

WINTER SPORTS

BANFF CANADIAN ROCKIES



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RESERVED

FOREWORD!

Viewed from one angle this little booklet can be termed an advertising pamphlet! Looked at from another angle it is a treatise on what can be done during a Winter Holiday in the Canadian Rockies. It is from this latter angle that it is being issued.

We who live in the mountains enjoy the winter months perhaps more so than the summer months, for it is then that the real beauty of our surroundings can be seen and appreciated. Nature could hardly present a lovelier picture than is shown in the mountains following a winter snow-storm or a deposit of frost on the spruce and pine trees, willows, poplar, etc., which grow on the mountain sides and in the valleys. Such a picture once seen is never forgotten!

The publishing of this booklet has been made possible through the co-operation of the different firms whose advertising appears herein, and the publishers have no hesitation in recommending the wares of these firms to the public. They have been chosen for the reason that their goods are known to be outstanding in their particular line. Their goods can be found in every locality where winter sports are indulged in.

The publishers are also indebted to G. Cameron Stockand for his excellent treatise on Winter Sports in the Canadian Rockies; also to Jack Fuller for his fine drawings on the cover pages.

If this booklet is the cause of your taking a holiday in the mountains in the near or distant future we shall be thankful. It will have fulfilled its mission. If you are not interested pass it to a friend, who might find in its pages something of interest.

THE SLIP-CLIP LETTER CARD CO., Publishers, Banff.

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SNOW! SCENERY! SLOPES! SUNSHINE!

WITHOUT these four alliterative attributes no Winter Sports Resort could long exist. But alone they are not enough. In addition, any such resort worthy of the name must have an ideal winter climate; it must be situated at the proper altitude; it must have adequate physical facilities for all winter pastimes—not merely for a specialized few—and these facilities must be supplemented by aggressive, hospitable and enthusiastic local organizations in each line of sport. It is essential, too, that the various sports locales be convenient of access. The social amenities must be given their due of importance as well as activities other than out-of-door pursuits, for, above all things, monotony must be avoided if holidays, winter or summer, are to be successful. There must be smart, up-to-date shops where sports clothing and equipment may be purchased at fair prices, and skis, skates, and kindred necessities should be on hire for the convenience of those whose stay may be too short to warrant outright purchase.

And, in addition to all written over page, if a winter resort is to thrive it must lay adequate stress on the creature comforts and the little niceties of life. The day has long since vanished when the over-worked phrase "all modern conveniences" told the whole story as far as hotel or other accommodation was concerned. The travelling public now takes this sort of thing pretty much for granted and expects (and quite rightly, too) comfort, service and courtesy of a high standard at rates scaled to meet present-day conditions.

Last, but by no means least, such a resort must be easily reached from outside points.

Now, this list of requirements with its parade of inexorable "musts" is admittedly formidable. But nevertheless we want to tell you about one winter holiday center which, or so we confidently believe, checks more than favorably on every essential point we have raised. It's Banff, in the Canadian

Rockies . . . the same Banff which for years past has been North America's premier mountain summer resort.

Perhaps, though, some of you who are now pursuing this booklet are not yet numbered amongst the countless thousands who in the last four decades or so have made Banff their headquarters while visiting Canada's great mountain playground. In which case a few brief facts presented now regarding the town and its surroundings may help you the better to understand and to visualize what follows.

Banff is picturesquely situated at an altitude of 4538 feet above sea level on the trans-Canada main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Lying just within the Alberta boundary on the Canadian Rockies' eastern slope twenty-four hours' journey from Vancouver, its nearest large city is Calgary, eighty-odd miles to the eastward and the largest commercial and

shipping center in the Province of Alberta. The town has a permanent population of some twenty-five hundred people, its own waterworks, lighting and telephone systems; public and high schools rated among the best in Canada by educational authorities, numerous shops, good restaurants and taverns, and several first-class hotels. Private accommodation is also available. And contrary to what is unfortunately all too general a belief these facilities and business enterprises do not exist for the summer months only, but are in operation all year 'round. It is also perhaps worthy of mention here that the stern rigors of keen competition (for monopolies of any sort are impossible in National Park areas) effectually dispose of that all-too-common resort bogey—the fear of unduly high prices for necessary goods or services.

Aside from the various summer and winter sports naturally expected in any mountainous section,

Banff's other year 'round attractions include an up-to-date theatre; excellent warm sulphur water swimming pools and bath-houses; a capacious dance-hall with one of the west's best dance bands in attendance; a museum, zoo and wild animal paddocks; lending library and various sporting, social, fraternal, service, political and cultural club activities—

in fact, all of the things that go toward making a comparatively small community so well worth visiting or, better still, living in.

