

on September 30 last a Conference of all parties interested (including members of Parliament) was convened by the Minister, and the President's scheme was generally approved. A Committee was appointed and legislation authorising the setting up of a Board of four experts (two guides and two amateurs) has been promised. This, it is hoped, will be dealt with at the ordinary session of Parliament in June.

Climbers' Hostel.—In the above-mentioned memorandum it was also urged that a hostel or annexe to the Hermitage be established, to be available for climbers who desire simple food and accommodation at a moderate price, but the proposal was not considered feasible by the Company. However, this year the opening of the motor road to the Ball Hut had the effect of making that hut unnecessary for sleeping accommodation, so at Miss Gardiner's suggestion the President again took the matter up with the Company while at the Hermitage in April, and the Committee is pleased to be able to report that the Company has agreed to convert the Ball Hut into a climbers' hostel at a charge of 12s. 6d. per day, and that the Malte Brun Hut may possibly be included at a later date.

De la Bèche Refuge.—The Club, at the request of certain friends of the victims of the storm on the Tasman Glacier in January 1930, headed the appeal for funds to erect a Memorial Hut at De la Bèche 'corner.' A sum of just under £400 was raised. The contractors did wonderful work, completing the hut inside five weeks. The hut was formally opened in the presence of some fourteen people on April 4.

Scenic Reserves.—The large Reserve taking in the whole watersheds of the Cook and Karangarua Rivers has been gazetted. Mention was made in our last Report of the representations made on behalf of the Club to secure the extension of this Reserve, which now covers some 175,000 acres, and some of the finest scenery and climbing in the Dominion.

Members.—This year 16 new members have been elected and 17 new 'subscribers.'

CAUCASUS NOTES.

ALTHOUGH, owing to disturbances, the Caucasus was mostly closed to tourists in 1931, an Austrian party arrived *via* Moscow at Naltshik at the beginning of August. It consisted of the following: Herren K. Poppinger, K. Frank, K. Moldan and S. Schintelmeister. The party was financed by the D. & C.A.V. and its sections.

On August 5 they arrived at the Missess-Kosh, their base camp on the Bezingi Glacier. Their first task was to search for the two Swiss, Herren Mägglin and Heglin, who had set out with two Russian climbers to attempt the ascent of Missesstau, S.E. of the

Missess-Kosh, and had been missing since July 26. A sleeping-sack was the solitary find at an altitude of about 3800 m.; no other traces were discovered.

The Austrians made the difficult first ascent of the N. face of Missesstau on August 8, bivouacking on the summit. Lialver (4350 m.) was next climbed by the N.E. arête, and on the following day, *via* points 4360 m. and 4530 m., the summit of Gestola, 15,932 ft., was attained. On the descent they bivouacked on the ridge connecting with Tetnuld. On August 13 they traversed Tetnuld, 15,918 ft., by the S.E. flank and W. face, descending by the latter's hanging glacier which drains into the Zanner Glacier, and bivouacking in snow and rain at 3200 m.; they returned over the Zanner Pass to the Missess-Kosh.

On August 18, after bivouacking in an ice cave at *ca.* 4420 m., they ascended Katuintau, 16,296 ft., by its N. buttress, again bivouacking in a storm near the summit. In a high wind and storm Adishtau, 5020 m., was next climbed and its S.W. arête descended, followed by the traverse of Gestola-Lialver-Zanner Pass to the Missess-Kosh.

On August 22 the W. arête of Dychtau, 17,054 ft., was attempted vainly. Then followed, August 23-28, the main undertaking (with 6 ice-cave bivouacs!), the complete traverse of Shkara, 17,038 ft., W. to E., in which the points 5017 m., 5010 m., 5130 m. were, it is claimed, climbed for the first time. Janga, E. peak, 5038 m., and W. peak, 5051 m., were traversed to Katuintau, and finally the party crossed Gestola and Lialver to the Zanner Pass, thus completing the traverse of the Bezingi Horseshoe.

From *Der Bergsteiger*, October 1931, pp. [15-16].

[The heights in *feet* are from Mr. Freshfield's map; the others are from Merzbacher's, presumably. In 'A.J.' 42, 347, will be found a note on a *previous* traverse of all the Shkara peaks.—*Editor.*]

ACCIDENTS IN 1931.

MOUNTAINEERING, or the modern equivalent thereof, is developing yearly; so are its risks and disasters. Yet the increase of accidents, terrible though it be, is less perhaps than might be expected. A wave of recklessness and folly is spreading throughout the Alps. The irrational desire and competition for new routes has degenerated into a mad striving for notoriety by forcing a passage where none exists, a few yards to right or left of well-known itineraries. The foolhardiness of inexperienced¹ and often in-

¹ Frequently also of *experienced*. As an example of the former, take the case of five young Strasbourgeois climbing together. One perished on the Aiguille du Goûter through the rope breaking, a