

CLIMBS IN THE COAST RANGE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

BY HENRY S. HALL, JUN.

THE entire coast of British Columbia, about 525 miles in length, between the United States to the S. and Alaska to the N., is occupied by the Coast Range.¹ The frequent long, deep inlets penetrating the range for distances up to nearly 100 miles bear considerable resemblance to the fjords of Norway, one of the chief differences being not of nature but of man, or rather his relative absence there. The range is crossed by two important rivers: the Fraser, only a few miles N. of the southern border, and the Skeena, less than 50 miles below Portland Canal, an inlet forming the first part of the northern boundary of the province. The railroads from eastern Canada follow the canyons of these rivers, both the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National (old Canadian Northern) coming down the Thompson and Fraser to Vancouver, and the former Grand Trunk Pacific (now part of the National), following the Skeena to Prince Rupert. There is also a local line, the Pacific Great Eastern, from the head of Howe Sound, 40 miles N. of Vancouver, crossing the range to the interior, where it now terminates at Quesnel, on the Fraser River. One automobile road passes through the range also by the Fraser Valley. No other route penetrates the barrier of the Coast Range, except for a horse trail leading E. from Bella Coola, a small village at the head of Burke Channel, and the only settlement of any importance on the entire coast between Vancouver and Prince Rupert, an airline distance of 450 miles. The rivers cutting through the range are too rough for through navigation even by canoe, but there are a few possible ways, all difficult, for foot travel, mostly dating back to the Indian days.

The range varies somewhat in width, but averages about 125 miles from the coast to the interior plateau, which extends eastward 150 miles to the Cariboo and other ranges; these in turn are paralleled by the Rockies, 75 miles farther eastward.

Fifteen years ago the Coast Range was generally supposed to contain no peaks over 10,000 ft. and few over 8-9000 ft. In the summer of 1922, Capt. R. P. Bishop, B.C.L.S., while engaged in survey work near Chilko Lake, on the interior side of the range, climbed a peak from which he saw far to the N.W. two outstanding mountains, the higher or western of which he estimated to be about 13,000 ft., or perhaps even higher than Mt. Robson in the Rockies, at that time the highest known peak in British Columbia, except Mt. Fairweather on the Alaska border.² His subsequent report, both

¹ For the southern portion of the Coast Range, see map facing p. 85.

² See *A.J.* 40, 414-15.

official and to the Press, was received with incredulity. In 1925 Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Don Munday of Vancouver, well-known members of the Alpine Club of Canada, saw from the summit of Mt. Arrow-smith, on Vancouver Island, high peaks to the N. on the mainland, which greatly aroused their interest. Later the same year they climbed Mt. Rodney, near the head of Bute Inlet, 125 miles N. of Vancouver, and definitely located what soon turned out to be the peak which Bishop had seen. They too claimed an altitude of over 13,000 ft. for it, and referred to it as 'Mystery Mountain.' In 1926, with a larger party, they forced their way up the Homathko River, at the head of Bute Inlet and up a tributary, Scar Creek, and stood, after weeks of the most strenuous work, on great snowfields only 10 miles from the summit of 'Mystery Mountain.'

In 1927 they entered Knight Inlet, 40 miles N. of Bute Inlet; followed a powerful glacial stream at its head and came to a huge glacier, from part way up of which they saw the mountain again. As in 1926 they went back for reinforcements, and returned to the attack in July. In August their second attempt failed in threatening storm a few hundred feet below the summit. In 1928 they returned, and succeeded in reaching the snow peak of the mountain which had by then been officially named Mt. Waddington by the Canadian Geographic Board. A rock tower just beyond them to the E. defeated them by less than 100 ft. from conquering the peak, which is now recognized as the highest in the Coast Range (13,260 ft.), and higher by almost 300 ft. than Mt. Robson (12,972 ft.).³

The history of the Coast Range is very brief. Alexander MacKenzie in 1793, the first white man to cross the North American continent N. of Mexico, came through the range by the Bella Coola Valley. In 1864, when the colony of British Columbia had no overland connection with Canada except through the United States, Alfred Waddington, a merchant of Victoria, undertook to construct a road from Bute Inlet through the range by the main Homathko River valley and its W. branch. After some progress had been made Chilcotin Indians from the interior fell upon and massacred most of his party, bringing the work to an end.⁴ Following Confederation in 1871, and as one of the conditions imposed by British Columbia, surveys were commenced for a trans-continental railroad, which was eventually completed in 1885, and Vancouver founded. The Coast Range proved a greater barrier than the Rockies, and several routes, including the Homathko, were surveyed before the line was finally carried through the Fraser canyon. In 1895 several hundred Norwegians settled in the fertile Bella Coola Valley, and their families remain there successfully to this day.

Large parts of the Coast Range are still unsurveyed. In 1912 Dr. Malcolm Goddard of San Francisco climbed two peaks at the S. end of Chilko Lake, Mt. Chilko (8887 ft.) and Mt. 'Merriam' (10,000 ft.).⁵

³ *A.J.* 40, 197-8; 41, 160-6.

⁴ *Ibid.* 40, 414.

⁵ *C.A.J.* v, pp. 20-33.

