

distinguished future which lies before the second century of the Royal Geographical Society.

(Sd.) CLAUDE WILSON, *President*.

(Sd.) SYDNEY SPENCER, *Hon. Secretary*.

October 21st, 1930.

Latest. The PIZ BERNINA Railway.—Owing to general protests the promoters of this scheme, *before* the poll had taken place at Pontresina, dropped the proposal and substituted an insidious alternative, a railway up PIZ MORTERATSCH, a summit that would have been tapped by the railway *en route* for Piz Bernina.

A meeting held at Pontresina on October 16 divided on the original 'Bernina' proposal, although officially dropped, and vetoed it by a huge majority. A second division was then taken on the 'Morteratsch' proposal, which was also thrown out by an overwhelming majority. It appears that the strong protest sent by telegram from the President and members, A.C., proved valuable at the meeting of the voters.

We offer our warmest congratulations to the S.A.C., and especially to the 'Bernina' and 'Rhaetia' sections, on the splendid result of their efforts.

CAUCASUS NOTES.

THE very successful Bavarian expedition of 1928 met with no hindrances from the authorities, neither have any of the following parties. In 1930, however, a large party of Viennese mountaineers and excursionists found the Balkar and Bezingi glens, leading from Naltshik into the Central Group, closed to tourist traffic. Hoping these glens would be opened eventually, they deviated into the Elbruz region.¹

After a delay of 14 days, the party left Naltshik, on August 2, to visit the Dykhsu district. The members of the expedition consider Ailama, 14,850 ft., as the finest peak of the region that contains also the higher summits of Shkara, Dychtau and Koshtantau.² A camp was pitched with great difficulty on the Dykhsu Glacier at a height of 2500 m., distant two days' march from Kunnium.

Kolchaja, 3700 m., was climbed by one group, while another made the first ascent of Fytnargin, 13,789 ft., from the N. Later again two members made a very difficult ascent of a peak (*ca.* 4100 m.) between Nuamkuam and Shkara, the summit being attained by a remarkable ice ridge. Thence they effected the first traverse to Nuamkuam,

¹ For the result of this deviation, see p. 362.

² See *A.J.* 26, 96–7, and 30, 194–6, for list of first ascents in the Caucasus.

13,975 ft. During this time the 'Nameless Peak,' 4100 m., was also scaled over the crevassed Ailama Glacier, and Koshtantau was reached by a 2000-ft. ice gully in its S.E. arête, which was then followed over many teeth and snowy gaps to the summit, 16,680 ft. From the top a new descent was made in an E.N.E. direction, a total expedition of $3\frac{1}{2}$ days.³

Finally, two more members traversed Khrumkoltau, 14,637 ft., the mighty neighbour of Koshtantau, in a circuit of 2 days. The weather was fine nearly throughout.

The party describe themselves as consisting 'of 6 super-expert and 4 moderate performers.'—From *Allgemeine Bergsteiger Zeitung*.

Two members of yet another Austrian expedition, Herren W. Müller and H. Tomaschek, have accomplished, on August 12–18, the traverse of Shkara, 17,038 ft., including 6 bivouacs at 4000 m.!—From *Æ.A.Z.* and *Der Bergsteiger*.

Mr. J. H. B. Bell, of the S.M.C., who accompanied several Russian tourists and mountaineers in a trip to the Caucasus, was much hindered by bad weather conditions. On July 16, starting from a camp (*ca.* 7000 ft.) on the Shaurtu Glacier, the party failed, owing to the weather, in an attack on Tiktengen,⁴ 15,267 ft., from the N. On July 21 Messrs. Bell and Delaunay, the latter an excellent Russian mountaineer, having bivouacked at about 10,000 ft. on the Suanetian side of the Tuiber Pass, made the first ascent of Bashiltau,⁴ 13,615 ft., by the S.W. arête—a difficult climb. Owing to doubtful weather, the same route was taken in the descent.

Messrs. H. S. Hall, L. Coolidge and W. O. Field were also much hindered by weather, but made the ascent of Elbruz, while Mr. Coolidge (of whom much will be expected in the future!) got within 600 ft. of the summit of the S. peak of Ushba, where the illness of his Swiss companion compelled the party's retreat. The members of this party suffered much from bad food and certain intolerable insects.

Mr. Field informs us that Mr. Freshfield's map⁵ has been reproduced and widely circulated throughout the Caucasus by the Soviet authorities. It has—quite rightly—taken pride of place of Merzbacher's.

³ Herren Heilingner and Jascynski, no date.

⁴ See *The Exploration of the Caucasus*, ii, 249. Tiktengen and Bashiltau were first climbed by Messrs. Rolleston and Longstaff in 1903, *A.J.* 21, 572.

⁵ *The Exploration of the Caucasus*, ii.