

New Wabasha Ski Tow Waits on Snow

WABASHA, Minn. (Special) — The nine children in the family of Leo Dick, contrary to most folks, are praying for snow these days, because their father, Leo Dick, will open the Little Squaw Valley ski tow the weekend of the first snowfall.

He's in partnership with James Johnson, Wabasha.

Little Squaw Valley is near Little Ireland. Here's how to get there: Two miles north of Kellogg on Highway 61, turn west at Little Ireland, and the tow is about a quarter of a mile away. An attractive sign pointing the way was designed and constructed by Johnson, on the spot of a former roadside vegetable stand.

THE 240-acre farm owned by Johnson, where the tow is located, is a skier's paradise as it's mostly Mississippi River bluffs.

Sunday it was a beehive of activity, with last minute preparations for the opening. The young Dicks except David, 1, were tearing down a shack and piling and hauling the lumber away on a tractor. The children are James, 13; William, 11; Jean, 10; Kenneth, 9; Marilyn, 8; Marie, 6, Danny, 4, and Glen, 3.

Rounding out the family workers were their pretty brunette mother, Lucille, busily engaged cleaning the chalet with her mother, Mrs. Carl Heilscher, Kellogg, and sisters-in-law, Mrs. Irvin Dick and Mrs. Thomas Dick, Wabasha. For good measure Mrs. Dick's father, Carl Heilscher, and Johnson's father, Charles Johnson, St. Paul, were unofficial supervisors.

THE 200-YARD rope ski tow is ready for use. It was installed by the partners after clearing the hill of about 30 trees with the help of a bulldozer. The tow is built on the north side where the sun does not reach. All the equipment was

formerly used at Snobakken ski tow at Wabasha, now disbanded.

At the foot of the ski tow is the large red barn, 40 by 80 feet, now being converted into the chalet.

Hot lunches, juke box music, pool tables and games will provide respite for the skiers at the chalet. Tables and chairs from Johnson's former Wabasha restaurant, the Hiawatha Grill, cooking equipment, a gray and red counter and gas heating system will be installed.

Little Squaw Valley will be open Saturdays and Sundays only with hours from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. As the nearest ski tow is about 50 miles away, at Menomonie, Wis., the owners hope to draw skiers from Rochester, Winona and Red Wing as well as neighboring towns. Skiing instruction will be available.

A Milwaukee Railroad station agent at Kellogg, 37-year-old Leo Dick, loves skiing and has skied since boyhood. He was manager at Snobakken, located about a mile north of Wabasha, for five years. He'll be using the tow.

NOW EMPLOYED as carpenter at the Wabasha Marina, Johnson, 27, was a member of Wabasha's 544th Ordnance Company stationed at Camp Polk, La., during the Berlin crisis. Following his return in September, he purchased the farm from Dale Heitman and Harry Schlichtman of Wabasha.

Johnson and Dick formed their partnership in September and have been working on the project since.

Next year the co-owners plan to install a skating rink at the entrance to the skiing area. Long range plans also call for dancing on the spacious second floor of the chalet. More tows eventually will be constructed, and there is a possibility of a golf course or driving range next summer.