

MESSAGE FROM MR. ERIC SHIPTON, PRESIDENT OF THE ALPINE CLUB, ON THE OCCASION
OF THE 75th ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEW ZEALAND ALPINE CLUB.

I'm delighted to be able to send you this message of greeting from the Alpine Club and from myself on the occasion of your 75th anniversary. I have always had a special regard for the New Zealand Alpine Club, derived partly from my early reading of the exploits of your pioneers, and particularly from my later contacts. The first of these was just over 30 years ago, when Dan Bryant joined us on that 1935 expedition when we spent three months scrambling about in that glorious country to the north and east of Everest. It was a wonderful trip; one of the best I've ever had. But it was Dan who made it really fizz. He was a real corker, tough and competent and always the most marvellous company.

Perhaps some of you may remember his account of his first meeting with Bill Tilman at the Planter's Club in Darjeeling before the rest of us arrived. Dan introduced himself and they went out for a walk together in complete silence, which was only broken two hours later when Bill remarked that it was time for lunch. Poor Dan must have wondered what on earth he had let himself in for.

One of the many highlights of that trip was when Dan, spurning the rope bridge used by lesser mortals, plunged into the Arun River at Khartar and swam across. It was an astonishing performance, and the Tibetans who'd never seen anyone swim before regarded it as a kind of miracle. To celebrate it the Dzongpen of Khartar treated us to a really memorable orgy of chang drinking.

That trip with Dan gave me a very high opinion of New Zealand climbers, with the result that when, a few hours before flying out to India for that 1951 reccy, I got a telegram from Mr. Rose suggesting that a couple of New Zealanders should join my party, I had little hesitation in agreeing. I must say I felt a bit of a clot when I met the rest of my party in India and didn't even know the names of our new companions or where they were to be found. But as you know that snap decision had far-reaching results.

Well, since then you people have been doing great things in the Himalaya, and the Peruvian Andes and elsewhere, and no doubt you've been discovering, as I have, what a vast field is left for fresh enterprise in many parts of the world, not only for modern technical climbing but for traditional mountaineering as well. I believe that in the Himalaya and Karakoram, for example, the Golden Age has not yet begun; and what about the hardly touched mountains of Antarctica. My guess is that when you celebrate your Centenary, New Zealand climbers will still be well in the van pioneering a still unlimited field of opportunity.

A special greeting to Ed Hillary. It is very nice that our terms as President should co-incide like this. Do you remember the last time we met, you came and had supper with me. George Band was there too, and dammit you two bottlers spent the whole evening talking about babies. I'd like to say hello to Earl Riddiford and Norman Hardy and also to Harry Ayres. Its always been my great regret, Harry, that we didn't meet in the Himalaya as I'd hoped. I'd heard so much about you from Ed and George Lowe.

Incidentally I've seen quite a lot of George in Santiago in recent years. In fact last January he came climbing with me in North Patagonia. He said the country was just like New Zealand. George is in very good form and doing a fine job at the Grange School.

Well, the very best wishes to you all. I'm sorry I won't be with you, but I'll certainly be there in spirit.

Eric Shipton.