

# HISTORIC BROADCAST

## How The ZB Network Put Waitangi On The Air

**T**WO somewhat bedraggled figures crawled wearily out of the lift at the Head Office of the Commercial Broadcasting Service the other day, and, leaving behind a faint trail of dust, they sought the nearest chairs into which they collapsed with sighs of relief. The Waitangi wanderers had returned.

The object in a white (or thereabouts) overall was Kingi Tahiwai, 22B announcer, who drove the 22B Sound Truck from Wellington to Waitangi and back—a mere 1,700 miles all told—while the figure in a pair of slacks (very slack slacks), an open shirt, and a regrettable blazer, was K. W. Kilpatrick, National Programme Director. The journey had been made in order to bring to listeners all over New Zealand through the ZB network, the Treaty of Waitangi Centennial Celebrations. It was a broadcasting feat of unusual merit, and one to which hard work and organisation contributed as much as technical skill and ingenuity.

After the hard drive from Auckland to Wellington, the travellers were more concerned with hot baths than they were with relating their experiences—practically all one could learn was that they had a marvellous time in shorts, shirts and shoes—and sometimes just shorts. They were not looking forward to coats, collars and civilisation generally. And it was with this thought, apparently, that they had reluctantly said farewell to Waitangi, the land of — (that will do, Mr. Fitzpatrick!)

Looking somewhat more tidy, but tugging at an unaccustomed collar, Kingi came in the next morning to tell the story of the trip. Here it is—precisely as your inquisitive reporter got it from him!

\* \* \*

*"So you travelled from Wellington to Waitangi in the 22B Sound Truck, Kingi? How many made the trip?"*

"From Wellington, Mr. K. W. Kilpatrick, National Programme Director, and myself travelled to Auckland, where we were joined by the Maori announcer of 12B, Lou Paul. At Whangarei we picked up Mr. Alan Snow, the owner of an amateur transmitting station, ZL1HJ, which we were to use for the occasion."

*"What about the other members of the ZB team?"*

"Ari Pitama, from 32B, arrived with the southern Maori party the following day, while Mr. Illingworth, 12B station engineer, was at Paihia on his vacation."

*"What sort of a trip did you have in the truck from Wellington to Waitangi?"*

"All things considered, it was a most comfortable trip, because we did the journey in easy stages as far as Auckland, and from there the 190 miles to Waitangi seemed no distance. We covered all told 1,700 miles."

*"Were many people interested in the Sound Truck as you passed through the various towns en route?"*

"All the way up a great deal of attention was attracted by the silver-painted truck, and wherever we stopped knots of people would gather to inspect it and inquire about it."

*"I suppose they wanted to know where you were going, and for what purpose?"*

"Yes, invariably we were asked our destination and the work we were to do, and, of course, many people had heard already through our short broadcast from 22A at Palmerston North that the Waitangi celebrations were our goal."

*"I suppose that there was a good crowd there when you arrived?"*

"Although we arrived four days before the actual ceremony itself, there were already some 2,000 Maori people and many Europeans camped in and around the estate. Many of these latter were Public Works men, whose remarkable work in setting up the camps is something to be remembered."

*"It must have looked like a real canvas town?"*

"Yes, it did. At the foot of the bluff on which the Treaty House stands were the camps housing most of the officials, while beyond, on the other side of the little hill, was the huge Maori camp, built to accommodate 3,000 people."

*"Feeding and generally providing for such a crowd must have been a problem?"*

"It may have been, but the organisation was both comprehensive and efficient. In the Maori camp, for example, the main dining hall, 100 by 110 feet, could seat 500 people at one sitting. It contained hot water supplies for all purposes, many up-to-date installations, including an electric potato peeler, and was run by a large staff of willing volunteers."

