ALPAMAYO, 1966

By JOHN AMATT

(*Six illustrations: nos. 3–8*)

THE history of Alpamayo is a subject which has been well documented in other journals, but a few historical details might not be amiss here. Lying in the Cordillera Blanca of Peru, Alpamayo appears at first sight during the approach from the west along the Quebrada Alpamayo, 'as all that can be expected of the perfect ice-peak'. Thus it is written in the book, *Cordillera Blanca* (*Peru*) by Hans Kinzl and Erwin Schneider, but it is probably true to say that the mountain obtained its unofficial title of 'the most beautiful mountain in the world' from the view of its south-west flank as seen from the nearby mass of Quitaraju (*c.* 6100 m.). From this angle, Nevado Alpamayo (as it is more correctly known) appears as a perfect trapezoid of fluted ice, incredibly steep and seemingly impregnable from all angles. Indeed it was not until 1957, more than twenty years after its 'discovery' by Erwin Schneider, that the mountain was climbed; but more of that later.

For a mountain of such importance, and with so much to attract the mountaineer, it is somewhat surprising that there is no height measurement which can be readily accepted. Schneider attributes to Nevado Alpamayo the height of 'about 19,800 ft.' and, as he is the cartographer of the region, one is prone to accept this. However, the Franco-Belgian expedition of 1951 give the height as 20,080 ft. Obviously one would like to think that this magical figure of 20,000 ft. is the true height, but recent elevations taken by Leigh Ortenburger and David Atherton seem to confirm Schneider's measurements of 5950 m. (19,521 ft.). The matter is still open to some small degree of doubt perhaps, but I personally feel that the height is a minor point when compared with the majesty and grace of the mountain.

The Cordillera Blanca, with its twenty-nine summits at over 6000 m., forms but a small part of the Andes chain, which lies down the whole of the west side of South America. The Blanca, as it is affectionately known, must be distinguished from the lower and rocky Cordillera Negra, but together they form what must be called the backbone of Peru, separating as they do the other geographical features of the country, the coastal sand desert to the west and the Amazon basin to the east. Since 1903, when an Englishman, C. R. Enoch, first crossed the range by a pass of over 17,000 ft., mountaineers have been interested in the area. Pride of place must be given, however, to the sustained expeditions of the large Austro-

German parties who explored the range in 1932, 1936, and 1939–40. Kinzl and Schneider were the prime movers on these expeditions and it was during the second one that they first found and photographed Alpamayo.

However, it was not until twelve years later in 1948 that a Swiss expedition made the first attempt on its defences. Before starting their final assault, the Swiss had already christened it 'the most beautiful mountain in the world'. Climbing by way of the heavily corniced North ridge, the three climbers were within sight of its virgin summit when a large cornice broke under them and they were carried down the precipitous North-west face. By some amazing piece of good fortune, the three—by name Lauterburg, Schmid and Sigrist—were neither buried nor injured by the 650 ft. fall and were able to make an orderly retreat from the mountain. Alpamayo had repulsed its first suitor.

Benefiting from information freely communicated by de Szepessy-Schaurek, who wrote an account of the Swiss expedition in *Alpinisme* (No. 88, September, 1949), a Franco-Belgian expedition set out in 1951. Led by Georges Kogan, and including such famous names as Claude Kogan, Raymond and Nicole Leininger, Lenoir and Jongen, the expedition again attacked the North ridge, dangerous as it was. They avoided the cornices wherever possible by making detours on to the East wall and such was the difficulty of the climbing that they only reached the massive cornice capping the end of the North ridge long after dark. In their book, subsequently translated into English under the title *The Ascent of Alpamayo*, they wrote 'at last our dreams had come true and Alpamayo lay conquered at our feet'. But events were to prove that this was not the true summit. In fact, they were still some 250 ft. below, and a very long 600 ft. traverse of an extremely difficult and dangerous ridge of cornices short of, the highest point.

That they should have considered their conquest complete at that point is easy to believe. At the time of their climb, the mountain did carry two distinct summits, although the drop between them was only small. Having reached their summit after dark, and having discovered that all around them the ground dropped away, few would not believe that they had completed the ascent. However, the experts of the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research in Zurich were later to prove that the southernmost summit was the higher, and not the North summit which they had reached. After a night spent in a bivouac below the summit, the French had retreated in very bad weather and consequently had not seen the trick which the mountain had played on them.

Learning of the French party's miscalculation, a German expedition led by Günter Hauser, and comprising some of Germany's strongest climbers eventually succeeded in climbing the peak in 1957. Rejecting the previously held views regarding the North ridge, Hauser chose to

attack the unknown South ridge, which lay hidden from view on the far side of the mountain. Although no less steep, nor less dangerous, than the North ridge, this ridge had the tremendous advantage of leading direct to the higher South summit, thus omitting the long and dangerous traverse from the North top. In spite of miserable weather conditions, which drove the party back on several occasions, they eventually reached the summit, which 'pierced the sky line like the prow of some great Viking ship'. Looking across towards the north, Hauser commented in his book . . . 'Directly below me was the knife edge of the summit ridge leading down to the North ridge where the French and Belgians had come up, though I could not see the actual point where they had stopped since it was in dead ground behind the fall of the ridge. A good thing we had not tried to come up that way; the icy ridge looked horribly dangerous.'

So the ascent of Alpamayo was complete, but the twice-tried North ridge was still unconquered. And would this not be an ideal peak on which to make a 16 mm. ciné-film? These were our objectives.

We had arrived in Peru by somewhat diverse means. Four of us, Roy Smith, Terry Burnell, Dave Bathgate and myself had travelled down through the States, to be greeted by Dennis Gray in Lima. He had arrived with the equipment by sea, only one day earlier. Our sixth member, Ned Kelly, who was to make such a wonderful job of the film, was already in America on business. He arrived separately a few hours later. We were only to find out later the tragic circumstances which were to keep Chris Bonington from joining us as planned.

