

## Pilot Knob area would need a big snow-maker

### Ski rift . . .

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controversy, Butler points out, is that the Mason City group has been clearing part of the proposed ski area for the last two years with commission approval. The group heard no objection from the naturalists either time when it cleared dead and small trees and brush from a 30 to 60-foot wide area.

One of the largest investments of the Mason City group, Butler added, would be the purchase of snow-making equipment. The equipment which the group feels is a necessity for the sound operation of the area—would cost between \$1,000 and \$12,000. With this machine, the area could provide 10 days of skiing starting in mid-December, Butler continued.

Butler also is quick to point out that the organization does not plan to clear state land for the construction of the parking area and chalet. Both these would be constructed on privately owned land next to the park or use would be made of present park facilities.

Just how many people would avail themselves of the ski area if it were constructed is the big question, Butler continued. The area could make money if it were used by 10,000 skiers in a season, he adds.

"We, however, are not going into this with the idea of making a lot of money," Butler points out. "We just want to make enough so the operation will go."

The Pilot Knob location was selected by the group, Butler says, because "there is no other comparable spot in the state." If there were a comparable location on private land, he continues, the group would be glad to investigate it.

Butler does not follow the criticism that the operation should not be put on state land. He places skiing in the same category as camping and motorboating.

"They are all just recreation activities and state facilities are used for the other two," he explains.

The construction of the ski area would turn the park into a year around operation, Butler continues. As it is now, he says, the park has few visitors during the winter months. The ski area also would provide additional revenue for the park, he points out, since his organization would pay the state a yearly rental for the land in operation.

The controversy between the Mason City organization—which has a membership of about 100—and Forslund centers around money.

Forslund maintains that he is in favor of a big ski area in the park, but "not at my expense."

Forslund says he has about \$12,000 invested in his operation and last year offered to sell the area to the Mason City group for about \$7,000. The group, he says, in turn offered him \$4,000.

"When I first got started," Forslund says, "these same Mason City people told me to go slow and not to invest in a bunch of expensive equipment. Now, they tell me all I have is junk."

Forslund's operation includes one 1,100-foot long ski run with a drop of 150 feet, a toboggan run, a chalet and an improved parking lot. He also had to construct a road into the area. He has no snow-making equipment, had because of the lack of snow, the area only was open three days two years ago and no days last winter.

There is room in the area for two more runs, Forslund adds, but there is no use putting them in until his business warrants them. During the first winter Forslund's operation was open as many as 200 or 300 people would attend the area on a weekend day. He also provided free sessions for Waldorf College students.

Forslund doesn't think the Mason City group appreciates what he has done for it. "I was the first person to think about and do something

about a ski area in North Iowa," he points out. "I even rebuilt the ski area the second year. I was in business just to please these guys." He regraded the slope and rebuilt the rope tow, he added.

The lack of snow-making equipment and the fact that it only has one ski run are two disadvantages to Forslund's operation, Butler maintains. Snow-making equipment can determine the success or failure of a ski area in this climate, he points out.

Stuart Campbell, general manager of the Buck Hill ski center south of Minneapolis on Highway 65, walked over the proposed Pilot Knob area with Butler and two other representatives of the Mason City group.

After studying weather data on the area, Campbell said the snow-making equipment would work "without question." The importance of the equipment can be seen in the Buck Hill operation, Campbell said. In 1961, operating without snow-making equipment, the Buck Hill area was open only a few days and had an income of \$700. With equipment installed in 1962 the area attracted 15,000 skiers and had an income of \$63,000. The attendance at the center this last winter was 30,000.

Campbell gave the Mason City group his approval of the proposed site and layout of the area. "I don't see any reason that there would have to be at least three or four runs to make the investment in the snow-making equipment feasible."

Forslund says he will continue to operate his area regardless of the action by the commission. "I've got too much invested just to quit now," he points out. He also says he would be interested in bidding on the new area if the commission gives its approval and "I can get the backing."

"It all boils down to the fact that I'm in favor of a big area, but I can't stand an \$8,000 loss and I'll fight these guys with my last dollar," Forslund says.

## Negro woman appointed to public post

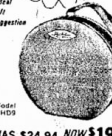
WASHINGTON (AP)—President Johnson has promoted Charlotte Moton Hubbard to what was described Thursday as the highest ranking permanent federal post to be held by a Negro woman. Johnson announced the appointment of Mrs. Hubbard as a deputy assistant secretary of state for public affairs Wednesday, noting that her father—Dr. Robert R. Moton—had been a successor to Booker T. Washington as president of Tuskegee Institute.

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