Bishop in 1922 climbed Mt. Good Hope (10,652 ft.), a few miles S.W. of Chilko Lake, from which he spotted the subsequent Mt. Waddington. He also climbed Mts. Tatlow (10,050 ft.) and Taseko (10,057 ft.), 10 and 25 miles respectively E. of Chilko Lake. In 1927 J. T. Underhill, B.C.L.S., while engaged in triangulating the Kliniklini Valley, which as well as the Franklin which Munday had used, ends in Knight Inlet, ascertained the height of Mt. Waddington. The other principal peaks in the Waddington group between the Homathko and Kliniklini Rivers were named and their heights estimated by Munday in 1927, 1928, and later years. Some of these are Mt. Tiedemany (12,800 ft.), Mt. Combatant (12,400 ft.), Mt. Asperity (12,300 ft.), Mt. Bell (11,800 ft.), Mt. Geddes (11,000 ft.), and Mt. Munday (11,500 ft.), the latter named by the Geographic Board. A sketch map of the Waddington area has been prepared by Munday largely from compass intersection and photographs.⁶

The area N. of the Kliniklini to the Bella Coola is unsurveyed and largely unexplored. Mt. Monarch (11,750 ft.) lies near the eastern edge of a vast expanse of permanent snowfield and glaciers in this section E. of Rivers Inlet. The snowfield culminates in a pure white peak called by Munday 'Silver Throne' (*ca.* 11,000 ft.). It is unlikely that any one has ever approached it.

North of Bella Coola there are not to my knowledge any peaks much, if at all, exceeding 10,000 ft., S. of the Alaska boundary. There are, however, literally scores of peaks from 6000 to 9000 ft. high, rising in many cases most of that distance from their immediate bases along the inlets.

Between the forks of the Homathko are four or five peaks of over 10,000 ft., and between the Homathko and Southgate Rivers Mt. Queen Bess over 10,700 ft., and others in the extensive Homathko snowfields around 10,000 ft. Mt. Good Hope may be the highest peak in the range S. of the Southgate and N. of the international boundary. Mt. Raleigh (10,100 ft.) and Mt. Gilbert (10,200 ft.) lie just E. of the Southgate. Mt. Garibaldi, a hundred miles farther S., is under 10,000 ft. On Vancouver Island two or three summits exceed 7000 ft., of which Victoria Peak, one of the highest, is distinctly visible from Mt. Waddington in clear weather.

Glaciation in the Coast Range is very extensive, due to heavy precipitation, mostly as snow, caused by the warm, moisture-laden air currents from the Pacific. Franklin, Tiedemann and Scimitar Glaciers, 25, 18 and 12 miles long respectively, radiating from Mt. Waddington, are among the longest in the range, although an unnamed glacier coming into the N. side of the Kliniklini Valley is wider at its snout than any of these.⁷ The snowfields which it drains undoubtedly cover several hundred square miles.

Coast Range weather has been the subject of much unfavourable comment, but the climbing months of July and August can present

⁶ *C.A.J.*, 1933 issue (pub. Dec. 1934)—reproduced here.

⁷ Visited by Mr. and Mrs. Munday, 1935.

stretches of lovely, as well as bad, weather. During certain seasons the weather is very suddenly changeable, but there are often periods of a week or more of rain followed by two or three weeks of very fine weather broken only by occasional days of rain.

All climbing from the seaward side of the range can be accomplished only by means of back-packing from tidewater to the base of the mountain which one wishes to attempt. Some of the rivers such as the Toba, Homathko and Kliniklini are passable for a few miles from their mouths by canoe or even by outboard motor boat. There are no horse trails.

Coast Range vegetation is often very beautiful to look at, but nearly always very trying to penetrate. Devil's club, huge fallen trunks often moss-covered, yielding footing, greatly add to the labour of carrying a 60 or 70 lbs. pack on one's back.

Several peaks at the head of Bute Inlet, the highest about 8000 ft., were climbed in 1929 by T. Fyles, S. H. Henderson and A. H. Dalglish. In 1933 Fyles, Dalglish, Neal M. Carter and Myles Winram climbed peaks at the head of Toba River, the highest being about 9150 ft. Directly behind this area is the Lillooet Glacier and valley which had been visited by the same party in 1932, where several peaks between 7000 and 9000 ft. were climbed and others over 10,000 ft. reported. In 1928 Fyles and others visited an area N.W. of Garibaldi Park on the P.G.E. railroad, the climbing running up to not quite 8000 ft. In 1931 Frank Smith and others climbed Kwoiek Peak (8500 ft.), 15 miles S.W. of Lytton on the C.P.R. in the Fraser Valley. In 1932 Mr. and Mrs. Neal Carter climbed a peak 8701 ft., $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles N. of International Boundary Monument '95.' The Mundays continued to visit the Waddington area in 1930, 1931 and 1932, climbing Mt. Munday, Mt. Jubilee (9400 ft.), Mt. Dauntless (9900 ft.) and Mt. Sockeye (9400 ft.), and in general exploring on foot and on ski the Franklin Glacier basin and its ramifications.