Anyone with any experience of expeditions to Peru will be fully aware of the meaning of 'insuperable' when applied to the customs. In spite of precautions taken prior to our departure, it is no exaggeration to say that our equipment could still be there now but for the tremendous help of our man in Lima, Colin Darbyshire, and great perseverance on Dennis Gray's part. On June 5 we were collected at the Hotel Claridge at three o'clock in the morning and travelled northwards on the smoothly tarmaced Pan-American Highway, with the *collectivo* driver dozing at the wheel in spite of our avid protests. After 130 miles of trying to sleep on a knife-edge of fear and worry, we turned off on to the narrow bumpy track which led us upwards into the dry, arid foothills of the Cordillera Negra. As dawn broke, we had left the dunes of the coastal sand desert far behind and had reached the Conococha Pass at 14,000 ft. It is here that the track breasts the ridge, having climbed from very near sea-level in about ten hours, and begins its long downward trek into the beautiful Rio Santa valley below.

Far away in the morning haze, we had our first view of the magnificent peaks of the Cordillera Blanca, a glimmering, shining barrier of icy giants—the backbone of a continent.

A few hours later, we had dropped down into the narrow confines of the valley and had drawn into the small town of Huaraz—our base for the next few days. And what a base! To the west of the town, we were cut off from the Pacific by the rugged rock peaks and pinnacles of the Cordillera Negra, which rise to a height of 15,000 ft., some 5,000 ft. above the town. To the east, the incredibly beautiful summits of the 'White Mountains' towered above us for some 10,000 ft.

The town itself was a vivid display of colour and life, contrasting as it did the way of life of the incredibly poor Indios with the relative wealth of the inbred Spanish population. For a town situated at 10,000 ft., whose only means of approach is via the 'roads' already described, Huaraz is very advanced and can boast the title of 'the second best lit city in Peru'—after Lima of course! However, its development is still far from complete and the number of small boys running about with their small box full of empty tins of polish and shining brushes, makes one wonder what schooling they will eventually receive. We made great friends of several of these lads, and Terry soon had his 'personal' assistant shouting, 'Shoe-shine?' to every gringo in sight.

While in Huaraz we were very lucky to make the acquaintance of the brotherhood of Benedictine monks, who now had as their seminary the old climbers' hotel of Los Pinos. Far from preaching Christianity to the somewhat ignorant peasants, the fathers lent their time to helping the Indians grow bigger and better crops, to helping them with irrigation or with the construction of some new track. During our stay, they were immensely good to us and in fact gave us permission to climb on Alpamayo, as it was on their land that it lay.

After a short acclimatisation period at Huaraz, we started out on June 8 leaving our friends Domingo Giobbi and Carlo Mauri, who with Mauri's cousin were to climb in the mountains to the east of Huaraz. By a miracle, the lorry arrived on time and we were soon bouncing down the tortuous, twisting road as it wound its way through the narrow confines of the Santa valley. Sitting perched on top of the nine shipping crates which housed all our equipment and food, we had an unforgettable view of our surroundings as we flashed under low wooden bridges, several nearly decapitating us, and skidded round blind corners on the narrow road, the width of a car. It was easy to visualise the results of a head-on crash, as the number of crosses which decorated the road-sides provided clear evidence of the Peruvians' maniacal driving.

After a long, dry six-hour journey, through the small towns of Yungay and Caras, we arrived at the Guardia Civil post which marked the crossing to the Hacienda Colcas, our take-off point for the heights. It was with dismay that we eased our aching frames off the truck, dusted ourselves down, and surveyed the pathetic cable-way which was the only means of crossing the swirling turbulence of the Rio Santa, some 50 ft. below.

What a blow! We had been led to believe that a bridge existed but now we found that it had been swept away many years before by a flood caused by an avalanche falling off the mountain, Ranrapalca, far above Huaraz. The flood had swept down on the town, killing four thousand people in its path, and had then roared on down the Rio Santa, breaking every bridge between Huaraz and the coast, many miles away.

We now had to break open the cases on the wrong side of the river, transport each item across the swaying wooden platform slung below the thin cable, and load all the gear on to donkeys for the five kilometres journey to the hacienda. Three days later, all was gathered at Colcas and we had had our first experience of the stubbornness of the *borros*, and of the *arrieros* for that matter. 'Mañana, mañana. . . .' It was always 'tomorrow'.

Even now, our troubles were not over. In fact, they had not really begun. Owing to our large amount of equipment and food, we estimated that we would require in excess of twenty mules for the journey to Base Camp and had always believed that we would have no difficulty in finding them at Colcas, once reputed to be the finest hacienda in Peru but now hopelessly decrepit. Our efforts to get the gear up from the river crossing had, however, shown us the error of our ways. Then we had been able to get only three donkeys at a time. How were we now to get the large number we required? After two days of fruitless bargaining, the solution was found in bribing 'La Señora' at the hacienda to find the donkeys for us. This gave her the necessary motivation and we awoke on the morning of June 13 to find some fifteen of the beasts, together with four *arrieros*, awaiting our departure for the mountain.

This was all very well, but we had no intention of leaving until the following day. In any case, it would be quite impossible to load all the equipment on to these donkeys, since on finishing the re-packing of gear previously we had found that we had sixty donkey loads. Some of these were heavy enough to constitute one load alone! As always in such cases, a compromise can be found. In this case, it was to pay the donkey-men for their one day of inactivity, if they would await the arrival of the remaining donkeys the following day. They accepted this willingly and then dispersed to their jobs, happy to be paid for doing nothing.

