



URANIUM *in the bush*

SIGHTSEERS stopping at Hawkes Crag in the lower Buller Gorge and looking down the rock wall at the foaming river, probably think that, apart from passing cars and perhaps a railcar across the river, there is no one else within miles. And if they look up at the rugged rain-forest-clad hills, with their bluffs and hanging mist, the feeling of isolation would be deepened. But they would be quite wrong, for every day a team of men sets out from a base camp high up in those hills, with scin-

tillometers, Geiger counters, and other instruments, in a search for that most modern dream of the prospector—uranium.

On Tuesday, July 2, at 8.30 p.m., 3YZ will broadcast *Search for U308*, a half-hour documentary on these operations around Westpoint, produced by Roy Woodward, Senior Announcer at 3YZ, who made a trip to the area to gather first-hand material.

Uranium was first found in the Hawkes Crag area in November, 1955

—a find which created great excitement throughout New Zealand, and boosted the sale of Geiger counters to an all-time high. This original strike was on the roadside on the southern side of the Gorge; the finds that are the subject of this documentary were made high in the hills across the river after months of systematic search.

To do this searching, the prospectors at first travelled in the railcar from Westport each day, then climbed up a thousand-odd feet to the area of the

LEFT: Helicopter about to touch down at "Benney's Landing"



claim. This was time-consuming, but the alternatives were equally so. How, for instance, could one make a permanent camp, when to cut a track for pack-horses would take months? How else carry heavy mining equipment, stores, tents and bedding, up to a suitable perch on the mountainside?

Old miners in the Berlins area had a grandstand view of the way these questions were answered one Sunday last October, when a helicopter—the modern prospector's packhorse—did the job in a few short hours. First a clearing of some 80 square feet had to be made in the bush for a landing site—two days' work for some 12 men. Midday on that October Sunday saw a fire lit as a signal for the helicopter to make the first of its fourteen trips, each of which shifted some 500 pounds of gear from the loading ground on the Buller riverbed at Berlins up to the landing site (called "Benney's Landing," after the Under-Secretary for Mines, C. H. Benney). This, incidentally, was said to be the first time that a helicopter had operated in steep, bush-clad country in New Zealand.

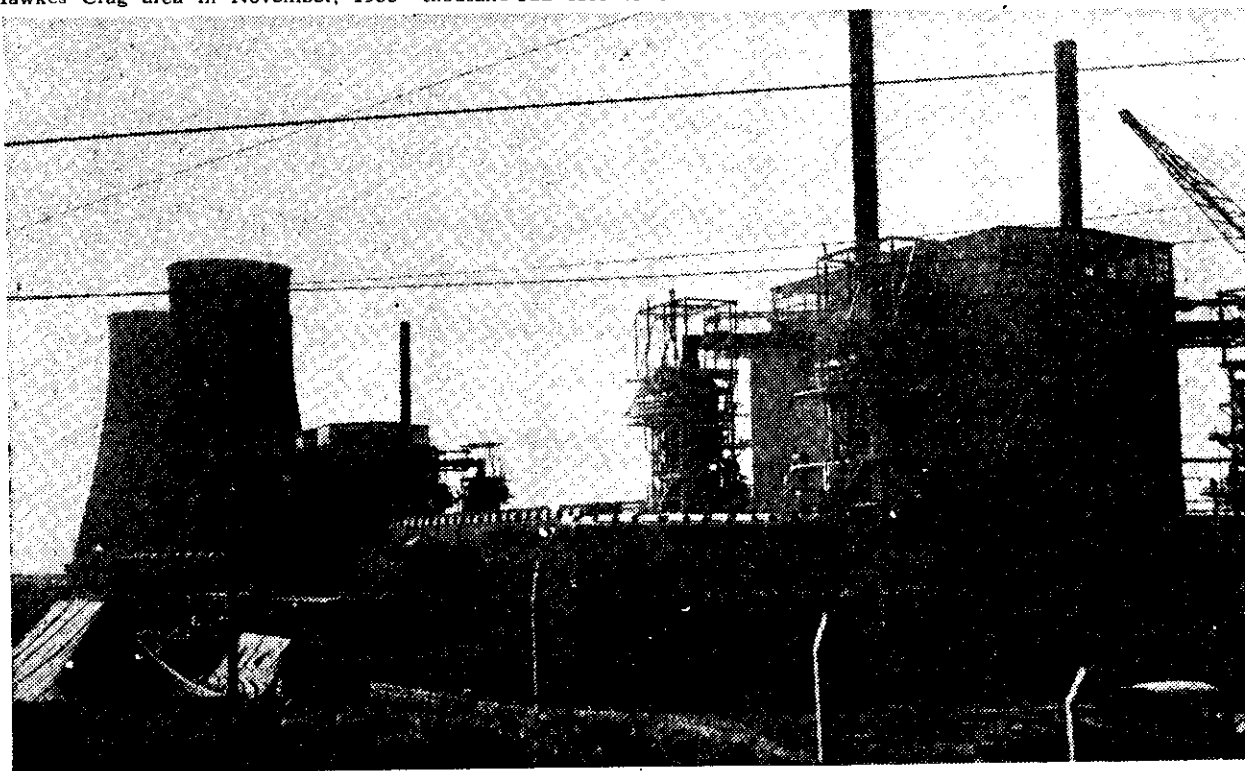
From October until now the men on the claim have lived under canvas, but latest reports indicate that a hut is being built to provide more comfortable living quarters in the winter. Preliminary sampling to determine the extent and value of the deposits is still in progress, the work being done by the claim-holders, Nelson Lime and Marble Ltd., with the co-operation of the Geological Survey.

Among the speakers in *Search for U308* are Tasman McKee, Managing Director of Nelson Lime and Marble, the company's Chief Prospector Don Bullen, whose experience of Buller prospecting dates back to depression days, and Dr E. Marsden, of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.

★ Atomic Power

WEDNESDAY, October 17, 1956, was an important date in the history of Britain. On that day the first major atomic power station in the world to produce electricity on a commercial scale was opened at Calder Hall. In a BBC documentary, *The Atomic Power Station*, to be heard from YAs, and 4YZ at 9.30 a.m. on July 7, listeners will hear the story behind this pioneer achievement, told by the engineers who designed the station and the technicians who are now operating it. Also included in the programme is a visit to Winscale, the only plutonium factory in Britain, where the plutonium, which is a by-product of the Calder Hall reactors, is processed for use. The photo (right) shows the reactor buildings, which are the heart of the power station, and the tall water-cooling towers.

The BBC narrator in *The Atomic Power Station*, Stephen Black, remarks that Calder Hall seems isolated from all the lines of communication that one expects: "There are no docks to bring coal by sea; no lines leading to the power station. The land is rural, with green fields and little cottages. And yet this power station is producing over 90 megawatts of electricity."



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