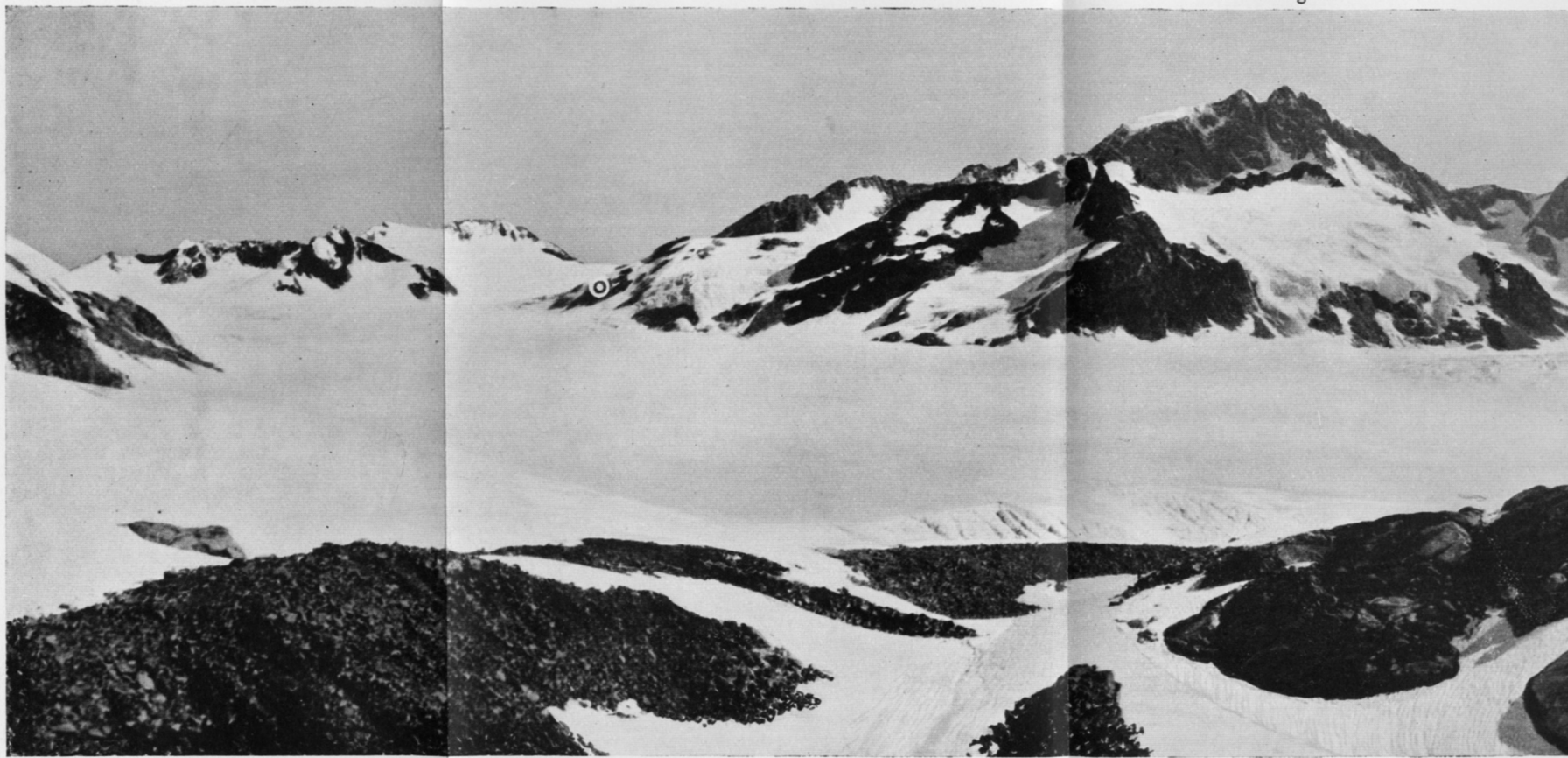
My own experiences in the Coast Range have covered the last four summers, beginning in 1931. In August of that year a chance acquaintance at Lake Louise with Sir Norman J. Watson led, at my suggestion, to the first trip. Watson was sufficiently adventurous to be attracted to the idea of going down to Vancouver, taking the P.G.E. to Williams Lake and there to find out what the next move would be. We were fortunate in encountering, entirely by chance, the semi-monthly mail 'bus which in two days with many stops covered the 150 miles across the rolling interior plateau to Tatla Lake. Williams Lake is about 1900 ft., the road soon rises to 3000 ft., drops sharply to 1500 ft. at the Fraser River bridge, climbs even more suddenly to over 3000 ft., dropping slowly a few hundred feet to the Chilcotin Valley, later to rise just E. of Tatla Lake to nearly 4000 ft., while the lake itself is about 3200 ft. This country is rather dry and seems to be becoming more so. The average precipitation at Alexis Creek, where a night can be spent with the Tom Lees, amounted in the previous twelve years to but 8.32 inches.

Largely covered by pinewoods with little underbrush and the remainder grassland, it is used principally for cattle, which here roam the open range subject only to the annual autumn round-up—something which has long since passed in the United States, and even here fences are now beginning to appear.

At the ranch of Robert Graham, the original settler at Tatla Lake, we met a former Alaska prospector, Pete McCormick. When he heard that we were interested in what he still called Mystery Mountain he brightened up and said he thought he could take us to where it could be seen, and that he wanted to go with someone who might recognize it. We went on the same day to Mackill's at One Eye Lake, and after a day of rain set out under lowering skies on September 5 with Pete, an Indian called Iks, and several horses. By nightfall we were camped near timber-line at 6600 ft. in a driving storm of rain and snow. It was Watson's first camp in North America, but he cheerfully said that it was far preferable to the trenches in France 15 years before and seemed not to mind. Had the next morning been good we could have climbed Perkins Peak (9380 ft.) near by for a view which I knew must be good, as it had been used, according to Pete, as a triangulation station on a recent survey. Snow flurries with frequent partial clearing as we travelled S.W., above timber-line—except when crossing a stream valley—took us 10 or 12 miles farther by the second night. The third day brought a full-fledged snow-storm and at noon we came suddenly to a great drop. A clearing revealed a deep valley with two large lakes some 4000 ft. below, which we soon spotted as Middle and Twist Lakes on the W. branch of the Homathko (sometimes called Moseley Creek). While the others made camp below at tree-line, I scrambled to a rocky vantage point and waited to see the object of our visit down the valley. Five hours that day and eight the next, finally, in a cold N. wind, yielded a fleeting glimpse of sharp granite peaks heavily glaciated about 30 miles away. I was satisfied that this must be the Waddington group, which I now hoped would become my goal of another year. Fresh deer meat around the fire that night and more snow concluded a satisfactory reconnaissance trip. Watson also evolved a future plan for himself, a ski crossing of the range to the sea. One bright day and a morning of rain brought us back to One Eye Lake, whence we returned by the same route to Vancouver.

