



ON TOUR with the NZBS Mobile Unit—from left, Brian Cosnett (technician), Leo Fowler (producer), Geoff. Haggitt (commentator), and Dick Miller (technician)

MOST of New Zealand's small country towns have their brass band, small orchestra, choral society, play-reading circle or drama club. The members use the local hall or take turn and turn about, practising in each

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They were a rallying point in dark days, and by their fortitude, good works and comradeship won still more of the nation's trust and affection.

That the King rules but does not govern is a commonplace. He must act on the advice of his Ministers. But there is a lot he can do. As Bagehot put it, he has three rights—"the right to be consulted, the right to encourage, and the right to warn. And a King of great sense and sagacity would want no others. He would find that his having no others would enable him to use these with singular effect." The King carries a great load of duties and responsibilities besides those strictly political. He and his family are leaders of society, and are expected to be exemplars in morals. It is only fair to Royalty to reflect what its temptations may be, especially to the young. To quote Bagehot again: "It is not natural to expect the best virtue where temptation is applied in the most trying form at the frailest time of human life. The occupations of a constitutional monarch are grave, formal, important, but never exciting; they have nothing to stir eager blood, awaken high imagination, work off wild thoughts."

The Sovereign is also a centre and symbol of religious feeling and expression. The Englishman does not believe in the Divine Right of Kings, but he does feel, however vaguely, that there is an element of divinity in the office. "Fear God; Honour the King." Even the Laodicean is moved when he reads the words of the Coronation Service, where the Bible is presented: "Here is wisdom; this is the royal Law; these are the lively Oracles of God."

The broadening of democracy and improvement in communications have

produced changes in the relationship between Sovereign and nation. The King can go about much more easily among his people, and speak to them all at one time. The office has come closer to the lives and interests of the citizen. The King must "walk with kings—nor lose the common touch." A vast amount of adulation—much of it nonsense—has been poured over royalty in the past. When we read some of the eighteenth century verse on the Georges, we don't quite know whether to laugh or cry. There is much less of this to-day. We look at royalty with clearer eyes. We don't expect them to be super-men or super-women. We don't expect Kings and Queens and Princes and Princesses to be brilliant. We do expect them to be hard-working, self-sacrificing, public-spirited, kind, and understanding, and, always remembering they are human like ourselves, we are not disappointed.

Two modern tributes to the place of the Throne in the State may be quoted. John Buchan looked at the Monarchy with the experience of deep study and long public service, which culminated in the Governor-Generalship of a Dominion.

In the last two hundred years, while the Throne has lost in definable powers, it has gained in significance. There have been wise monarchs and some not so wise, but the inherent and accumulated majesty of the office has increased. It is not only higher than any other human estate, but of a different kind from any other, for it is the mystical, indivisible centre of national union. It is the point around which coheres the nation's sense of a continuing personality. In any deep stirring of heart the people turn from the mechanism of government, which is their own handiwork and their servant, to that ancient, abiding thing behind governments, which they feel to be the symbol of their past achievement and future hope.

These two sessions are somewhat alike, but with the difference that the first deals purely with local musical efforts and the second with music, plus a short account of the town's history and reminiscence by local inhabitants. Much of the Unit's work has to be done under circumstances which cannot bring out the best in the recordings. Frequently the surroundings dismay the technical staff. Studio facilities are not to be found in small country areas, so that most of the choirs and their soloists, bands and so on have to be recorded in whatever hall is available. Almost without exception the halls were built originally for local gatherings, flower shows, country concerts, socials and dances, and only in rare cases has the Unit found a hall designed to include the acoustic qualities necessary for first-class recording.

The Mobile Recording Unit of the NZBS has proved this during three tours—two in the North Island and one in Otago, where it is operating at the moment. And through its visits to out-of-the-way places have come two programmes—*Music is Where You Find It*, now being heard from 4YA at 7.30 p.m. on Mondays, and *History and Harmony in New Zealand Towns*, heard from 1YA at 8.0 p.m. on Thursdays.

