

ALPINE NOTES

(Compiled by D. F. O. Dangar)

PERSONAL—Four members of the Alpine Club have appeared in recent Honours Lists, and we congratulate:

Sir Edwin Herbert on a Life Peerage;

Colonel W. McEwan Younger on a Baronetcy;

Professor I. A. Richards on being made a Companion of Honour;

Mr. A. S. Pigott on the O.B.E.

We also congratulate Sir John Hunt on being made an Honorary Member of the Swiss Alpine Club and Colonel J. O. M. Roberts on being awarded by the Americans the National Geographic Society's Hubbard Medal for his services with the American Mount Everest Expedition.

LOUIS SEYLAZ.—We report with much regret the death of this distinguished Swiss mountaineer; he was struck by a falling boulder and killed instantly while descending the Sex du Parc aux Feyes, above Corbeyrier, on October 27, 1963.

Professor Seylaz was born in 1882 and was a former editor of *Les Alpes*. He was an Honorary Member of the Swiss Alpine Club.

SCHALLIJOCH.—A small bivouac shelter, with sleeping accommodation for eight, has been erected *c.* 60 ft. above the Schallijoch by the Basel section of the Swiss Alpine Club.

QUOTA IGM, 2,992 m.—For lack of a better, this strange name has in the past been applied to a point on the North ridge of the Civetta, which only achieved distinction in 1957 when the Austrians D. Flamm and W. Philipp forced a route up the North-west face. A proposal has now been made to name it Punta Tissi in honour of the Italian climber Attilio Tissi, who carried out much exploratory work and opened a number of new routes in the Civetta group; he was killed in 1959 on the Torre Lavaredo. *Alpinismus* reports that the ascent of the North-west face by M. Boysen and P. Nunn was the ninth, and not the tenth, as stated in *A. J.* 68. 293.

ACCIDENTS.—The annual summary in *Les Alpes* reports that 108 people lost their lives as the result of accidents in the Swiss Alps in the summer of 1962. Accident statistics are available since the founding of

the C.A.S. and some of these are given for earlier years. Between 1859 and 1885 there were 134 deaths in the whole chain of the Alps¹; in the next six years, 1886-91, there were 214 deaths, while in the three years 1911-13 the number had risen to 486. Of the 151 victims in 1913, two-thirds were Austrians and Germans.

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS—September, 1963, was noted in climbing circles for the centenary celebrations of both the Italian and Swiss Alpine Clubs. The Italians began it, with their meet centred in Turin, a beautifully built, spacious baroque city within sight of the snow-covered alpine peaks, and lending itself easily to a large concourse of mountain-lovers. The C.A.I. did us very well. They invited representatives from all the alpine clubs, put us up in the best hotels and arranged excursions on two levels—Tigers and Tourists. Alas! at the age of seventy-three I could not keep up with the Tigers, and had to be a Tourist.

On September 4 the former set off in three parties for Mont Blanc, Monte Rosa and the Gran Paradiso; two or three days were allowed for these expeditions. Meanwhile, the Tourists got going on September 5 with a motor-coach run over the four passes: Mont Genève, Lautaret, Galibier and Mont Cenis. Next day we went to Courmayeur and up the ropeway to the Rifugio Torino on the Col du Géant. I felt ashamed of myself, on this my first experience of going up a mountain by mechanical means. I always distrusted civilisation; and here I was, with other mountaineers, going up in twenty minutes what used to take several hours of hard, hot foot-slogging. But I gather everyone does that sort of thing nowadays in this degenerate but accomplishing age, and my offer to resign from the Alpine Club as having disgraced myself was not accepted by the Honorary Secretary who informed me that he always used the ropeway to get to the Torino hut.

