

BIGGEST EXCURSION EVER!

1ZB Happiness Club Visits Wellington

"COLOSSAL" is the word which, when accepted in the fullness of its meaning, most aptly applies to the achievement of the director the 1ZB Happiness Club—Miss Joan Sutherland—and her able lieutenant, Miss Lorna King, for their organisation of what is the biggest privately-organised excursion ever conducted in the history of N.Z. Railways. Though not alone in this undertaking, it was upon these two that the brunt of the work fell.

Once the idea was afloat, things were set in motion by Joan, in co-operation with 1ZB, and her job was to handle a project, the magnitude of which was not at first fully realised. From the word "go," the idea met with an enthusiastic reception, and the Happiness Club office resembled a half-price day in a bargain basement, as hundreds of women queued up to be interviewed.

Railway Officers Amazed

In the first three days no fewer than 655 women had been interviewed, and all arrangements for rail and accommodation finalised. The New Zealand Railway authorities were not exaggerating when they told Joan that they were amazed to see two women do the amount of work which normally would have required a committee of fifteen men. Joan could not find words sufficiently strong in praise of Miss King, who

handled approximately £2,900 in deposits in ten days. Apart from handling all this money without a hitch, she also adjusted ticket planning and accommodation, to enable friends to be together. Miss King, a very modest young lady, was brief in her comments about her part in the preparations, but to use Joan's own words, "I am indeed fortunate to have such a tower of strength beside me," and when Joan says that, it is exactly what she means. One very willing helper was F. Gembitsky, commercial agent for N.Z. Railways, one lone man among all these women.

Mr. Gembitsky's views were decidedly interesting, he likens the situation to a second gunpowder plot. "Any wrong handling and the whole works would

as well as working late nights (fifty-five hours overtime in three weeks), we would have had early mornings, and still not be finished."

Veteran Traveller

The oldest member to travel from Auckland was "88 years young" Mrs. Tylcoat. Mrs. Tylcoat arrived in New Zealand in 1865, and one of her earliest memories is imitating the rifle drill of the soldiers stationed in the barracks in Auckland. She has a great fund of interesting memories and it seems she was born for a life of adventure. She has travelled by practically every means of transport, from sailing ships and bullock-carts to stream-lined cars and aeroplanes. So travelling to the Exhibition, an



THE BROADCAST before the departure, with Joan at the microphone. From left, John Griffiths (1ZB Station Director), Felix Gembitsky (N.Z.R.), Lorna King, Joan, John Gordon and the two nurses who accompanied the excursionists

have exploded," at least that is how he felt—his praise of Joan and Miss King was a most sincere tribute to their patience and foresight. "If I had come up against the merest suspicion of some of the situations those two handled," he said, "I would have gone mad and bitten someone, but with an understanding that surpasses anything I've ever seen or heard of, they carried the whole show."

Long Working Hours

Here we asked Mr. Gembitsky about his part in the show, as he called it, but he closed up like a clam; once again, we had to refer to other sources for our information, and the reply was unanimous, "If it hadn't been for Felix,

ambition which had it not been for the Happiness Club, would not have been realised, holds no terrors for her.

Humorous sidelights were present in plenty, and the good advice received about how to prevent tired feet and train sickness, was extensive. Two of the most original suggestions were. *For tired feet:* Place a banana skin, moist side up, against the sole of your foot, then don the stocking and shoe. The cure or preventative is supposed to be infallible. *To prevent train sickness:* Wrap round the stomach, next to the skin, a girdle of stiff brown paper—never known to fail!

It is interesting to note that approximately five months ago, Joan landed alone in Wellington and was met by one friend. This time she will arrive with almost a thousand women, and half

Joyous Send-Off Broadcast From Station

I CAUGHT one of the numerous special trams from Customs Street to the railway station and was met by the blaring voice of a loud-speaker directing the crowd to "number 7 platform for the first Happiness Club Train." I elbowed my way along to the subway which was packed with a slow-moving stream of laughing and excited women. We literally flowed down through the subway and out on to the platform where, with more elbowing, I made my way to the broadcasting points and tried to force through the crowd to the enclosure. I nearly got there too, but just when victory was in sight I was confronted by a portly lady with beaming face, who challenged me to pass her. So we laughed and I elbowed my way to the mail van at the rear of the train whence I squeezed through carriages packed full of "happiness," to the official enclosure on the platform a couple of feet away from my genial, portly lady friend.

Farewell Broadcast

Jack Gordon was at the "mike," then Joan smothered in flowers bade farewell. The crowd shouted and sang, the band played, streamers flew, the crowd in the train took up the chorus—Jack Gordon at the mike tried to shout over the din, the band played louder and harder, the crowd responded in a rising crescendo, the whistle blew, and streamers began to snap as the first train slowly pulled out of the station amid the deafening shouts of farewell.

I immediately joined the milling crowd headed in the direction of number 2 train. We eventually arrived at number one platform—another band, excitement everywhere, streamers, community singing. I don't know why, but I shouted and sang, too, until I was hoarse. My last glimpse as I mopped my brow was of a grinning guard standing in the doorway of the van, as the number two train faded from view.

Phew! The Happiness Club was off on its trip to the Exhibition.

Wellington Programme

Thursday, February 22: 11.0 a.m., arrive Wellington. National network broadcast of welcome at station by Wellington hostess, "Aunt Daisy." Wellington host, "Uncle Scrim." News-reel cameras will be on the spot to film proceedings. Afternoon: 1.30-2.0 p.m., Joan broadcasts from 2ZB on relay to 1ZB.

Thursday Afternoon to Saturday Evening: Free for Exhibition.

Saturday, February 24: 1.30-2.0 p.m., Joan broadcasts from the Exhibition station, 5ZB (relayed to 1ZB).

Sunday, February 25: 10.0 a.m., the special 'bus sight-seeing tour will leave from the Exhibition Hotel and return at 12.10 p.m. Afternoon: 2.30 to 4.0, great Happiness Rally, Wellington Town Hall. National network broadcast of official farewell to Auckland members, and inauguration of new Happiness Club for Wellington. Organ recital, 2.10-2.30. Special choirs and leading soloists. Community singing. A real "Happiness Rally." Leaders of major organisations in attendance. Evening: 7.40, cheerio at train.

of Wellington will be there to greet her. Taking it all in all, this should be the happiest and most successful trip ever undertaken by a group of women.

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