



THIS IS AN aerial shot of Kelowna's Big White Mountain, opened Dec. 1 for skiing by Kelowna ski enthusiasts Doug Mervyn and Cliff Serwa.

The circled area left is the site of parking facilities and the Day's chalet. Section circled at right is the bunny hill used by children and begin-

ners. The hill is equipped with a 500-foot rope tow. The line in the center of the picture traces the route of the 5,500-

foot vertical drop. The skiing area is a true Alpine with few trees, very beneficial to a good ski area.

Big White Ski Resort Major Tourist Attraction

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Possibly the most significant development in the Okanagan during 1963 was the opening of Big White ski resort just outside of Kelowna.

The Okanagan and Mainline areas of B.C. are already well equipped with skiing areas, but Big White is the largest mountain in the Interior and it boasts one of the best natural sites. Skiers soon learned of its existence and now make trips to it between visiting other, older areas.

The story of Big White development is a short, but already interesting one.

Black Mountain was the scene of Kelowna Ski Club activities for a number of years. A small rope tow area was in operation. The lower elevation of the ski bowl resulted in a consistent lack of snow.

Cliff Serwa and Doug Mervyn, Ski Club directors explored every feasible site for relocation of club operations. Big White, southeast of Kelowna, was recommended.

PARTNERSHIP

However, the club felt the project was too big and too much for them to tackle. Private individuals in the area were approached but no one was interested. Two years ago, Mr. Serwa and Mr. Mervyn decided to develop the mountain themselves.

A partnership was formed to investigate and obtain rights to the area and in April of 1963, the Big White Ski Development Ltd. was incorporated to develop and operate the resort.

A jeep access road was built

in November 1962. The Big White partners skied the area from Christmas to June 1 and at the latter date, there was still five feet of snow over the whole hill . . . not one bare spot.

During the winter, skiers of every stage from beginner to pro were taken to the area, in order to get a good cross-section of representatives with opinions on Big White facilities.

PARADISE

The reaction of everyone was unanimous, "If you can get a good road into this paradise you can't possibly go wrong!"

Big White is located 39.5 miles from downtown Kelowna, traveling in a southeast direction. The initial 25 miles is paved highway and the remainder, a good, two-lane road with very "a" grade.

The first six miles of the latter portion was a logging road which has been widened and the remainder done completely by the partners.

Big White is the highest moun-

tain in the Okanagan with a top elevation of 7,603 feet.

One has a tremendous view from the chalet which can be serviced by the road. On a clear day on the mountain, it is possible to see 100 miles in every direction.

A huge bowl forms the mile-wide ski area on the south side of the mountain. With prevailing weather during the winter coming from the north and northwest, the skiing section is protected from almost all the wind by the high west ridge and the peak above.

ALWAYS DRY

At this altitude the snow is always dry and at most times "the stuff dreams are made of." Standing alone on the plateau, snow comes from almost every cloud that drifts along. It is seldom a thick fall and doesn't interfere with skiing. About two to four inches falls each day.

The lift is a new Doppelmayr high-speed T-bar with a capacity of 800 skiers per hour. It

is 5,500 feet long with a 1,316-foot vertical drop.

Because the lift runs up the centre of a huge basin which is flatter near the bottom and steeper toward the top, it provides skiing for everyone, with an infinite variety of trails and runs.

A forest fire about 100 years ago left only scattered clumps of trees so that almost no clearing was necessary. It provides true alpine skiing at its best.

There is also a 500-foot rope tow hill for bunnies and beginners.

INSTRUCTOR

Willie Phisterer from Jasper is head of the ski school. He is a certified Canadian Alliance instructor who headed the Jasper school for the last six years. He was a member of the Austrian ski team and the Alberta ski team trainer.

The area operates Saturday, Sunday and Monday and as soon as it is feasible, it will operate seven days a week.

Ski weeks were held December 21 to January 6; February 8-17 with others slated for February 29 to March 9 and March 27 to April 6.

There has been limited accommodation on the mountain this year but plans call for this service within the next two or three years.