Economically the town is of considerable importance as the chief point of supply and distribution for such well-known contiguous mountain resorts as Lake Louise, Yoho, Emerald Lake, Field, Mount Assiniboine and Lake O'Hara to name a few. In addition it is the seat of the administrative headquarters for all Western Canadian National Parks, embracing not only the

thousands of square miles of mountain terrain contained in Banff, Yoho, Kootenay and Jasper National Parks but several park areas in the prairie provinces as well.

Probably just about at this point you will have reached the conclusion that we who are compiling this advertising material are pretty enthusiastic about our town. We love it and its majestic surroundings just as much in the mountain winter as in the summer. But the trouble is, you see, that while Banff has long since reached its proper place in the sun as a summer resort, and beauty-lovers from all over the world tax its accommodation to the limit every year in the months from May till October, there are still not nearly enough people who come to Banff between October and May. That, in a nutshell, is why thousands of these pamphlets are being sent out all over the world. It's simply that we want you and your family and your friends and their friends, too, to visit Banff in the winter time, and by association and enjoyment, to learn to love it just as we do.

Naturally, if you do answer our call and come to the Canadian Rockies on your winter vacation,

we who live in Banff and whose interests and lives are linked with its future progress will stand to benefit to some degree at least. That is to be expected—even, in fact, to be hoped for. But—and this we promise with all confidence—you will benefit too.

So we have explained to you, first, just what the chief essentials of a winter resort should be; second, given you some general information regarding Banff; and third, confessed the motive which prompts the issuance of this booklet. Now, if you have borne with us so far and are still interested, let us go still further and tell you just how in winter, Banff and the mountain wonderland surrounding it, meets the high standard we have outlined; and, more specifically, just why, when next you plan a winter vacation, Banff should be the logical resort centre to consider.

Snow, of course, is obviously the prime essential—that's why we mention it first—for on the presence of good snow in precisely the proper quantity (oh, yes, its quite possible to have too much) depends not only the success of practically all winter pastimes, but

also the existence of that intangible but none the less important winter resort attribute—Atmosphere. Nor must be overlooked the vitally important part snow plays in complementing another asset we shall deal with shortly—scenery. However, the snow of the eastern slope of the Canadian Rockies is good snow. It has those marvellous qualities found only in the snow of mountain regions—and only then when such regions are sufficiently distant from the sea—of crispness, keenness, speed and general aliveness, so to speak, which are so absolutely essential to the success of all winter sports other than those held on ice.

Broadly speaking, the snow of the Banff district has, in the course of a normal season, two distinct phases, which may be designated more or less accurately as winter snow and spring snow conditions.

The first snowfalls, which may commence any time in November, are generally of considerable depth and consist of snow loose and powdery in texture. This phase as a rule prevails throughout the Christmas holiday season and until the beginning of March, providing in that period excellent skiing on packed practise slopes, trails, jumping hills and at low altitudes generally. Conditions are also ideal for such pastimes as tobogganing snow-shoeing, ski-joring, dog-sleighing, bob-running and other similar activities in the immediate vicinity of Banff. The highlight of this phase is, of course, the world-famous Banff Winter Carnival held each year early in February when such conditions as described above are usually at their best. But more of this gala winter event later on.

Then, in March, as the sun gets higher and its rays more powerful, this powdery early snow consolidates, settles and forms a firm foundation on which each succeeding snowfall lays in a powdery film until it, too, is affected by the sun and becomes one with the layer or layers of snow below. And the beauty of it is, in this transition the snow loses none of

the unique qualities that distinguish it so favorably from the wet, heavy snows of the Pacific slope.

We enter now that delectable phase during which the mountain skier—who perhaps above all other winter sports enthusiasts is the true connoisseur of snow and student of its vagaries—comes into his own. Now, with the snow well-crusted, high altitude skiing is possible without the labor of heavy trail-breaking, and hundreds of enthusiasts turn their ski points toward the great slopes that reach from wind-swept summit down to the scattered larches of timberline; toward the mighty glaciers whose crevasses are now snow-filled and as securely-bridged as ever they are, and where, for the expert, or even the runner just beyond the novice stage (if competently guided) there are runs of miles in length with vertical descents of one, two or three thousand feet at breath-taking speed and without the necessity for a single stop. (Involuntary ones always excepted!) And other enthusiasts, whose interests do not begin and end with the thrill of mere downhill running, turn their skis toward the far-away places—the high passes and

almost unexplored valleys of the mountain hinterland—on ski tours of sometimes several weeks' duration. And such expeditions, especially when all one's necessities must be back-packed in a mountaineer's rucksack, provide sometimes the hardest of hard work. But, nevertheless, they have a fascination all their own, and once one becomes infected with the ski-touring virus he returns to the mountains again and again.

