



Routeburn is easy going—not always—but sometimes. It requires a good standard of fitness to make it completely enjoyable.

GUIDED ROUTEBURN WALK

The accumulation of beauty . . . this magnificent trail . . .

Reprinted from NAC Airline Review

Arthur Feslier, NAC's Public Relations Manager and editor of AIRLINE REVIEW, covered the 23 miles of the Routeburn Walk with the first party of the year. The paragraphs which follow have been taken at random from his notebook:

The south is a resplendent, sparkling place; each time I fly down here I am overwhelmed by the beauty of it, because there can be no island in all the world more replete with nature's lavish generosity than New Zealand's South Island. And this track—so high, so spectacular—is a man-made facility between the Milford road and Lake Wakatipu which in no way disfigures the splendour or immensity of the landscape.

The Routeburn Walk, even on this first, mildly arduous afternoon, has lifted me to a new world—remote, glorious and almost untouched, it seems, by man's hand: It is a splendid experience; I feel truly dwarfed by the gigantic mountains, the rivers, the waterfalls I have passed on this twisting trail.

As I plodded this afternoon up the eight miles (and five hours) from The Divide—proudly labelled as the lowest pass on the Southern Alps, 1704 feet—I asked an irrational, unsettling question of a companion: "I wonder what's happening in the world?" I queried. She looked at me with cool blue eyes which, as I

learned, have rested on many of the world's most famous places. "Forget it," she said. "Forget the world; it's somewhere back there. Now you are here, on this trail; get the world out of your system." And then, in a most curious reflection of my own thoughts she added, "Never have I seen anything like this . . . this accumulation of beauty all in one place; and yet so close geographically to all those other and different things your country offers me . . ." She sought for a word as she contemplated the dramatic scenery: "It's all so . . . sublime; that's the word, sublime. It exalts me . . ."

She was right, of course. The Routeburn Walk, clinging as it does to the steep sides of such huge hills, is a pathway *from* the twentieth century. It leads me back to the earth as God made it. Today I feel better for just having walked in this superb environment.

Birds

Along this magnificent and unique trail which climbs through the western rain forest to the clear, wide heights above the bush line where the snows lie thick in winter, I saw more birds in one day than in any place except Stewart Island. (And its welcome elevation lifts the Routeburn 'way above the sandfly belt and yet within the range of numerous gaudy butterflies and dainty moths.) But it is the avian roll