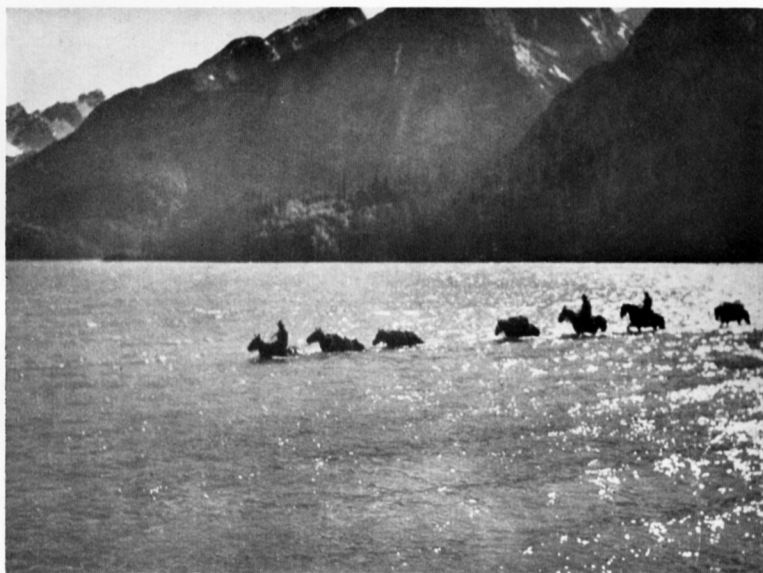
Early in July 1932 I took the Union S.S. Co.'s *Venture* up the coast from Vancouver to Bella Coola. Pete met me at the dock and we were soon motoring up the valley with Mr. Arnold, who with Mr. T. A. Walker has built Stuie Lodge about 40 miles inland near the site of an Indian encampment of that name used now for a short period only each year by the Indians from the interior. Stuie, only 600 ft. above sea-level at the forks of the Atnarko and Talchako, the latter a large white stream draining the glacier at the N. side of Mt. Monarch, is surrounded by peaks from 5000 to 9000 ft. high. The

Mt. Waddington.



PANORAMA FROM ICEFALL POINT OF UPPER ST.

© Our



Photo, W. A. Don Munday.]

FORDING TWIST LAKE ON A SAND BAR.



Photo, H. S. Hall, jun.]

MTS. COMBATANT AND TIEDEMANN FROM 12,700 FT. ON MT. WADDINGTON.

[To face panorama.]



Photo, H. S. Hall, jun.]

MT. BLACKBURN (10,050 FT.), CLIMBED IN 1932.



Photo, H. S. Hall, jun.]

MT. COMBATANT FROM 11,000 FT. ON MT. WADDINGTON.



Photo, H. S. Hall, jun.]

STORM WARNING OVER MT. WADDINGTON, 1933.



Photo, H. S. Hall, jun.]

THREE GRIZZLIES AT 125 YARDS.



Photo, H. S. Hall, jun.]

TIEDEMANN GROUP FROM SCIMITAR GLACIER, 1933.



Photo, H. S. Hall, jun.]

MT. GEDDES (SQUARE TOP) AND MONARCH ON HORIZON.

[To face p. 293.]

country to the S.W., in the right angle between the Talchako and Bella Coola Rivers, is virgin as far as mountain ascents go and contains peaks certainly up to 10,000 ft.

My first move with Pete was to try with horses to reach Mt. Monarch by the high country between the Talchako and Atnarko Rivers, the latter coming in from the S. about 15 miles E. of Stuie. After covering about half the distance in 3 days, we found that for two men with horses the difficulties were such that other routes should be tried first. We accordingly returned to Stuie and set out by way of Anahim and Charlotte Lakes in the interior for Knot Lake.

A good trail to Charlotte Lake took 4 days. From there with George Powers, a ranch owner, and his Indian wife we rode up on to the high ground bordering the E. side of the range and, mostly above tree-line, covered the remaining 25 miles in a day and a half. Camp was made on July 19 at 6000 ft. overlooking the deep trench valley of the N.-flowing Atnarko and S.-flowing N. fork of the Kliniklini River, the latter draining Knot Lake, which lay 4000 ft. below us. Directly across from the lake stands Mt. Monarch, but clouds obscured any view of the higher part during the four days which we spent here. I climbed once to 8050 ft. behind the camp for a view, and another day walked some miles S. along the rim of the valley while the men attempted to work out a route down to the lake for horses. My view was restricted to a cloud ceiling at 9000 ft. and no possible route for horses was found.

In 1933, with a party including the Swiss guide Hans Fuhrer, I returned here, and this time Pete had brought an Indian trapper who provisions his trap-cabins in the autumn with pack horses. We camped for 6 days on the westerly shores of Knot Lake and attempted Monarch unsuccessfully. From a bivouac at tree-line, here about 5500 ft., we walked several miles to a horseshoe-shaped glacier, climbed to its head at the S.E. base of the actual peak, but found that the only possible route from this side was protected by a bulging pocket glacier on the final ridge. This might have been attempted, but the danger of avalanches on its convex surface decided us to examine the S.W. side. A drop of 2000 ft. followed by a climb of 500 ft. brought us at 8000 ft. to the base of the long, broken and apparently not too promising S.W. ridge at 3 P.M. Some of the party felt that as a night out would be certain we should postpone the attempt and in the meantime seek a possible shorter route from Knot Lake. The latter, as I had expected, did not exist and we returned to the bivouac over the S.E. ridge at 4 A.M. after 25 hours of almost continuous travelling during which it was estimated that we had climbed over 9000 ft. and covered some 30 miles.