The previous day, Sunday June 12, Roy and Terry had left in advance of the main party to make a short reconnaissance of the route in and to find a site for our Base Camp in the upper Alpamayo valley. Accompanying them was an Austrian photographer, Fred Allert, who was on commission from the Peruvian government to make a propaganda film of the expeditions climbing in Peru in 1966. We had heard that there were thirty-one in all, double the number of the previous year.

We followed two days later with our long caravan of twenty-five donkeys, four *arrieros* and four climbers. Within the first hundred yards

of leaving the hacienda, a donkey had thrown its load and the pattern for the next few days was already established.

That night, we bivouacked some 6,000 ft. above the valley floor by the side of the meandering path that led up and over a high 14,000 ft. col into the Alpamayo valley. Our progress throughout that day was dictated by lack of water and Ned Kelly, Dave Bathgate and I had forged on ahead of the donkeys, which were already finding difficulty in carrying their loads. At six o'clock, just as darkness fell, Ned had come across a small stream, the first for several thousands of feet. Realising now just how unfit and badly acclimatised we were, we had staggered to the stream and gorged ourselves with water.

Meanwhile, Dennis Gray was experiencing the first of a throat infection which was to dog him for the whole expedition. Consequently, he had been forced to stay with the slower-moving donkey team, which had been stopped by darkness some hundreds of feet below us. In the absence of water and because of a badly swollen throat, he had been quite unable to eat anything. As for the *arrieros*, they had been quite unconcerned.

Next morning, after time spent chasing donkeys which had been allowed to roam in the night, it was not until after ten o'clock that they had reached the point where the three of us had been forced to bivouac in the freezing Andean night, without food or warmth. Taking advantage of a donkey throwing its load, we dived upon one of the High-Altitude food boxes and pilfered its contents.

That day was little short of agony for us. So exhausted were we by the rigours of the previous day that we were soon left behind by even the weakest donkey. Consequently, we were forced to bivouac again by the side of the beautiful Cullicocha lakes. The day was not without its rewards, however, as we had had our first view of these magnificent ice peaks of the Blanca at close quarters. At the head of the lakes, the impressive mass of the Santa Cruz range dominated all around with its sheer flutings and immense cornices. Of especial interest was the twin-peaked Santa Cruz Norte (18,944 ft.), the highest unclimbed peak in the Cordillera Blanca, which would require a very determined effort by a strong party if the summit were to be gained.

From the lakes, we reached the 14,000 ft. col with little trouble and descended the 3,000 ft. of zig-zags into the deep trench of the Alpamayo valley. Here we met Fred Allert who had spent some time filming around Alpamayo. With him when he left the next morning was our last mail to get out for the next month. That evening, on June 17, we had had our first view of our mountain as it cleft the evening sky, and we had established our Base Camp on the Swiss site of 1948, almost at the foot of the North face of the massive Santa Cruz Grande (20,537 ft.).