Gradually the others trickled into the Rifugio, some from Mont Blanc, some from the plains of Italy, and at 1.30 or so we all assembled at the Rifugio Nuovo to have a sumptuous lunch; the usual alternatives were printed on the menu, but as the cloudy weather had cut down the number of people, we were all asked to eat *all* the alternatives (including three pasti, four meats and a fish, three puddings, cheese, and fruit). Speeches followed, and as representative of the senior alpine club, I was asked to make one in French, which I think I did. At least, it seemed French to me, and was evidently understood by the others, as they fulfilled the acid test of comprehension by laughing at the jokes (such as they were). We got up from the table at 4.30. Alas! in the dense cloud

¹ C. E. Mathews, in 'The Alpine Obituary', *A. J.* 11. 78, records the names of forty-nine tourists and thirty-eight guides and porters who lost their lives in the Alps in the years 1856-82.

and falling snow, there had been little to do except to sit at table and nibble. The moment we left, the clouds dissolved.

On September 7, a bus-load of us went to the Col de Nivolet. More cloud. September 8, Sunday, was spent in Turin for the big centenary meeting in the New Theatre. Here again, the Italians did us proud, and produced the longest meeting ever, in which I had to speak for the A.C. (and in the name of the other clubs), in English this time, followed by at least twenty of the other clubs in various languages. Then we were given an hour of the life and work of Quintino Sella, who founded the Italian Alpine Club. There followed an immense lunch at Turin's largest restaurant, and a three-mile walk to the hotel. (Lifts in cars offered but declined.)

Next day we went to Crissolo at the foot of Monte Viso and, while Tigers climbed the mountain, Tourists divided into two parties—speleological (à la Yorkshire Ramblers Club) and open-air (to a view-point and lunch by car—I atoned for the Torino ropeway by being the only guest who walked up the 3,000 ft. to the view-point).

Thus ended eight days of lavish and wonderfully organised entertainment, for which all of the guests are very grateful to the C.A.I. It was delightful and interesting to meet so many of the great names in Italian mountaineering, among others old friends like Count Aldo Bonacossa (with whom I had climbed forty-three years ago) and our fellow guests from other alpine clubs. I met my wife in Milan, had ten days in Italy and four at Zermatt, and then began the S.A.C. (or C.A.S.) centenary celebrations in Interlaken. In these the C.A.S. was joined by the U.I.A.A. who were responsible for some of the events. As in Turin, so in Interlaken, we were royally entertained, and except for drinks ordered personally, guests had not a penny of expense during the celebrations. Solari and Sinclair were guests of the U.I.A.A., Charles Warren and I were the guests of the C.A.S., and our wives were p.g.'s.

Under the auspices of the U.I.A.A. we went up in the Jungfrau railway to the Jungfraujoch, once again in cloud; but for twenty minutes the clouds cleared enough for us to see the whole of the Aletsch glacier view, with some of the mountain-tops. The next day being also cloudy, a steamer trip on the lake of Thun, with a picnic on board, led us to the courtyard of the castle of Oberhofen, where an excellent sermon was preached in French and German, on the transient but significant beauties of the mountains, in the presence of the President of Switzerland.

On September 27, the first meeting was held in the secondary school, the second (after a Kursaal evening performance of traditional songs and dances) was the official reception by the Interlaken municipality and its sections of the C.A.S., with presentation of all the gifts, including that of our club; a polylingual evening, with plenty of champagne, which made it more polylingual still.

On September 28 there was a variety show at the Kursaal, followed by a ball. On September 29, a fine, sunny day, in the semi-open air Tellspielplatz the national, as opposed to the local, celebration took place, with an address from Dr. Wyss-Dunant, as well as one from the President of the Swiss Confederation, and a performance of part of the folk-play of William Tell. The official lunch then took place, and in the afternoon my wife and I and some of the other delegates went up to the Harderkulm in the cable railway and got a grand view, and a rewarding walk along the ridge, a fitting end to a well organised and enjoyable four days of celebration.

Our friends both in Italy and Switzerland gave us a much more exciting time than we could give to our guests in 1957. But then, they have the Alps and we have only the Club, founded to visit other people's mountains. And we must remember the size of these continental clubs. The C.A.I. has 90,000 members, as against our 600-odd. So they can more easily, with numbers *and* mountains on their side, make a good show of it. May we, who were privileged to be delegates, offer to both Swiss and Italians, our congratulations as well as an expression of our thanks?

