

WINTER ASCENT.—The Watzmann, E. face,⁸ the great rock wall, facing St. Bartholomä, not much under 2000m. in height and said to be the highest in the Alps, was climbed on December 6, 7, 8, 1930, by Herren T. Beringer, S. Flatscher, G. Mitterer and L. Zankl, one or more of whom were concerned in the traverse of Mont Blanc *via* 'La Sentinelle' last summer.⁹ The rock face is described as having been practically a snow wall at the time. Three bivouacs were made in caves or holes in the wall, while the total going time was 46 hours. From *Reichenhaller Tagblatt*.

We are informed that the expedition was quite unjustifiable, and that the participants should have perished to a man. A full account is given in *Der Bergsteiger*.

HIS HOLINESS THE POPE.—When I was in Rome the other day I had a private audience with His Holiness The Pope, and he sent his blessing to the Alpine Club and all mountaineers.

MARTIN CONWAY, *March 31, 1931.*

NEW ZEALAND NOTES.

MR. A. P. HARPER writes: 'See "N.Z.A.J." iii, pp. 352-3, with reference to my points about Alpine Guides. It is now officially recognized that the last three paragraphs on p. 352 and the first two on p. 353 are on sound lines, and we hope to have legislation next year [1931], giving us power to set up a Board working on those lines. The following are the points we hope to be able to work on':

Mountaineering and Government Responsibility.

Climbing above the line of perpetual snow has developed enormously during the last three or four years—a fact which I ascribe to the very efficient work done by our Publicity Department in attracting tourists to our two main Alpine resorts at the Hermitage and the Franz Josef—this campaign would have probably been of little use had it not been backed up by the provision of good transport and accommodation by private enterprise—all the same, *I desire to especially emphasize that the very fact that efficient State Publicity has brought people to our Alpine resorts places a grave responsibility on the State to see that its visitors and others are properly safeguarded.*

I also wish to point out that in this country the State has introduced a wise policy of laying aside large National Parks and Reserves for public recreation. This course of action also lays upon the State the further responsibility of seeing that these Reserves are properly

⁸ *A.J.* 31, 264, 268.

⁹ *Ibid.* 42, 343.

administered. In fact, no climbing of any consequence is available except on Crown Lands or Reserves.

The State has duly recognized these various responsibilities in every case but that of high Alpine climbing. To drive a public or private motor vehicle on our good roads requires not only a licence but a hundred to one safety regulations; steamer and railway travelling are hedged round with precautions, accommodation again is subject to stringent safety regulations, and at such non-climbing resorts as Rotorua where danger is possible, visitors are safeguarded as much as possible. But high Alpine climbing, which in the hands of inexperienced men is a most dangerous pursuit, is allowed to be carried on under anyone who calls himself a guide without any test as to his skill or licence to prove his suitability for the job. A visitor has to take all the risks.

This is the ground on which I first approached the Minister of the day in 1922, before the Government had leased the Hermitage, and it is on this basis that I have persistently agitated for regulation since that date, efforts which have at last resulted in this Conference.

I do not contemplate any real difficulty *if everyone works wholeheartedly to put the principle of 'licensed guides' into practice*. Having got your Board and your licensed guides, the position would be this:

There would be various high-climbing centres, under different forms of control such as:

- (a) National Parks under Boards.
- (b) National Reserves or Parks under lease to private enterprise.
- (c) Private concerns outside National Reserves, but established to exploit the same and carry on work within those Reserves.
- (d) In addition to these are Crown Lands under no special form of control, such as the country behind the Southern Lakes, the head of Rakaia, and so forth.

There is one common factor in all these, namely, that the State is the owner of the country being exploited, and such owner has the right, and should assert the right, to safeguard as far as possible all climbing activities within these districts.

The *first* effect of my proposal would be that *no* person would be permitted to offer his services for pay, as guide, above the snow-line or on glaciers, anywhere in New Zealand, without a licence.

The *second* would be that wherever a Park Board or private employer employed guides for work upon Crown Lands or Reserves, the State should assert its right to say 'keep your guiding staff on a proper footing, or we shall prohibit you from employing guides and take over control of that work ourselves.'

The proposed Board would function as an assistant to the State by watching the interest of climbers, and if, in its opinion, the conduct of any establishment or at any National Park or Reserve was not satisfactory, it would at once report the facts to the Department—where action would be taken.

I can foresee one objection from the State, namely, that it would involve it in possible loss to ask it to take over the guiding staff at any centre : to this I answer, ' You are inviting people to come to New Zealand, you send them to our Alps, these Alps are all on Crown Lands, or in special Reserves and Parks ; it is your duty to see that regulations are made to safeguard those, who at your invitation, are tempted to indulge in a highly technical and hazardous pursuit. If you have handed over the control to others by lease or otherwise, or if private enterprise is in any way catering for work within your Reserves, your duty is to see that these people are made to provide proper safeguards.'

That is, I submit, the duty of the State, and if it should in the exercise of that duty find it necessary to assume direct control of the staff of guides at any centre, I venture to prophesy that the monetary loss would be trifling, because climbing and winter sports are going to increase so much in the next few years that guides will be able to make enough to cover wages.

[I, of course, pointed out that no interference with guideless parties was possible.—A.P.H.]

REVIEWS.

Im Kampf um den Himalaja. By Paul Bauer. Pp. 174, with 100 illustrations, 5 panoramas and 3 maps. Knorr and Hirth, Munich. 1931. Price 9 marks 40 pf.

THIS is the full narrative of the Bavarian attempt on Kangchenjunga in 1929, the essentials of which were described in Dr. Bauer's admirable article in 'A.J.' 42, 185-202. We can recommend the book unreservedly ; the text is remarkably clear and concise without a touch of modern journalism. The absorbing story of a magnificent team-effort is told coldly and dispassionately, ending up with the short daily record of each party from the departure of the expedition from Darjeeling on July 31 until its return thither on October 29. This diary makes it a simple matter to follow the complete narrative in the text.

The illustrations are very fair—some excellent—while the panoramas are instructive. The maps are far less effective, consisting mostly of poor outline sketches. It should, of course, be remembered that the price of the book is low.

From a German point of view, and for future German expeditions, the appendices will prove of high value. First comes the total cost of the expedition : 40,342 marks, or roughly £2400—a remarkably low figure towards which the D. & C.E.A.V. and A.A.V.M., together with sections of the former, subscribed an amount less than 400 marks below the total expenses. Dr. Beigel contributes an appendix