Above the camp, our route lay up a long, tenuous scree-gully to a small

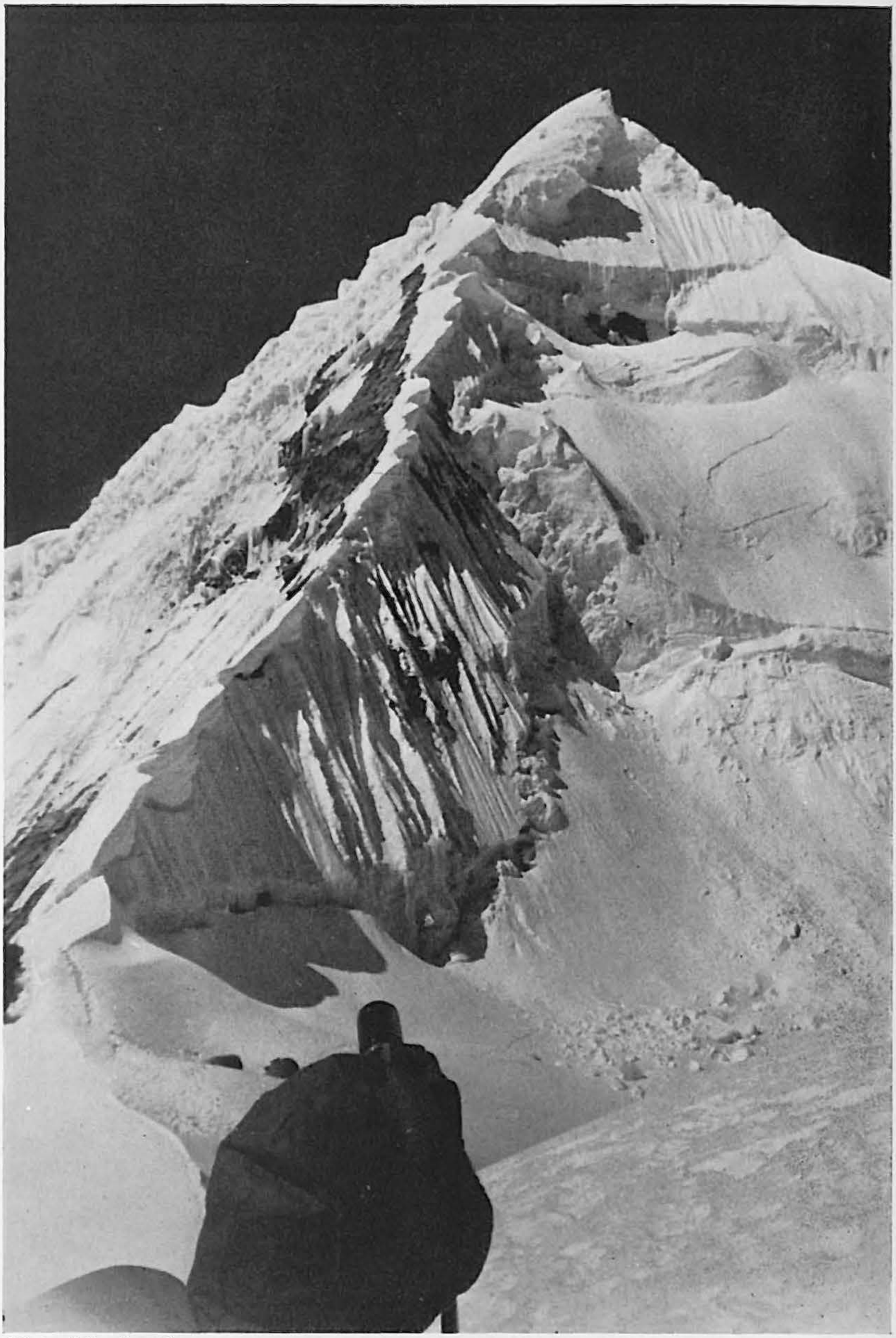

Photo: John Amatt]

THE HEAVILY CORNICED NORTH RIDGE OF ALPAMAYO AS SEEN FROM THE CAMERA POSITION. NED KELLY FILMING (FOREGROUND) WITH CAMP II IN THE BASIN ON THE LEFT.

(No. 3)

Photo: John Amatt]

ALPAMAYO: THE SECTION, WHICH SUBSEQUENTLY COLLAPSED, KNOWN AS THE 'CAT WALK', WITH THE HUGE ICICLES HANGING LIKE SWORDS OF DAMOCLES.

(No. 4)

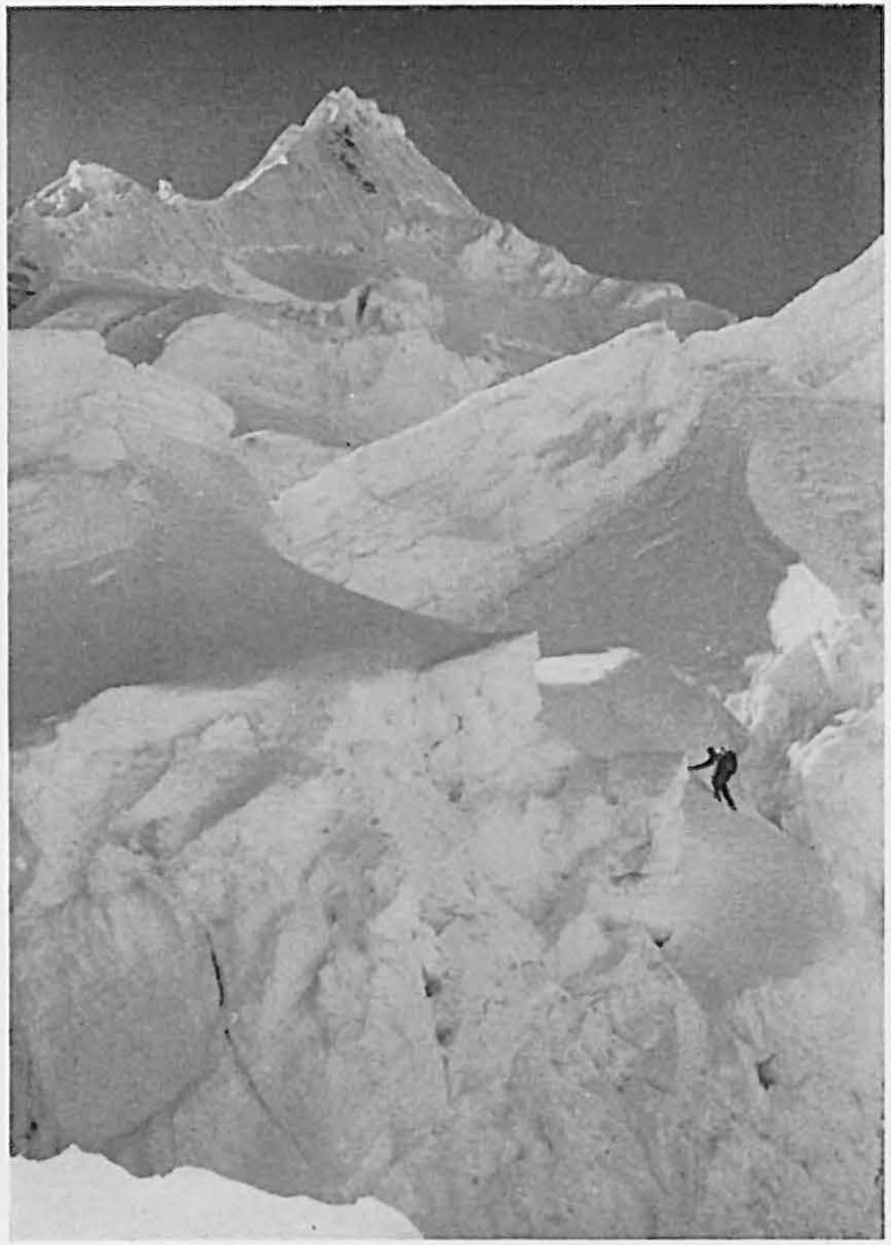

Photo: Ned Kelly]

CLIMBING OUT OF THE 'SUGAR-BOWL' SECTION OF THE ICE-FALL. IN THE BACKGROUND, ALPAMAYO WITH THE WEST RIDGE ON THE LEFT. THE SUMMIT IS THE RIGHT-HAND OF THE THREE HUMPS.