It is for this period, which sometimes continues until late in May, that the various ski-ing lodges situated in strategic points throughout the finest ski-ing terrains in the Banff-Lake Louise region—the Skoki Valley, Mount Assiniboine, Ptarmigan Pass and the Sunshine Valley on Simpson Ridge—are opened. These resorts, invariably located as near timberline as practicable, are provided primarily

for those interested in extensive downhill running on terrain varying from the easiest to the most difficult, in glacier ski-ing, in ski touring and ski-mountaineering—all in the accepted Alpine tradition. And, may we say, with more or less modest pride, that the settings and facilities for such pursuits have been more than favorably compared with those of the Alps by disinterested authorities with first-hand experience both here and in the various European mountain resorts.

Before leaving the subject of snow (which, incidentally, seems to have embraced a good deal of ski-ing and other more or less extraneous information) we perhaps should make it clear that the change to spring conditions does not necessarily imply that snow sports are entirely over right in Banff and that one must go high into the mountains from the beginning of March on. Nevertheless, we must admit that a certain deterioration of snow conditions must be expected in the valley floor after this date. But, should you arrive at Banff on a fine March morning and find the ground bare, (mind you, its very unlikely, but it

has happened) don't throw your skis back on the train and cancel your hotel reservation, please! We'll tell you why.

A thousand feet above Banff, but only a few moments' drive from your hotel on a brand-new highway, is Norquay Pass and the Mount Norquay Ski Hut. And, invariably, snow . . . The hut is a picturesque and commodious log structure located near timberline on the summit of the pass separating Mounts Norquay and Stony Squaw, right in the centre of the finest ski-ing terrain in the immediate vicinity of Banff. Here you can get light lunches and refreshments, you may hire skis and equipment if necessary, you may take ski-ing lessons from government-licensed instructors (some of them trained in the famous ski-ing schools of Switzerland and the Austrian Arlberg) you may watch jumping tournaments or thrillingly-contested downhill and slalom races on thirty and forty-degree slopes; and of course, you will probably do a lot of ski-ing yourself, but not necessarily on thirty and forty-degree slopes—unless you want to—for there are lots of others. If

you prefer trail ski-ing, there is an extensive system of well-kept-up ski trails radiating from the hut in all directions. And, may we suggest if you want a real thrill, that you dismiss the taxi that brought you to the hut, and ski down to the village by way of what we know affectionately as the Nose-dive Coulee. It's a marvellous run—over open glades and partly wooded trails; but 1000 vertical feet of descent—partly steep, if you make it with only a few falls; well, you're a ski runner in any country.

This, you understand, may all be enjoyed even though there is no snow in Banff itself. Norquay Pass, as well as the lower slopes of Stony Squaw seem to constitute a natural snow-pocket where ski-ing is at its best during the months of March and April—although it is good, too, even before the snow crusts, in December, January and February.

Perhaps you who read this are thinking now: Lord! what on earth

MOUNT NOR
HUT AND

will this writer do when he gets on the subject of scenery if its taken all this time to get the matter of snow off his chest? Well, really there is not a great deal I can say about the winter beauties of Banff and the Canadian Rockies that has not been better said before. It's a job, anyway, not for a writer, how-

ORQUAY SKI
D SLIDES

ever enthusiastic, of advertising copy; but for a poet in a pitch of sublime inspiration. So I shall spare you what might be pretty painful paeans of praise and say simply that the ineffable charm and mysterious beauty of the great rock- and ice-peaks, the open country far above timberline, and the tree-clad lower slopes in summer is, if anything, enhanced and enriched by winter's white blanket of snow. There is nothing in this world, I think, more inspiringly beautiful than a Banff morning immediately following a heavy fall of snow. Every tree and growing thing bears a delicate tracery of snowy crystals shimmering

brilliantly in the clear sunshine, while above, fleecy snow-clouds are pluming away from the shining white mountains into the limitless deep blue vault of the winter sky. Perhaps though there are some (and with them I find it hard to disagree) who would, on such a morning, prefer to find themselves on some high pass where the whole world seems to consist of just oneself, the bare, windswept summits and a limitless expanse of dazzling white marred only by one's own ski tracks leading into nothingness below . . .

