

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

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EDITORIAL

How to Pick the Committee

In a little over a month will be held the Club's Annual General Meeting at which Office Bearers, Committee and other Club Officials will be elected for the ensuing year. Some of those now doing jobs will not want to carry on. If so they would do well to declare their intentions early so that members can decide in advance on worthy successors. This is important, because good Committee members don't as a rule take on a job at a moment's notice in a meeting. If they are conscientious they won't take it on unless they think they have the time and ability to do it properly, and they will probably want to chew it over for a while. If they are not asked till the night of the meeting they probably won't take it on and somebody may be elected who is not keen on the job, nor capable of doing it well. Thus are some of the worst committees elected.

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There are some in the Club, we know, who don't like the idea of "pre-selection", but there is nothing undemocratic about picking them beforehand. Any number of people can pick any number of candidates, but it is the meeting that decides who gets in.

The success of the Club and your enjoyment of it depend very largely on a live and able committee. What qualities, then, should one look for in a good Committee member? First and foremost your candidate should be a trier. Most of the jobs in the Club can be done well by a person of ordinary ability so long as he will do his best. Next to this we would place an understanding of Club ideals. Old members have no monopoly of this virtue. Many who have been in for years haven't must interest in what the Club stands for, while others are enthusiastic right from the start. For some jobs it is an advantage to be an old member, but this is never essential. We would put in a plea, however, for at least one very old member on the Committee who can remember what has gone before. It is an advantage for some to have special knowledge - e.g. accountancy for the Treasurer and some secretarial or clerical experience for the Secretary and Assistant Secretary. Some officers, such as the Walks Secretary and the Membership Secretary need to be very active walkers. It is important that most of the Committee should be active walkers, and that they should go on a good number of official trips, so that they will know the leaders and prospectives. But there are several jobs that may be done well by people who, for family and other reasons, cannot leave home too often. A job in the Club enables such members to keep in touch with their friends and enjoy at least part of the Club's activities.

The best place to decide who you want on the committee is round the campfire. You probably belong to one of the little groups of walkers within the Club and may want your group represented. Remember too that there is no need to tolerate any of the present Club Officers, from the Editor up, if you think they have had their day.

AT OUR JANUARY MEETING.

Reported by Jim Brown, Asst.Hon.Sec.

The January meeting must challenge last September's as one of the tamest on record: the President was in the Chair, and about 55 members present, there were no newcomers to welcome, and no one disputed or commented on the minutes and various reports.

Indeed, the meeting progressed as far as the Federation Report before a solitary motion was voiced, this taking the form of a directive to the Federation delegates to press for an explanation from the Adelaide Bushwalkers why they supported the publication of Mr. Lindsay's book.

The Photographic Section indicated that it desired to secede from the Club, and after a loud "No" vote the President called for

a show of hands, when it transpired that the dissentients numbered a vocal two. The Photo Section seceded.

Among several announcements and verbal reports was advice of a change of venue for Colin Lloyd's Instructional Week-end, and Miss Renee Brown's statement concerning the Children's Treat, and the tragedy which closed a very happy outing.

A motion to limit archery at Era to a prescribed range was amended to a complete prohibition on the use of bow and arrows in the Bushwalker preserve, whilst a few enquiries regarding the exact area covered by our Era purchase met with rather inexact answers - except the President's to the effect that we could not define the boundaries with absolute certainty.

After nomination of Euroka Clearing and a spot near Menangle as the marshalling area for the next S.B.W. re-union, the meeting ebbed to an affable closure at 9 p.m.

SOCIAL NOTES FOR FEBRUARY.

18TH FEBRUARY is Slide Night for Members, so please bring along your slides and help make the night a success.

19TH-20TH FEBRUARY. Don't forget to pack your favourite swimsuit and join your pals at Sandy's Bend, George's River, for a super Swimming Carnival.

25TH FEBRUARY. "Kosciusko in Summer and Winter". Slides by Bob Savage.

- Jean Harvey, Asst. Soc.Sec.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO BE SORRY

You can still become a subscriber to this magazine, commencing with the March issue, and we'll charge you until 31/1/50. If you want it posted home send along 6/- and your address, or, we'll hold your copy in the club room till next time you come in, for 4/7d. Be a subscriber - it's cheaper!

