

us doubt that the summit can be safely reached with or without the improved oxygen apparatus. Half the battle is won if the climbers and porters start off from the North Col in really good condition and good health.

This is easy to talk and write about, but is most difficult to accomplish. But the experience of two years has taught us much in regard to the conflicting claims of acclimatisation and conservation of energy, and something, if not a great deal, of how it is possible to improve the comfort of the glacier camps. The rest depends on the patience, patience, and again patience, that is the most difficult type of patience, which will wait, and await the fine weather essential to success, even though all indications point to an early arrival of the monsoon, and with it the end of another year's efforts with, perhaps, nothing accomplished. And so, whatever the verdict, whether Everest should or will be attempted again, we of the 1924 Expedition are confident that it can be climbed, despite the dictum of our good friend the Shekar Jongpen. Commiserating our misfortune he summed up by saying: 'Myself think God's mountain will never allow.'

JOINT MEETING OF THE ALPINE CLUB AND OF THE R.G.S.

THIS meeting, to receive the reports from the Mt. Everest Expedition of 1924, was held on October 17 at the Albert Hall. It was attended by a large number of members of the two Societies.

The meeting was opened by the Earl of Ronaldshay, President R.G.S., and the following reports were then made:—

THE ORGANISATION AND START OF THE EXPEDITION.

BY BRIGADIER-GENERAL THE HON. C. G. BRUCE.

I FIND that I am down to follow the President of the Royal Geographical Society both in my capacity as President of the Alpine Club and as the original leader of this year's Expedition.

As President of the Alpine Club I consider myself free to offer my warmest congratulations and to express my admiration to Colonel Norton and to the members of the Expedition, for his (Colonel Norton's) wonderful leadership, and to all for the

heroic efforts which they all made. I must also express on the part of the Alpine Club the deep sorrow felt for the loss of our two gallant members who made their sacrifice in the most terrific of all mountaineering history. They were two magnificent personalities, and have the finest cenotaph in the world, and are worthy of that splendid monument.

Speaking now as the original leader of the Expedition, I must pass on to its organisation. Colonel Norton, Captain Bruce, Mr. Shebbeare, and myself found ourselves in Darjeeling in the last days of February. There we found a large collection of porters, both true Tibetans and Sherpas, for us to choose from. We also found local supplies which had been ordered by our excellent agent, Mr. Weathered, all ready for forwarding to Tibet. Our old interpreter and our old headman of porters were also ready to re-engage.

Owing to the experience gained on previous expeditions, and our exact knowledge of the geography of the district, and of where the high camps would be placed, it was found possible to earmark our stores for the different camps, so as to save time at our Base Camp. These arrangements were made by Norton and Bruce, and Shebbeare was despatched to Kalimpong to take delivery of the stores and forward them on by our contractors into Tibet. All went swimmingly, and as soon as our whole party was collected, which was at the beginning of the last week in March, we were able to set out.

We marched in two parties in order not to overcrowd the rest-houses on our route, and collected in the beginning of April in Yatung. Certain arrangements had to be made there, but the party and its entire stores were gathered in Phari by April 5. We were a day earlier than in 1922, but experienced the whole way up an infinitely milder climate. Phari, to our intense relief, and somewhat to our surprise, was almost balmy. There we had rather more than our expected troubles with the local authorities, who are of a peculiarly grasping nature, and had taken the opportunity of putting up the prices of everything 25 per cent. over 1922 rates. We had a two days' battle, and a dramatic *finale*, when a telegram to the Prime Minister of Tibet reporting their conduct was torn up in their presence as soon as a suitable agreement had been arrived at. We had previously discovered that orders had come from Lhasa directing every assistance to be given us, but the final collapse of the Phari authorities was both dramatic and amusing.

From Phari began the second stage of the march across Tibet to the Base. We left Phari on April 7, the main party,

owing to the curious district restrictions on transport in Tibet, marching *via* the Dongkar-La to Khamba Dzong, and Major Hingston, Mr. Macdonald, our postal expert, and myself going with a light outfit by the Tuna, Dochen, and Tatsu route. However, I was obliged through illness to relinquish the command of the Expedition at Tuna, and hand it over to Colonel Norton.

Disappointing as this step was, it was partially made up to me by the personality of my successor, for no finer or more inspiring leader could have been found, and this is borne out by the manner in which he dealt with the immense difficulties and hardships occasioned by the terrible conditions met with this year.

One word about the weather. All through May there was a wave of cold and wet weather over the whole of the Western and Central Himalayas, brought by strong winds from the west, and giving in the Punjab and North-West Provinces almost the lowest temperatures ever experienced for that time of year. These storms and winds had nothing to do with the monsoon, which itself was favourable, in that it was about a week later in arriving in the Eastern Himalayas than is usual. This condition was a thorough bit of bad luck, and very unusual. I think it will be seen that at the time of the final effort on Everest the weather was extremely favourable, which was probably due to the slight delay in the monsoon.

With regard to the porters, they had an extraordinarily rough time, but to get so large a percentage as six men who were able to carry loads to the terrific height of 27,000 feet is in itself remarkable, considering the way the men had to be chosen ; for, after all, with the exception of certain old hands, they were picked from a crowd of men who had come for daily labour to Darjeeling.

I will leave it to other members of the Expedition to give an account of the personal prowess of its members, but I must draw attention to the results of the Expedition.

It is perfectly clear that the summit of Everest can be reached—certainly with oxygen, and in all probability without it—for there is no doubt that the very severe conditions experienced before the weather cleared up left the members of the Expedition less fit than they otherwise would have been.

We have quite clearly increased the standard of expectation. Who would have thought four years ago that men could climb without oxygen to over 28,000 feet ? Who would have thought that three ascents between 25,000 feet and 27,000 feet would

have been accomplished inside the same week by the same climber? And who, again, could have forecast that men were to be found who could possibly carry loads to a height of 27,000 feet?

A slight addition has also been made to the geography of the mountain. The West Rongbuk Glacier and its neighbourhood have been surveyed, and other additions to the map have been made. At the head of the Dzakar Chu another great Himalayan gorge has been further explored.

Later on, no doubt, Major Hingston will give an account of his physiological observations on members of the Expedition, and he has brought back also an immense collection of insect and plant life.

I will now hand the story on to Colonel Norton, who will tell you about the *personnel* of the Expedition.

THE PERSONNEL OF THE EXPEDITION.

BY LIEUT.-COL. E. F. NORTON.

I feel that an account of an expedition which omits some description of the members is a sadly colourless business. I should like to be able to make these men real flesh and blood to you instead of mere lay figures. Unfortunately, the time available is too short for me to hope to do this, even had I the talent, and I must content myself with a very brief introduction.

I have an uncomfortable feeling that, as I go on, you will conceal a smile at what you may term a mutual admiration society. I would be the last to suggest that we were a party of little tin saints, but it is a matter of common knowledge that expeditions involving some hardship have a way of bringing out the best that is in every man and of obscuring his faults. In this lies the greatest virtue of such enterprises. It is not my business to-night to talk of the faults.

When General Bruce went sick we sustained a loss which—irreparable as the loss of such a leader must be to any expedition—was doubly so in an exceptional year. For it was just in the conditions which we met this year that General Bruce's well-known influence over our Himalayan *personnel* might have made so great a difference.

Yet it must not be forgotten that we owe him much of what was achieved this year. To him must be given the credit of