

ALPINE NOTES

	Year of Election
THE ALPINE CLUB OBITUARY :	
Runge, J. C. H.	1893
Schuster, Lord	1894
Clarke, L. W.	1900
Ziemann, H. P.	1905
Driver-Holloway, J. S.	1908
Morrison-Bell, Sir A. Clive	1908
Bullock, G. H.	1909
Sharpe, W. S.	1911
MacCarthy, A. H.	1916
Hickson, J. W. A.	1922
Jeffrey, R.	1928
Lehmann, C. T.	1932
Foster, W. J.	1934
Thornycroft, O.	1939
Lowndes, D. G.	1949
Bourdillon, T. D.	1951
Viney, R. M.	1951
Attlee, C. G.	1953
Blodig, Dr. Carl (<i>Hon. Member</i>)	1953

HONOURS AND AWARDS.—We congratulate the following Members on the receipt in recent Honours Lists of the distinctions shown against their names :—

Sir Edwin Herbert	K.B.E.
Dr. F. P. Bowden	C.B.E.
Commander C. J. W. Simpson	C.B.E.
Mr. J. W. Rolleston	M.B.E.

Lord Hailsham has been appointed First Lord of the Admiralty.

We congratulate R. C. Evans on receiving the Founder's Medal of the Royal Geographical Society for 1956. It is a matter for satisfaction that for three years running the Founder's Medal has been awarded to members of the Club: in 1954 to Sir John Hunt; in 1955 to Commander C. J. W. Simpson; and now to Charles Evans.

Sir John Hunt, R. C. Evans, E. E. Shipton and H. W. Tilman have been made Honorary Members of the American Alpine Club.

C. W. Brasher has been nominated to represent Great Britain in the 3,000 m. Steeplechase at the Melbourne Olympic Games.

ALPINE JOURNAL.—The current volume, No. lxi, will consist of three issues, Nos. 292, 293, and 294 ; No. 295, for November 1957, being the Centenary issue, will be a volume on its own.

JEAN ESCARRA.—We deeply regret delay in recording the death at the age of seventy of our French Honorary Member, Professor Jean Escarra, on August 14, 1955. Professor Escarra was elected to Honorary Membership of the Club in 1932 ; an obituary notice about him will be found in *La Montagne* for April 1956, by Monsieur de Ségogne. A lawyer by profession, Professor Escarra was a man of very varied interests and gifts ; during the last war he came to England after the German invasion of France and became a leading figure in the Free French movement.

ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA.—We offer our congratulations to this Club, founded on March 28, 1906, on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary.

BENJAMIN FOSSON.—The Italian newspapers have announced the death at the age of ninety-eight of Benjamin Fosson, of Fiéry, Val d'Ayas, the *doyen* of Italian guides. When he was ninety years of age Fosson ascended Castor.¹

ANGELO DIBONA.—We regret to report the death of this well-known guide who passed away at Cortina d'Ampezzo earlier in the year. Dibona was at the height of his powers in the period immediately preceding the First World War, and in 1913 with Dr. Guido Mayer of Vienna carried out a number of notable ascents in the Western Alps, including the first ascent of the Ailefroide Centrale by the North (Coste Rouge) arête. Another of their achievements was the conquest of the Aiguille du Pain de Sucre, now known as the Aiguille Dibona.

Although he had made many new ascents in the Eastern Alps Dibona had no love for mechanised mountaineering and in the course of more than fifty years climbing he is said to have employed only eleven pitons. He was seventy-seven years of age.

ANOTHER MYSTERY SOLVED.—According to Press reports a skeleton was discovered last summer in the Weisshorn glacier ; a purse found with it contained an hotel bill which showed that the remains were those of Georg Winkler, of Munich, who disappeared on the Weisshorn on August 16, 1888.

Winkler, born in 1869, was an early exponent of solitary climbing. He made alone the first ascent of one of the three Vajolet Towers, which now bears his name, and carried out other difficult climbs in the Dolomites, but had not an extensive experience of ice and snow climbs.

¹ *A.J.* 56. 185.

Two days before his death he climbed the Rothorn by himself from Zinal and then attempted the West face of the Weisshorn. He was not seen again ; search parties subsequently found a woollen cap and a photograph (identified as belonging to him) in the remains of the avalanche by which he had evidently been overwhelmed.

