

# THE TALE OF "GALLOPING GERTIE"

## *How She Left The Rails And Took A Sea Voyage*

"GALLOPING GERTIE" is a Railway Broadcasting Studio with a sense of adventure. Perhaps you have met her — she's better known as Station 5ZB. Well, "Gertie" had been back some time from her successful tour through a number of North Island towns where she was everywhere acclaimed as a studio of class; and naturally she was becoming restive in her inactivity after this exhilarating journey. Every day she grew more and more restless, until at last she was absolutely "rarin' to go." Now "Galloping Gertie" didn't earn that dashing name for nothing. Oh, dear no! — she has a just and well-lived-up-to reputation for high stepping.

But "Gertie" was all dressed up with nowhere to go until, with her sensitive nose for adventure, she smelt out the news about the forthcoming Centennial Exhibition. Then she definitely decided to take steps.

"Nothing," she said to herself, "will keep me from it, not even if I have to fly there!" Since the days of Pegasus are over, and the days of flying railway studios here not yet come, "Gertie" had to compromise. She decided to go by sea. That in itself was a revolutionary idea for a vehicle normally bounded by two steel railway lines, but "Gertie" is the soul of initiative, and she soon thought of a plan.

### **She Lays Her Plans**

Under the pseudonym of S.S. 5ZB Studio, alias Railway Broadcasting Unit

No. 1, alias "Galloping Gertie," she prepared her campaign. First of all she must charter a barge, secondly, she must get aboard the barge, and thirdly, she must have some means of exit at the other side.

But "Gertie" has many friends, and before long everything was arranged.

It was a glorious afternoon. Wellington Harbour, in her most pleasant mood, lay still as glass under the sun, or occasionally sparkled with a myriad gay little wavelets as a slight breeze teased her surface.

Aotea Quay was in its usual place within working distance of the floating dock, and the good ship "Hikitea" stood by with her tall crane beckoning the adventuress onward.

### **She Suffers Indignity**

The central figure of the drama arrived by rail at the quayside, brimming over with excitement. The "S.S. 5ZB Studio" lets nothing stand in her way when she's going places; and apparently without qualms she submitted to the first indignity of being lifted bodily off terra firma on to great mounting blocks from which she could more easily be lifted by the crane. She could not be kept waiting long in this position, and a whirl of smoke from the barge announced the second act in this thrilling drama of the sea. While the "Hikitea" was steadily ploughing her way quaywards, "Galloping Gertie" was, as always, the centre of an admiring crowd (which, of course, included many ZB Executives).

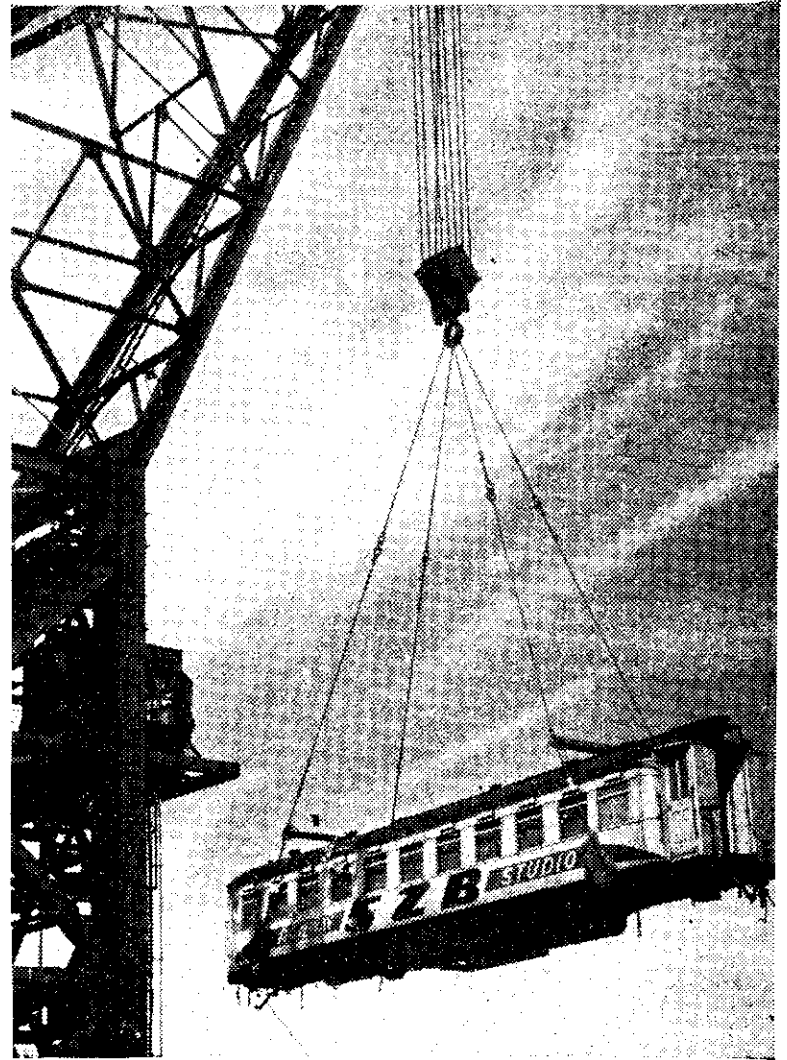
Such an event could certainly not go "un-aired" by an enterprising Broadcasting Service, and the men with the "mike" were on their toes. In a short time the "Hikitea" had drawn up alongside, and, on the bridge, looking very