In June 1934, with the guide Ernest Feuz, I made a rapid trip to Knot Lake and accomplished somewhat of a *tour de force* by making a complete first circuit of Mt. Monarch in 50 hours, including a passing attempt to climb it from the N.W., halting only for the 6 hours

of darkness each night. I estimated the distance covered as approximately 35 miles and the altitude climbed between 11,000 and 12,000 ft. Monarch is well defended on all sides, and the early-season coating of ice and frost feathers on the upper rocks presented additional obstacles. Mt. Waddington stood out superbly 50 miles to the S. Little did we suspect that the first fatal climbing accident in the Coast Range had occurred on it that same day.

The bulk of the climbing seasons of 1932 to 1934 I devoted to the area nearest to Mt. Waddington. In August 1932 Pete McCormick took Hans Fuhrer and me down the Homathko past Middle and Twist Lakes, where after some heavy trail-cutting we camped at 2800 ft. on the creek above and E. of the one which we soon learned drains Scimitar Glacier into the Homathko. Hans and I twice climbed to points of vantage over 8000 ft. up on a ridge between the creeks on the N. side of the Homathko and obtained what was probably the first close view that any one, certainly climbers, have ever had of the Waddington-Tiedemann group from the E. We were thrilled at the resemblance of the granite peaks S. of Tiedemann to the Chamonix Aiguilles. We later climbed Mts. Razorback (10,667 ft.) and Blackhorn (10,050 ft.) S. of the W. branch of the Homathko and saw clearly the summit tower of Mt. Waddington, which from closer had been hidden behind Mt. Tiedemann. On this clear day, also, stood out Mt. Good Hope and other peaks beyond the Southgate River, as well as Monarch to the N.

Mr. and Mrs. Munday and two graduate students, Alfred E. Roovers and Donald W. Brown of New York, with Hans Fuhrer again as guide, joined me in 1933. We retraced our steps of the previous year down the Homathko, spent 6 days cutting a trail up Scimitar Creek, took the horses 12 miles up Scimitar Glacier and pitched a climbing camp a mile from Fury Gap at the base of Mt. Waddington. Minor climbs, several trips for reconnaissance purposes, a failure on Mt. Geddes about 800 ft. below the top, and a splendid first ascent of Mt. Combatant, consumed three weeks. The Combatant climb, involving a night on the summit (12,400 ft.) in absolutely clear, still weather with a full moon, was one of the finest experiences I have ever had in the mountains. The ascent took 16 hours, half the time on good rock, until 6.30 p.m., and the descent 9 hours by a different route, of which the principal feature was the backing down and step-cutting for 2 hours in a long ice couloir.

On this trip, as is generally the case in the Coast Range, we encountered much game, such as moose, deer, wolves, bear (both black and grizzly), goat and smaller species, such as foxes and beaver. The deer and goat on occasion, after a party has been out for some time, afford very pleasant variety to the diet. Bear as usual were harmless and sometimes afforded considerable amusement. A small black bear almost walked into the cook tent one day only to flee when he saw Pete. At supper one evening, as we all sat around the fire next to a large rock, Roovers suddenly looked up

and saw an enormous grizzly eyeing us at no great distance. We all stood up, and so did he to full length on his hind legs. Presently he walked slowly off, stopping every few yards to give us a contemptuous glance, as if to say 'Why should I hurry for you?' When the bear, whose 14-inch tracks were later measured as 75 yards from the fire at their nearest point, was perhaps twice that distance away, Hans let fly a lusty Swiss jodel. The bear was panic-stricken, starting away in huge bounds over the flat, sending up little puffs of dust as he went, the whole suggesting nothing so much as an animated cartoon. That bear, particularly grizzly, cannot face a good honest jodel we learned again on a partly open alder slide near Mt. Monarch. After I had photographed three, standing near together at not more than 125 yards distance, Hans jodelled and off they went. As soon as they stopped to look around another jodel would send them on their way again. On our return in the afternoon they were again eating berries on the same spot, but Hans was considerate and we passed them unmolested about 100 yards away.

The eastern route of approach from Tatla Lake to Fury Gap which we used on this trip was followed in March and April 1934 by Watson and Beauman with their guide, Alfred Couttet of Chamonix, on their ski trip across the range to Knight Inlet.⁸ They climbed Fury Gap with some difficulty but comparatively safely. We had not attempted it in July the year before principally on account of the constant danger from avalanches and rock slides. From the top of the Gap they followed the route down Franklin Glacier which the Mundays had used in 1927 and subsequent years. This was the first ski crossing of the Coast Range and the party, particularly Watson, deserves much credit, more especially since none of them was familiar with that part of the world save for Watson's very brief introduction to it with me in the autumn of 1931. Clifford White of Banff was forced to return before reaching Fury Gap because of a leg injury. Horses in charge of Pete McCormick were used down the Homathko as far as Scimitar Creek.

