

The Kunama Hutte

G. R. T. Ward

MANY casual passers-by on the alpine lakes trail at the end of February of this year have been astonished to see a new building in the basin below Mt. Lee and Mt. Northcote. An observation made earlier in mid-February would have given no indication whatever that a building project was about to start. "How could a building spring up overnight?" might well be the thought of a casual observer. The answer to that question is that the magic wand used was careful planning and organisation followed by an all-out effort by the sponsors of the Kunama Hutte project to assemble the building on the site.

Before the new addition to mountain structures is described the writer ventures to insert a brief history. In August, 1951, the scheme was first envisaged by Charles Anton, President of the Ski Tourers Association. On November 5th, the site was selected under snow conditions by a site selection party, and later confirmed by summer inspections made by the State Park Trust. In January, the building and fittings were prefabricated at Dee Why to a plan by the writer. On the

week-end of February 9th, the prefabricated materials were transported by the State Park Trust to Mt. Northcote. In the subsequent fortnight the entire building, with all its fittings and stores weighing eleven tons, was manhandled down 600 feet of precipitous mountainside by the builder-sponsors and working parties, and the construction of the shell of the building was completed.

Kunama Hutte has a Swiss style ridge roof of zinc anneal tiles, and walls of round backed weather board. The building houses eight persons in comfortable two-berth units

Kunama Hutte, 1st March, 1952

Photo. G. R. T. Ward.



with a living room. The kitchenette and bathroom are fitted to all modern demands. The layout of these divisions is designed on an overlapping space principle that makes use of every possible square foot of area. This means that areas used for one purpose by day are partly convertible for use by night, and vice-versa. Even the bathroom can be extended in area because it overlaps with the airlock. (We'll taks ours straight—Ed.). There is also extensive attic space and a basement to cater for the many other requirements of a ski lodge. The basement is to be completed with granite walls, timber lined.

(Before this could be done an exceptional wind storm dislodged the building, but restitution is, we understand, in hand.—Ed.).

The building is orientated to maximum

mid-winter sunshine, and a picture plate glass window provides a solarium for a skier who wishes to relax and view the magnificent mountain scene. The focal point is Mt. Lee and the adjacent main range rising 1000 feet above the site of the building (which is on the 6,100 contour). Kunama is about two miles from Charlotte Pass, with an imperceptible gradient for ingress from the Snowy provided the Club Lake Creek is followed by incoming skiers.

As for the name, Kunama is an aboriginal word for snow, and Hutte (pronounced Hoota) is a Swiss word.

It is expected that the building will be controlled by the Ski Tourers Association, which was responsible for the provision of high altitude accommodation at Lake Albina Ski Lodge.