ANDEAN NOTES, 1953–4

By T. CROMBIE

THE following is a summary of the principal activities in the Andes during 1953 and 1954, which have not hitherto been recorded or reviewed in the JOURNAL. A remarkable amount of climbing, and several new ascents, have been accomplished in the period by European and local mountaineers, and only a few of the more important expeditions can be mentioned here. For further details, readers of the JOURNAL are referred to the excellent *Anuario del Club Andino Bariloche*, edited by Señor J. F. Finó, which, besides Argentina, summarises every year events throughout the range.

PERU

Cordillera de Vilcanota

In July–August 1953, a German party from the Munich Academic Alpine Club visited the region and made a number of interesting first ascents, including the highest point of Ausangate, which had not been attempted by the Ghiglione expedition of the previous year (see *A.J.* 59. 359). There would appear to be some doubt about the height of 6,384 m. assigned to it by the Peruvian maps: Hr. Bolinder of the Ghiglione expedition, in a note clarifying the various ascents, gives the following figures:

Principal Peak (6,550 m.). (März, Wellenkamp and Harrer, July 24, 1953.)
East Peak (6,500 m.). (Bolinder, Ghiglione and Rebitsch, August 16, 1952.)
Central Peak (6,350 m.). (Rebitsch, August 15, 1952, and all three aforementioned, August 16, 1952.)
North-west Peak (6,250 m.). (Bolinder and Rebitsch, August 17, 1952, and Ghiglione, August 18, 1952.)
West Peak (6,050 m.). (Unclimbed.)

The 1953 German party also ascended the following new peaks in the same group:

Colque Cruz (6,111 m.). (Wellenkamp, Steinmetz, Harrer, and März, August 4, 1953.)
Cayangate IV (6,001 m.). (The same party, August 13, 1953.)
Huayna Ausangate (5,700 m.). (Wellenkamp and Steinmetz, August 2, 1953.)
Campa II (5,550 m.). (Wellenkamp and Steinmetz, August 22, 1953.)
Surimani (5,450 m.). (Wellenkamp, July, 1953.)

For an account of this highly successful expedition, see *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Alpen-Vereins, 1954*, pp. 24–38.

Cordillera de Huayhuash

A scientific and climbing expedition of the Austrian Alpine Club, under the leadership of Prof. H. Kinzl, visited this region in June–July 1954. A glaciological survey was carried out, and the ascents included : Puscanturpa (5,652 m.), Nevado Sarapo (6,148 m.) Jirishanca Chico (5,467 m.), Ninashanca (5,637 m.) and the second ascent of Nevado Rassac (6,040 m.). An attempt on Yerupaja was defeated by soft snow. Altogether thirteen peaks over 5,000 m. and two over 6,000 m. were climbed.

See *Mitteilungen des O.A.V.*, July and August 1954.

Cordillera Blanca

A United States expedition, including several members of the successful Salcantay party of 1952, revisited Peru in 1954 and made a first ascent of Aganapaccha. The second and third ascents respectively were also carried out of Tschopi-Kalki and Nevado Pisco. (The note in *A.J.* 60. 176, erroneously calls the latter a first ascent : this was made by the Franco-Belgian Alpamayo Expedition of 1951.[1])

Cordillera de Vilcabamba

Signor Piero Ghiglione, accompanied by Felix Marx, was again in the Southern Peruvian Cordillera in 1953. The following new ascents were made :

Humantay, Northern Shoulder (5,700 m.). (Ghiglione, Marx, Matzenhauer, and Parodi, August 11, 1953.) The summit height is 5,914 m.
Colquepunco (6,020 m.). (Ghiglione and Marx, August 22, 1953.)
Huacratanca (5,910 m.). (Ghiglione and Marx, September 7, 1953.)
Halancoma (5,625 and 5,685 m.). (Ghiglione and Marx, September 6, 1953.)

The same two climbers, on July 22, 1953, also made the first ascent of Lasontay (about 6,000 m.) in the Huancayo district.

As briefly recorded in *A.J.* 60. 170, F. Kasparek and T. Matzenhauer were killed on June 1, 1954, while attempting Salcantay by the East ridge, in very bad weather conditions. Apparently a cornice gave way and they fell 1,200 m. down the South-east face.

Bolivia

There has been no report of activity in the Bolivian Andes during the period under review, comparable to Hans Ertl's climbs in 1950–51 (see *The Mountain World, 1953*, pp. 149–70). The note in *A.J.* 60. 173, seems to imply that the first ascent of the North Peak of Illimani took place in 1953 : it was made by Ertl and Schröder on May 6, 1950.

[1] We regret and apologise for the error—Editor.

