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LISTENING BY EXPERTS

Engineers Plan Coverage Tests in 1950

NO one whose business it is to supply things to people—least of all those who supply entertainment—can afford to be ignorant about what people want and how they want it. The NZBS is always anxious to know how its programmes are being received from both the technical and entertainment points of view. To assist the Service in securing this information, engineers and technicians will undertake next year one of their most important tasks since the first broadcasting station was opened in New Zealand. The Engineering Division will make what it calls a "survey of field strength," which means that radio conditions all over the Dominion will be tested to check on the technical results of the increased power of transmitters and to see how far the improvement plans have been effective. The engineers will also find out what remains to be done and the NZBS will then be in a position to consider a revision of its programme policy.



Spencer Digby photograph
W. L. HARRISON, NZBS Chief Engineer, whose Division will test station coverage next year

When the data have been assembled they will facilitate final decisions on programme patterns. Widening the listeners' choice, for example, is one object. Stations may carry differently designed types of programmes and come to be identified with them.

The survey, which will probably take not less than year, will cover the results reached when all the new transmitters that have been planned are operating at their full power.

Although it will involve a great deal of careful research and many miles of travelling, the equipment required is compact and comparatively simple. It is a highly sensitive calibrated radio receiver, and, as it must be easily portable, it occupies about as much space as an ordinary attache case. The engi-

neers will seek out positions well clear of power and telephone lines which can cause errors in measurement of strength. When in country districts they will travel along highroads and tributary roads, halting at regular intervals to make their tests. In the cities and towns they will take their measurements in sports grounds, parks and other open spaces.

Having completed the field work, the Division will then prepare coverage maps showing the signal strengths given by all the 26 or so stations and these in turn will give information about the propagating of radio waves over different parts of the New Zealand terrain.

★ Elephant at the Microphone ★



WHEN HECTOR HARRISON (left), who is a circus trainer, was interviewed for a 2YA Christmas programme the other day, he brought a baby elephant to the studio with him. So a photograph was taken "for the record"—on the assumption that an elephant in a broadcasting studio represents some sort of record

N.Z. LISTENER, DECEMBER 2, 1949,