

CHROMIUM



THE only workable source of the element chromium is chromite, a compound of chromium, iron and oxygen mined in Russia, Africa and Turkey. Chromium is known everywhere as the plating on taps, hardware and motor fittings, but it has other and more important applications. Alloyed with steel, for example, it imparts superior strength and surface hardness, and it is from chromium that stainless steel derives its resistance to corrosion. As well as being the source of chromium, crude chromite ore is used to make heat-resisting firebricks and cements for the construction of furnaces. Chromium derives its name from the Greek "χρῶμα", meaning colour, because its compounds are almost always coloured. Known as chrome pigments, some of these—the chromates of lead, zinc and barium for example—are used extensively for colouring paints, linoleum, rubber and ceramics. Chromium sulphate is important in tanning, and potassium dichromate in the dyeing of wool, silk and leather. Other chromium compounds are used in photography and in the manufacture of safety matches. I.C.I. makes a complete range of chrome pigments for the paint, linoleum and rubber industries, besides employing chromium compounds as catalysts in the manufacture of aviation petrol and methanol, an industrial alcohol.

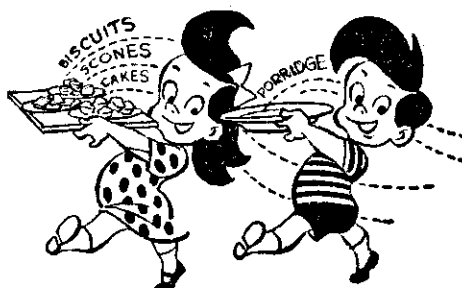


IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES (N.Z.) LTD.

A "Vital" Difference



"FINE or COARSE"



Vi-Max made from selected wheat with extra wheat germ added is not devitalised. It is, therefore, ideal for porridge and for baking, especially where there are growing children.

Order VI-MAX, VI-BRAN and VI-MEAL from your grocer. Made by D. H. Brown & Son, Ltd., Moorhouse Avenue, Christchurch.

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER

INCORPORATING N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday

Price Fourpence

JUNE 12, 1953

Editorial and Business Offices: 115 Lambton Quay, Wellington, C.I.

G.P.O. Box 2292.

Telegraphic Address: "Listener," Wellington.

Telephone 70-999.

The End of the Climb

ON May 29 a New Zealander and a Sherpa reached the summit of Mount Everest. It was the end of a story which for many years had excited the imagination of British people. There are mountains in the Himalayas more difficult than Everest, if difficulty be measured solely in terms of climbing. Some of them, we know, will never be mastered: they are abrupt and terrible peaks which will keep their sovereignty in that twisted and wind-tormented region. These were the guardian towers of rock and ice which rose through the clouds when Edmund Hillary made his reconnaissance along the Western Cwm and saw the "long snow plume" streaming from the summit. But Everest is the top of the world, the highest point which man, the inveterate climber, can reach on his own two legs; and from the moment that human eyes looked downwards on the giants nearby it could be said that they, too, were no longer inviolate. For the lesser stations are held in vain when the heart and centre of the range has been conquered.

New Zealanders are justly proud of Hillary. It will never be forgotten that a man who learned to climb in our own tough ranges was the first to reach the summit of Everest. But the assault has been long and hard; many others have taken part in it; and the movement towards success has been through wider knowledge and skilful organisation. Eleven expeditions—nine of them British—have made the attempt. In the end there came the combination of circumstances that Hillary himself had hoped for—good weather, good planning, and "a great deal of good luck." Earlier reports had shown that the weather was unusually favourable. Only first-rate organisation, however, could have allowed the last team of climbers to seize their opportunity. From then onwards, when Hillary and his companion were committed to the effort, there might well have been need of luck; but before it could be looked for there had to be the right use of skill, energy, and indomitable purpose. Everest

was conquered by two strong and resolute men, supported by a team which had behind it the experience and silent encouragement of previous expeditions. The giant did not surrender easily. Improved equipment could strengthen the assault; but when all had been done that science and teamwork could do, the issue lay openly between frail flesh and the iron mountain. In the last thousand feet, up where the winds blow ceaselessly and death waits upon a faltering step, the battle was joined between human endurance and the wild energies of sky and earth. We can only imagine what it must have meant to those two small figures crawling up a wall of snow; but we can be certain that there was a point at which the strength of body passed into a final and sustaining strength of spirit.

Now that it is over, we may ask what has been gained. From a worldly or practical point of view, the gains are negligible. Something has been won for national prestige, and at a fortunate time. But the assault on Everest has always been undertaken for its own sake, an enterprise of the spirit. There are things hard to do, which in their fulfilment can bring no profit but only a little glory and—better than the glory—the feeling of tested metal in a man's character. Brief indeed could have been the triumph felt by Hillary when he knew that he was at the end of the climb. Lungs and heart still had to be driven in a thin atmosphere while he and the Sherpa turned back through the snow. The triumph was to come later, and Hillary would know that he was most of all its messenger, a man chosen to announce it to his own people—above all to his Queen, then on the eve of her Coronation. Everest is climbed. And as the news reached us we knew, each one of us in his different way, that to stand briefly on top of the world is to know what men can do when the climbing spirit drives them. This was something we knew before; but it is a truth which now stands as high as Everest.

N.Z. LISTENER, JUNE 12, 1953.