

Victorian Resort Planning Activities, 1949

V. M. Corr

(Chairman F.O.V.S.C. Resort Planning Committee, and Member Mt. Buller Committee of Management).

ONCE again Victoria has seen marked progress in the development of its ski resorts.

The greatest advance has again taken place at Mt. Buller where the Committee of Management established under the Forests Act has continued the progressive policy of which it gave evidence last year. It will be remembered that originally an area of about three and a half acres was surveyed in the Cow Camp area and divided into fourteen sites, but such was the demand for the available sites that it fairly soon became apparent that some extension was necessary. The Forests Commission, on the recommendation of the Committee of Management, surveyed with most gratifying promptitude an adjoining area extending approximately west from the Cow Camp saddle along a shelf on the Howqua side of the ridge and created an additional nine sites. The new area is a most delightful one, and has the advantage of being considerably more sheltered than most parts of the saddle. However, it has already become fairly evident, with the consistent flow of further applications that a still further area will be necessary and at present the Committee of Management has in mind recommending the development of a further site in the Horse Hill area which, although not as close to the best skiing as Cow Camp, has certain other advantages.

Once again, the Country Roads Board, too, has given excellent co-operation, a considerable amount of work having been done on the road up to the old Chalet prior to the skiing season, while more recently the track from the Chalet onwards, which was in a very rough state, has been given a grooming.

One of the most pleasing features of the development of skiing in Victoria, and particularly at Mount Buller, has been that the development has not been merely on paper, as appears unfortunately to have been the lot of our friends in New South Wales. The enterprise of the Forests Commission in giving effect to the urging of the clubs for the development of Buller has had a full re-

sponse in the subsequent efforts of the clubs which, under the broad general guidance of the Building Regulations adopted by the Committee of Management, have produced practical and attractive lodge designs. But even more heartening has been the immense enthusiasm and initiative shown in carrying out the plans and the surprisingly good standard of workmanship revealed. The Chairman of the Committee of Management, speaking at the Melbourne Walking Club dinner towards the end of 1949, summed the matter up when he said that until he had had experience of skiers, he regarded walkers as being the most devoted to their particular sport, but now he was convinced that he must hand the palm to skiers as they were not merely enthusiastic but quite fanatical.

The great practical strides which have taken place at Buller are shown by the fact that, at the time of writing, the Australian Postal Institute Ski Club, the Chamois Club of Australia and the Harding Ski Club have virtually completed their buildings, the Melbourne Walking Club, Omega Ski Club, Ullr Ski Club and Yurredla Ski Club have made such progress that it is apparent that their buildings will be ready for occupation this winter. In addition, the Montanto Ski Club, Dandenong Ski Club, Grey Rocks Ski Club and Buller Ski Club have all made some advance with their construction and in some cases their buildings are likely to be ready for the winter.

Water supply has remained somewhat of a problem, but here again the Forests Commission has demonstrated its good will by offering maximum co-operation in the development of a water scheme which will, at the same time, be of assistance in the direction of a general fire prevention on the mountain.

The whole history of co-operative planning on Mount Buller is a striking example of what can be achieved when public authorities "get together" with interested citizens who, in turn, work constructively and in good faith with them.

It is fitting to say that in addition to the interest and keenness of the official members of the Committee of Management and of the officers of the Forests Commission and Country Roads Board, tribute must be paid to the excellent co-operation and help of Mr. A. W. Shands, S.C.V. representative on the committee, which augurs well for the friendly co-operation of all State skiing bodies. And before passing from Mt. Buller we should express our thanks to Mr. Albert Chivers without whom the village could not possibly have reached its present stage. Mr. Chivers is one of those people, in the tradition of Eric Johnson and others, who does not seem to think that you ought to stop work at five o'clock or shrink from turning a heavily loaded truck on a pocket handkerchief piece of ground with a five hundred foot drop on one side.

Emboldened by the functioning of the Committee of Management at Mount Buller the Federation of Victorian Ski Clubs felt that the time was ripe for a concrete plan to be put forward for the Hotham area. A comprehensive reports was accordingly prepared and submitted to the Minister for Lands at a deputation introduced by Mr. T. W. Mitchell, M.L.A. A recommendation was made for the appointment of a Committee of Management for the Mt. Hotham area, together with a number of other suggestions. It was suggested, however, that the Hotham area was one which did not lend itself to the establishment of a more or less formal village as at Buller, but rather lent itself to a wider spacing of buildings subject, of course, to some control as to their location to ensure that they did not interfere with the development of the mountain as a whole. The other highlight on Hotham was the snow ploughing by the Country Roads Board of both the Omeo and Harrietteville sides of the Alpine Road. Owing to the condition of the Omeo side of the road, work on which could not be completed before winter set in, the Omeo snow plough had rather mixed luck, but the Harrietteville snow plough demonstrated its ability to keep the road open as far as St. Bernard. It is interesting to note that a number of parties in consequence again used the St. Bernard route of entering Hotham apart from those making visits to St. Bernard itself.