*"What about Post Office facilities and other public services?"*

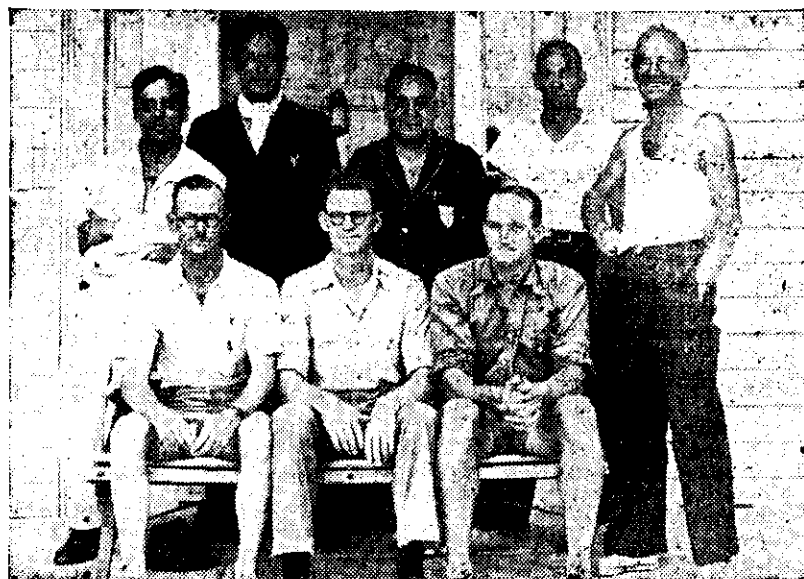
"Yes, the Post Office was the busiest place—except at meal times—in the camp. There was only one main outlet. The postal staff had a full-time job. Not only was there a full postal service, but in addition they had telephones, telegraph, and even a teleprinter."

*"Altogether then, Waitangi was transformed into a small modern town?"*

"Yes, it was. They began work there as far back as the middle of November, and it must be remembered that all this organisation was essential for the elaborate function which occupied only one whole day."

*"That certainly seems a remarkable thing. Do you think that all those efforts were repaid by the results?"*

"Most certainly, when you consider that the ceremonies in connection with the re-enactment of the signing of the Treaty have a relation to a pact which has stood the test of time for 100 years, and served a very important purpose in the life of both Maori and Pakeha in New Zealand. It is well that we should remember the Treaty of Waitangi, and



THE SPECIAL ZB UNIT which went to Waitangi to broadcast the Centennial Celebrations, photographed on the verandah of the Treaty House. Back row (from left) Kingi Tahiwai (22B), Lou Paul (12B), Ari Pitama (32B), Allen Snow (of Whangarei), Bill Illingworth (12B Engineer). Front row: K. W. Kilpatrick (CBS Programme Director), C. G. Scrimgeour (Controller, CBS), John Griffiths (Station Director, 12B)

remind ourselves how the goodwill of two peoples can keep alive the spirit of a working arrangement which could, with the slightest misapprehension on either side, suffer the fate of so many treaties."

*"Do you think then that this 100th anniversary had more significance to the Maori people than it has to the pakeha?"*

"It must have a little more significance to the Maori, because even after 100 years we have only just begun to realise the implications of the citizenship which comes with the adoption of the European way of living. As for your people, they haven't the ground to make up that mine have. After all, your civilisation is 2,000 years old, and we have been acquainted with it for only one hundred years."

*"Looking at it in that light, one can certainly see that this Centennial was worthy of the utmost attention."*

"I think so too, and indeed, that is largely the reason why the Commercial Broadcasting Service made the effort to bring the re-enactment ceremonies within the scope of all those who were unable to attend."

*"There must have been many difficulties to overcome. Waitangi is really an isolated spot, so I suppose you had to make all sorts of temporary arrangements?"*

"That is a most interesting question. In the first place, we were unable to adopt the usual procedure for a long distance broadcast, namely, to use a land-line, for the simple reason that there was none available. Accordingly, we had to employ a shortwave transmitter to do the work. That is where the assistance of Alan Snow, of Whangarei, and two other amateur operators, Frank Hart, of Paparoa, whose amateur call was known to amateurs as ZL1NH, and Cliff McLean, of Waipu, whose call sign was ZL1AI."

*"You had two shortwave stations in the hook-up, then?"*

"Well, actually, we had three—12A, our station at Waitangi being the third,

(Continued on next page)

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