Brian Harvey
Business Manager

The Business Manager has a copy of all Club circulars issued in the 1948/9 Club year. These may be perused in the Club room at any time and new office bearers could obtain useful information from them

FAUNA PROTECTION ACT, 1948.

By Allen A. Strom, Hon. Secty.
Wild Life Preservation Society.

Almost at the very close of the 1948 Session, both Houses of the N.S.W. Parliament agreed to the Fauna Protection Act - an act regarded "as a most progressive step in the history of conservation in Australia".

Ours is a land where political State Boundaries are in general, geographical and biological curios, and deep-thinking citizens have consistently agitated for Commonwealth Control of Conservation. This, however, is filled with "parish-pump" jealousies and the ogre of a referendum in order to legalise the transposing of power from State to Commonwealth. So the Conservationists three-point plea ---

1. A complete biological survey to determine a true picture of our resources in native flora and fauna.
2. The setting aside in perpetuity of large primitive areas where communities of plants and animals will develop their own protective habitats.
3. A strong educational plan to develop a conservation consciousness not only in the apathetic, and complacent, but also in the self-sufficient.

--- must be developed (pro tem) on the State basis. This new Act goes encouragingly along this road. Mr. David G. Stead, who has battled for half a century in the Field of Nature Protection, and who was a founder of the Wild Life Preservation Society of Australia in 1909, has this to say:

"The passing of this Act is an immense step forward towards the realisation of the ideals of what I might term the wild life preservationists. Its implementation will put great heart into many people - those who love their Australia and want to preserve as much as possible of our beautiful and interesting wild creatures for the delectation and edification of future generations of Australia and of the world generally".

The Act will set up a Fauna Protection Panel, the membership of which shall represent interested Government Departments, the Museum, the University and some of the organisations engaged in "the preservation, conservation, protection or scientific investigation of fauna". This panel shall "be the authority for protection and care of fauna". Amongst its functions comes giving advice to the Minister, engaging in "educational activities to awaken and maintain an appreciation of the value of bird and animal life", having care, control and management of "faunal reserves" (which may be declared on Crown Land by recommendation of the Panel, co-operating with trustees of land already set aside as reserves for animals, conducting scientific and biological research in connection with the protection and care of fauna, and generally administering the Act.

A Chief Guardian of Fauna shall be appointed and he will act as Chairman of the Panel on a fixed salary and apparently as a Public

Servant. The Act goes on to state various matters necessary to the administration; but one cannot help feeling that in the future "big game hunters" can do little else but break the law.

The road has been opened - the goal lies well ahead! Many loopholes leave ample room for abuse. But conservationists welcome the new approach. Their fervent hope is for a substantial annual grant and for a Guardian and a Panel alive to the responsibilities, enthusiastic and in possession of an understanding of the work that they have to do. In this way, who knows but that we may achieve the impossible - a balance between civilisation and the primitive.

THE LADY SWAGGIE CHERRY PICKERS.

By Cecily Mann and Flo Allsworth.

On our first day we left Sutherland at 9 a.m. and arrived at Ben Ricketts (the Page estate) at 5 p.m., having travelled in eight vehicles and enjoyed two swims, morning tea, lunch, and a pint of milk for afternoon tea.

So the trip commenced and so it continued, until we had visited our friends at Woodhill, Kangaroo Valley and Moss Vale, then on through Gundagai to Tumut. Having come through some parched and blackened country, we were delighted to arrive there just before Christmas and discover the lovely camping ground on the banks of the Tumut River. Green grass, shady trees, swift running crystal clear water overhung with willows - what more could we wish! And so we thankfully dropped our packs, planned an elaborate menu, and generally prepared to have a lazy Christmas.

Our good host had provided us with so many home comforts it seemed foolish not to dig well in and soon we had no ambition to move. But Mr. Hogan had other plans for us. It was not long before he was suggesting to the "lady Swaggies" a spot of cherry picking. Why work, said the L.S.'s, but eventually he got us moving and so we set off for Batlow on the Tuesday after Christmas.