ACCIDENTS.—The annual summary of accidents published in *Die Alpen*, (July 1956) records that in the summer of 1955 there were forty-one fatal accidents in the Swiss Alps involving fifty-one deaths, though not all of these could be classified as mountaineering accidents.

AIGUILLE VERTE.—Many attempts were made on the Aiguille Verte before Whymper's ascent in 1865. According to a contemporary newspaper, quoting the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Whymper himself had made three unsuccessful attempts. Adams Reilly wrote that it had 'been often attempted but seldom described'² and T. S. Kennedy recorded that Chamonix guides had made at least twenty attempts, some of which 'were merely sham expeditions organised to extort money from their employers.'³

Kennedy included an attempt on the Aiguille Verte in 1860 in his qualification list for the Alpine Club, but this was by no means the earliest attempt, as suggested by Mumm,⁴ and Birkbeck made two attempts in 1864.⁵

Sir Alfred Wills, however, was contemplating an attempt in 1857 and his letters to his wife (given to the Alpine Club by the late Major-General E. F. Norton) give a little information about some attempts at an earlier date than those referred to above. In a letter dated August 14 1857, Wills wrote: 'Balmat and I examined well the Aiguille Verte from the Jardin. He has had 3 tries and failed. One other way remains to be tried, by the arête between the Aig. de Moine and the A.V. That we are going to try, & if that cant be done it is impossible. . . . We shall go and sleep one night at the Jardin, the next day we shall again take it very easy, sleep at the foot of the Aiguille among the rocks in a place Balmat knows of, above the top of the Gl. de Talèfre and the 3rd day we shall essay the great peak itself. I rather expect to fail. Balmat rather hoping to succeed. *Nous verrons.*'

Wills did not attempt the Verte in 1857. On August 30 he went up Mont Blanc and on September 13 wrote to his wife from Sixt: 'I have always forgotten to say anything about the Aiguille Verte. We have not tried and now have no chance. . . . The A.V., if to be accomplished at all, is very difficult if not dangerous. All who have tried it have brought back grave news of rolling stones. The higher parts are excessively broken up. On one of Balmat's 3 trials he gave

² *A. J.* 1. 272.

⁴ *A.C. Register* 1. 175.

³ *A. J.* 3. 68.

⁵ *A. J.* 44. 331 and 52. 260.

himself up for lost in one couloir, and the last party who tried it, about ten days ago, came back with one of the party quite laid up from a broken head. A rolling stone had struck him on the forehead. They had been out 50 hours and had had no success. No one has yet tried it *our* way, wh. we think will be easier and less exposed than any other, and we still hope to try it that way some day, but after our success on the Mt. B. Balmat seemed more than ever unwilling to risk anything by an ill-timed and precipitate attempt. So for this year all is up !'

Another attempt in 1857, of which no details are available, is recorded in the Führerbuch of Peter Bohren over the signature of F. S. Blunt.

Perhaps the earliest recorded attempt was that of Count Fernand de Bouillé in 1856. An account of this attempt was published in the *Journal de Genève*, August 29, 1856, and is reproduced in *Die Alpen*, 1951, p. 242.

MOUNT SARMIENTO.—The first ascent of the highest (2300 m.) mountain in Tierra del Fuego was made on March 7, 1956, by C. Mauri and C. Maffei, members of an Italian expedition.

Many previous attempts had been made on Sarmiento ; Conway tried the ascent in 1898 with Antoine Maquignaz and a Chilean sailor, but was defeated by a sudden and violent storm when about 3,000 ft. from the summit.⁶ De Agostini, in an attempt in January, 1915, reached a height of over 6,100 ft.

Three members of the same expedition (L. Carrel, L. Pelissier and L. Barmasse) have also climbed Monte Italia (2350 m.) and Monte Francese (2150 m.), two of the highest summits of the Cordillera Darwin, the little-known range to the north of the Beagle Channel.