(No. 5)

col on the ridge which barred our approach to the Alpamayo glacier. On Saturday, June 18, Smith and Gray reconnoitred the ice-fall from this col at 16,800 ft., over 2,000 ft. above Base, and returned having fixed rope over two sections to facilitate the carrying of loads over the col. The view from the col was impressive, mile upon mile of glistening ice peaks; the route through the ice-fall promising; but the West ridge of Alpamayo, which we had previously intended to climb, was thought to be too dangerous to allow an attempt, especially in view of the filming of the climb. That it was climbable was beyond doubt, but to spend time filming the upper section where the ridge reared up to merge with the massive summit cornices appeared impracticable.

Sunday evening saw Terry Burnell and Dave Bathgate established in the Moraine Camp (Camp I) on the edge of the glacier. For the next few days, while they attempted to find the route through the ice-fall, Dennis, Roy, Ned and I stuck to the task of provisioning this camp and establishing the basis for the next push on the mountain. On June 21 Roy Smith moved up to Camp I and the following day he and Bathgate, prospecting a new entry to the ice-fall, reached the plateau at the foot of the West ridge in just three hours. The route through the ice-fall was therefore open but was not without its dangers. In one place, the route lay beneath an imposing ice-cliff from which immense icicles hung like so many swords of Damocles. This was always a dangerous spot and in spite of the fixed ropes we placed there, we would have stood little chance had one of the icicles fallen just as we were passing across the delicate snow bridges at its foot. The fact that a crack had appeared at the side of the cliff and was widening daily did not help matters either. This section we called the 'Cat-walk' and I for one was always glad to be through it. Towards the end of the expedition, this cliff did fall, burying our fixed ropes. Luckily no one was underneath at the time. The resulting traverse, however, across huge ice-blocks perched on the edge of a big crevasse, was precarious in the extreme.

The other dangerous area was the 'Sugar-bowl', a huge ice-bowl formed by the collapse of a series of séracs into a huge crevasse. This necessitated a very intricate route threading its way delicately over several fragile snow bridges, crossing some deep crevasses. To cross the bowl, we had to descend about 100 ft., before traversing the bridges and ascending a steep slope for some 200 ft. to the plateau itself. This depression in the ice-fall was a natural sun-trap, and the bridges daily became more dangerous throughout the expedition. What had been a reasonably easy route at the start of the climb became a very dangerous and precarious one as the bridges melted away later.

The same day as the route through the ice-fall was found, Dennis, Ned and I arrived back at Base Camp after a carry to Camp I and found that some Americans had moved into the valley near by. They were led by

Richard Goody, who we were surprised to find had been at Cambridge for a long time before moving out to Harvard, where he is now a professor of meteorology. The other members of the party were David Atherton, Donald Morton, and Richard Wylie. They were a small, compact group and relied on the 'quick-push' type of assault which has become prevalent amongst American parties during the last years. This depends entirely on travelling light and is made possible by the fact that on most Andean peaks there is little more than 6000 ft. of ascent from Base Camp to the summit. The Americans also make good use of local porters, but we could not afford this luxury and had to do all the carrying ourselves. It is perhaps a lesson to be learned that during three weeks in the valley, they climbed one peak in excess of 20,000 ft. (Quitaraju, *c.* 6100 m.) and four other summits including the first ascent of Tayapampa, 5750 m. (18,865 ft.). However, none of these peaks presented them with difficulties comparable to those of Alpamayo and we knew that the making of the film necessitated the slow build-up of the climb. Future British parties, however, might find food for thought here.

On June 24 the weather broke for the first time since our arrival in Peru. Usually we had awoken to impeccably clear skies, but now we noticed the first wisps of cloud on the horizon. By the time we reached the 16,800 ft. col above Base Camp, it was snowing hard and we were forced to seek some shelter. Dropping our loads at the dump we had established by the glacier, we hurried back to the col where we met Dave, Terry and Roy who had decided to come down to Base in view of the threatening weather. We knew that conditions in the ice-fall for the next few days would be such as to make the route too dangerous, and chose to use this time making further carries to the glacier dump. However, the weather soon improved and on the 27th we were all gathered at Camp I, ready to push through the ice-fall and attack the slopes leading to the North col, some 2000 ft. above us.

The next day, Bathgate and Burnell left Camp I in the early hours of the coming dawn and reached the col for the first time. In spite of the unknown nature of the route, they reached the 18,000 ft. col in just two and a half hours, having passed through the ice-fall by torch light. They were relieved to find that the slopes above the plateau were not difficult, and had been able to crampon up them unroped. From the col, they had a clear view of the huge cornices of the North ridge—'just like Everest from the South summit', Burnell told us later, but no doubt more difficult. They were both very enthusiastic about the climb, but it was obvious that we would have to fix a lot of rope if we were to film such a steep and dangerous place.

It was on this ridge that the Swiss had almost come to grief back in 1948 and we knew that we would have to take especial care. However, it was fairly obvious from what the lads told us that it would be possible to

keep to rock for the first few hundred feet and then to move out on to the South-east face to avoid the cornices. This would provide some very steep and exposed ice climbing, but would be safer than keeping to the ridge itself.

All was now ready for the final push. During the days that followed, our advance party once again moved up to the North col and began work on the ridge. While the 'Comedians' team' made daily trips through the ice-fall, carrying all the equipment and food required for the assault on the mountain, Roy, Dave and Terry were slowly roping the ridge, which was proving decidedly stubborn. The climbing was quite difficult at that altitude, but the weather was providing the main barrier. On two occasions deep snow at Camp II made climbing very precarious and often the cold on the very exposed North ridge made progress very slow and painful. The icy wind cut through even the superb duvet equipment and ventile clothing we were wearing.