Arriving at the orchard, we were given a four-roomed unfurnished cottage, put up the tent close by, and with packing boxes and pieces of string, furnished our home. Picking was to commence on Wednesday but steady rain on Tuesday night and most of Wednesday put an end to those plans. As a truck was going into Batlow, 6 miles away, we jumped at the opportunity of replenishing our food store, and then spent the rest of the day lazing in front of our log fire. Thursday was still dull and showery, but a good wind began shifting the clouds and drying the trees, until the outlook was more hopeful. We were just licking our fingers after puftaloons and golden syrup when two small boys arrived to say picking was starting. Great excitement! In a few minutes we were at the Packing Shed, receiving a half kerosene bucket and packing case. Then instructions how to pick! No leaves or twigs, cherries to be on the stem, picked without damaging next year's buds etc. etc. And so the Lady Swaggies became "L.S. Cherry Pickers" (late P.W.F.). Of course we just bowled in and

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picked all within reach, but soon it became necessary to leave terra firma and so we received a ladder and wire hook. Before long one of us was standing on a ladder twelve feet above the ground, stretching just an extra inch for a luscious bunch, when away went the ladder in a northerly direction, while the lass, the cherries and the bucket made a wild flight in all directions. Just for extra measure, after she had attained equilibrium on all fours, down came that offending bunch, branch and all - horror! Still, we went on and soon she was mounting the ladder again and getting her lengthy legs twined around branches in the most amazing manner.

Experience taught us that next time we go fruit picking we will try for a professional bucket, cross over straps distributing the weight, canvas bottom unhooking to drop fruit into packing case: all so much easier than the kerosene bucket with one rope or leather strap around the neck which has to be removed to empty. Then first in first served with ladders and we had definite leanings towards small lightweight jobs, of course all taken by the time we applied. However we tackled our tree with the gear available and it was not long before we were amazed at just how high we could climb. The wire hooks were a definite asset and at last the seemingly impossible was achieved - we finished a tree.

First to ripen are the Whites and so for two days we picked "Florence" Cherries intended for crystallising. Later we were to see these in barrels of brine at the Batlow Packing House Co-op, ready for transport to Sydney, where the process is completed. Soon we settled down to the job. Sometimes whole trees had been eaten by the birds or split with the rain, but we took the good with the bad. Occasionally we might pick 30lb. each in an hour, and then it would take the rest of the afternoon to find 10lbs. of good sound fruit. Once on to the black cherries - St. Margaret - and it was quicker going. Each packing case held about 50lb. but we preferred to carry them only partly filled to the Packing Shed. After weighing and recording against our names the White Cherries were levelled, nailed down and despatched to Batlow. The St. Margaret's involved a little more work in the sheds, each case being carefully sorted and the choicest fruit packed into 12lb. boxes ready for market.

Cherry picking is the most pleasant work imaginable. All day long birds fly overhead, some protesting loudly, others darting quickly in and out through the branches. Every time one gets above the foliage one gets lovely views of the surrounding mountains. At night the sky is wonderful. One night when there was a storm brewing a blaze of red, blue, purple and pink light glowed in the sky and tinged the mountains.

We enjoyed every minute of our week. Hours were perhaps long - we started about 7 a.m. and with breaks at 9.30, noon and 3.30, finished at 5 p.m. or later, but it was contract, so we pleased ourselves. Payment was at 2d.lb. and those eager to swell their cheques were on the job long before us. For our part, we wanted to enjoy the experience, besides adding to our funds. After a few days in our cottage, we were promoted to a furnished one, and life became

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

By "The Dog in the Fog"

The S.B.A. was polishing his glasses when I came in. "Ha, how did Christmas go?" "Tolerable". He polished his glasses more vigorously and settled them on his nose, still roseate from the same season.

"Laden with liquor, I suppose?"

"Certainly not. Len only brought a medicine bottle of rum and we drank that in one night. However, the girl did bring a bottle of perfume which lasted rather longer."

"Ha, to beguile any unsuspecting bachelors. (The S.B.A. still thinks it should be Sydney Bachelor Walkers.) Did she meet any?"

"Only a prospector who hadn't struck it yet."

"And so she wasn't interested, I suppose. By the way, what happened to Mary? I believe she wouldn't eat the fish you were taking?" The S.B.A. laughed to himself and then sheepishly crept back to his wife.

Beaming as usual the Pain in the Back creaked in. "Well, how did all that honey go? Nothing like it. Full of food value and much better than jam. Good for infantile convulsions, too."