T. H. SOMERVELL.

The S.A.C. Centenary was also marked by two exhibitions organised by the A.B.M.S.A.C. At the British Museum, last autumn, a very notable showing was made of some of the Swiss Prints collected by the late R. W. Lloyd, and given by him to the Museum; while at the Alpine Club Gallery, from November 25-30 last, a more general exhibition was laid on, to illustrate the past hundred years' climbing in Switzerland.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

WINTHROP YOUNG PAPERS.—The Alpine Club has received, by the generous gift of Mrs. Geoffrey Young and Mr. Jocelyn Young, a fine collection of the correspondence and other papers of Geoffrey Winthrop Young. Young had the valuable (if to heirs a sometimes inconvenient) habit of preserving quantities of letters, and the Alpine Club benefits by correspondence spread over half a century.

Some of the later papers are loose and it is to be hoped that they will be bound up; but Young had himself mounted and indexed many of the letters, newscuttings, etc. in four large scrap-books. For anyone interested in the history of climbing during the present century, these volumes should prove a quarry. Young, though his war injuries largely hampered active climbing after 1914, nonetheless, as everyone knows, still took an intense interest in anything relating to mountains. He was, indeed, a link with pioneer days, or at any rate the neo-pioneers, such as J. P. Farrar; he came of climbing stock, for his father, Sir George Young,

although never a member of the A.C., belonged to the Golden Age of the 1860's in the Alps; he married into a climbing family; he had met, talked and corresponded with countless mountaineers. Some estimate of his influence on the climbing world is to be found in *A. J.* 66, p. 100 (Sir Arnold Lunn) and p. 169 (A. K. Rawlinson): any of us who grew up in the 1920's will remember the impact made by *Mountain Craft*, a book that, in its psychological insight into mountaineering, went far beyond anything previously attempted and has, perhaps, not been surpassed.

To have, therefore, so much raw material that lay at the back of Young's writings and influence, is a most welcome event, and the thanks of the Club are due to Mrs. Young and her son. These letters are, naturally, confined to mountaineering matters: Young had many and varied interests that are outside the A.C.'s particular concern. Moreover, he could not keep every letter he received; he was judiciously selective. Inevitably, the bulk of the correspondence consists of letters received, and only occasionally do we have copies of Young's own letters. On the other hand, he was apt to make notes on letters received by him, and the reader is rarely at a loss about the subject under discussion.

It is impossible to attempt to list the names of his correspondents: Sir Edward Davidson, Farrar, Mallory, Schuster, Strutt, Smythe, Noyce—these are a few among the dead, whilst there are literally dozens of writers who are still living. From abroad there come letters from Gos or Suzannet; or from famous guides such as Emil or Franz Lochmatter. One considerable group of letters, recently discovered by Young's family in an outhouse, consists of his correspondence with H. E. G. Tyndale, mostly during Young's Presidency of the Club (1941-3); this series helps us to understand the difficulties of those days, when the A.C. owed much to three members for keeping it going; to Young and Bryan Donkin on the administrative side, and to Tyndale in maintaining, under much stress, the standards of the *Alpine Journal*.

The Young collection is a rich addition to the archives of the Alpine Club; it will well repay some expenditure on putting it into complete order.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

'FAILED A.C.' (*A. J.* 68. 269).—I am grateful to several members for amplifying or correcting information in this article. Taking the names in date order:

1878. PARNELL. There is no doubt this was Henry Tudor Parnell, brother of the better known Charles Stewart Parnell. H. T. Parnell was born in 1850. Furthermore, on looking up Conway's original entry in Alexander Burgener's *Führerbuch*, I think there is no doubt that he wrote 'Parnell', not 'Purnell' as given in *A. J.* 58. p. 181. Conway

formed his 'a' and his 'u' quite differently, though his 'a' may look like some people's 'u'. We can safely say, now, that H. T. Parnell was climbing with Burgener during the period covered by Conway's entries. (I am indebted to Mr. J. W. Howard for information about H. T. Parnell, who was his cousin.)

