

HOW THE VICTORY NEWS CAME

Scene in 2YA's Control Room

IT was Wednesday, May 9, 1945. The big clock in the studio next to the main control room at Station 2YA, Wellington, showed 1 a.m.

The staff on duty was silent. All were waiting for the most dramatic piece of news (with one possible exception) in New Zealand radio's short life.

"This is the great moment, fellows," said the acting-Director of Broadcasting.

air for subsequent transmission overseas.

For several hours the control room itself was busier than it had ever been. The red light over the studio door was "on" and admission was very strictly on important business only.

An Allied Round-up

All receiving sites in Wellington were taking the news and everything was recorded to make up a series which could be played over again as desired. Some

cities and towns of England. Into every home in New Zealand with a radio switched on went the news that the Mother Country was rejoicing after nearly six years of strain and trial.

Through all the excitement of the actual broadcasts and re-broadcasts, some members of the 2YA staff not connected with the technical side of the Service were doing necessary jobs. During the exciting period no one felt weariness, but a certain amount of strain was felt when the big thrill had passed. These men had to be refreshed and so the kitchen staff worked hard. Girls whose normal job was at the typewriter or some duty connected with administration, provided tea, coffee, soup, and toast at various times during the night.

The VE day staff got to their beds some time in the morning, but one or two, whose work compelled them to be on duty at the normal hour, stayed at the station for the rest of the night.

There was not a hitch of any sort. The reception was excellent. But there was considerable amusement when, during the height of the announcements from overseas, someone telephoned the station with the curious query: "Isn't there going to be any dance music tonight?"

A member of the staff of *The Listener* who had been in the control room from midnight left at 3.0 a.m. The streets were by no means empty. In many homes "Victory parties" were making merry. The people of New Zealand had heard by radio the greatest news of their lives.



HON. WALTER NASH, acting-Prime Minister, photographed at the microphone as he formally announced the end of the War in Europe

One man answered. "Yes," he said, "the night we have been waiting for six years."

In the voice of Winston Churchill came the words: "Hostilities will cease at one minute after midnight on Tuesday, the eighth of May." Britain's leader said much more, but that sentence was the most important.

Yet there was no element of surprise in the announcement. Radio had robbed itself of that. Information of what was pending had come from overseas piecemeal and been given to the listening public.

But everyone in 2YA's control room felt it a privilege to be on hand for the reception of the big news. They had, many of them, worked long hours on the job of gathering news items and putting them on the air. Technicians, programme men, engineers and typists were on duty, all contributing towards a radio programme which made world history. These people offered listeners a session which contained one quietening note—a reminder that the war was not over. There was the reservation that Japan had still to be defeated.

Representatives of almost all departments of the Service were standing by. Girls were there to handle the scripts for the overseas announcements. A telephone operator was on duty throughout the night to take outside calls. Programmes had to be entirely reconstructed to make way for victory. The talks department was busy preparing descriptions of the Dominion's reactions; these had to be recorded and sent to Sydney by

technicians were monitoring the BBC; others were listening in to America, Russia, Australia, Canada, China and India, and all were seeking a round-up of speeches from the leaders of the United Nations. As they came on hand, these addresses were also recorded, to be added to the mass of matter which New Zealand listeners heard in the very early hours of the morning.

At 12.45 a.m. the Hon. Walter Nash, acting-Prime Minister of New Zealand, heard a news bulletin from the BBC. Later he spoke to the country, briefly, of the Dominion's thankfulness for peace in Europe and of the part New Zealand's men and women had played in achieving victory. After the speeches came the national anthems of the Allied countries.

All records were made simultaneously. For instance, while Mr. Churchill was speaking, and his words were being recorded, other discs were being cut on other turntables, preserving for all time the addresses of the leaders of the free world.

For some time no news was heard from Moscow. A technician whose job was to "receive" Stalin, announced that the Moscow frequency was off the air.

"Try again and keep on trying," said a member of the staff when told that only continuous music could be heard. And so it went on until New Zealand had heard everything on the air.

England's Bells Recorded

A broadcast of street scenes and sounds in London was recorded. Bells were heard, pealing from the blitzed



Ah! that's
Persil
Whiteness

P.212.32Z

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