Two possible lines of attack on Waddington from the E. were disclosed to us in 1933, but both were eliminated from the class of reasonable risks by the almost certain danger of avalanches. After we had declined to risk Fury Gap, a very promising route was found in the form of a high glacier corridor beginning from the N. end of the Waddington-Combatant col and proceeding diagonally north-westwards to join the Mundays' 1928 route of ascent from the W. From the summit of Combatant at 4.30 on a cold, clear morning, ordinarily the safest time, we heard and saw the entire width of the hanging glacier above break off and sweep the 'corridor route' on a front of several hundred feet. One or two other minor slides occurred there the same day. We dismissed Waddington to another season for an attempt from the Pacific side, turning to other climbing and

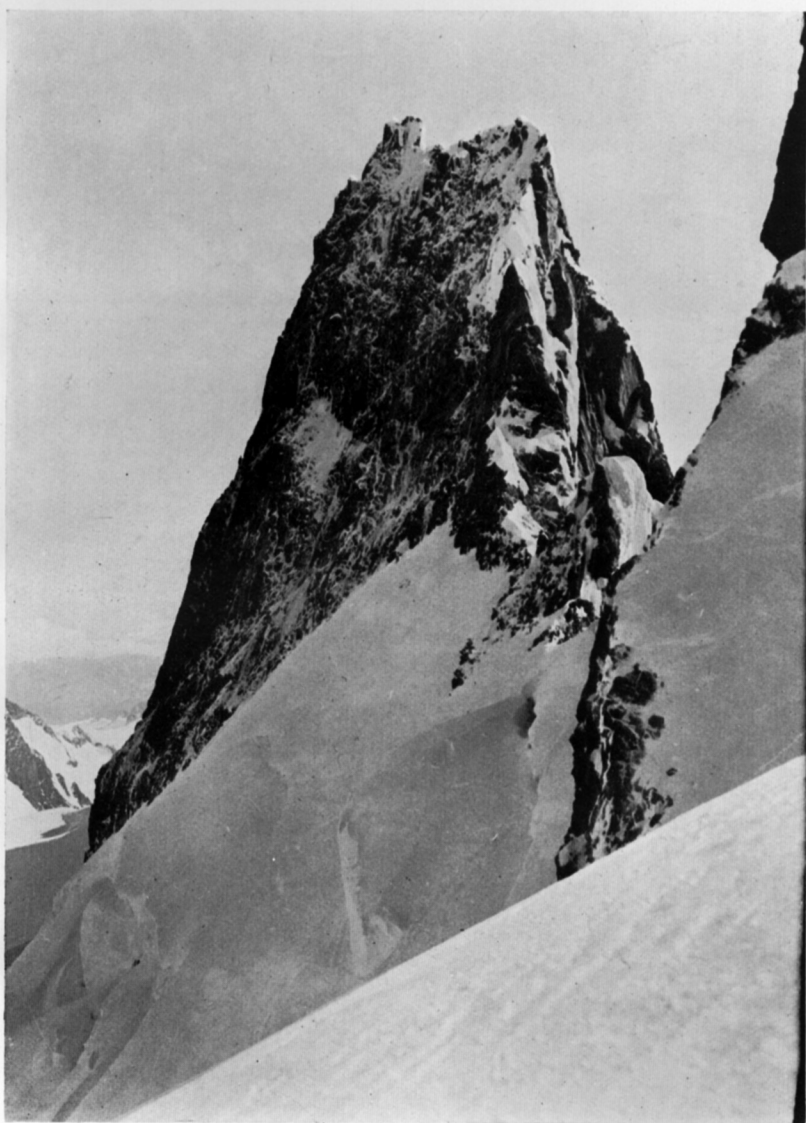
⁸ Pp. 75-86.

reconnaissance around the Scimitar Valley. Tiedemann could have been done from Combatant; a drop of 1000 ft. by a fairly steep rock and ice slope and 1500 ft. of ascent with some step-cutting to the summit seemed to be involved, perhaps a matter of 3 or 4 hours from peak to peak. From Tiedemann there was little choice of routes back to camp other than over Combatant again. This would certainly have meant another night out, which did not meet with unanimous favour and was abandoned, particularly since little else would have been gained save the ascent of one more named peak less than a mile from Combatant. In a new country this is seldom worth while, at least until somewhat more distant peaks have been accomplished.

Several glacier climbs were made in order to find out what lay beyond the head of each. The S. side of Mt. Geddes went well until vertical cliffs were encountered 800 ft. from the summit. Two days later the N. side was found to consist of 2000 ft. of very steep ice-covered rock and was not attempted. Two glacier passes to the Kliniklini Valley were found by the divided party on our last day before beginning the return to Tatla Lake. From base camp at the tongue of Scimitar Glacier, 5 days of steady travelling with light loads brought us out. There is a full season's work for a strong party on the granite spires of the group lying between the Tiedemann and Scimitar Glaciers, the peaks ranging in height from 10,000 to 12,400 ft., and there is Tiedemann itself, on which some better way should be found than over Combatant. This is certainly the most spectacular area in the Coast Range and offers more climbs from one base than anywhere else, at least in our present knowledge of the range.

July 1934 saw the Mundays, Hans and me on our way back to Mt. Waddington, this time by the way of Knight Inlet and Franklin Glacier. With us were also two nineteen-year-old students from Vancouver—Philip Brock, son of Dean Brock⁹ of the University of British Columbia, and his friend Ronald Munro. Hans and I followed the others up the coast two weeks later and in so doing somewhat shirked our share of the back-packing from the head of the inlet to a point 7 miles up Franklin Glacier and about 14 miles from the sea. On July 30 a south-easterly Coast Range storm set in and persisted with little intermission for *nine* days, during three of which we relayed, but thereafter awaited developments. On August 9 after two days' relaying we made a climbing camp at a delightful spot a few hundred feet above the main Franklin Glacier at 7200 ft. on a tiny patch of moss and grass among the rocks fed by trickles from near-by snow-banks and surrounded on all sides by ice. There we were only 4 miles from Waddington and 6 miles from Fury Gap (8500 ft.).