1904. ZIMMERN. Mr. R. L. G. Irving informs me that he accompanied A. E. Zimmern on many of his climbs, and there was absolutely no reason why he should have been turned down by the Committee, unless personal prejudices had crept in.

1910. RICHARDS. Firstly, his Christian name should be corrected to read Edward, not Edwards. Mr. H. E. L. Porter informs me that he was at Charterhouse with Richards, and they commenced their climbing together in 1907. At Magdalen College, Oxford, Richards was influenced by A. D. Godley, and it would seem that the A.C. Committee's decision to postpone the application was due to the fact that they had a rather large list of applicants at that time. This was unfortunate, for the applicant did not reapply.

I understand that Mr. Richards went into the Church after the First World War, and is still living. There appears to be no doubt that the A.C. Committee blundered on this occasion, and lost a member for no good reason.

1915. RANKIN. Sir Arnold Lunn draws my attention to my omission of any reason why this candidate was not elected. I should have inserted that the application paper is marked: 'Withdrawn by Proposer, Nov. 1915'.

T. S. B.

ALPINE CHRONICLES.—The exact date of the guideless ascent of the Brouillard ridge of Mont Blanc by P. Wyn Harris and S. B. Van Noorden in 1925 has hitherto not been known (see *A. J.* 37. 351-3). Reference some years ago to Sir Percy Wyn Harris had not been able to pinpoint the date as closer than in July of that year. Now, thanks to the correspondence of Winthrop Young, we are able to give the date as being July 15, 1925; Wyn Harris wrote to Young shortly after the climb and the letter with this information has been preserved.

T. S. B.

EIGERWAND.—The first solo ascent was made on August 2-3 last year by the Swiss guide Michel Darbellay. Leaving the Kleine Scheidegg at 2 a.m. on August 2 he bivouacked some 650 ft. from the summit, which he reached at eight o'clock the next morning. Darbellay had had previous experience of the Eigerwand, having made an unsuccessful attempt with three companions—two of whom were women—in July, 1962, when his party had to turn back some distance below the top of the Ramp. Three of the previous solo attempts had ended fatally.

The first complete descent of the Eigerwand was made by the Swiss, Paul Etter, Uli Gantenbein and Sepp Henkel on December 27–31.

There remains the problem of the *direttissima*. This was again unsuccessfully attempted in January by four Munich climbers. The first day they climbed about 300 m. but on the second day gained only 60 m. in height and were compelled by the weather to bivouack in a snow hole, where they were confined the whole of the next day. On January 14 the attempt ended at the *Ausschüttestollen* west of the Eigerwand station² with descent by railway to the Kleine Scheidegg.

A CENTENARIAN ON ELBRUZ.—*Alpinismus* reports that among a party of two hundred people who ascended Elbruz, 18,470 ft., one day last year was Tschokka Zalichanow who, at the age of 107, successfully accomplished his 208th ascent of the mountain!

KISOI MUNYAO.—At midnight on December 11, 1963, Kisoï Munyao, Robert Chambers, A.C. (President of the Mountain Club of Kenya), and Denis Rutovitz hoisted the flag of independent Kenya on the summit of Nelion (17,022 ft.), the lower of the twin peaks of Mount Kenya. I have no details of the climb but the higher peak, Batian (17,058 ft.), was at that date evidently unattainable owing to the severe conditions. The 'short' rains usually extend well into December and from the photograph of the scene on top of Nelion it is obvious that the mountain was still plastered in snow and ice.³ In these conditions an ascent of either peak is a considerable feat. On December 12 Kisoï was taken by helicopter from the moorlands to the stadium celebrations in Nairobi, where he was presented to the Duke of Edinburgh.

Soon after Christmas the same party climbed the mountain by the normal route without difficulty, removed the flag from Nelion and raised it on the summit of Batian.

