

NEWS ITEMS

Chairlift for Falls Creek

Bob Hymans has continued to invest heavily in skiing development at Falls Creek. He intends to build a chairlift 100 yards long with a vertical lift of 400 feet and a load capacity of 330 persons per hour. If the small chairlift is a success Bob intends to build a large chairlift of the full length of the Frying Pan—825 vertical feet.

Snowplanes

Last summer Bob took delivery of two snowplanes. They were imported from Canada and each is powered by Lycoming aero engines driving a conventional airscrew. They ride on four broad skis, the front pair of which can be steered. Their performance will be of very great interest to N.S.W. skiers, as they could provide an economical solution to the chronic transport problem at Charlottes Pass.

Helicopters

A proposal for a helicopter ambulance service at Kosciusko has been placed before the Ski Council. The idea is to remove injured skiers direct from the snow to Cooma Hospital, thereby removing the delays and discomforts which now confront the injured. The snag is that helicopters are immensely costly to operate; the price is £40 per flying hour. Also there is some doubt as to whether helicopters could operate reliably in bad weather.

T-Bar for Kiandra

Kiandra Pioneer Ski Club has asked John Gam to design and build a 500 feet T-bar lift to be installed for the 1958 season. Being accessible by a sealed road from Cooma, this lift should have an assured economic future.

Operation Kandahar

Roger Lascelles, a shy but imaginative skier from Christchurch, N.Z., was so impressed by the girls he saw in Sydney in 1955 that he decided to return in 1957 with as many of the "boys" from New Zealand as possible. In order to cut costs he decided to charter a DC6b from Teal and fill it with New Zealand skiers for the forward journey and Australian skiers for the return journey. In order to give the whole scheme an aura of respectability he called it Operation Kandahar.

Lascelles has set up a world-wide organisation to handle this exchange invasion which is scheduled to take place on July, 1957. The cost of the return air fare will be approximately £50 Stg., a very substantial reduction in the normal cost. So far as Australians are concerned the trip is to start and finish at Mascot Aerodrome, Sydney, and will occupy a period of twenty-two days. On arrival in New Zealand the members of the Australian contingent will be free to go off on itineraries arranged by themselves or stay with their fellow travellers and follow a skiing and sightseeing programme arranged by the inexhaustible Lascelles.

Area Controllers for "OK" are:—

VICTORIA.—Eric Burt, 40 Wattle Road, Hawthorn, E2. Phone: WA 4947. (Please phone rather than write.)

N.S.W. Temporary Area Controller.—G. E. F. Hughes, G.P.O. Box 3336, Sydney. (Please write rather than phone.)

TASMANIA.—I. Sauer, 3 Corby Avenue, West Hobart.

Persons interested in Operation Kandahar should contact the Area Controller in their State to obtain full particulars. The idea certainly has merit and we hope that it will become a successful and per-

manent amenity for Australian and New Zealand skiers.

At Last—Action in the Thredbo

After nearly two years of negotiation the N.S.W. Cabinet announced on 29th January, 1957, that it had approved the application of Kosciusko Chairlift and Thredbo Hotel Syndicate for grant of an option to lease some 60 acres at Friday Flat in the Thredbo Valley. The form of the option for lease has been approved by the Ski Council of N.S.W. The Syndicate proposes to develop the area into a first-class Alpine holiday resort and has already commenced the first phase of its development programme.

The Snowy Mountains Authority has built a short access road from the Alpine Way to the hotel site and Tony Sponar, one of the Syndicate, is supervising the erection of a self contained lodge. This building is to house approximately 12 guests in double rooms during the winter of 1957.

The Alpine Way has been very greatly improved during the summer of 1956-57, and the Snowy Mountains Authority expects to keep it open for 2-wheel drive vehicles 365 days a year.

The N.S.W. Downhill and Slalom Championships are to be held at Crackenback Peak on 3rd to 5th August, and it is expected that accommodation for competitors and officials will be available at Tony Sponar's lodge, Crackenback Ski Club Hut and Friday Flat Camp.