Six o'clock was the usual time for our radio contact and we were able to keep in touch with proceedings on the ridge, and also to plan for when we should all move up to occupy the col. Obviously, there was little point in six men being at Camp II until all was ready for the summit climb, so Kelly, Gray and I resigned ourselves to the inglorious but highly necessary task of keeping the supply lines open. Time was also spent in filming sections of the ice-fall and the slopes above the plateau.

On July 7 our daily contact produced the encouraging news that the route had been pushed through to within 200 or 300 ft. (vertical height) of the summit. This was the top of the North ridge, the point now thought to have been reached by the French party of 1951, but still a long and very difficult traverse short of the summit mushroom. It is interesting to note that no evidence of the French party's assault was found above the rock sections in the lower half of the ridge. Up to this point, ropes, pitons, a north-wall hammer, a piton hammer and even a wool hat had been found, but above, on the snow itself, there was no evidence of their climb at all.[1] It was debated at length amongst ourselves that this would have been the place where fixed ropes would have almost been a necessity; perhaps not on the ascent, but surely on the descent. To climb down those upper slopes of high-angle snow and ice, at a time when the tropical sun had been at work, would have been very dangerous indeed.

We could now prepare for the final assault and the next day, July 8, we all moved up to the col, the camera equipment having been taken the previous day.

The camp on the col was situated in a small basin directly below the precipitous North ridge. Above, we were overshadowed by the huge cornices, many of which curved out over 30 ft. of space above the impres-

[1] Surely, after fifteen years, one would not expect fixed ropes, or other traces, to be detectable on the *snowy* part of the ridge?—EDITOR.

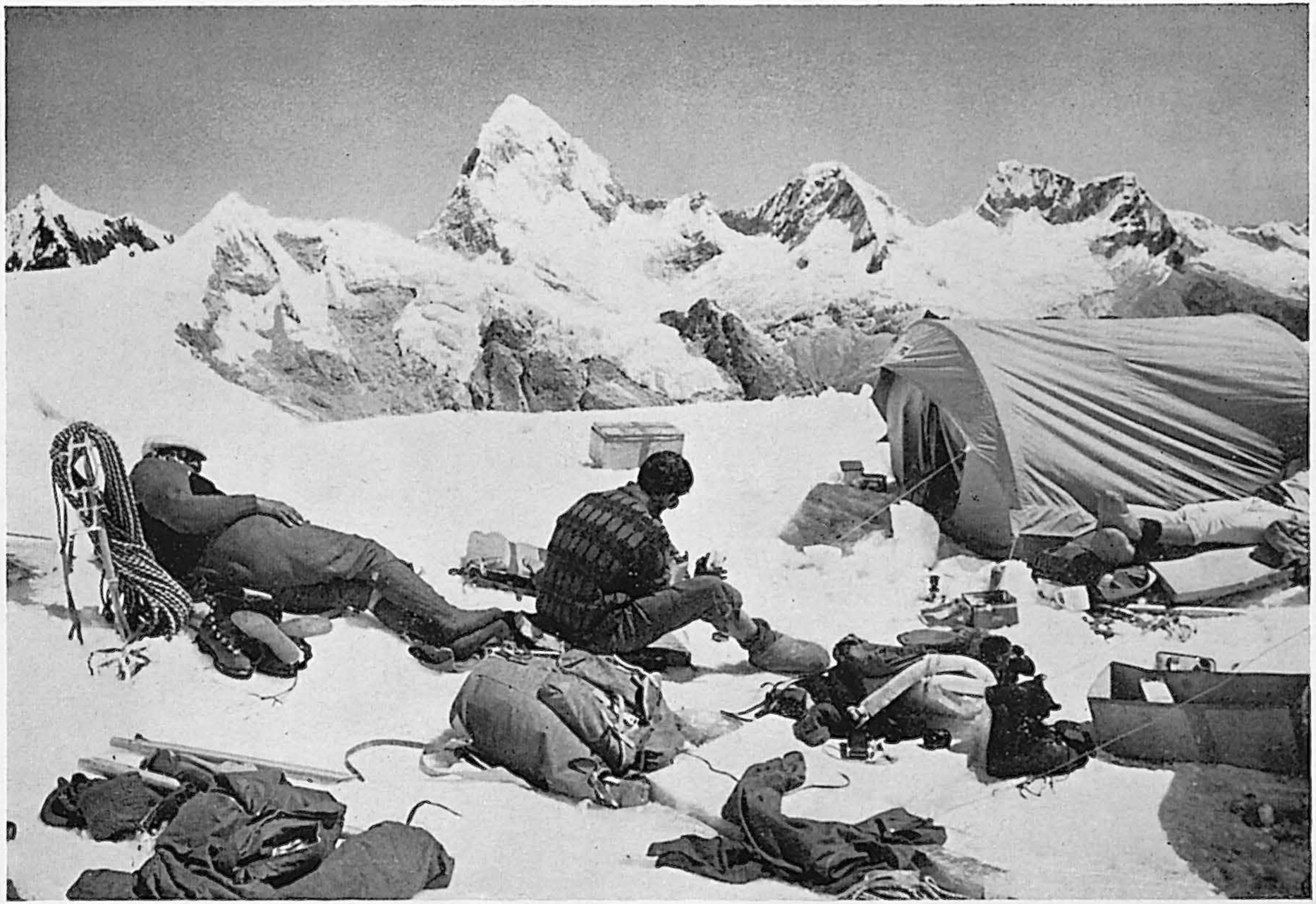

Photo: John Amatt]

CAMP II AT 18,000 FT. ON THE NORTH COL OF ALPAMAYO. IN THE BACKGROUND, THE TRIPLE PEAKS OF THE SANTA CRUZ RANGE, WITH SANTA CRUZ NORTE (FAR RIGHT) AND THE UNCLIMBED ABASRAJU (FAR LEFT).