Kisoï is a member of the Kamba tribe from the Machakos District of Kenya. He became interested in mountaineering through long service with the Firmin family in Nairobi, first as cook and later as an employee in the photographic studio. After several expeditions to the moorlands of Mount Kenya he climbed Kilimanjaro (Kibo) in 1955 with Mrs. Firmin on the day when Arthur Firmin and I were reconnoitring the East face of Mawenzi.

In 1959 he was the first black African mountaineer to reach Batian when he climbed it by the ordinary route with Peter Fullerton and myself, traversing Nelion.⁴ Mtu Muthara, a Mwingi from Chogoria, in 1938 and Ali Kikuyu, from Nanyuki, in 1941 had already climbed

² Not to be confused with the better-known 'Gallery Window' still further west, used by so many rescue parties.

³ See illustration, no. 29.

⁴ See *A. J.* 64. 212.



Expedition photo]

STAUNINGS ALPS: PEAK 2,220 M., CLIMBED IN AUGUST, 1963, BY THE ITALIAN GREENLAND EXPEDITION (*See p. 129*).

(No. 28)



KISOI MUNYAO ON THE SUMMIT OF NELION, DECEMBER 12, 1963 (*See p. 141*).

(No. 29)

Nelion once each,⁵ but had never crossed to the higher peak. Since 1959 Batian has again been climbed by at least one Uganda African. Kisoï's ascent was the thirtieth party to climb Batian since Sir H. Mackinder and his guides made the first ascent in 1899; Mtu Muthara's was the seventh party to climb Nelion and Ali's the twelfth.

Kisoï is a keen member of the Mountain Club of Kenya and is one of the very few Africans in Kenya who enjoys mountaineering as an amateur rather than as a professional guide or porter. He has taken part in several mountain rescues. In 1962 he bivouacked on the West ridge with Charles Warren's party.

The Kamba tribe live some way from the mountain, but the name Kenya is derived from their language though it is often incorrectly attributed to the Kikuyu and allied tribes who live on the lower slopes. The Kamba name for the mountain is 'Kiima kya nyaa', meaning 'the mountain of the ostrich' (the cock ostrich has black and white feathers and in the distance the dark rock and the gleaming snows are reminiscent of this bird). 'Kiima kya nyaa' has been elided to 'Kiinyaa' which is the name commonly used nowadays by the Kamba. The missionary Krapf, the first European to see the mountain in 1849, spelt the word 'Kegnia'. The Kikuyu word is 'Kirinyagga', also meaning 'the mountain of the ostrich', but the modern word 'Kenya' is clearly derived from the Kamba version. The country takes its name from the mountain.

It was therefore entirely fitting that a member of the Kamba tribe should not only be the first African to reach the summit but should also be chosen to hoist the flag on Independence Day.

J. W. HOWARD.

THE FIRST RAPPEL.—Two prints from the R. W. Lloyd collection which were reproduced as illustrations⁶ to Mr. H. R. C. Carr's article 'Some Notes on Swiss Prints' in the last number of the *Journal* show two versions of an incident in de Saussure's descent from Mont Blanc in 1787. It ought to be mentioned that these are the 'suppressed' and 'revised' Chr. de Mechel prints referred to by Sir Douglas Busk in his note, 'The First Rappel: A Study in Vanity', which appeared in *A. J.* 66. 365-7. The 'suppressed' print—'the first depiction of a braked rappel'—should be compared with the explanation given in that note of the braking technique employed, which is very clearly shown.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST ASCENT OF EVEREST.—It has been suggested that Sir John Hunt's note in *A. J.* 68. 304 might profitably be amplified. Following the first week-end's activities, after which unfortunately Hunt had to leave for home, four of us set out for the Grimsel

⁵ See *A. J.* 60. 271 and 53. 215-24.

⁶ *A. J.* 68, illus. 15, 16.

