

VARIOUS NOTES

ACCIDENTS IN 1947

ON 4 October 1947 the Council voted to form a committee to be called the Safety Committee of the American Alpine Club. Its purpose is to investigate climbing accidents and to formulate a program of prevention for the future. It has been the initial concern of this Committee to gather as many data as possible concerning last summer's unprecedented number of accidents, with no intent to criticize the persons involved, but rather to learn why these accidents occurred and to emphasize the lessons to be learned from them. The fact that mountaineering accidents led to eleven deaths in the five-month period from May through October 1947 is evidence enough that something must be done. Four near-fatal accidents could easily have brought the number to 15—many fewer than the 60-odd deaths reported from the Alps in 1947, but certainly enough to constitute a harsh warning.

The Committee's first report was presented on 6 December 1947. A section devoted to summaries and brief analyses of 13 accidents in 1947 is reprinted below. The introduction to this section concludes thus: "The aim has been to stress only those accidents which were fatal or so nearly fatal as to be worthy of special note. The Committee feels that emphasis on the causes of these accidents will call attention to the full significance of all accidents. If the effort put forth now can save but one life or limb next summer, that effort will, most assuredly, have been well spent."—*Ed.*

Coast Range, British Columbia. On 22 July 1947, in the Mt. Waddington-Tiedemann district of western British Columbia, Charles Shiverick, of the Harvard Mountaineering Club, lost his life in a snow avalanche on the highest peak of Mt. Serra, at about 11,000 ft. A high camp party of four men had made an extended reconnaissance of this peak two days before. They had kicked steps to the top of a long 45-degree snow slope leading to a rock saddle on a ridge of the highest Serra peak. After the reconnaissance, they had descended the same slope to a steep névé basin. The last snow had fallen a week earlier. Snow on the descent was somewhat mushy. The 21st was a brilliant day. On the 22nd the party again