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was beginning to wonder how much to leave for our first sight of the hut itself.

"UNFORTUNATELY, when he were still three miles from the hut I ran out of film, so two of us went on ahead and I managed to reload in time to take some shots of the party arriving. Late that afternoon the official opening took place, with A.P.H. performing the ceremony. He added a fitting touch by presenting his ice axe to the hut, with the remark that he wasn't likely to have any further use for it. After dinner we assembled around a huge fire and there were further speeches and items and a community sing. During the evening around the fire A.P.H. and Peter and Alex. Graham told old climbing stories. Peter told his famous story of the Hooker Hut ghost, and Alex. gave us a fascinating account of the first ascent of Mount Aspiring, in which he took part. I was disappointed that the lighting wasn't good enough for any camera work, because these would have made wonderful scenes.

"THE next day I decided to go with a group who were packing building materials for a new bivvy up to French Ridge, the last overnight stop before an assault on Mount Aspiring. I got up at six o'clock to get shots of the first light on the mountains which we could see from the hut, and was lucky enough to see and photograph a snow plume coming off the peaks, with the sun rising behind them. There were 30 in the packing party, each man carrying some timber, wire, tin, etc., for the bivvy, and it was a long steep climb through bush, where I got some more shots using a wide-exposure. When we reached the snow though, I had the shock of my life. There were pictures everywhere I looked just waiting to be taken—snow-slopes, glaciers, peaks, rock faces, everything. Frankly, it was a photographer's paradise, and as you can imagine I very soon ran out of film once again. By now I had shot 2,000 feet, so I decided to finish the sequence the next day when another packing party were going up. I was very much afraid that a change in the weather would ruin everything, for mountain weather is notoriously changeable, but by some sort of miracle the next day was almost as perfect as the previous one, and I was able to shoot off another 1,000 feet of film before we returned.

"Well, I had used all my film. But I still wanted some "cut-ins"—general location shots of the valley and so on—to complete the picture I had in mind, so back at the Aspinall homestead we radio-telephoned to Dunedin to arrange for another 1,000 feet of film. In the meantime the main party had dispersed, and a week later there was another fresh fall of snow and I was able to get all I wanted with conditions almost identical with those on the opening days.

"BACK in Wellington we developed the negative and then had the tremendous job of cutting the film down to 1,000 feet, the length of one reel, the Unit's usual weekly release. Arrangements were made for Christopher Johnson, editor of *The New Zealand Alpine Journal*, to write the commentary. He did this one week-end after I had gone down to his place and run the film through for him six or seven times. Music was then mixed with the commentary (spoken by William Austin of the NZBS) and the sound synchronised with the photography. Finally the film went to the negative room where the usual copies were made for distribution throughout the country."



ASPIRING HUT in its majestic setting of bush and mountain. It can accommodate up to 50 climbers. AT TOP: Brian Brake discusses a point with A. P. Harper and Bob Craigie of the building party (left) before starting up the valley from the Hut