Pass and made the ascent of the Sidelhorn, then still under winter snow. From the summit we revelled in the view of the eastern giants of the Oberland as well as the distant Pennine peaks. Then on the Friday some of us had a delightful day traversing the Kingspitze, the fine rock peak in the Engelhörner above Rosenlauri. It was of interest to be reminded that this peak was named after Sydney Locke King (A.C.), who in 1914 had been killed by an avalanche on the Linda glacier below Mount Cook in New Zealand. I had seen his memorial there, erected near the site of the old Hermitage. Moreover, with King in the Engelhörner had been the eminent Gertrude Bell, after whom the nearby Gertrudspitze is named.

A few other minor excursions, hampered by bad weather, were undertaken by those remaining at Meiringen during the week. But on the Saturday there arrived a contingent of the returning American Everest party, six in number, together with five of their outstanding Sherpas and the Nepalese liaison officer, Captain Brabakor Rana. Included in the party it was good to see our own member Professor Maynard Miller, my old geological friend, and glaciological specialist on the expedition. A number of Swiss 'Everesters' returned for the second week-end, and Norman Dyhrenfurth's father (Professor G. O. Dyhrenfurth), Dr. Erwin Schneider and Alexander Graven also joined the party. The finale for members of all parties was an enjoyable reception at the Indian Embassy in Bern.

N. E. ODELL.

EARLY PROPOSALS TO CLIMB EVEREST (see *A. J.* 68. 155, n.).—Three further proposals have come to my notice:

- (i) Lord Curzon, when Viceroy of India, wrote to Freshfield, July 9, 1899, saying he hoped soon to visit Nepal, and would try to get permission to allow an attempt on Everest. (Ronaldshay, *Life of Lord Curzon*, i, pp. 166-7.)
- (ii) On October 23, 1911, Curzon wrote to the Maharaja of Nepal, expressing the hope that the latter would sanction an Everest expedition. (*Id.*, ii, p. 60.)
- (iii) On May 19, 1914, the Alpine Club Committee recorded in their Minute Book the following record of a serious attempt to arrange an expedition to Everest in 1914:

'The President [Lord Justice Pickford] invited the Committee to give him their views as to what answer he should return to a letter he had received from Major Rawling, asking him to accept a seat on the advisory committee of an Expedition that is being organized for the purpose of exploration on and around Mount Everest, and the Committee were of opinion that it would be advisable for the President to accept the seat.'

It is to be noted that while Lord Curzon confined his attempts to getting permission to approach *via* Nepal, Rawling undoubtedly thought in terms of Tibet.

Major (later Brigadier-General) Cecil Godfrey Rawling was born in 1870 and died in 1917. He was a distinguished explorer in Western Tibet in 1903 (see refs. in *A. J.* 66. 118) and joined the Younghusband Mission to Lhasa in 1904, and after it led the party that journeyed from Lhasa to Gartok and on to Simla, during which time they obtained views of Everest from the North (*G. J.*, xxvi, Oct. 1905). This fired Rawling's ambition to explore the mountain, although he could do nothing at the time. But right up to his being killed in France he remained very keen on the project, which he hoped to carry out once the war was over (*G. J.*, 1, p. 465). Captain J. B. Noel would have been in the party, as transport officer had the expedition materialised.

T. S. BLAKENEY.

KARAKORAM.—With reference to the meaning of the word Karakoram,⁷ Mr. G. W. Creighton of the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names writes: "Kara" is common to Turkish and Mongolian, and means "black". In Mongolian, the mountain range of the Karakoram is rendered *Xap-Xəpə̄m* (pronounced Khara-Kherem), and this makes sense, because it means "black wall" or "black barrier". I am further encouraged to think that this is possibly the true etymological origin of the word, because the Mongols call the Great Wall of China, *Tsagaan Kherem*, "white wall" or "white barrier"). It seems to me that these two barriers were thus juxtaposed in the Mongol mind, and that this is probably as good an explanation as we can expect to find.'

THE TIBETAN NAME OF MOUNT EVEREST.—Mr. Creighton writes: 'All Chinese Communist maps now call the mountain *Chu-mu-lang-ma* (pronounced *Jew-moo-lang-ma*), but hitherto a Tibetan name had not been accurately traced.