RUWENZORI.—Early this year, R. F. Davies and six other South Africans (not connected with the Cape Town party who suffered a fatal accident in January⁷) enjoyed fair weather in the area. They climbed Johnston by a steep route up the centre of the Johnston Glacier, Elena by a presumed new route on the rock face (north-east) to the left of the original route, and Margherita by a variation of the 1938 German route. On the last-named, the party kept to the right-hand side of the snowfield and then reached the ridge between Margherita and Albert by ascending the rock ridge which runs up the right-hand side of the snowfield ; the party of two took six hours in good conditions.

On March 25, Piero Ghiglione and Georges Gualco, with the guide Ernest Frachey, made the first ascent of the West face of Margherita. This is a steep ice-face, some 2,000 ft. in height, said to be comparable to the North-east face of the Lyskamm.

The Uganda Survey Department have now completed their survey on the ground. The map should be finished early in 1957.

⁶ *A. J.* 19. 521.

⁷ *A. J.* 61. 214.

GOUGH ISLAND.—The Gough Island Scientific Survey made the presumed first ascent of the highest mountain (nearly 3,000 ft.), and in the course of their survey work ascended all the major peaks. They also climbed the 6,760-ft. snow-capped peak on Tristan da Cunha.

ANDES.—An international party, which included the Dutch climbers G. Egeler and T. de Booy, led by the French guide Lionel Terray made the first ascent of Veronica (Cordillera de Vilcabamba) on May 15 and of Pic Soray on June 3. They also achieved the second ascent of Salcantay. A British party has made the first ascent of Huagaruncho.

Other important Peruvian ascents include: Cerro Vanoloma (20,046 ft.) by P. Ghiglione, July 18, 1955; Huandoy, South Peak (20,177 ft.) by H. Schmidt and A. Koch, July 15, 1955. Members of this German expedition to the Cordillera Blanca also climbed Nevado de Caras (19,768 ft.) and made ascents of the Principal and West Peaks of Huandoy, the South Peak of Huascarán, and Nevado Pisco.

MOUNTAINS OF ELBURZ.—Mr. Busk points out that in M. Bernard Pierre's article (*A. J.* 61. 63) we failed to check with earlier sources and a number of errors occur.

Takht-i-Suleiman's height was accurately surveyed by H. Bobek at 15,154 ft. (4,619 m.).⁸ Alam Kuh was not estimated by Bobek and Busk at 5,100 m.; Busk suggested 15,850 ft. (4,831 m.),⁹ and Bobek gave 15,819 ft. (4,821 m.).¹⁰

Sardabrud = river of cold water. Alam Kuh = mountain of the mark (or banner). Siah Kaman = black bow.

Pierre's surmise that Lashkarak might be of interest is not borne out by Busk who climbed it but found it too easy to be worth mention.

Pierre's Azad Kuh is assumed by Busk to be the fine fang far to the east of Alam Kuh; the only name Busk could get for it was Charz-kunam Kuh which means 'What-shall-I-say-mountain.'

In Pierre's article the French transliterations of proper names were used; it would have been in conformity with ALPINE JOURNAL practice to use the English transliterations, viz.:

Kuh for Kouh; Takht for Takt; Shaneh for Chane (Shaneh Kuh is the Germans' Punta Martha¹¹); Qurma for Gorma; Sardabrud for Sarabroud; Ab-i-garm for Abegarm; Lashkarak for Lach Garak.

CENTENARIES OF FIRST ASCENTS AND PASSAGES IN 1956.—The 1856 *haute saison* commenced on August 5 when the guides Jean Alexandre Devouassoud and Ambroise and Jean Simond, who had been sent ahead by their employer—the Comte Fernand de Bouillé—to explore

⁸ *A. J.* 49. 245.

¹⁰ *A. J.* 49. 245.

⁹ *A. J.* 47. 303.

¹¹ *A. J.* 49. 245 *et seq.*

the way, climbed the south peak (12,606 ft.) of the Aiguille du Midi. ' . . . Dix minutes devaient leur suffire pour arriver au sommet, et pourtant trois quarts d'heure se passèrent sans qu'on les vît revenir. Enfin, au bout d'une heure, au moment où nous allions nous risquer à quitter notre si frêle abri, Alexandre Devouassoud reparut pâle et tremblant : " Monsieur le comte, — me dit-il, — votre drapeau flotte là-haut, l'ascension est faite ; mais pour toute la fortune du monde, je ne repasserai pas l'arête que nous venons de traverser ; j'ai fait une croix, c'est fini. Il n'y a pas un de vous tous, — nous dit Simond d'une voix haletante, — capable de passer là sans y laisser sa vie. Mon âme y passera peut-être après ma mort, mais mon corps jamais ! Du reste, l'affaire est faite, le drapeau y est, mais personne ne me forcera à y retourner jamais. . . . C'est pour vous comme pour nous, monsieur le comte ; le drapeau y est, que voulez-vous de plus ? Tout l'honneur n'est-il pas pour vous qui nous avez mené là. . . . '12