⁹ Dean Brock was killed in an aeroplane accident at Alta Lake, B.C., in July 1935.

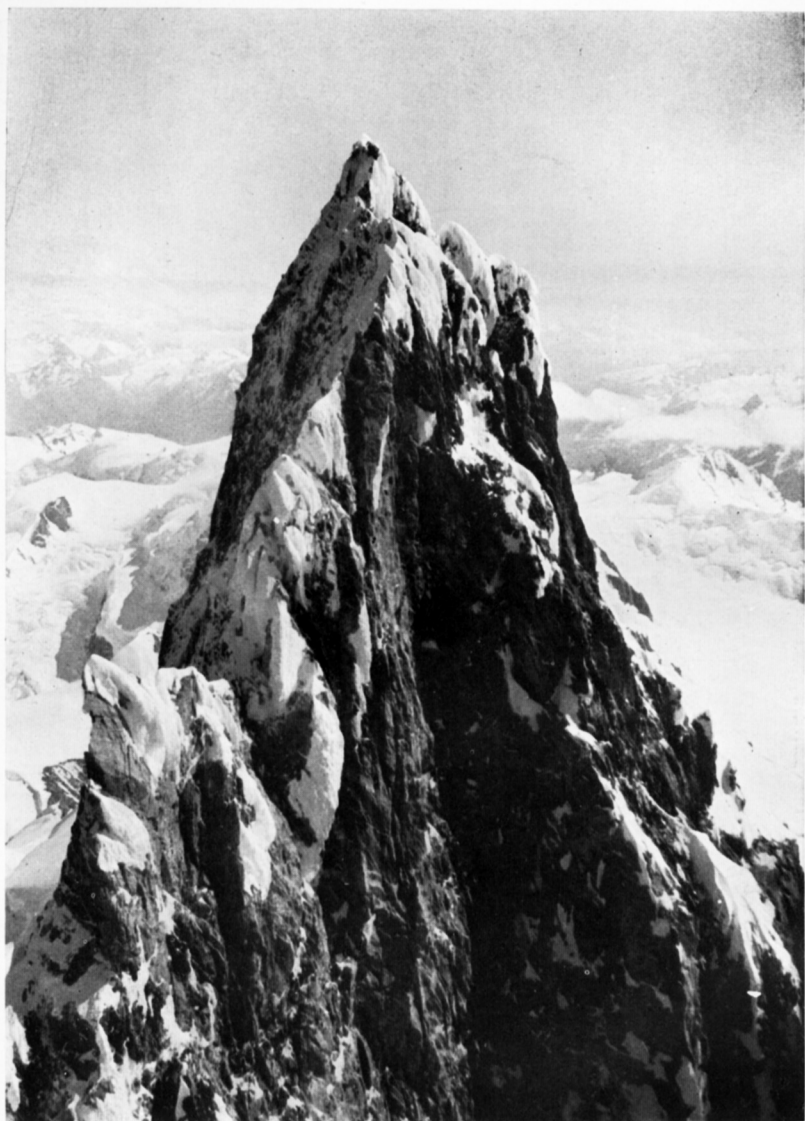


Photo, H. S. Hall, jun.]

SUMMIT TOWER OF MT. WADDINGTON.

About 800 ft. visible.

[To face p. 296.]



Photo, H. S. Hall, jun.]

SUMMIT OF WADDINGTON FROM N.W. PEAK.

The next day witnessed our first attack on Waddington—direct at the S.E. peak from the head of Dais Glacier, a feeder of the Franklin. Six hours from camp up the glacier and névé at its highest point brought us to the pink and whitish gneissic-schist rocks rising in almost unbroken cliffs to the summit.

As we approached it from the upper névé I am sure that the Mundays, Hans and I had all had about the same feeling. We ought to have placed a high camp or made a bivouac at the foot of the rocks. I should not care to say that this climb will not be made, but we were of the opinion after an hour on the rocks that we had best give it up and make directly for the N.W. peak the first good day following. We did not turn back until there was little or no anchorage for Hans, who was leading, and 2000 ft. below the summit was no place to begin using pitons, as long as we felt that some entirely different route offered better chances.

Two doubtful days, a trip to the head of the Franklin at Fury Gap which we looked down upon from the slopes of Mt. Spencer, and on the 14th we left camp at 3.20 A.M. for another attempt on the actual summit of Waddington. The Mundays in 1928 had followed the entire N.W. ridge of the mountain from their high camp at Fury Gap, a vertical rise of 5000 ft. and an airline distance each way of nearly 4 miles. From the head of Dais Glacier we found a steep couloir where crampons brought us by 8 A.M. to the main ridge at 10,800 ft. A long snow grind with the crevasses all well bridged, the upper 1000 ft. in powdery snow which only becomes solidified above 11,500 ft. where exposed to the wind, brought us to a small plateau at the base of the final steep snowy step. The névé bergschrund at the base of the snow peak gave momentary trouble when a frail bridge collapsed under the feet of the leader, but no harm was done. Two or three strong kicks made a good foothold for each step on the 50° slope, and at 2 P.M. we stood at the base of an unsubstantial snow platform, the actual highest point. This we occupied in turn.