ARGENTINA

Northern Argentina

The very high, but technically easier, 6,000-m. volcanoes of the northern provinces have received their share of attention from local clubs (the biggest of these, the 6,870-m. Ojos del Salado,[2] has now been climbed thrice). The party to make the first recorded ascent of Llullaillaco (6,723 m.), in December 1952, found indications that it had been climbed in pre-Colombian days.

Aconcagua Region (Mendoza)

For an account of the French ascent of the South face of Aconcagua, see *A.J.* 60. 17–24.

The year before the French attack on the South face, an interesting new route on Aconcagua was successfully followed on January 18–24, 1953, by Dr. F. Marmillod and his wife (Swiss), Lieut. F. Ibañez, the late leader of the Argentine Dhaulagiri Expedition, and F. Grajales. This route traverses under the cliffs of the West face, and emerging on to the upper part of the South-west ridge, crosses the South summit to the top. Two bivouacs were required, but the route could probably be made more direct. It must offer magnificent views of the great southern precipices and afford a welcome alternative to the beaten path up the North flank. It is the measure of the development of Andean mountaineering that the highest peak of the continent has now been climbed by four separate routes and twice in winter.

Among the many expeditions in this region by members of the Club Andinista Mendoza and Centro Andino Buenos Aires, mention should be made of the ascent of the Cerro La Mano, Cupula Güssfeldt, and three other virgin peaks of about 5,500 m. immediately to the north of Aconcagua, which were christened Zurbriggen, Fitzgerald, and Reichert, after the pioneers of exploration in this district (January, 1953).

The well-known American climber Richard Burdsall, then in his sixtieth year, died in the Horcones Valley on February 20, 1953, from the effects of exhaustion and cold suffered during a successful ascent of Aconcagua by the normal route.

Bariloche

The very active Club Andino Bariloche has in recent years recruited several fine climbers of Slovenian origin who have settled in the district. The local standard of rock climbing is notably high, and among expeditions farther afield, the Club has sponsored the first complete crossing of the Patagonian Ice-cap (1952) and the ascent of San Valentin (see *A.J.* 59. 432–5).

[2] Ojos del Salado is reported to have been ascended in January last by a six-man expedition which carried out a survey of the mountain and claimed that its height is 22,991 ft. This figure must be treated with reserve until the party's measurements have been checked and confirmed, but if correct it means that Ojos del Salado, and not Aconcagua, is the highest mountain in the western hemisphere.—D. F. O. D.

All three peaks (Chilean, Principal, and Argentine) of the Cerro Tronador were traversed in one day (February 4, 1953) by T. Pangerc. The first ascent of the main peak only, by G. Claussen in 1934, took two days (see *A.J.* 46. 370).

Chilean Patagonia

Following the success on San Valentin, the Club Andino Bariloche in January 1954 organised a new expedition to the Cerros Paine in S. Patagonia, north-west of Punta Arenas. This group, though slightly lower, rivals the FitzRoy massif in the mountaineering interest of its cirque of rock aiguilles (the Cuernos and Torres del Paine) and its glaciated principal summits (the western or highest peak, 3,150 m., and the eastern peak). The latter had previously been climbed by the Germans Zuck and Teufel in 1937, but the rest of the group was unexplored from the climbing point of view.

The Argentine party consisted of H. Schmoll (a member of Agostini's San Lorenzo expedition in 1943); Otto Meiling; T. Pangerc; B. Lantschner; H. Kaltschmidt; and E. Hernandez. The ascent of the eastern peak (2,700 m.) was repeated by a new route, and Pangerc and Lantschner on January 4, reached a point some 100 metres below the westernmost of the two 'horns' of the Paine Medio (2,450 m.) before being turned back by mist and the lateness of the hour. The party then made a final attempt on the principal peak by way of the broken glaciers leading up to the West ridge. This route was clearly threatened by hanging séracs, and on January 17, a vast avalanche overwhelmed without trace Schmoll and Pangerc, who were last seen immediately beneath the ice-wall, about 150 ft. high and 300 ft. wide, which suddenly peeled off. On account of the weather and the avalanche danger (an abrupt rise in temperature during the previous night ought surely to have warned this party) the Paine Principal—together with Mount Sarmiento which it somewhat resembles—is one of the most formidable unsolved ice problems of the Patagonian Andes, and its attendant aiguilles clearly call for artificial climbing of a high order.

For some fine photographs of this little-known but quite accessible group (it is easily reached from Rio Gallegos or Puerto Natales), see Chapter V of Agostini's *Andes Patagonicos*, and the account of the recent expedition in the *Anuario del Club Andino Bariloche*, No. 23, pp. 5–15.