Ski Year Book, things have been happening in the Selmer Sphere of the Snowy Mountains, both as far as work and ski-ing are concerned.

The works task is now in its concluding phase—when these notes are printed "hole-through" will have been accomplished in the tunnel between Guthega and Munyang (Surge Tank). Poor rock, necessitating steel supporting, timbering and concrete lining, has delayed this "hole-through" which, however, nevertheless was achieved practically on contract time.

The Power Station at Guethga is now nearly completed and installation of heavy electrical machinery is proceeding according to schedule. The concreting of the Guthega Dam is two-thirds completed and the laying of the penstock is in its last phase.

The 1953 winter came late to Snowy Mountains, but when it first came it lasted longer than ever (we thought), with enormous quantities of snow. In some of the camps the snow covered the windows, and at Guthega one had literally to dig oneself down from the roofs to get in through the doors.

The very active Selmer Norwegian Ski Club had intended to hold a jumping competition at Guthega on the 3rd of July, the 50th anniversary of the Crown Prince of Norway, in the same way as the Club cele-

brated the King's 80th anniversary the previous year. But there was insufficient snow for a jumping contest on the 2nd July and the first general competition was held on the 2nd of August, which proved to be one of the most glorious winter Sundays ever experienced, even in Norway, which is saying some!

In the meantime the large Guthega Jumping Hill had been improved and extended, allowing jumps of some 50 metres (approx. 165ft.) and everybody expected Sverre Kaaten's Australian record of 43.5 metres to be beaten. And so the record was beaten, decidedly, to the delight of the holder, officiating as judge: Arne Koksvik's trial jump measured 47 metres, Rolf Killingstad had 48, Tormod Lillejord 49.5 and Syvert Ravnevand became the temporary holder of the new record by managing 50.5 metres.

But Ravnevand's tenure as record holder did not last long—in a subsequent contest Tormod Lillejord jumped 51.5 metres (170ft.), which is approximately the limit to be reached in the Guthega Hill in its present shape. It has been stated that jumps of up to 54 metres have been done during practice, but there is no official confirmation of this.

Also, in the Australian and New South Wales Championships the Selmer Norwegians did well, especially in the Nordic events (longrun and jumps). We are afraid, however, that the winter of 1953 will be the last one—for the time being—with the Norwegians dominating the ski sports in the Snowy Mountains. Quite a number of the best runners and jumpers have concluded their work and have returned home and, after the "hole-through" in the tunnels, a further number of men will go home, among them some of our best skiers.

But the Selmer Norwegians are grateful for having been given the opportunity to show their favourite sport in Australia and they are happy to know that their performances have given some impulses for the furtherance of jumping and longrun in the Commonwealth.

And even if they will be less in number in 1954 than before, the Selmer people will still be there during the coming winter.



Looking on to the Munyang Power House. Roadway in distance leads to the Snowy River Valley.

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Tuesday morning at an unmentionable hour. This week-end was generally successful; everyone appeared to enjoy themselves enormously in various odd ways; financial membership was doubled; and all interstate comment on the effort was favourable, not to say surprised.

The second Club week-end, hurriedly organised for the 9-12 October, when eight people set out in two cars and three by other means, was successful only so far as the seven who actually arrived at the snow were concerned. One carload was involved somewhat disastrously with a large truck near Bordertown on the way over and consequently four people did most of their week-end ski-ing in imagination in a very slow train back to Adelaide.

The greatest difficulty that has faced the Committee in the organisation of these

week-ends has been the arranging of transport for members. They recommend an all-out drive for new members with new cars and long holidays. Accommodation has been no great problem, thanks mainly to the co-operation of the C.S.I.R. Ski Club and the University Ski Club. Cost per person on each trip, except when faced with the expense of buying a new car or new skis, has worked out at £8 approximately.

When the books closed on 1st August the Club numbered forty-one financial members. Several more have been accepted since then. And so, to summarise in a series of clichés, the Committee feels it has been a successful year, that much spadework has been done and solid foundations laid, that ski-ing has an assured future for South Australians and South Australia itself has been made almost habitable for skiers.