

In Memoriam

George Petersen



The late George Peterson.

With the untimely death of George Petersen on 7th January last, the Australian wintersports movement and the Kosciusko snowfields lost one of their keenest and most devoted advocates. Many skiers, young and old, have felt his passing as a personal loss. As "Mons" Perier, doyen of the Australian photographic industry, wrote of him recently in "Snow Revelry," he was "a good bloke." Australians can really give no higher praise than that.

His interest in the snowlands was sparked off and fanned to a flame by many business trips to the Kosciusko country in the 'twenties and 'thirties. This interest, together with previous experience of hotel management at Jenolan Caves, equipped him ideally for the position of Manager of the old Hotel Kosciusko, where he took over in 1939. The Second World War cut short the first phase of his reign: the hotel was closed soon after the outbreak of hostilities, and George went off to an important Commonwealth post, planning and supervising industrial canteen services.

With the end of the War, George returned to re-open the Hotel and there followed five happy years, which were brought to an abrupt conclusion by the disastrous fire of 18th April, 1951. Some months later, he moved up to Charlotte Pass managing The Chalet until '54.

George Petersen had an intimate knowledge and love of the Snowy Mountains. In addition to his flair as an amusing cartoonist, he was photographer

of very considerable artistry, and down the years he created a priceless pictorial record of the high country in all its moods. (Many of his finest negatives were lost in the Hotel fire.)

During his latter years he began writing a detailed history of the Kosciusko region. This involved much intensive research—scrutinising ancient newspaper files, rummaging in the records of the early Monaro families and homesteads, and having long interviews with old-timers who could still remember the pioneering era of the nineteenth century. Some forty-three fascinating instalments of the history have already appeared in "Snow Revelry."

It is a tragedy that, at the time of his death, George Petersen's big self-appointed task was uncompleted. It is to be hoped that someone will be found to carry on the work, someone sharing George's deep understanding of his subject and his spirit of dedication.

The heartfelt sympathies of all the skiing fraternities go out to George Petersen's widow and to his two sons, George and Dick.