The summit rock tower beyond rose perhaps 60 ft. above us from an intervening 500 ft. gap. We did not then know of the Neave party's attempt of seven weeks before, nor do I believe they realized what lay ahead of them when they turned back on the left face of the tower as we saw it. The highest known peak between Mt. Rainier in the State of Washington and Mt. Fairweather on the Alaska-B.C. boundary, this must be one of the most difficult culminating points of any considerable mountain range in the world. The view was good, but smoke and light clouds beyond 50 or 60 miles in every direction prevented it from equalling the practically perfect view of the year before from Mt. Combatant. That was probably one of the clearest views I have ever had from any mountain, and under the most unusual conditions of every light variation during 12 hours, from evening sunlight through full moonlight to morning sun an hour above the horizon.

Backing down the upper cone we skirted its N. base to confirm our idea of the year before that the foot of the rock tower could be reached from there, which turned out to be the case. By common consent we did not attempt the tower. The Mundays and I felt that we were not sufficiently expert on rocks to expect success, and perhaps because of that as well as the actual difficulties, Hans was quite willing to forgo the attempt. We felt at the time that it approached the impossible, but in retrospect I realize that such an opinion seldom finds confirmation in mountaineering. The rocks were badly glazed with ice and there were layers of what appeared to be frozen wind-blown mist on all the most exposed steps of the uppermost 200 ft. Munday said he had never, in several seasons, seen these rocks less coated and yet the *six* days immediately preceding had been without storm and mostly brilliant.

After a day of rest we set out at an early hour on the 16th for Mt. Bell, a fine peak some 5 miles W. of Fury Gap. A very deep valley-head guarded by a nearly perpendicular icefall prevented a direct attack on the peak in one day from camp, and when we had learned this, with but two days remaining, there was no time to return to camp for more food and equipment for a bivouac of two nights in the valley—or else at least one night on the peak. We accordingly examined the heads of the creeks flowing on both sides of Mt. Bell to the Kliniklini River which give the mountain a relief of over 9000 ft. on two sides. A long broken ridge leading to the steep easterly arête or ice-clad N. face of the mountain, the dividing crest between the head of Dorothy Creek at the S. and Bell Creek on the N., led from the easterly rock wall bordering the Franklin névé where we stood. It may well provide a route for the next party. Return to camp over the snowfields, soft under the midday sun, was as usual a grind. The next day when the Mundays with Brock and Munro set out for a last climb to a point of vantage on the western rim of the Franklin snowfields, which they named Mt. Finality, Hans and I remained in camp, where various jobs, such as bringing my diary up to date, provided plenty of occupation aside from mere enjoyment of the surroundings and rest.

The march out to Knight Inlet occupied 3 days with a day of showers intervening at base camp, and by the afternoon of the 22nd, after a lovely 6-hour trip down the inlet in a motor-boat owned by a trapper named Stanton, we boarded the steamer for Vancouver at Glendale Cove.

Two other parties tried for Waddington in 1934 from opposite sides of the range at the same time. Ferris and Roger Neave with Campbell Secord of Winnipeg, after an arduous back-packing trip of 19 days down the E. fork of the Homathko from Tatlayoko Lake, reached Tiedemann Glacier. They bivouacked at 10,500 ft. on the S.E. ridge of the mountain and, on June 28, attacked the summit tower direct by its precipitous N.E. face only to have to give up when about 500 ft. below the top. Weather had been against them

since leaving Tiedemann Glacier and the most difficult part of the climb lay ahead of them. They roped down into a bergschrund for the night and returned to Tiedemann Glacier the second day thereafter.

A Vancouver party made up of Alec H. Dalgleish, Neil M. Carter, Alan Lambert and Eric Brooks came in by Knight Inlet, camped at Icefall point 2 miles above our subsequent base camp, and made their attempt by way of the Buckler Glacier and S.E. ridge on June 26. At about 10,500 ft. the leader, Dalgleish, an experienced and daring climber, for some reason never explained, fell. The rope broke over sharp rocks; he went down some 800 ft. after striking head first on the rock and was dead when the others reached him. The attempt was abandoned, and later a party came in to give the body permanent burial on the Buckler Glacier; a memorial cairn was erected at Icefall point.

Further attempts will doubtless be made until this amazing peak succumbs.¹⁰ We can only hope that enthusiasm will be tempered with the sound judgment so far prevailing and that no further lives will be sacrificed.

There is still much exploration remaining to be carried out in the Coast Range and of course only a small proportion of the more important peaks have been climbed. The glistening snowfields between the Kliniklini and Bella Coola Rivers and at the heads of Rivers and Kingcome Inlets and the S. Bentnick arm of Dean Channel are virgin territory. The Lillooet and Homathko snowfields are hardly touched. No mountaineers to my knowledge have investigated the coast N. of Bella Coola. Unless one enjoys the hard work of reconnaissance and approach as a preliminary to all climbing and is prepared for frequent disappointments along with occasional successes, the Coast Range is not to be recommended; but to some of us an eventual triumph is worth everything that precedes it.

CLIMBING IN THE TAKHT-I-SULEIMAN GROUP, N. PERSIA.

By D. L. BUSK.

IN an earlier number of the *ALPINE JOURNAL*¹ some account has already been given of an attempt to unravel the intricate topography of the central Elburz. On the first occasion we had recoiled

¹⁰ A Californian party of good rock climbers led by Bestor Robinson made the third ascent of the N.W. (snow) peak of Mt. Waddington in 1935, bivouacking only a few hundred feet below the actual summit, whence they were driven down by a blizzard. The weather was bad, as I understand it was generally on the B.C. coast this summer.

¹ 45, 334-41, with map.