

This is a great occasion in New Zealand mountaineering history, and I, along with ~~my~~<sup>many</sup> other British mountaineers, am thinking of you all as you celebrate your 75th Anniversary tonight.

My mind goes back especially to two dates in the past: one of these was the Centenary of our Alpine Club in 1957 when it was my good fortune to be President. There were some unforgettable moments that year: the meet at Zermatt where we were feted by our Swiss comrades and, talking of comrades, received a handsome trophy from the U.S.S.R. Mountaineering Federation; the reception in the Grand Hall at Lincoln's Inn, which was attended by the Queen and Prince Philip, and the Banquet at the Dorchester Hotel when our guests represented mountain clubs from all over the world, and included Tensing. Mention of Tensing leads me to the other date which was, of course, 29th May 1953, the first ascent of Everest, whose Thirteenth anniversary coincides with your 75th. Now I need hardly say any more about this for Ed Hillary is with you and he probably would agree with me that quite enough has been said already, starting with his own immortal remarks to ~~Bob~~<sup>George</sup> Lowe when they met on the South Col ! I suppose that event has very considerably affected the lives of both of us, and Ed must accept some responsibility for the fact that I have acquired quite an affection for New Zealanders. Nor can ~~Bob~~<sup>George</sup> Lowe evade responsibility for taking a fancy to my daughter Sue and for presenting me with a grandson of mixed nationality → quite a good mixture too.

Looking back I have come to believe that the property of making friends is the most valuable asset that mountaineers confer on us humans. Thanks to this I have friends over all the world, across every frontier, and you know that all of your mountain friends over here are with you in spirit right now.

Sir John Hunt