Ski trails are being cleared under Tony Sponar's supervision and it is hoped that a downhill of about 2,000 vertical feet descent will be available for the Championships. Two ski tows are to be installed on Crackenback Peak for the 1957 season. One will be a large rope tow rising from 4,900 feet to 5,850 feet, and the other a Gam Transportable T-Bar rising from 5,850 feet to 6,150 feet.

The Syndicate is in process of forming a public Company to acquire and develop the rights granted under the option for lease. If all goes well the Company will start construction of a chairlift and a restaurant in the summer of 1957-58. In order to obtain the full benefits available under the option for lease the Company is required to complete within five years bedroom accommodation for 80 guests, 40 of whom must be accommodated in bedrooms with private bathrooms.

Last winter the Syndicate carried out investigations into snow depths and wind velocities on Crackenback Peak. As a result it was decided to terminate the chairlift at about 6,000 feet in order to keep it thoroughly sheltered. It was also found that the site originally chosen for the hotel was subject to drainage problems and it was therefore abandoned. As a result the chairlift line cleared in 1956 has been abandoned and a new survey line is now being cut through the woods. In addition to the chairlift the Syndicate plans to build a high capacity T-bar lift from 5,900 feet to 6,350 feet on Crackenback Peak. This lift will serve a slope of medium gradient suitable for all classes of skiers.

Next year water, sewerage and electricity should be available for clubs wishing to build near the hotel site at Friday Flat. One of the greatest advantages of the area from the point of view of clubs is that because of the easy road access they need not carry large stocks of food and fuel for the winter season.

The next twelve months should see intense activity at the Thredbo and of course the main interest of skiers will be to see whether the ski slopes will prove to be as good as they look.

New Huts in Tasmania

The Ski Club of Tasmania has erected a new prefabricated hut near Lake Dob-

son at the foot of Mt. Mawson in the Mt. Field National Park. The Hobart Walking Club and the Wellington Ski Club are building extensions to their huts in this area. The National Park road terminates at Lake Dobson and the Public Works have agreed to keep the road clear of snow, so that skiers should be able to drive to their hut doors.

Helicopter Air Lift

Mr. H. Cuming (ex Buller) is erecting a rope tow on Mt. Mawson about half an hour's climb from the end of the road. The A.N.A. helicopter has been chartered to lift the tow material and engine from the road terminus to the tow site. This is a 700 feet lift.

