

VARIOUS NOTES

Isolation—Shiverick Divide.

At this time of the year, Cataract Glacier was in bad shape. With some luck, they managed to bridge all crevasses and return to high camp on the 8th. Then, the following morning, they descended the Tellot Glacier to Nabob Pass. The lakes, the mountain scenery, and the flora combined to make this one of the prettiest spots they had ever visited. One day, Hubbard, Karcher, and Bullard climbed Serpentine (rising just east of the pass) by way of the prominent snowfield and south arête. On another day, Lembeck and Wexler made the ascent up the southwest face immediately below the main peak.

The party's climbing was now at an end. On the 12th, they returned to Dumbell Lake. Late in the afternoon of the 13th, two de Havilland Beaver aircraft evacuated them to Vancouver.

This was a memorable trip. The weather had been favorable, the climbing excellent and enjoyable, and the country beyond compare. What more could one ask of a mountain holiday?

ARNOLD WEXLER

Ascent of Mt. Robson. There have been numerous attempts on Mt. Robson since its last ascent in 1939. The difficulties range from the enormous bulk of the 12,972-foot mountain to the ever-changing conditions of the upper ice cap. When this party began the eight-day assault on the mountain, it was immediately confronted with a difficulty which was to prove the main problem of the ascent—the inclement weather for which Robson is noted.

On 21 July 1953, four members of the U.C.L.A. Bruin Mountaineers, Jon Gardey, Jack Lasner, Norman Sanders and Gerrit Bratt met Don Claunch of the Seattle Mountaineers near Mt. Robson Station, British Columbia.

According to the local residents, the weather this past summer has been the worst in at least 30 years. It had been raining with great frequency for more than a 100 days, and such was the case when the party decided to camp at the end of the road and start out in the morning.

Of the several routes up the mountain it was decided to try the south face. One close look at the ice seracs and cornices of the

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upper Wishbone Arête turned all thoughts to the southeast glacier. Claunch's experience in two previous attempts on the southeast route was the deciding factor.

The walk began late the next morning in a heavy rain, the party taking the pack trail for three muddy miles to 3,000-foot high Kinney Lake. From Kinney Lake a snow-filled chute offered a convenient route upward for 1500 feet, between the cliffs which comprise the mountain's lower fortification. Leaving this chute, the party passed over ledges and slabs to timberline at 6000 feet. Camp was pitched that night in the rain, and it was not until 2:30 P.M. the next day that the climb was continued up dangerously wet rock slabs amidst snow and hail flurries to 7800 feet.

The next three days were spent in two camps at about this same elevation, with the hope that the weather and snow conditions would at length become favorable. The first day the camp was moved a few hundred feet higher to the level of the icefall from the lower glacier, but the second and third days were spent in boredom and anxiety. One reconnaissance, however, was made onto the first glacier.

Five days had now been spent on the mountain, and thunderstorms and flurries had brought about three inches of new snow. Since the weather would obviously not subside, it was decided definitely to try an attack the next day.

The next morning, July 27th, the five climbers set out with equipment for a bivouac for two nights; it consisted of one two-man mountain tent, two primus stoves, one sleeping bag, and ample food. By the time the party was on the first hanging glacier, the weather began to close in. The west side of the glacier was followed in knee-deep snow, with very poor visibility. The upper and lower glaciers are separated by an ice wall of 200 feet. A 50-degree snow finger on the east side of the wall leads ultimately to the southeast arête, and from this finger a route may be made on to the upper glacier. The ascent of the snow finger was straightforward, except that the snowstorm and surface snow slides made belaying difficult. After following the finger for 200 feet, steps were cut into a 60-degree slope leading onto the upper glacier. On the waste-deep snow of the upper glacier a heavy fog limited visibility to ten feet, producing the well known "white-

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out" effect which makes other climbers look as if they floated in white space. An acute sense of direction enabled the party to reach the foot of a great bergschrund separating the glacier from the upper ice cap, at an elevation of 11,000 feet. It was getting rather late, and, although the weather was beginning to clear, a decision was made to remain until the next morning, since the lower lip of the bergschrund afforded a good spot for a bivouac.

The next morning, July 28th, fortunately brought the best weather of the entire trip. After the inevitable spilled pot of cereal in the tent, crampons were again adjusted and the ropes straightened out. Leaving the tent and equipment, the party proceeded west until a place was found where the bergschrund could be surmounted with a bit of step cutting. A short rest was made after the southeast arête was gained. The arête, a series of large cornices which rise 1700 feet at a constant 45-degree angle, was perhaps the most dangerous part of the climb. The climbers remained on the arête in two ropes, even though cornices went crashing down a few feet from them. Wading in snow which reduced the effectiveness of the crampons, they approached another bergschrund 250 feet from the summit. This was the point at which Claunch had been forced to withdraw on his last attempt because of high wind and bad weather. From a technical standpoint this was the most interesting part of the climb, requiring the cutting of a great number of steps on a face that descended to Kinney Lake, now nearly 10,000 feet below. Once the bergschrund was finally surmounted, the ascent was readily made. An hour was spent on the summit, taking photographs and placing an American flag with a record of the first ascent in 14 years of the highest peak in the Canadian Rockies.

GERRIT T. BRATT

Mt. Robson from the East. "God made the mountains, but good God! who made Robson?" exclaimed Conrad Kain, who led the first ascent in 1913. It was with high hopes, but with bleakly realistic expectations that Dave Bernays, Craig Merrihue, and Dmitri Nabokov set out to climb Robson; our ambition was not to use the relatively straightforward traditional route on the south side of the mountain, but to make a second ascent by Kain's original itinerary.