Other's homes. And as often as not the amount of enthusiasm put into this type of after-work-hours activity is as great as in any of the larger centres—probably even greater, because, apart from the local picture theatre, and an occasional dance, there is little else in the way of amusement. The immediate results do not always measure up to metropolitan standards, but all over the country creditable efforts are being made to keep music alive in small communities.

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"What's the Piano Like?"

One of the first questions in the technicians' minds is "What's the piano like?" There are a few good ones, some fair, and others quite unsuitable for recording purposes. On some occasions the Unit has had to move the piano from the room altogether and to record just as many of its notes as penetrate

The other is from a wage-earner who on his way from work paused among the happy crowds on Princess Elizabeth's wedding day. "I'm a good trade unionist and a Labour Party man, but the Royal Family means something," he said to a correspondent of an American journal. "My father saw Victoria once, as close as you and me are now. These two are getting married—they carry it on. I suppose it's having something steady in your life. And God knows there isn't much steady these days."

Everything that has been said applies to the Dominions, with certain differences that spring from our conditions. Our laws are made in the King's name through his deputy. That deputy carries a responsibility similar to the Sovereign's and is expected to set the same example. The Sovereign is the centre of that family from which we sprang and to which we are proud to belong. He rules over a vaster family that extends to the ends of the earth. No President could exercise the same universal binding power, because it is not in the office of President to do so. To men and women of divers races and creeds the word "King" means something that "President" could never mean. Next year we shall welcome the King and the Queen and Princess Margaret for what they are and what they represent. It will be the first reception of the supreme heads of our family. The thought will never be far from our minds that the basis of the King's rule is freedom, and that twice in a generation the blood of this country, with that of the Motherland, has been shed in that cause. Equally close to us should be the realisation that freedom must be guarded with intelligence and vigour, or it will perish.

—A.M.

MUSIC IN THE OUTBACK

New Programmes from the Mobile Unit

softly through a dividing wall. But with all these drawbacks, the general standard of music recorded is comparatively high, the staff of the Unit state. And if it is presented on the air simply as an example of the keen work of the bands, choirs and other musicians to foster music appreciation, then it is all to the good.

Throughout the tours the Unit staff have been impressed with the willingness of country folk to co-operate. A choir member has been known to ride seven miles on her bicycle to help in an evening's recording. Sometimes it takes several hours to get a correct balance of tone. And sometimes the final recording has been obtained only after crowding a choir of 40 into a small and stuffy room designed for the comfort of not more than a dozen, with the piano wedged into the most convenient place. One orchestra in the North Island was recorded in a hall so small that the whole string section had to move every time the door was opened. But no matter what shifts the people were put to, they were full of enthusiasm and anxious to give all possible help.

Every small town has its "life of the party," the man who gets up all the entertainments, conducts the choir, plays for concerts and dances, and perhaps plays the harmonium or small pipe organ in the little church on Sundays. He might be the local grocer, the lawyer or doctor, the undertaker or the garage proprietor. He is the pivot on which all musical activities turn; and if he is not available, there is always someone else ready to do his best. The Unit has made firm friends of many of these indefatigable people.

Off-Noiseis Gratis

In addition to its collection of discs of country musical work, the Unit has unavoidably picked up some of the extraneous noises that are a countryside feature. Bands, which are recorded in the open air wherever possible, are apt to have a background accompaniment of the town clock, bird calls and the bleating of a passing mob of sheep. Choirs and the like are generally recorded in halls which add to the music their own contribution of squeaky doors, clattering windows, stealthy (and sometimes not so stealthy) footsteps, coughs, whispers, and an occasional giggle. And so the Unit now has in its repertoire such noises off as come from lowing cattle, car-horns and gears, aeroplanes, tractors, crowing roosters, roaring winds, granite saws and trains. The staff has counted no fewer than 60 kinds of extraneous noise.

When the recordings are complete, they are sent to the Production Studios in Wellington. The most suitable are selected, scripts are written round them, and the sessions are ready for presentation on the air. Stations other than 1YA and 4YA will probably present *Music is Where You Find It* and *History and Harmony in New Zealand Towns* later in the year.