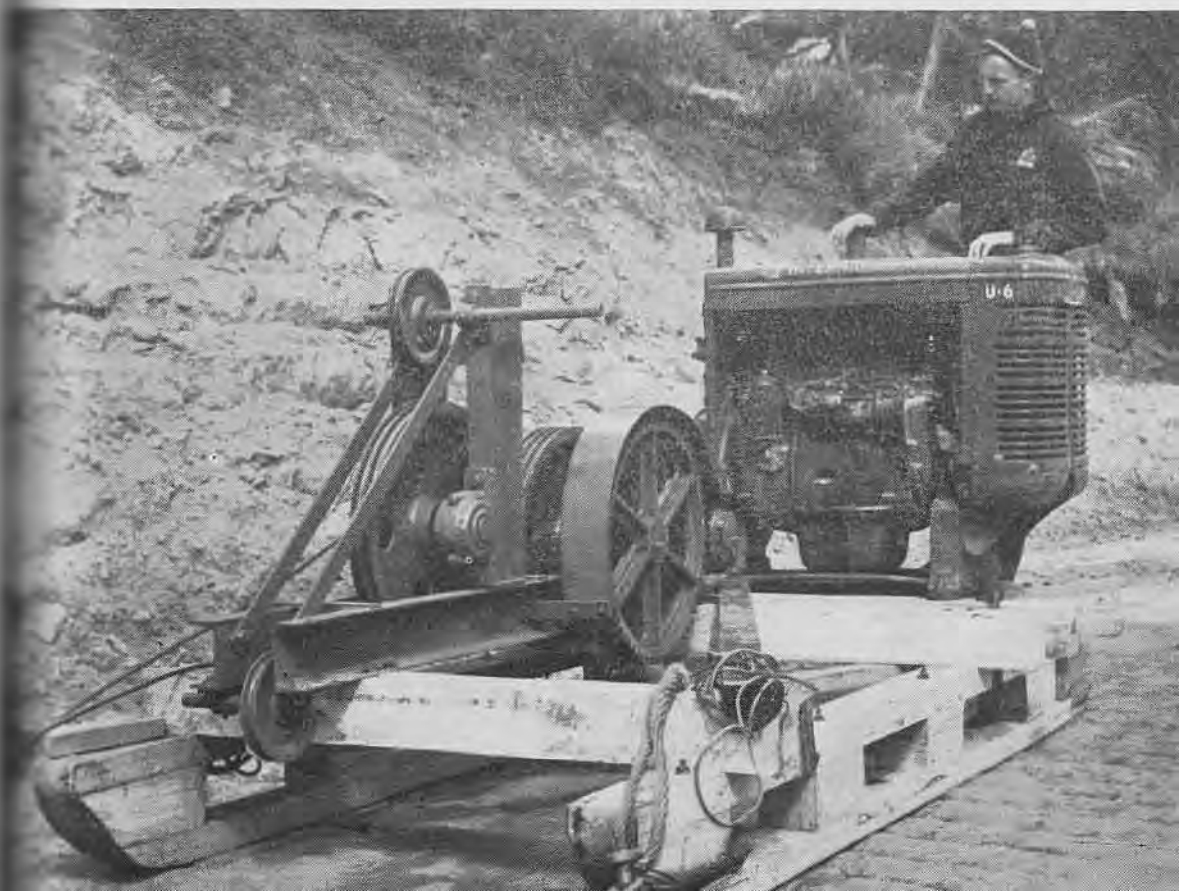
The Mt. Field National Park Board

has arranged to provide material for a shelter hut to be erected near the tow. The helicopter will be used to lift this material and the Southern Tasmanian Ski Council will provide volunteer labour to erect the hut.

Accommodation at National Park, Tasmania

There are now five club huts near Lake Dobson in the Mawson area. The National Park Board has four huts in this area and these may be hired through the Tasmanian Tourist Bureau.

Mr. H. Cuming has renovated the old National Park Accommodation House at the Park gates. This is about half an hour's drive from Lake Dobson.



also went a long way towards making nonsense of my contention that we should expect our best results in slalom. Later in the season Christine continued to improve and ran into the first half of an exceedingly strong field in the Arlberg-Kandahar at Sestriere with 24th and 21st places.

In Australia most of the Olympians could not afford more time for racing that year and a whole sheaf of new names began to appear, together with the visiting New Zealanders, at the top of the result lists. Sepp Staedler won both Australian Alpine titles but it was good to see Danny Collman running him a close second and captaining the Australian team. But for his family ties Danny would probably by now be seriously threatening Billy Day's position as Australian's best international skier.

That brings us up to date, but it might be as well to finish with a few assorted conclusions.

1. As much of the major racing as possible should be done in September when the weather tends to be more stable.

2. Anyone who is going to do several seasons' racing might as well count from the start on breaking a leg at some time or another but, apart from insurance, there is no need to worry about it too much since, as with mumps, one will get over it and will probably be racing again the next season, although possibly more carefully.

3. The standard of Australian ski racing is rising fairly rapidly, thanks both to overseas competition and to improving facilities at home.

4. There is a small but steady stream of good ski-racers appearing almost continuously. Not all of them make the grade but, on the other hand, the phenomena like Tom Alston and Christine Davy, who are our best international hopes, often appear suddenly and go straight to the top of the tree so I don't think we should worry too much about just who is going to represent us in the future so long as we provide plenty of opportunity for promising youngsters to ski and to race.

5. However, if we are to reach the highest standards in international ski-racing we need some children getting enough skiing and enough **good instruction** to become fluent in their middle teens.

6. A major need in Australia at the moment is a small number of fully qualified Austrian ski-teachers, experienced in the latest technical developments.

7. I am inclined to believe that ski-racing suits the Australian temperament so that when I consider the rapidly expanding facilities in our mountains I become very optimistic about the future of the sport. In fact, I look forward quite confidently to the time when our runners will get among the first ten or fifteen at the Olympics and I will not be very surprised if I live to see them nibbling at the medals.

