



LOOKING WESTWARD from Lake Manapouri towards Murrell Pass and the rugged little-known country between the Cold Lakes and the western sounds. This photograph was taken from a mapping plane making a survey of the area.

## UNEXPLORED NEW ZEALAND

WHEN it was announced recently that an expedition organised by Colonel J. K. Howard, an American, would go into "unexplored" country in the Otago Sounds at the end of this year, some surprise may have been expressed at the existence at this time of day of any unexplored territory in New Zealand. The main secrets of New Zealand geography were laid bare quite early, which is to be expected in a country no part of which is more than 60 miles from the sea. The main features of the North Island were known before Hobson arrived in 1840. The line of the Southern Alps could be seen by pioneers of Canterbury. Julius von Haast was mapping the Mt. Cook region in 1862. In the early 'fifties the first white man had looked upon Wakatipu. It may be said that in the last 80 or 90 years there have been no spectacular discoveries. This and the unobtrusive nature of much of the early penetration, plus the very lay-out of these long narrow islands of ours, account for the fact that the story of our internal exploration has not received the public attention it deserves.

### Remember the Surveyors

For the records of Brunner and von Haast, not to mention earlier men, show how much hard adventure was often involved in penetrating the unknown.

Since then generation after generation of explorers and surveyors, helped by back run-holders and alpinists, have gradually built up the New Zealand map that we know. The engineer and the surveyor have been among the basic map-makers of New Zealand. They have mastered their job in a particularly difficult country, amid high mountains and satanic gorges, heavy forest and rushing rivers. These men have lived for months at a time in isolated camps, and spent their days in labour that only the fittest could endure. There were times in the North Island (to say nothing of the Wairau affair), when there was added the risk of Maori violence.

The result is an almost complete map of New Zealand, at any rate in the main essentials. The exceptions are few. If you look at a large-scale map issued by the Lands and Survey Department in the 'thirties, you will see in the country of the Otago Sounds a number of white patches, extending from south of Milford Sound down to Dusky Sound, and in to Lake Monowai. Some of these are marked "unexplored." Before the coming of the aeroplane, with its camera eye, that would have been literally true. Now, it is more accurate to say "unmapped." For the aeroplane has flown over these patches, and it is pretty certain they contain no geographical surprises. What has to be done is to fill in the details.

The Howard expedition will tackle only a small portion of this great area

of fiord, mountain, and forest. It will go into Caswell Sound and explore the territory between that and George Sound. Its primary object will be to see what is happening to wapiti and red deer, but officers of the Lands and Survey Department will accompany it, and the scientific world will have representatives too. Is there a possibility that they may find fresh specimens of the notornis? Some years ago it was reported that the tracks of this bird had been seen. The land between these two sounds is not marked "unexplored," but not far away are two white patches on the map. And over much of the Sounds country it is impossible to draw a sharp line between "unexplored" and "explored." The Lands and Survey Department will be well aware that much work has still to be done on country that appears already covered on the map.

### Savage Grandeur

And what country it is! For reasons of geography as well as strategy, we should use large-scale maps when we study countries. When New Zealanders see or hear the word "sounds" they think almost exclusively of Milford, for the simple reason that Milford is magnificent in scenery and the only place regularly visited by holiday-makers. But Milford Sound is only one of many. It is the most northerly, and from there right down to Foveaux Strait, stretches a line of fiords. One needs a large-scale map to appreciate their number, length

and ramifications. There is an admirable description of these Sounds in the South Island volume of James Cowan's *Travel in New Zealand*.

The west coast south of Milford for a hundred miles is deeply indented with fiords cut like vast trenches far into the heart of the mountains and the forests. Several of these fiords are far longer than Milford, and in some parts almost equal it in the amazing dimensions of the precipices, the canyon-like character of the sea-arms. Lofty and steep-to mountains surround all the Sounds, and the all-encompassing forest comes down to the clear, deep waters. Waterfalls of great height flash through the bush, and wooded islands lie on the calm inner waters or make an ocean-barrier of shelter for the Sound mouths.

Of the wild tumbled character of this country, so savage as well as so grand, Cowan wrote 22 years ago, in words hardly less applicable to-day:

If one were asked to point to the section of these islands lying the most lonely and mystery-steeped, there could be little hesitation in indicating that area of the great southern Fiordland country which lies between the western cliffs of Lake Te Anau and the West Coast Sounds. . . . All to the west in an enormously broken land, of implacably savage contour, a land of densely matted forests, ancient beyond all reckoning, jagged with peaks and ranges, craggy hostile, a forest and mountain land blue-dotted with lakes, white-threaded with torrential rivers, a-roar with waterfalls of unsurpassed height; and above all a land of utter solitude. In all this vast Sounds region, from Milford down to the southern side of Dusky Sound, there is but one permanent home of man—at the head of Milford.

Even to-day, there are shore lines in the western arms of Te Anau that are