



Quarrel at Makereatu

AT MAKEREATU on the coast south of Dunedin, walls of hexagonal basalt columns rise 40 metres out of the sea. Here, swells from the Antarctic crash on polished column ramparts.

It is a place dear to Maori people and many others: ramblers, surfers, artists, anglers and rock climbers are all inspired by the massive formations. They are the finest in New Zealand and equal to the famed Giant's Causeway of Ireland.

The area is also known as Blackhead, a term supplied by Blackhead Quarries Ltd which is in the process of taking away the whole headland for cheap road metal and railway ballast. The company owns the land and rock down to high tide. In the slow process of demolishing the headland, rubble from blasting is falling on to the best formations and into the water.

A coalition of friends of Blackhead, including the Otago branch of Forest & Bird, has been protesting at this irresponsible exercise of property "rights". They are asking for protection of the southern cliffs, a halt to shale dumping and the clean up of rubble in an area known as the "Roman Baths". More than 6000 people have signed a petition, asking the company to protect the geological features now, and not in 40 year's time as has been promised – when there won't be any features left to protect.

The Geological Society has recently placed it on its register of geological sites worth protecting. 🐦

Sue Maturin

Behind the Scenery

Outdoor Recreation in Otago: Volume 2 Silver Peaks and Otago's Alps by Bruce Mason (1989), Publ by Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ, 104 pages, price \$30 incl GST (25% discount to Forest and Bird members).

This is the second and final volume, covering the remainder of Otago not covered in Volume 1 (the Central Otago Block Mountains). It deals with lands broadly suitable for conservation and recreation but not necessarily administered by the Department of Conservation.

Most Forest and Bird members will generally know Otago for Mt Aspiring National Park, Lakes Wanaka and Wakatipu, and the Otago skifields. But Otago has much more than these areas, and these two volumes cast a conservation and recreational spotlight on them for the first time. Many will be amazed and stimulated by the interesting Otago areas outside the national parks, highlighted in these volumes.

If anything, Bruce Mason has achieved a higher standard of presentation in Volume 2 with more than 150 clear and often stunning

black and white photos, by a range of Otago recreationists.

The book very effectively summarises the history, natural features, geology, vegetation, scenery and land tenure issues. It is not a guide book, but rather a handbook giving



Mt Aspiring National Park. Cross country skiers returning from Mt Brewster and glaciers – just one of the 150 photos from the book. Photo: Bruce Mason

a broad overview and picture of the recreational characteristics and management issues of each area.

Overall *Outdoor Recreation in Otago Volume 2*, gives us the scenery, but gets behind it to the history, geology and land use issues, with perceptive and careful arguments. Otago is one of the few areas of New Zealand where the public protection of natural, recreational and scenic mountain lands is presently inadequate. The book is a timely pointer to balanced reservation, even though the path may not be easy. 🐦

Hugh Barr

Note: *Outdoor Recreation in Otago Volumes 1 and 2* is available at a special combined price of \$45 (reduction of \$15. Write to FMC, Po Box 1604, Wellington with your order).