

has been the highest yet-unclimbed peak. After establishing camps at 14,000 and 17,000 feet, on January 10, 1957 at 5:45 P.M. the Chilean, Manuel Bazán, and the Czech, Radko Schneberger, reached the top. They had had difficult climbing up rock and steep snow to a col which gave access to the summit. The Italian, Aldo Cassasa, had to give up because of the altitude.

Somewhat farther south, above the Mamá valley east of Rancagua, a Chilean group made several rather difficult first ascents. On January 24 Bión González, Patricio Campos, Leonardo Alvarez, and Alvaro Yañez climbed the Cerro Gabriela Mistral (14,928 feet). On January 26 Eduardo García and Francisco Vivanco climbed the Matterhorn-shaped Alto de la Mamá (15,595 feet), a difficult climb, on which they used 30 pitons. The next day González, Roberto Schnell, Ernesto Lavanchy, and Hernán Molina ascended the Corona de Don Manuel (14,600 feet).

An expedition of the Asociación Santiago de Andinismo y Excursionismo failed, as have all other groups, to climb the last 100 feet of Chimbote (17,815 feet). They did climb on March 11, 1957 Polleras (19,510 feet), which had been ascended before, and made the second ascent of Polleritas, or Académico (17,618 feet). This group consisted of Bión González, Jorge Duprat, Roberto Fuentes, Juan Tangol, Oscar Zorrila, Eberhard Meier, and Guillermo Silva.

In July Kurt Claussen led the first winter ascent of the Plomo (17,815 feet).

*Cerro Balmaceda and Cerro Paine, Patagonia.* An Argentine expedition of the Club Andino Bariloche had expected to attempt the main peak of the Paine group, which they had attempted in 1954 and 1955. Just before leaving for Punta Arenas in mid October 1957 they were surprised to be informed by Chilean officials that these soaring, ice-fluted granite Paine spires, which rise to altitudes between 9000 and 10,000 feet from near sea level, were being reserved for an Italian expedition sponsored by the Padre Alberto de Agostini. Political permission has never been necessary in Chile. The Chileans assigned them Lieutenant Ramírez and Corporal Saavedra and gave them permission to attempt Cerro Balmaceda (6677 feet), some 30 miles south. The Balmaceda group is composed of three parallel ridges that run north and south. The westernmost caused them little difficulty, but the second was definitely of Alpine character, despite its height of only 5500 feet. In frightfully bad weather, typical of the region, they reached a pass which gave access to the third ridge, which is crowned by the highest peaks. On October 25

a momentary break in the clouds gave them a view of a glacier which promised a route up the northwest side to the summit. When, after nearly three weeks of incessantly bad weather, the weather suddenly improved, on November 8, they left their snow-cave camp on the pass, although the summits still lay hidden in the clouds. Otto Meiling, Ivan Arnašek, Carlos Bottazzi, and the Chilean, Saavedra, reached the top at 2:45 P.M. just as the clouds cleared from the peaks.

Meanwhile a small party was reconnoitering the Paine group. After a week of bad weather, on October 26 they reached a glacial cirque where from 5500 feet a couloir ascends the rock walls to the "techo" or roof, a high glacial basin around the outer edge of which rise the principal summit pyramids. After ascending the 60°-couloir several times to be driven back by the weather, on November 8 Augusto Vallmitjana and his son Augusto, Carlos Sonntag, and Davorin Jereb ascended to the "techo." The first two made the second ascent of Paine South (Cumbre Bariloche), first climbed by the Chileans in 1955. The latter two attacked the south-east face of the main peak (10,007 feet). Difficult ice-climbing above a 6000-foot cliff brought them finally to the foot of the rocks. This pair returned two days later to ascend the route they had prepared in the ice, to climb the severe rock face, and to reach a snow gully about 100 feet below the summit ridge. Although there seemed to be no further difficulties, they turned back from there in deteriorating weather. Other members of the party were Vojslav Arko, José Iglesias, and Benjamin Dixon.

*Paine Group, Patagonia.* An Italian expedition, sponsored by Padre Alberto de Agostini and led by Dr. Guido Monzino, made several first ascents of severe difficulty in the Paine group. Although plagued by the bad weather typical of the region, on December 27, 1957 after 27 days in the field Jean Bich, Leonardo Carrel, Camillo Pelissier, Toni Gobi and Pierino Pession reached the summit of the highest peak of the Paine group (10,007 feet). The Italians believed that the Argentines, Sonntag and Jereb (see above), had turned back considerably below 100 feet from the summit and stated that there were severe climbing difficulties above the Argentine high point. The Italians climbed 6½-hours beyond the point where they found the last Argentine pitons. On January 17, 1958 Jean Bich, Pierino Pession, Camillo Pelissier, and Leonardo Carrel, supported by Toni Gobbi and Gino Barmasse, made the difficult first ascent of the incredibly sheer spire of the Torre Norte del Paine (North Paine Tower) (about 8500 feet). The first 250 feet of the south ridge, which took them