I felt the hot blood rushing through my head and I wanted to shout "Honey" in his face. The tin with the honey had sprung a leak, probably when I packed it. Twenty four hours later two pounds of that creeping insidious fluid had seeped through a pound of dried potatoes, a pair of shorts, numerous sox and a sleeping bag. For two hours I scrubbed and rubbed with hot and cold water, finally filled it up and hung it on a tree to dry. "Yes" I murmured through clenched teeth "Yes, there are no seeds in honey".

A dangerous situation was averted when George came in and ponderously eased himself into a chair. "Well, what did you think of Cope Hut? Did you see our names in the Visitors' Book?"

We had seen them. About twelve names with the Redoubtable Fo.'s at the head. But no women. This seemed rather strange. I wonder where he left them?

"Did you do Mt. Fainter and Bogong?" "Listen, George, while I tell you a tale of woe. When we should have been fainting on Fainter and bogged down on Bogong we were sitting in a hut with a pea-souper outside. Imagine that - with nothing to drink but Milo!" George saw the grimness of it all and shook his head sadly.

The beery voice of the Gent in the Tent chimed in "Fish, and what happened to Mary?"

I took myself off to the Monterey. Christmas had become intolerable.

MAKE IT A LEGACY - IN WRITING.

By "Mumbedah".

"Well, what do you know - I've been elected to an official job in the Sydney Bush Walkers, and I've got to sit on the Committee too. Always wondered what they did in that mysterious room down at the end of our clubroom - now I'll know!"

We overheard this remark following on last year's Annual General Meeting. It denoted the election of "new blood" to some official position which a member held for the previous twelve months.

The enthusiasm may be all very well, but let it be maintained. How many of the "displaced persons" take the trouble to give their successor a proper helping hand with the new job? There are many points to know in every job, and it should be the duty of the relinquisher to set down in writing the salient features of the official position as gained by their experience of the preceding twelve months. It would not be too much trouble to make the necessary notes and place them in a folder which could be handed down and amended as occasion demanded. The officials' jobs have become so onerous that it is only fair that the general routine should be in black and white.

Not so long ago the Walks Secretary (quoted for example only) was whizzed away at ten days notice to England. His successor was not appointed until two Monthly General Meetings subsequent, by which time the former official was in England. Such occasions will arise again and the present committee, before going out of office, would do well to consider requesting the present office bearers to commence the compilation of such records for future holders.

It is conceded the Secretary's multifarious jobs would fill pages, and no doubt the Treasurer's personal application of accountancy would be spread over many volumes, but there are many minor jobs which could easily be recorded for posterity.

FEDERATION NOTES

by Brian Harvey.

As instructed by January General Meeting the S.B.W. delegates moved that the Adelaide Bushwalkers be asked to state why they supported "The Bushman's Handbook". As the majority of delegates opined that a life may be saved by the knowledge in the book the motion was lost.

The Search and Rescue Section meet on 7th February at 5.30 p.m. at Paddy's. The Search and Rescue Fund stands at £35. The Section recommends that parties should never split.

Frank Adams suggested that some wealthy walkers should save Era

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by purchasing the remaining three (3) lots, so as to prevent the incursion of road if the area were resumed by The National Park Trust.

The Perisher and Rocky Plains Huts on the road to the Chalet were reported to be unhygienic. The Ski Council is to be approached.

Cutting of timber on Budthingeroo Creek was reported by the Federation to the Minister for Conservation. Extensive damage to creek banks was alleged.

RASTUS

by "Skip"

Conversation was at a low ebb. A few contented sighs and some sleepy meanderings hardly disturbed the serenity of the evening. The grass trees drew in toward the fire, the she-oaks bent low, flames flickered softly, and a full moon shone down in peace upon the calmness in the valley.

All should have been calm, but the majority were rather apprehensive of the morrow. They were recalling, regretfully now, how Rastus had joined the party. He'd sort of said "hello", as we left the station, in a friendly off-hand manner, with no hint of his evil intentions. At the first rest he came charging on rather blindly, but hastily retreated when he saw he'd gone too far. The retreat, so we thought, was for good. Merely wishful thinking though. At the next stop he brazenly joined the party. Most of us were rather child-like in our innocence, and unaware of the subtleties of mental torture our openheartedness was letting us in for.

