

NEW ZEALAND NOTES

BY NORMAN HARDIE

In the Alpine Notes of the May, 1962, *A. J.* brief mention was made of a new route established on the East face of Mount Cook. A month later another rib was climbed just a few hundred yards north of the first. This great face has been under discussion for some years without any party getting to grips with it, blaming the conditions as much as anything else. Early in the season there are obstacles in the form of sliding snow and rockfalls. Later the upper ice becomes glassy, the lower crevasses open wider, and the good climbing weather is rather brief. There are many more face approaches to Mount Cook, awaiting those willing to expose themselves to the likely hazard of falling rocks, and involve themselves in climbs which are certain to include all-night stops.

Three, P. Farrell, V. Walsh and L. Crawford, of the four who completed the first Mount Cook East face route are now in Peru as part of a strong expedition operating in the Cuzco Province. The latest report states they have made eight first ascents in sixteen peaks climbed. Those on the second climb of Mount Cook, H. Leitner and E. von Terzi, are Austrians, who, like another pair of their countrymen, have been breaking the New Zealand tendency to make their climbs great marathons of step-cutting. Many big climbs are now being done using twelve-point crampons, with steps cut at belaying positions only. There is of course no uniform cry of approval of these methods.

The lesser giants of the Cook area hardly received the share of climbers that one expects in a good season. In the outer ranges there were many good climbs including some that were new. I joined five men in one of the most inaccessible areas where only three or so parties have previously climbed. Two in the party were H. E. Riddiford and W. B. Beaven, who have not been very active in the mountains since their overseas expeditions, Riddiford for Everest and Cho Oyu, and Beaven for Makalu in 1954. We were supported by the modern devices (aircraft) which I damned with faint praise in these pages a year ago. However, acknowledgement must be made to the fact that the struggle through the gorges and out to the grass alps above the forest was made relatively painless.

Philip Temple, now describing himself as a New Zealander, after being here five years and having come originally from the United Kingdom, returned to West New Guinea for a second visit. This

time he was with Heinrich Harrer. They climbed thirty-two major mountains, all but one being first ascents. The last report from Temple is that he is trying to escort two non-climbing American War Graves experts to a plane he had located at 14,000 ft. in a very remote part of the country.

Both the main climbing clubs now have expedition funds of minute proportions. The boost that is coming to New Zealand expeditions from the Mount Everest Foundation has convinced club administrators that the support, however small, of overseas expeditions is a most worthy objective.

Maintaining the balance of introduced animals and plants is a controversial issue affecting all groups concerned with New Zealand's mountains. Before Captain Cook landed here there were no grazing mammals on these Islands, but by 1910 red, fallow and Virginia deer, moose, wapiti, chamois, tahr, goats, pigs, wallabies, opossums and rabbits were firmly established. Now, the majority of them are major pests, being blamed along with the sheep for extensive erosion throughout all our ranges. An open shooting season exists to all comers for deer, chamois, goats, tahr and pigs, and the annual kill of these is about 90,000. The Forest Service claims that all means of 'extermination of vermin' are legitimate (including poisoning), and the landowners tend to agree with the government department. On the other hand the deer stalkers argue to preserve their sport. Mountaineers are mainly on the side of 'extermination' for the sake of preserving the country, but they have to admit the tracks made by deer, and the Forest Service huts, have opened up new country for them to extend their climbing interests. Not ten per cent of the shot meat is brought out for human consumption. Our alpine valleys are the haunts of swarming blowflies and the white bones of deer.