On August 16, E. von Fellenberg, with Jakob Tritten, accomplished the first recorded ascent of the Wildstrubel (10,640 ft.).

In the Pennine Alps, on August 20, C. E. and W. Mathews, accompanied by Auguste Simond, were the first tourists to reach the summit of the Mont Avril (10,978 ft.). ' . . . As the Mont Avril is separated from the Graffeneire only by the glacier of Mont Durand, we saw that it would be an admirable point of view for studying that perplexing mountain, and thinking, too, that a fine day would be better spent on a mountain top than in a valley, we abandoned our intention of exploring the Chermontane Glacier, and sending Felley to the châlets with the major part of the provisions, resolved to ascend Mont Avril. Leaving to our left the path leading to the Fenêtre, we took a slanting track up the mountain, and after toiling through the loose slates of which it is composed, reached the summit at noon. . . . '13

To the north-east, a large party consisting of E. L. Ames, J. J. Imseng (the Curé of Saas) and three English companions, with Franz Andenmatten and three other guides, climbed the Lagginhorn (Laquinhorn) (13,156 ft.) on August 26. ' . . . The active old curé seemed proof against fatigue, and devoted himself most energetically to the assistance of two of my companions who had not much experience in the high Alps, and made rather slow progress in consequence. Andenmatten and I were, in consequence, far in advance towards the end of the ascent, and owing to his delicate forbearance in suggesting that I should go before him for the last few yards, I was the first to plant foot on the hitherto untrodden summit. . . . '14

¹² Extract from p. 141 of Stéphen d'Arve's *Histoire du Mont-Blanc et de la Vallée de Chamonix*. 2nd edition. Paris, 1872.

¹³ Extract from W. Mathews' article on pp. 100-1 of *P.P. & G.* 1st series.

¹⁴ Extract from E. L. Ames' article on p. 216 of *P. P. & G.* 1st series.

Two days later, Ames, again accompanied by Franz Andenmatten but with another Imseng, gained the top of the Allalinhorn (13,212 ft.). '... The worst, however, was passed; the wall of rock gradually receded, and the ascent became once more practicable. In half an hour more we joined Andenmatten, who was waiting for us on the top of the ridge, and from here there remained only a gentle slope of snow to the summit, which we reached soon after eleven o'clock. Andenmatten's pet object was now attained. He cheered and "jodelled" enthusiastically, exclaiming at intervals, "Der Herr Pfarrer sucht uns gewiss mit dem Spiegel" (I'm sure the curé is looking out for us with his telescope); and seeing a quantity of loose rocks lying on one side of the peak where there was no snow, he called on us to assist him in building a "Steinmann" (cairn), as a memorial of the ascent, and a palpable refutation of any doubts that might be thrown by envious tongues on our achievement. . . .'¹⁵

On the same day, about 11 km. to the east, A. T. Malkin and a companion were the first tourists to ascend the Latelhorn (Punta di Saas) (10,492 ft.). '... In climbing up there is not much view; your back is turned on Monte Rosa, and your attention is likely to be engaged in the choice of hand- and foot-hold; not to say that there is a natural tendency to keep away from the side which commands the view and at the same time drops 4,000 feet into Antrona. So it came to pass that I saw but little until I reached the narrow summit, and then I literally screamed. From the Simplon to the Ortler Spitze, in the distant Tyrol, every peak in the Alps was in clear and distinct view. . . .'¹⁶

Finally, on August 29, C. J. Blomfield and R. Walters, with, probably, Johann and Stefan Zumtaugwald of Zermatt, following a route now known as *l'ancien passage*, made the first recorded tourist crossing of the Neu Weisstor (11,476 ft.).¹⁷

J. SANSEVERINO.

MOUNTAINEERING DOGS.¹⁸—The first dog to reach the summit of Mont Blanc belonged to Michel Balmat, chief guide on the ascent of H. M. Atkins in August 1837. Atkins was very impressed with the performance of the dog and wrote that it 'had evidently been trained for the purpose, mounting the steep rocks like a chamois.' In spite of its training, however, the party was frequently retarded by the little dog, even before reaching the Grands Mulets, and 'heartily wished him at the bottom of the glaciers.'