Later that day we had our first misgivings, for ten miles in an afternoon will make anyone hungry, and such was his nature that Rastus had nothing with him. This doesn't seem very important when you are full unto busting with a tin of sphagetti, bread and honey, Milo, Bill's peaches, Eric's custard, and Merle's Bonox, and when the rest are in a similar condition, for it would seem that on the surplus an extra mouth could be fed. But Rastus was fussy, very fussy. A quarter of a pound of ham was but a mouthful, and the surplus was not to his liking. So except for some odd scraps of bread and cake, Rastus chose not to eat further. Then he turned round and went to sleep.

The morning was rather gloomy, and having nothing else to do we slept in. Rastus was the worst offender (we still don't know his name), but he put in an appearance at breakfast time, where he ate even less than the night before, due, of course, once more, to his gastronomic prejudice.

However, he bore us no illwill, and made quite a to do about having a swim. Although not a good swimmer he put up a creditable

performance, but showed no affection to the soap with which Bill and I were laving ourselves. Even in the midst of this merrymaking Rastus worried us. No more charming companion could one have, none more discreet or affectionate, none less demanding, but none more dependent.

Already his necessarily restricted diet was having its effect on his appearance, although he was still as lively as ever, even pathetically so. What else could we do, then, but abandon plans for lengthening the trip, and return to our starting point in a district presumably familiar to him, although I will admit we were swayed somewhat by the unattractive weather, the time of day, and general lassitude of all concerned.

About morning tea time, then, we broke camp and began retracing our steps towards home. With hearts nearly as heavy as our tread we slowly climbed out of our valley intent on doing our best for Rastus, alias Fleabite, Boy and Fella. For know you, as if you hadn't already guessed it, that Fleabite was a dog, and a large dog at that. Eric said it was a foxhound, and who am I to be quarreling with Eric? And so if you have been following my tail, the moral will surely be evident already.

If, however, there be those who find no fault with Fleabite so far, let me finish my episode of woes. True, our friend as yet had caused us no inconvenience, bar having to come back the way we came, but later he insisted on getting lost. For on top of the ridge he found yesterday's trail and immediately set about tracking us down at an alarming rate. In five minutes Rastus was only a far off baying in the valley below, and we spent some anxious, and it could have been precious, minutes baying back until he "homed" on our voices and re-appeared as quickly as he went.

This wasn't all. Lunchtime came, and he dined sparingly from bread and Bonox, and plum cake. We hastened back to Springwood in a drizzle heaving sighs of expectant relief with just a little apprehension about his owner's state of mind and the animal's state of health. Surely he would go home as soon as we got there. But apart from various excursions into and out of divers front gates, Fleabite adamantly refused to leave. He thought he was in on a good lurk - after all we had put up with him for a weekend, why not longer?

Of course I was the mug. I went to the station with the others and changed into a more civilised outfit for Operation Highways. I left the station, then I took Rastus back to the party. I went into the waiting room, shut the door, went out the other door and shut it, and then slunk off up the stairs trying to be as anonymous as possible. Of course this didn't work. Springwood offered Fleabite no welcome, and he showed no signs of transferring his allegiance to any passers by, local buildings, or lady dogs. Exhortations, nay even threats, about going home, only made him gambol even more playfully around my feet, which is rather an under-

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statement of his affection which reached even unto placing his colossal paws on my chest and licking my face, and I'm no babe.

The end had to come. I met up with a friend in a car (yes, I did) and the last we saw of poor old Rastus he was coming hell for leather after the car. My conscience still twinges at the recollection. The moral is obvious. Prospectives are urged officially not to bring friends or dogs on test walks, and I hope they never do. Well, dogs anyway.

"WE ARE WHAT WE EAT" It would be wrong to infer from the title of Clem Hallstrom's lecture that the mind of the vegetarian is as green as the things he eats. This eating, let it be understood, is a serious business, but the time to be serious is not during or after meals, for too much thought about food when, or after, eating it, leads only to indigestion and the medicine bottle. However it is apparently in order to consider the matter after 8 p.m. on Fridays. Life is not froth and bubble, but a successful reduction of the uric acid content of our insides by the absorption of alkaline foods. The lowly cucumber (it grows on the ground), is packed with everything good. We learnt that our insides are 38 feet long, that meat takes too long to get from one end to the other, that pain is our friend because it warns us when things go wrong, and that all diseases can be prevented if our organs receive the right nourishment. Many disagreed with Clem's views, but if only one spurns the (medicine) bottle and reaches for a cucurbit, his words will not have been in vain

LOST GROUNDSHEET: René Browne lost her groundsheet at the Christmas treat. Would anyone who was there please look over their groundsheet and see if they got the right one? Apart from its monetary value the groundsheet has some pleasant associations for Rene.