'A new Tibetan-Russian dictionary, however, published in Moscow by the Siberian Section of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in 1963, now shows three forms for the mountain, viz:

Jomolang-ma-ri ("Venerable ?Bull Goddess");

Jomolungma ("Venerable Goddess of the Country"—?);

Jomolu ("Venerable Goddess ?Redeemer").

'Whilst the translations are tentative, at least we do now have a Tibetan name for the first time' (the actual Tibetan script for these three forms is not reproduced here).

As mentioned in *A. J.* 66. 36-7, it would seem that the form "*Jolmo Lungma*" proposed by the Chinese Everest party is unacceptable, and

⁷ See *A. J.* 67. 348-50.

that the old-established form of Chomo Lungma, although the pronunciation of the first syllable would be better shown with a "J" than with "Ch", was essentially correct.

NILKANTA AGAIN (See *A. J.* 68. 139).—The dispute in India over the claim of the 1961 party to have climbed this peak has not subsided, and a special committee of enquiry was set up by the Indian Mountaineering Foundation. Their findings were reported in the *Times of India*, December 25, 1963, and in London two days later.

The Committee have given an opinion in favour of the ascent having been made, but their support of the claim is hedged round with certain qualifications that strike one awkwardly. They felt that Mr. Sharma's claim, so far as details of times and heights were concerned, must be disregarded; they did not, moreover, confirm the revised heights given by Major N. B. Nayar, but established a fresh series. Camp V, the crucial point, has now been estimated at 21,200 ft. (Mr. Sharma), 20,450 (Major Nayar), 19,970 (Committee of Enquiry), and 19,600 (Mr. Nanavati). This is not encouraging, except in so far as the Committee's figure (assuming it to be correct) justifies Mr. Manavati's intervention in the first place, for his figure is very close to theirs.

Mr. Nanavati had put forward a plausible suggestion, that one of the humps on the summit ridge may have been taken (in the bad weather and in the fatigued condition of the party) for the top, but the Committee reject this view, and as they have been able to examine the points in dispute in considerable detail, their opinion must be treated with respect. It is to be noted, however, that Mr. Nanavati and others dispute their findings (*Times of India*, Jan.-Feb., 1964), and certainly the report of the Committee tends to give the reader the impression of being one of those 'smoothing-over' committee reports that one knows so well: on the one hand, commending Mr. Nanavati for having drawn attention to errors, and on the other trying to avoid saying that the claim to have made the ascent cannot be accepted. Their final recommendation, that another Nilkanta expedition be set on foot, sounds very much like a tacit admission of *not* being quite satisfied, though giving Mr. Sharma the benefit of all doubts.⁸

All things considered, one is a little surprised at the Committee's findings, and wonders if it might not have been better had they merely recorded a 'non-proven' decision, which the coming expedition could confirm or otherwise. As it is, the new expedition—consisting, apparently, largely of the old party—starts with a decision in their favour that

⁸ They quote the *A. J.* remark (vol. 68, p. 140) that 1,190 ft. for the summit climb was not excessive, but omit the remaining words about the atrocious weather conditions, which, of course, had a bearing on the possibility of making the ascent at all. Moreover, on the Committee's figures, the final height to be climbed would be 1,670 ft.

they may feel induced to uphold. But however that may be, one hopes that 1964 will see an Indian party on the summit of Nilkanta.

T. S. B.

ANOTHER DISPUTED ASCENT.—The claim of an Indian expedition to have reached the summit of Matri, 22,050 ft., on June 20 last year is challenged by Mr. J. Nanavati in an article in *The Sunday Standard* of September 29, 1963.

The Paribhraman expedition from Ahmedabad had as objectives Matri, Sri Kailas, 22,742 ft., and an unnamed peak of over 22,000 ft., all situated in the range that forms the northern boundary of the Gangotri group.

