



LEFT: The peak of Aspiring—an aerial photograph

per and Alex. and Peter Graham, arrived about 10 o'clock, after having been delayed by the floods. Here I also had the experience of meeting Mrs. Aspinall, a woman of amazing energy and generous hospitality, and a great friend of mountaineers in the district. Indeed, without her help the hut would probably never have been built. We were supposed to sleep in the woolshed, but 'Mrs. A.', as everyone called her, wouldn't hear of that, and laid out mattresses in front of the fire for us. That night I followed my usual tactics of loading the five camera magazines (each holding 200 feet of film) in my sleeping bag for the big day to come.

"WE were up at seven on Good Friday and had a huge breakfast before setting off to meet the main party who had come up in two special trucks. There were now about 120 people gathered together, and I got some good shots of the party preparing to leave, and more of the mist clearing off the hills. The lighting by this time was almost perfect, and there had been a fresh fall of snow in the valley which added to the pictorial quality of the scene. I took several shots of the first crossing of the Matukituki, with the trucks being winched across by the 'schnorkel,' a little command-car so called because of its amazing ability to cross creeks when almost completely submerged. The sun had by now begun to touch the peaks and I could see possibilities of some really first-class ciné-photography farther up the valley. I shot a short sequence showing A.P.H. and Peter Graham talking together, and then various shots of the mass movement up the valley, so that by the time we were two-thirds of the way there I had used up about 800 feet of film and

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PRELUDE TO ASPIRING

THE opening last Easter of Aspiring Hut, in the centre of some of Otago's most picturesque mountain country, was an event important enough to draw mountaineers from all over New Zealand, and the National Film Unit sent a cameraman along, too, to cover operations. The result was an exhilarating alpine film called *Prelude to Aspiring*, starting with the journey from Wanaka to Cameron's Flat, following the hundred-odd visitors up the West Matukituki river to the hut itself, taking in the official opening by the veteran alpinist A. P. Harper, and ending with shots of a packing party moving through mountainous bush to French River Bivvy, above the snowline and within close striking distance of Mount Aspiring itself. The photography was in the hands of Brian Brake, A.R.P.S., and after the usual period of cutting and editing in the studios at Miramar the completed film, 1000 feet long, is to be released simultaneously in New Zealand's main theatres this Friday, August 26. Next year the National

Film Unit hopes to photograph an ascent of Aspiring itself.

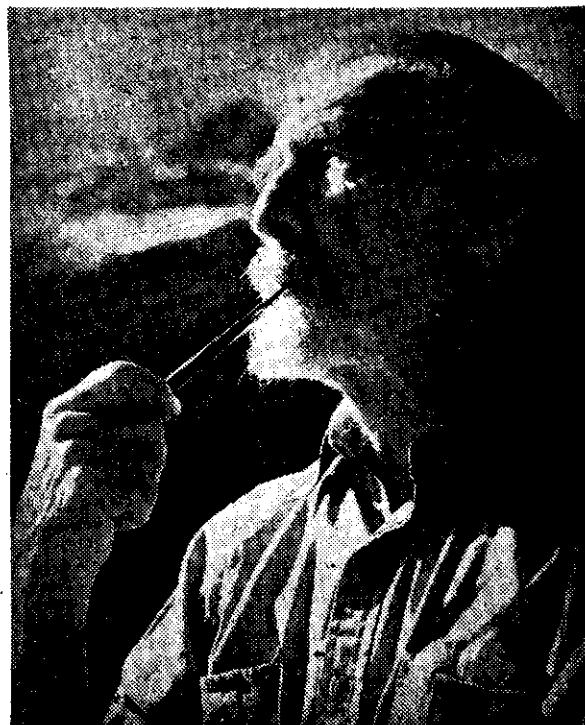
Although it is four months since he finished the assignment Brian Brake is still full of enthusiasm about his visit to a region that he described as a veritable photographer's paradise. Although he had grown up in the Arthur's Pass district, he had never realised, he said, that such magnificent alpine scenery existed in New Zealand.

"I WAS allotted the job of making *Prelude to Aspiring* partly because I was brought up among mountains," he told *The Listener*, "and also because I had been assistant cameraman in the film *Journey for Three*, a good deal of which was shot in the Mount Cook area. Aspiring Hut was to be opened on Good Friday, so on the Wednesday before Easter I went down to Christchurch and motored through to Wanaka with a ciné-camera and 3,000 feet of film in my luggage. There I met the president of the New Zealand Alpine Club, S. A. Wiren, and learnt that the road up the valley was in a bad state through flooding. However, we started off next day, and although we got stuck in one of the first creeks we had to cross, and took two hours to get out,

we finally reached the rendezvous at Cameron's Flat—about 210 miles from Dunedin.

"In the meantime I had learnt a lot I didn't know about the hut itself. It had been built by the Otago Section of the Alpine Club over the past three years, by parties working mainly on Easter and Labour week-ends. It is about the size of two ordinary houses, is constructed of wood and stone, and can sleep 50 or more.

"MY idea had been to start the film at Wanaka, but the lighting was bad that first day, and I got only a few shots, mainly of mist coming off the mountains in the evening. We stayed the night at the Aspinall homestead, where three of New Zealand's most famous mountaineers, A. P. Har-



A. P. HARPER, veteran New Zealand alpinist, who officially opened Aspiring Hut