

THE NATIONAL BAND OF NEW ZEALAND



as recording the Coronation March which was written by Sydney Bernard, of Plimerton.

Last week *The Listener* obtained some information about the National Band's tour of Britain from E. Ormrod, the Band Secretary. He said the idea of a National Band had been thought of for some time, although it wasn't until the National Executive of the New Zealand Brass Bands Association received a letter from P. B. Barlow, a member of the staff of 3YA, suggesting that such a band might tour England during Coronation year, that any action was taken. Members of the National Band of New Zealand were selected from players throughout New Zealand by a panel consisting mainly of members of the N.Z.B.B.A.'s National Executive. There are 37 playing members, as well as a Musical Director, K. G. L. Smith, of Dunedin, and a Drum Major, Captain E. T. Eastwood, of Christchurch.

The National Band is particularly strong in soloists, who will be featured during the tour. These include Alan Brieseman, trombone champion of New Zealand, R. Jackson, who has won the euphonium championship five times, Dave Christensen, cornet champion of New Zealand, J. R. Clague, former champion trombonist, and Brian Barrett, drummer, organist and xylophonist. The last-named is also at 17 the youngest member of the Band. While the Band is in England it will be joined by Ken Smith, the world-famous New Zealand cornetist (and son of the Musical Director), who is at present with the Fairey Aviation Works Band. He will be featured as a guest artist.

Mr. Ormrod was specially enthusiastic about the National Band's uniform, which was designed by J. Kenyon, a commercial artist, of Wellington. The marching uniform was based, he said, on the familiar All-Black uniform. It consists of a black coat and trousers, with a light blue panel on the chest, silver braid trimmings and a silver fern on the collar and sleeve. There are two hats—a plumed white helmet and a peaked cap also decorated with a silver fern. The Band's indoor uniform is of a similar colour scheme with cutaway tunics. The overcoat is based on the design of the Guards Regiment greatcoat.

Following its South Island tour in the week before Easter, the Band will return to Wellington and play in North Island towns until April 12, when concerts will be given in Auckland. The members of the Band will then have a week's leave before returning to Wellington for the final concert on April 17.

The Band will arrive in England late in May and give its first concert in the Festival Hall on Whit Monday, May 25. It will then tour England and Scotland and take part in the Aberdeen and Belle Vue championships where it will be competing with the best bands of Britain. The Band also hopes that it may yet get permission to lead the New Zealand contingent in the Coronation procession on June 2. On its return to New Zealand the National Band will be disbanded, although it may give further performances before the members, who are all amateur players, return to their respective jobs throughout the country. The only other band of this kind which New Zealand has had was the Hinemoa Band which toured Britain under the baton of Lieutenant T. Heard in 1903, exactly 50 years ago.

FOR seven years New Zealand has had a National Orchestra, and now we have a National Band. It was formed last year and gave its first performance in November in the Wellington Town Hall. It assembled again last month and spent two weeks practising at the Shelly Bay Air Force camp in Wellington, and then, when it had been equipped with its stunning new uniform, it marched through the streets of the capital to the Cenotaph, where a wreath was laid. This commemorative act marked the official opening of the National Band's New Zealand tour, which will end with a concert in the Wellington Technical College Hall on Friday, April 17. The following day the Band will leave on the Rangitoto for England, for a 17 weeks' tour starting on May 25. The Band will play in London's Festival Hall, and take part in the Scottish Championships at Aberdeen, as well as the great Belle Vue contest at Manchester, before returning home.

In an appropriate gesture the guest conductor of the National Orchestra, Warwick Braithwaite, has agreed to conduct part of the National Band's concert in Wellington on April 17. Parts of this concert will be broadcast by 2YA from 8.0 to 8.30 p.m. and from 9.30 to 10.0 p.m. The Band has already recorded five programmes which were broadcast from the ZB stations recently in the breakfast session, and has made four additional programmes for the YA stations, as well

AT TOP of page: The Band take the road for the first time in their new uniforms at Shelly Bay, Wellington. LEFT: K. G. L. Smith, musical director, with Brian Barrett (Hawera) and S. L. Dougall (Christchurch)



N.P.S. photographs