(No. 6)

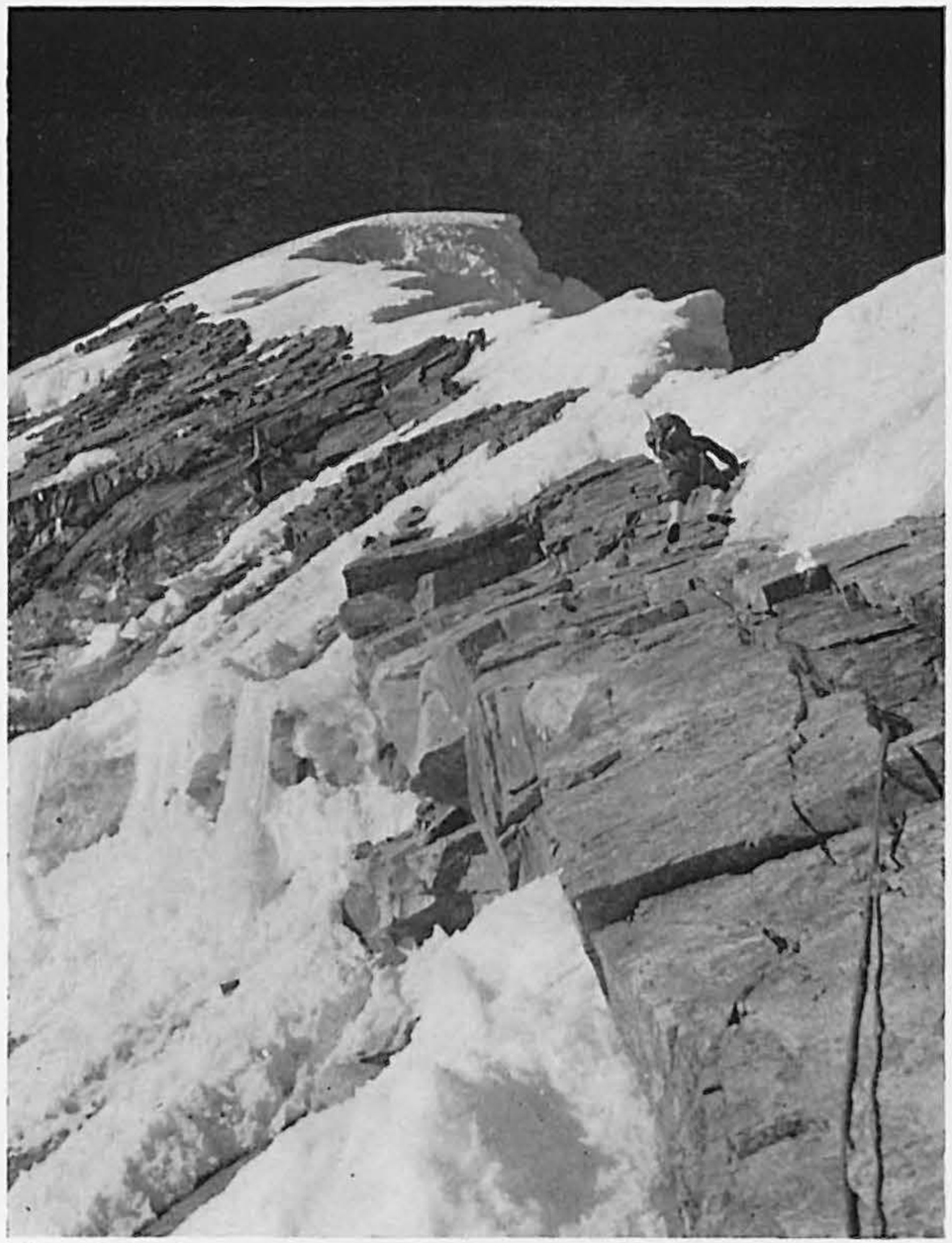

Photo: John Amatt]

CLIMBING THE NORTH RIDGE OF ALPAMAYO.

(No. 7)