Plans for Mount Baw Baw received a fillip

from the report of the West Gippsland Regional Development Committee which made a comprehensive report recommending the development of the Baw Baws as a skiing and tourist area. This should be of material assistance in furthering the development of the area with its big advantage of relative proximity to Melbourne and to the developing of the Latrobe Valley.

On the broader side, the visit of the State Development Committee (an all-party committee of members of the State Parliament) to Mt. Hotham, where evidence was given by a number of skiers, was followed by a tour of Mt. Buller and subsequently by the giving of evidence by Mr. Colin Brewer which should round off the picture the committee has obtained of our snowlands. It is understood that the State Development Committee will make its report on the development of the Alpine areas without waiting to complete its general survey of the various developmental projects. Another interesting move in 1949 was the proposal for the setting up of an authority to control national parks. This matter was referred to the State Development Committee for examination and it is felt that valuable results may follow from this provided that an over-centralised authority does not result.

In general vein, two thoughts emerge from the year's activities. Firstly, a conviction that the smaller lodge or cabin is the most economical and practical unit for clubs in the development of ski resorts. In the first place the smaller building is much easier for amateurs to build and is therefore cheaper. Also, the administrative problems associated with the control of the building are much simpler when the accommodation does not exceed, say, sixteen at the most. Beyond this figure, administrative difficulties, such as, for example, those associated with the supply of and payment for foodstuffs tend to increase almost as an arithmetical progression. And then, in the smaller buildings, accommodation can be provided so much more cheaply because there is little difficulty in the occupants looking after everything themselves. Once you start having to employ managers, cooks, etc., costs must rise. An interesting example of the proposition is the development by the S.C.V. of satellite cabins to the Ivor Whittaker Memorial Lodge. Each cabin accommodates eight persons who attend to their own requirements,

or if they desire may eat in the cafeteria next to the lodge.

Secondly, and in conclusion, there emerge the excellent results, already indicated, of government-citizen co-operation in the development of our common national heritage. It is interesting to recall that the chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority in U.S.A. attributed the success of the Authority to

what he calls his "grass roots" policy. That is to say, friendly co-operation between the officials of the Authority and the inhabitants of the region. While all parties continue to approach our scheme in their present frame of mind, it may be anticipated that within its lesser sphere a similar success will await our developmental schemes as attended those of the T.V.A.

The Victorian Championships, 1949

David Fors

(S.C.V. Racing Committee).

AT Hotham in 1949 the main events were the Victorian Championships. These were held at an ideal time, for the main party of competitors arriving on Thursday, 28th July, was greeted by the first fall of snow for some time. The snow continued to fall for four days, covering the many bare patches and making conditions ideal for racing. Little snow fell after this, and heavy rain in early September concluded one of the shortest ski-ing seasons on record.

For the first few days the contestants practised on the Drag, partly because it was sheltered, but mainly because it was almost certain that the Downhill would be run on this course.

The snow was very soft at first, but by Sunday the Drag was nicely ironed out.

The crowd was very keen, and it was most ill-advised to walk up the narrow sections of the course, for just as one was regaining one's breath or admiring the view someone would invariably scream around the corner yelling "Track" and lots of other words. Tom Alston and Toni Aslangul would go down together and it was really a pleasure to watch them, one on the tail, or, more correctly, I suppose, heels of the other.

Tuesday was sunny and, after wildly taking photographs, we settled down to breakfast, seeing for the first time through the large Chalet windows the beauty of Hotham. Towards the end of breakfast, George Chisholm arrived from Alpine Lodge and announced that the Downhill would be run that morning.

The course was very fast and slightly icy. While practising John Harper had the bad luck to hit a tree and damaged his ankle. Only a few of us knew about it as John

watched the races before being helped back to the Chalet.

Bob Cutts opened the course and ran very well, particularly as he had been off the snow for some years. Tom Alston skied beautifully, but was slower than last year in getting to the Hog's Back. Tom's time was 1 min. 18.1-5 sec.; Toni Aslangul's time was 1 min. 18 sec., so he won the Downhill by 1-5 sec. (At the start Toni gains high speed quickly by pushing off with his stocks.) Bill Harris, $\frac{1}{2}$ minute behind Tom, was third, closely followed by Bob Hymans.

Jill MacDonald skied very confidently to win the Women's Downhill. Margot O'Loughlin, 9 secs. behind, was second and Marjorie Byron-Moore third. Marjorie is a fearless skier with a great future on the snow if she manages to avoid killing her herself.

At the Chalet after the races, Dr. John Snell bound John Harper's ankle in plaster and on Wednesday the men sledged Harper down to Eric Johnson's hut. Bill Caine very generously offered to drive John to the Melbourne Hospital that day so, with Bob Balingall, the three rode to Harrierville and arrived at Melbourne at 9 p.m.

The Slalom was held on the following Friday morning in Avalanche Gully. The weather was clear but cold and very windy. George Chisholm had set the course and no competitor said that it was too easy. The start was on the top of the Pimple. Derrick Stogdale opened the course, then Mrs. Matters made the first run, Margot O'Loughlin went very well until she had the misfortune to miss some flags towards the end of her first run. Jill MacDonald proved her superiority again and won the event, giving her the Combined title. Suzanne Williams was second. Have you seen those notices on