A base camp was established at Tapovan and an advanced base in the Raktvarn valley. A party of three girls with two Sherpas and some porters left here on June 8 by way of the Thelu glacier to climb Matri; within four days the party returned, claiming to have reached a point only 100 ft. below the summit. On June 18 a second party, including three girls, set out for Matri by the same route. Camps were pitched at 18,000 ft. and 20,000 ft. and on the third day the party claim to have reached the summit and were back at the advanced base the same evening.

Unfortunately for these claims, the Thelu glacier, as Mr. Nanavati points out, does not lead to Matri. At its head are two peaks, Pt. 19,690 ft. and Pt. 21,350 ft., connected by a snow ridge the lowest point of which is a 19,200 ft. saddle, and any party attempting Matri via the Thelu glacier would have to cross this saddle and descend 3,000 ft. to the Matri glacier which leads to the mountain. Neither of the Paribhraman expedition parties mentions having crossed this or any other saddle because, says Mr. Nanavati, they neither attempted nor subsequently climbed Matri but mistook Pt. 21,350 for their mountain.

Apart from the fact that the approach to Matri is by the glacier of the same name and not by the Thelu glacier, Mr. Nanavati points out that the times recorded by the climbing parties are evidence that it was impossible for them to have climbed Matri. Camp I is said to have been set up at 18,000 ft. on Matri on the day the second party left the advanced base. This would imply an ascent of nearly 5,000 ft. to the saddle at the head of the Thelu glacier, followed by a descent of 3,000 ft. to the Matri glacier, and finally an ascent of 1,800 ft. to the camp site—and all this in 5½ hours. On June 20 the party claim to have been on top of Matri at 11 a.m. and yet were back at the advanced base, about 11 miles away, 6 hours later after a journey involving a 3,000 ft. ascent to the head of the Thelu glacier and two descents totalling over 10,000 ft. Mr. Nanavati remarks, 'This is absurd. It is therefore clear that none of the Matri parties could have set foot on any part of Matri itself and they probably mistook Pt. 21,350 for Matri.'

MACHAPUCHARÉ.—The Government of Nepal is reported to have decided to ban any future attempts on Machapuchare, 22,958 ft.; the mountain will remain a virgin peak for all time. A Tokyo University party has already been refused permission to make an attempt this year.

In 1957 two members of an expedition led by Colonel J. O. M. Roberts (A. D. M. Cox and the late Wilfrid Noyce) turned back at a point less than 150 ft. below the summit.⁹

FORTHCOMING EXPEDITIONS.—A Scottish expedition led by Dr. Malcolm Slessor plans to visit the Peruvian Andes between July and September. The area chosen is at the northern extremity of the Cordillera Vilcanota in the region north and east of the Rio Yanatilli. This is one of the few unexplored mountainous regions of Peru and is said to contain peaks rising to 19,000 ft. or more. The expedition will be completed by tackling a major mountaineering problem, the one selected being the East-north-east buttress of Yerupaja (21,759 ft.). The highest summit of Yerupaja has only once been reached, by Messrs. Harrah and Maxwell in 1950.

Mr. C. T. Jones is leading a party to the Elburz range of Persia, with the primary object of climbing the North face of Alam Kuh (15,880 ft.) by a route on one or the other side of that climbed by Steinauer and Gorter in 1936.¹⁰

HIMALAYAN PLANS.—Sir Edmund Hillary will be leading another 'Schoolhouse' expedition to Nepal. His plans include the maintenance and improvement of existing schools and the construction and equipping of three more. As a side-line, and to introduce a mountaineering feature, an attempt will be made on the unclimbed Thamserku, 21,730 ft.

A German expedition will attempt Kabru, the highest peak of which is still unclimbed, and the virgin Talung Peak, 24,112 ft.

J. B. Tyson hopes to take a small party to West-Central Nepal in the post-monsoon period.

Alpinismus gives news of several other proposed expeditions and reports that Momhil Sar, Gyachung Kang, Malubiting and K.12 are all due to be attempted this year.

⁹ See *A. J.* 62. 113-20.

¹⁰ See illustration *A. J.* 49. 245 and map *A. J.* 63. 208.