PERSPECTIVE: It was ever thus. Forty thousand people are drowned in China and receive two lines of publicity. One person is murdered in North Sydney and gets the whole front page. Countless trees are killed or warped by fires within 30 miles of the G.P.O., and nobody hears about it, whereas the felling of one ugly fig tree in Anzac Parade gets columns of publicity. But let us not condemn the press too hastily. Did any of the conservation bodies take the trouble to write to the papers about the fires in our reserves?

THE BARREN LANDS: The Barren Lands above the Albion-Park, Kiama Berry district are covered with a thick swamp vegetation of coarse grass, flowering plants, scrub and low trees. When rain falls the water is held in this swamp-vegetation as in a sponge, and very slowly it seeps down through the porous sandstone below until, at the foot of the cliffs, it meets the non-porous shales (weathering into clay) of the Upper Coal Measures. Here the water can go no farther down and it comes out of the ground in the form of

no further down and it comes out of the ground in the form of those springs which are a characteristic of the district. These both form streams themselves and help feed the streams which flow from the swamps on the seaward side of the Barren Lands.

If the Barren Lands became a desert, both the springs and the streams would dry up. The rain would quickly run away in storm water channels because there would be no spongy vegetation to hold it. The little springs and streams, the life-blood of the district, depend on that dense swamp vegetation on the top of the Barren Lands, and when it goes, they go too.

After an absence of many years I recently walked over the Barren Lands, and I was shocked to see how the swamp vegetation had degenerated. In places there were even large patches of bare earth, and the swamps were a great deal drier. There were obvious signs that fires had swept across, and that these accounted for the poorer, sparser, vegetation. Some fires, I am told, are deliberately lit by saw-millers, some by graziers hoping for young grass shoots, some by misguided people who think it is a "good thing to clean up the bush." Whatever the cause, the bush fires, if allowed to continue, will eventually turn the Barren Lands into a desert, and that will be the end of the lovely streams of the Albion Park and Berry and Kiama districts. Bushwalkers can do their part helping to form that enlightened public opinion which ultimately does change things. (By Marie B. Blyes - adapted from article reproduced with the permission of the "Kiama Independant").

In some regions, areas which were far too steep for safe use either as grazing land or for cropping have been cleared of their timber. Such areas extend from Scottsdale in Tasmania to the Atherton Tableland, Queensland. Sometimes after heroic efforts farms have been established on such country; more often than not the forces of nature have triumphed and the land has reverted either to bracken or scrub or to a less desirable type of forest than that which originally covered the ground. In some cases such land has reverted to or been repurchased by the Crown; in others it is still nominally the property of the owners who have arrears of rates standing against them. They do nothing with it and the fallen trees which litter its surface are particularly difficult to deal with in the event of a bushfire sweeping the area. From the point of view of effective land development, these failures, which are numerous, represent economic waste on the one hand and social disasters on the other. These also represent wasted forests which if clad with their original timber to-day would be worth many millions of pounds.

From the Third Report of the Rural Reconstruction Commission.

WHAT HAS PADDY GOT?

Paddy is in Tasmania, but during his absence the following wares are displayed for sale:

Japara Water Buckets, weight 3 ozs. small 5/-, large (2 gallons) 5/3. With zips 7/9 and 8/3

Rubberised (yellow) water buckets, weight 5 ozs., capacity 10 pints, 4/9 (none with zips)

Li-lo air beds 78/-

Air pillows from 7/6 to 13/-

U.S. Army Ponchos, weight 2 lbs. 2 ozs. £1

Tropical blankets, weight 2½lbs., 17/6

Skiers take note

Paddy is stocking up with a full range of ski gear, including skis made by Johannsen and Nilsen, also waxes, stocks, bindings, boots etc.