But we still have two more of our primary attributes to deal with — slopes and sunshine — and our space is growing short. So, without further delay, on to the slopes!

It is easy to understand that most winter sports would be pretty dull affairs without the combination of snow slopes and the workings of the inexorable law of gravity. Just, for instance, try to imagine ski-running without a profusion of big hills on which to test one's skill.

The need of slopes — and good slopes—for such sports as tobogganing and bob-sledding is perhaps too obvious to mention; and even

the excitement of a ride behind a team of six or eight Arctic-bred husky dogs can be increased to no small degree by a wild gallop down a mountain-side—the driver yelling and cracking his whip, the dogs yapping furiously, the brake-teeth ripping up the trail and the sled careening perilously from side to side—just try it on the Norquay Pass road, say, when you come to Banff, and see for yourself!

However, so far as slopes are concerned, about all that needs to be said is that Banff is in the mountains, and naturally, mountains being what they are, there are slopes in plenty for every purpose. The lower reaches of Tunnel Mountain are responsible for the existence of Banff's mile-a-minute (but absolutely safe) toboggan slide, which ends its thrilling course right on the town's wide main street, while several nearby mountain highways provide ideal surfaces for Canadian-style bobsledding which does not require a specially-constructed track.

And did we say something about sunshine? Well, we shall, at any rate; for on sunshine depends a lot of things. That so necessary transition of snow that we mentioned,

for instance. And what else is there other than sunshine that could supply that atmosphere of cheer and gaiety which makes Banff the wonderful resort it is? For Banff gets more than its share of winter sunlight. Of course, it would be futile (as well as blatantly untruthful) to say that the weather in the Canadian Rockies is always good. It can, from time to time, be pretty awful. A certain amount of cold weather and occasional snowstorms we naturally must have to provide snow and ice for winter sports; but real old-fashioned blizzards are not unknown and once or twice in a winter the mercury nose-dives to almost incredible depths. Happily, such occurrences are definitely the exception rather than the rule, and usually are more than compensated for by the good weather which invariably follows. But even at the worst there is a certain very definite charm and fascination about a mountain storm—provided one is ensconced in snug quarters—and, if outdoor pursuits are rendered temporarily out of the question by the weather's current vagaries, there remain always the resources of good company, a good

book and a hotel fireplace roaring lustily. Or even Bridge!

But to really appreciate the potency and power of the sun's rays at high altitudes one should see just once the deep bronze complexion of some fortunate ski runner who has spent a fortnight or so in Banff or at one of the various ski resorts we have mentioned. Honestly, it makes the average Riviera suntan look positively anemic by comparison—and the pigmentation will probably cover just as much epidermal territory! You see, especially in April and May, a great deal of ski-ing is done in bathing suits and ski slacks or shorts—and quite comfortably too—although one would be well advised not to fall too frequently when so garbed—the snow is still cold, even though the sun be hot. Nor, may it be mentioned is sunbathing on the warm roof of a high-altitude ski-ing lodge entirely unknown as an aid to the cultivation of a deep coat of tan.

THE SIMPSON SISTERS



(Margaret and Mary)

Banff's Noted Juvenile Exponents
of the Silver Blades

SKATING



Well, we seem to have covered snow, scenery, slopes and sunshine (as well as a lot of other matters that worked themselves in, in passing—pretty thoroughly — in fact, a little more thoroughly than we intended. But what about the various sports in which ice is the medium instead of snow? They seem to have been given only cursory mention so far.

It's most certainly not that they lack importance in Banff's scheme of things that they have been left until now for attention, but simply for the reason that we have so many things to tell about that something had to be left until later.

Banff has a large open-air skating rink with well-heated and commodious waiting rooms beautifully situated on the south bank of the

Bow River in a sheltered location just a short stroll from the centre of the town. As may be expected, the rink during the season is one of the resort's most popular centres of interest. Figure skating is given a great deal of prominence in Banff and is tremendously popular at the present time both with visitors and local residents. Amateur or professional instruction in this branch of skating is made available through the facilities of the local club, which is also active in the holding of tests and competitions—the last-named being one of the major attractions of the annual Winter Carnival, when strong teams of visiting figure-skaters vie with the not inconsiderable talent native to Banff.