¹⁵ *Idem*, p. 228.

¹⁶ Extract from p. 211 of *A. J.* 15. (A. T. Malkin's Diary).

¹⁷ For another Centenary see *A. J.* 61. 211.

¹⁸ See *A. J.* 60. 378; 61. 210.

D. W. Freshfield records in his diary that when he was on the top of Mont Blanc in 1863 his chief guide, François Dévouassoud, 'narrated the adventures of a Spitz, the first canine climber who reached the summit. The poor dog was pitched over the crevasses, and helped along by his master, and thus reached in safety the top of the "Mur." Hence, he trotted along merrily at the head of the party apparently determined to be the first on the top. But, strange to relate, as the dog climbed higher and the air grew colder, his tail which he carried as usual done up in a neat twist on his back, after the fashion of his tribe, was seen slowly to unfold itself till it blew out in a stiff streamer, frozen straight and hard as a poker. The poor beast still trotted bravely on, but frequently turned his head with a thoughtful air as if wondering what could possibly be the matter behind. Happily, as soon as he returned to more genial climes his tail unfroze, and before he reached Chamonix the curly-tailed dog was himself again, and has ever since strutted about with a loftier twist behind than any of his fellows.'

The list of these canine mountaineers seems to be getting lengthy, but to complete the record, it may be noted that 'Fifi' a dog belonging to the wife of H. G. Link, leader of many successful parties on Aconcagua, accompanied her mistress to the summit on March 7, 1940. Aconcagua, indeed, seems to be a breeding ground of high-altitude dogs, as our own member, Mr. Crombie, found himself being accompanied (until measures of dismissal were adopted) by no fewer than eight assorted mongrels.

ANTONI MALCZEWSKI.—Of the men who made early ascents of Mont Blanc, many are in the unfortunate position that very little is known about them. Among these was Antoni Malczewski, who ascended Mont Blanc on August 4, 1818, accompanied by Jacques Balmat. This note is devoted to further information which has come to light concerning Malczewski.

In a recently published work of Juliusz Slowacki¹⁹ there is a reference to Malczewski's ascent of Mont Blanc in a letter from Slowacki to his mother, Mme. Salomea Bécu. The letter is written from Geneva on July 15, 1833, and the relevant extract follows, kindly translated by Mr. W. Rybotycki :

'As I look at Mont Blanc every day, Malczewski very often comes to my mind, the poet who after his death became so famous because of one poem that now he towers above all our poets. When reading a description of the ascent of Mont Blanc I found Malczewski's name on the last page, among those of the heroes of this difficult expedition, but

¹⁹ Juliusz Slowacki, *Dziela. Listy do Matki* (Wroclaw, Zakl. Narodowy im. Ossolinskich 1949), xi, 137.

his name was so badly distorted that if I had not known that he had ascended this mountain, I should never have identified him. . . .'

Slowacki's remark about the manner in which Malczewski's name has been treated is only too well justified. Some accounts do not give his name at all. For example, he is referred to by Captain Basil Hall²⁰ as follows: 'We stumbled upon a Polish Count who had just returned from an expedition to the summit of Mont Blanc. The account he gave us of his adventures, and those of his son, a boy of only fourteen, and the animated assurances of the guides, who were looking out for a fresh job, that, with a little patience, a good deal of resolution, a moderate degree of strength, and adequate faith in their knowledge, nothing was safer or surer than such a trip, had well-nigh tempted us to embark in a similar undertaking.' Hall was mistaken in supposing that the fourteen-year-old boy was Malczewski's son; he was Jacques Balmat's boy. It will be noticed that Malczewski's name was not given by Hall; nor was it given in the account published in the *Bibliothèque Britannique*²¹, nor in *Blackwood's Magazine*²², at his own request. In other accounts it has suffered from considerable variation in spelling, as the following list will show.