nautical, were seen W. W. Kilpatrick, CBS Programme Director, and Announcer Kingi Tahiwai. As soon as the boat tied up, the crane swivelled into position, and hung suspended over "Gertie" with four huge cables dangling fore and aft. These were attached one at each corner and tightened into position. Bundles of rag were stuffed between the cables, and "Gertie's" tender paint and vulnerable window panes. Kingi began his broadcast to all ZB Stations from the bridge at 1.30 p.m., with technicians standing by with a firm hand on the controls.

### **She Enjoys A Swing**

No doubt "Gertie" uttered a prayer as she felt herself swung high into the air, but it was all over in two or three minutes. Lifted high above the crowd, she swung across the bows, and was lowered foot by foot till she stayed swaying gently about 15 feet from the deck, while sleepers were deftly put into position on which to rest her modest 20 tons! No doubt also she sighed with relief when she rested at last on the gently-riding barge.

Cameras clicked for the last time, as a siren shrieked—visitors hastily leaped her at the Exhibition — sometime.



"GERTIE" goes up in the world

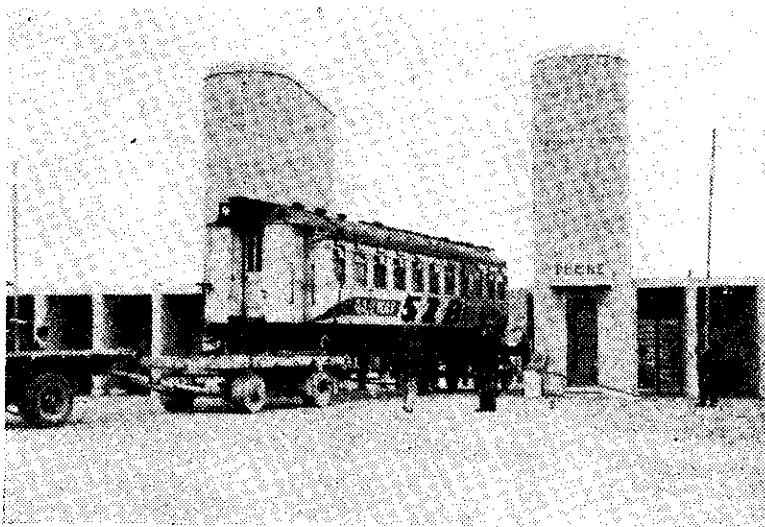
ashore—and the "S.S. 5ZB Studio" was afloat at last.

It was a triumphant journey. "Gertie" bathed thankfully in the sunshine after her trying ordeal; a few gulls winged a couple of lazy circles and darted away aft; and the Lockheed, on her way from Auckland, swooped down to see this amazing sight.

### **She Extends an Invitation**

As the barge passed Point Halswell, one could see the trailers turning the bend of the road en route to meet "Gertie" at Miramar Wharf. The voyage over, the whole painful process began again for the poor seafarer. Once again the chains rattled, the huge crane swivelled on its greased axle, and "Gertie" went for another ride. Up, up she went, and round; and down and down and down. On to the sturdy trailers she went, and up and down again a little while the rests were adjusted.

So ended "Galloping Gertie's" sea voyage. Subsequently she was taken to the Exhibition by road — a much more prosaic adventure, although she certainly looked very imposing, as the picture on this page indicates. And now, "Gertie"



"GERTIE" arrives at the Exhibition