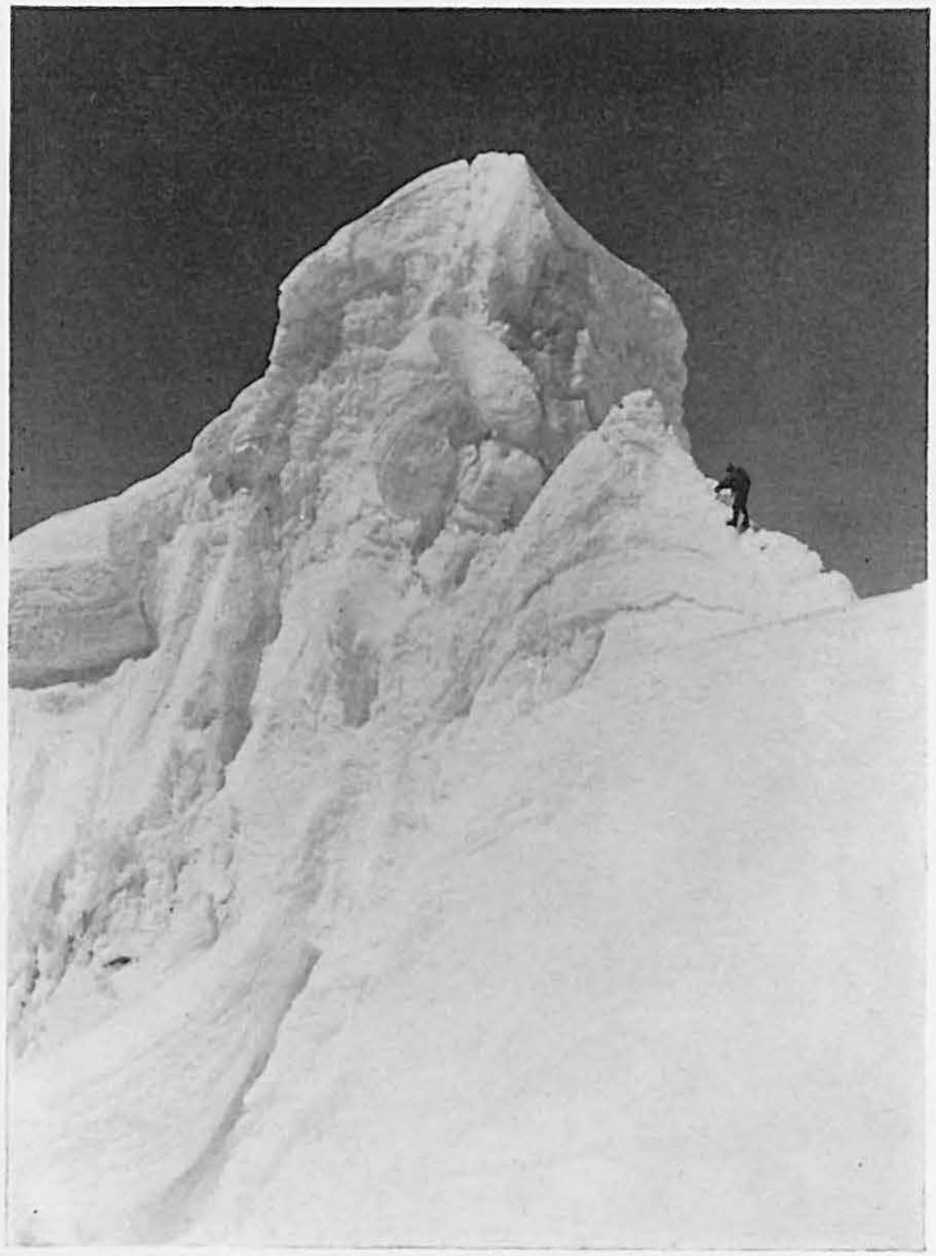

Photo: John Amatt]

APPROACHING THE SUMMIT ON THE SECOND ASSAULT. THE NOTCH IN THE SUMMIT CONE MARKS THE LINE OF ASCENT.

(No. 8)

sively fluted ice of the North-west face. To the west, we could look almost straight down on to the tangled mass of crevasses and séracs in the ice-fall. It was just possible to pick out the orange tents at Camp I, as they merged into the background of glacier moraine grit. Further west, on the horizon, lay the triple peaks of the Santa Cruz massif; the majestic Santa Cruz Grande; the diminutive Chico; and the unconquered twin summits of Santa Cruz Norte. Even from here, we could see no break in its defences. To the north, the ridge continued in a jagged knife-edge of séracs and gendarmes, rising every now and then into the steep dome of some unknown summit. We knew that Goody's party was in that region, attempting the first ascent of Tayapampa (18,865 ft.) and we wished them luck.

Most impressive of all, however, were the peaks of the Pucahirca range which lay hidden over the col to the east. No words could describe the beauty of the scene which faced us as we topped the col for the first time. Below our feet, the slope dropped away in one smooth sweep of ice and rock, to merge into the vivid greenness of the two lakes, many thousands of feet below. Above these, the steep walls of the Nevado Pucahirca rose in unrelenting steepness, snow merging into rock, blending together in an unforgettable mosaic of colour as the triple peaks cleft the clear blue sky like Britannia's trident.

Next morning, we were awake early in the freezing Andean dawn as Dave Bathgate and Roy Smith left for the summit, supported by Burnell and Gray. Meanwhile, Ned Kelly and I filmed their progress from a near-by peak. That day was one of the coldest I remember for a long time and it was not long before both Ned and I were so cold that it was an effort to speak. Changing the lenses on the cameras became an ordeal in itself; what it must have been like on the ridge I shudder to think.

With the aid of the rope fixed during the build up, they soon climbed the steep rock pitches and featureless ice, several sections approaching the vertical in the upper reaches, and reached the North summit at ten o'clock. Technically the climbing was not difficult, but was exposed in the extreme. After the initial traverse on to the face, the climb was mostly on good granite for several hundreds of feet, until they were forced to move on to the ice cornices of the ridge. From here, they climbed alternately on the snow and rock outcrops until all above was ice. By traversing out on to the exposed face, the final huge cornices were by-passed and the North summit reached. Here Bathgate took the lead and after traversing for four rope-lengths over the dangerously poised ice gendarmes and wind-blown cornices, he reached the summit at one o'clock.

The last 20 ft. to the summit were perhaps the most difficult and precarious of the climb. Climbing out of a crevasse where he had belayed, with a breath-taking view down the whole sweep of the South-west face

between his feet, Dave cut down a swaying cornice and broke through a rib of soft snow on to the far side of the ridge. Here he was climbing directly above the tremendously exposed reaches of the North-east face, such was the knife-edge of the summit ridge. Balancing on crampon points above the 4,000-ft. drop of the face, he had cut round another icy rib to gain entry into a wind-flute which he had climbed at an angle of over eighty degrees to reach the pointed summit.

Cutting an ice-bollard in the summit cone, he descended to allow Roy Smith to climb to the top, there being insufficient room to fit them both safely.

July 10 was spent filming the rock sections in the lower half of the ridge, before abseiling off the ridge for 300 ft. down the North-west face above the col camp. Then, on the 11th, first Terry and Dennis, followed by Dave (again) and myself reached the summit. Meanwhile, Ned Kelly filmed from the slightly lower North summit being, to our great regret, unable to make the last section on account of slight snow-blindness which had resulted after removing his glasses to take a camera sighting.

Despite a slight build up of cloud, the view was indescribable.