<i>Gazette de Lausanne</i> , August 11, 1818	. . . . .	M. Antoine Malczesky.
Jeremiah van Rensselaer, 1819	. . . . .	Count Malazesky.
William Howard, 1819	. . . . .	Count Malzeski.
Frederick Clissold, 1822	. . . . .	Count Matezeski.
Henry Humphry Jackson, 1823	. . . . .	Count Mateyeski.
C. Ritter, 1824	. . . . .	Count Malczesky.
Markham Sherwill, 1825	. . . . .	Count Matezeski.
Charles Fellows, 1827	. . . . .	Count Mateyeski.
William Hawes, 1827	. . . . .	Count Matayeski.
John Auldjo, 1827	. . . . .	Count Mateyeski.
C. E. Mathews, 1898	. . . . .	Count Matzewski.
H. F. Montagnier, 1911	. . . . .	Count Matzeswky.

This is perhaps the place in which to summarise the chief events in the life of Poland's great Mountaineer-poet. He was born in 1793 near Krzemieniec and was educated at the Lyceum of that town. He joined the army in the defence of the fortress of Modlin and fought in the Napoleonic war. He travelled in Europe from 1818 to 1820, he met Byron in Venice, settled in the Province of Wolyn, and left for Warsaw in 1823. His most famous poem, 'Maria,' was a kind of Saga. His premature death at Warsaw in 1826 is suspected to have been suicide.

GAVIN DE BEER.

²⁰ Basil Hall, *Patchwork* (London 1841), i, 42.

²¹ 1818, ix, 84.

²² 1818, iv, 180.

HIMALAYAS.—The season has been one of considerable activity. The Swiss Expedition achieved a double triumph; the summit of Lhotse was reached for the first time on May 18 by E. Reiss and F. Luchsinger (the latter's attack of appendicitis had, earlier in the expedition, given rise to considerable anxiety). E. Schmied and J. Marmet made the second ascent of Everest on May 23 and on the following day A. Reist and H. von Gunten also reached the summit.

The persistency of the Japanese attacks on Manaslu has at last been rewarded. Four members of the party reached the summit, Mr. Imanishi with the Sherpa Gyalzen on May 9, and Messrs. Kato and Higeta on May 11. Six camps were established and the final assault was made from the south by a route not previously used. The expedition was led by Mr. Yuko Maki, who made the first ascent of the Mittellegi arête of the Eiger.

Dhaulagiri is now the highest unclimbed mountain, the Argentine attempt this year having failed. Two unsuccessful attempts were made, on May 15 and May 25, to reach the summit from Camp VII. According to Press reports a Franco-Swiss expedition is planned for next year and an Argentine team will make another attempt in 1958.

In the Karakorums a British expedition consisting of Messrs. J. Hartog, J. Brown, I. McNaught-Davis and Dr. Tom Patey reached the summit of the Muztagh Tower (23,800 ft.). The party, in pairs, made the final climb by the West ridge on July 6 and 7 from a camp at 21,000 ft. : both parties had to bivouac on the descent. Mr. Hartog was, unfortunately, badly frost-bitten. The mountain was also climbed by a French party a few days later.

The first ascent of Gasherbrum II (26,360 ft.) was made by three members of an Austrian expedition who reached the summit on July 7.

An expedition organised by the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute and led by Major N. D. Jayal made an unsuccessful attempt on Saser Kangri, 25,170 ft.²³ The Deputy Leader is reported to have said, 'It is impossible to climb it.'

A party of British women mountaineers visited Kulu under the leadership of Mrs. Joyce Dunsheath and climbed six peaks between 19,000 and 20,000 ft. in the neighbourhood of the Bara Shigri Glacier.

Captain M. Banks led a four-man Anglo-American party in an attempt on Rakaposhi. Blizzards and persistent bad weather defeated three major efforts to reach the summit. A point 2,550 ft. below the top was reached.