Hockey

Hockey, the national Canadian game, is of course a regular feature of winter life in Banff, mountain league games being played at least one night a week as long as the ice lasts. The standard of ice hockey in the Banff region is exceptionally high, a fact which is evidenced by the number of players from this and nearby towns who, in recent years, have been picked up by major professional teams in eastern Canada and the United States. Speed-skating, too, has an enthusiastic local following, distance and sprint races in all classes being held regularly throughout the season, and especially during the winter carnival.





Curling

Nor must curling, that grand old Scottish pastime, be overlooked. The Banff Curling Club—one of the town's most ancient and honorable institutions—maintains four perfect sheets of ice in its capacious all-enclosed club-house adjacent to the skating rink. Here the interested visitor will find it made easy for him to at first get in on scratch games, for the club is famous for its hospitality. And, should he show aptitude and genuine enthusiasm for the 'roarin' game' he may eventually be honored in having some canny and perspicacious skip pick him for a regular 'rink'.

The activities of this club culminate each season in a glorious week's festival of curling—the Bonspiel—held, as a rule, coincid-

entally with the Winter Carnival. During this week valuable prizes are competed for by numerous visiting rinks as well as by local ones, but despite the rigors of keen competition—and curling is not taken lightly! a spirit of fine good-fellowship holds throughout, making the Bonspiel one of the highlights of the winter season.



Recapitulation

It was pointed out almost at the start of this booklet, we believe, that a wide diversity of attractions was essential if monotony was to be avoided. So let us now make a brief recapitulation of the pastimes already mentioned just to see how Banff acquits itself in this vitally important regard.

Lets see; there's ski-ing in all its branches—downhill running, jump-ing, ski-touring, slalom and downhill ski racing, trail ski-ing, ski mountaineering, and ski-joring; then come figure skating, speed-skating, hockey and "just skating"; tobogganing, bob-sledding, dog-sledding, snowshoeing. And then of course come attractions which cannot be classed as winter sports but which, nevertheless, provide variety in the evenings. We refer to the theatre, dance hall, clubs taverns, and so forth. All in all, a pretty creditable list of inter-

ests, we think, for a small mountain town.

But just a minute! We have forgotten something—and something pretty important, too—swimming. For it vies in popularity with all the ice and snow sports we have named, even in the midst of winter. The modern Government bath houses and swimming pools utilizing the natural springs of hot sulphur water that gush forth at both the Upper Hot Springs (if you like it really hot) and at the Cave and Basin (if you prefer it slightly cooler) make it possible to swim in complete comfort in the coldest of cold weather.

And if there's anything on this earth more refreshing and relaxing after a hard day on the ski slopes or the skating rink than a short dip in this marvellous radioactive water I can't think of it just now!

Before concluding, though, we must tell you a little more about that event we have mentioned occasionally through this article. We mean the Banff Winter Carnival. It is simply a mid-winter gala week—a week in early February set aside solely for gaiety, sport and amusement of all kinds.

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Cheery crowds fill the town to capacity—there are dances and masquerades — hockey games (girls' teams as well as men's), moonlight ski-ing and sleighing parties, ending with bean-feeds perhaps in some nearby camp, competitions in every winter sport up to and including swimming and trap-shooting; there are impromptu entertainments of all kinds—in fact it's a never-to-be-forgotten event—an event definitely not to be missed.

Probably the last question still in your mind is: Just what is the best time to come to Banff?

Well the answer to that is: Come any time. There's always something to do in Banff and it has its own special charm in every month of the year. But for winter sports holidays, and after all that is what this booklet means to deal with, our advice would be about as follows:

If its just a general winter holiday for yourself or your family that you want come in December, January or February. For, as we explained, it is in that period when all the sports and attractions tend to center in and around the village itself. If you can arrange your

dates so that the Christmas holidays and or the Winter Carnival may be included, so much the better. But if not, it still doesn't matter much, for you will find plenty to interest you, anyway. However, if your interest is confined primarily to ski-ing, then do something like this: Come to Banff in March or April. Put in as few or as many days as you care to on the wonderful ski-ing terrain at the Mount Norquay. Hut to brush up on your ski-ing technique and put yourself in A1 condition. Then, when to coin a phrase, you have your ski legs, go out to one

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of the high-country ski-ing resorts we have mentioned for a week, two weeks or, if circumstances allow it, even longer. For you won't tire of it—ski-ing provides an infinite variety of pleasures in itself—and we'll guarantee you'll have a holiday that will supply pleasant memories for the rest of your life.

All then that remains to be said is, if there's any additional information you need; just write, and a courteous, accurate and individual reply will wing back to you by return of post.

In the meantime, we'll be looking for you this winter or next!

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