

## Charlotte's Pass Chalet

By P. M. A. Speet.

*The opening of the Chalet was fully dealt with in the 1930 number of the "Year Book," but the difficulties encountered in the erection may not have been realised by some readers. They are shown in the following article by Mr. Speet, (Editor "A.S.Y.B.")*

It may be of interest to readers to learn a few of the experiences we had with the erection of the Chalet at Charlotte's Pass, at short notice, before the winter of 1930.

On January 25th, 1930, a commencement was made with the levelling of the site which the Chalet now occupies, and a very optimistic foreman builder went up to commence operations. Some of his optimism was damped when he discovered the difficulties which had to be faced and the conditions he had to live under, but he maintained most of his cheerfulness throughout the period he was there, and a tribute to his cheerfulness is provided by the fact that the Chalet was finished in time.

The greatest difficulty was transport. Every item had to be brought from Sydney and dragged down over an impossible track to a shivering bog in front of the Chalet, and across the bog to the site. A temporary telephone connection to the Hotel kept me informed of the progress made whilst I was not there, and I was informed at least once a day that the tractor was hopelessly bogged and that building had to be stopped unless it was extricated from the bog; this was usually accomplished before I had time to get up to the site by car, and on two occasions only was it necessary to send another tractor to pull the first one out.

Work progressed apace until during one raw night a half-hurricane swept the Stilwell Valley and removed the front part of the roof in its stride; telephone communication was interrupted and a few of the builders whose tents had been swept away came down to the Hotel and informed me that the Chalet was minus a roof and that considerable damage had been caused. A fast drive brought me to the scene of the disaster, where it was found that sheets of iron were strewn all over the sides of Mount Stilwell. Luckily, however, only the front part of the roof had been removed and damage inside was of a minor nature; the damage was repaired a few days later and no great inconvenience had been caused, except to the men whose tents had been blown away.

As time went on and May was close at hand, the rea-

lisation that snow would soon make approach impossible, with most of the furniture not yet in Cooma roused anxiety, and when snow fell during the last days of April and the furnishings were still in transit to Cooma things looked hopeless. Finally, on May 4th, the furniture began to arrive, and was transported through snow and mud to the Chalet, but the painters were still putting on the finishing touches, and very little could be done in the way of cleaning and furnishing.

Meanwhile our lorries were bogging axle deep on the road to the Pass, and a frantic appeal had to be made to the Main Roads Board for a repair gang. Tractors, of which two were then being used at the Chalet, had to be withdrawn to drag the lorries out. Then rain began to fall and made things worse than ever, but after a combined effort by the Chalet staff, which had then arrived and all the members of the Hotel staff that could be spared, the place was put in a habitable condition by May 27th, when the opening ceremony was performed.

Even then it was found that things were not all that might be expected. Last-minute additions had to be made to provide for adequate service to guests, but all was finally completed and the Chalet is now an accomplished fact.

### THE LATE MR. W. DORAN.

In February of this year a fall of earth caused the death of Bill Doran, a well known ski-runner from Kiandra, while prospecting for gold. One of a family of three brothers—all of whom did their best to make the winter visitor to Kiandra welcome—he was an accomplished performer on skis and truly representative of all that was good in Kiandra ski-ing.

The writer remembers the thrill he experienced once on seeing him disappear into thick timber, standing and fallen, down the steep Sawyer's Hill to the Government Rest Hut. It looked absolutely impassable, and on the way up it had been difficult to find a track owing to windfalls, but straight down he went, changing direction when necessary with the wide skating turn that all good Kiandra skiers do so well. The rest of us made our way to the Rest Hut with more dignity and less speed down the old road.

On one occasion he visited Kosciusko with Patrick—probably Kiandra's strongest runner—to enter the five miles Cross-Country Championship. Courage, kindness and a sense of humour made him a welcome companion, and his passing means a distinct loss to the sport of ski-running.

—E. M. F.