SKAGASTÖLSTIND.—On July 21, the eightieth anniversary of the first ascent of Skagastölstind, Slingsby's grandson, Jocelin Young, with another member, H. C. Bugge, President of the Norske Tindeklub,

²³ See *A. J.* 56. 149.

repeated the ascent by the Slingsbybrae. Both the weather and the subsequent dinner in the Tindeklub were magnificent. With other members of the Tindeklub they had a further three days' good climbing in the Horungtinder before the weather broke. It is significant of the generous spirit of Norwegian mountaineering that Slingsby's memory should still be cherished with affection and admiration. It may be recalled that on the fiftieth anniversary of the first ascent of Skagastölstind, Eleanor Slingsby (Mrs. G. W. Young) climbed the mountain accompanied by the Tönsbergs, father and son, our Honorary Member Lord Adrian and his wife being of the party.

OJOS DEL SALADO ²⁴.—The controversy as to whether Ojos del Salado or Aconcagua is the highest mountain of the Western Hemisphere, remains, at the time of writing, unresolved. Ojos del Salado was first climbed in 1937 by a Polish expedition, when its height was officially accepted as 6,870 m. Early in 1955, much interest was aroused by reports of an expedition of the Argentine Tucuman Andean Association, who claimed to have repeated the ascent and to have found the height to be 7,100 m., or about 150 m. more than the mean of the most exact measurements of Aconcagua. It has since, however, been established without much doubt, that this party had in fact climbed not Ojos del Salado, but the north summit (about 6,500 m.) of the Cerro Sin Nombre, a peak some 12 km. to the south.

In 1956 no fewer than four expeditions attempted Ojos del Salado, and on February 2 Mathias Rebitsch, of an Austro-Swedish party which included Hr. Anders Bolinder and his wife, reached the summit alone, found the 1937 Polish records, and claimed the second ascent. His tentative estimate of the height on this occasion was 7,043 m. He was followed three days later, on February 5, by six members of a Chilean expedition led by Captain René Guajardo, who made the climb from the Chilean side, and reported a measurement of 7,085 m. Despite some confusion, in the bearings given by the Chileans for the peak, there seems no reason for not accepting this as the third ascent.

In view of all the publicity given to these expeditions, the Club Andino de Chile, in their journal, *Revista Andina*, has issued a statement, which, after congratulating Capt. Guajardo, concludes as follows: 'We consider it premature to affirm that Ojos del Salado is the highest peak of the Americas, despite the interest and good faith demonstrated by the members of the last (Guajardo) expedition, because a fact of such importance can only be admitted after the Military Geographical Institutes of Chile and Argentina have confirmed the corrections of Capt. Guajardo's surveyors—made in haste and over-publicised—which announced a measurement of about 7,100 m. Without any

²⁴ See *A. J.* 60. 389.

display of ultra-nationalism, we would be the first to rejoice if this figure were to be confirmed, but as long as the competent technical authorities do not do so, we will continue to record on our maps the height of 6,870 m. as established for Ojos del Salado by the Chilean and Argentine Boundary Commissions, after a series of prolonged and exact trigonometrical surveys of this frontier peak.'

T. CROMBIE.

PATAGONIA.—Two expeditions have recently continued the exploration of the Cordillera del Paine.²⁵ In November 1954, O. Meiling and A. Vallmitjana, of the Club Andino Bariloche, approaching the group from the west, reached points at 2,270 m. under the North peak, and 2,370 m. under the South peak. They were followed, in January and February 1955, by a Chilean expedition, four of whose members succeeded in climbing the Central Peak (2,750 m.) and the South Peak (2,600 m.). They also reached approximately the same point on the North Peak as the Argentines. The photographs taken by these expeditions confirm the mountaineering interest of this group and the formidable defences of the Principal Peak (2,900 m.) which remains unclimbed.²⁶

T. CROMBIE.

QUARTER-WEIGHT NYLON SLINGS.—After the tragic Jägihorn accident, a quarter-weight nylon sling was found on or near one of the bodies. This had been cut through in two places, suggesting that it had been in use either as a runner or as a belay, and under tension had been cut through by the rock. This follows at least three other recent cases in which the nylon has been cut with disconcerting ease. Notwithstanding the advantages of this thin line, particularly for threading, it seems clear that climbers would be well advised to use a heavier weight for slings and particular care should be taken to avoid the possibility of tension forcing the sling against a sharp edge of rock.

²⁵ See *A. J.* 60. 390.

²⁶ See *Anuario del Club Andino Bariloche*, No. 24, 1956, pp. 5-14.