

NZBS Plans for Royal Tour

ON the morning of December 23 the NZBS will embark on the biggest and most important operation in its history—broadcasting the 40-day tour of New Zealand by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh. As the liner Gothic and its cruiser escort Black Prince steam down Rangitoto Channel, radio observers at vantage points on the Auckland waterfront will begin the task of describing to thousands of listeners the scene of Royal progress—a scene which will become familiar in the weeks that follow.

As many broadcasts as possible during these 40 days will be made "live"—direct from the scene to the listening public. Descriptions of the Royal drives through the cities and towns of New Zealand, public welcomes, and the great variety of local functions will be broadcast by carefully-briefed observers, who will be in constant touch through headphones with a producer and production technician in the studio. Such a technique will be used for the first time for outside broadcasts in New Zealand. It should ensure that the change-over from observer to observer goes smoothly, and that each observer knows what is going on before the Queen comes within his own arc of vision.

Because of this aim to get the spontaneity and actuality of "live" broadcasts on every possible occasion, extra precautions have had to be taken against circuit failures and other technical emergencies. Whereas normally one or two relay lines only are used between a relay point and the studio, in these relays three or four will be used. For the first day in Auckland upwards of 50 lines will be in use from various observation points. NZBS engineers have worked for months in close

co-operation with their opposite numbers in the Post Office, who have had to bring many new circuits into use for them.

The supreme example of the need for precautions on the technical side is the Queen's Christmas Broadcast, which will be made at 9.0 p.m. on Christmas Day from Government House in Auckland. Although this historic broadcast will take place for the first time outside of England, the Queen's message to the Commonwealth will still go straight on the air as she speaks it. The broadcast will be relayed through New Zealand by the NZBS, and every major short-wave transmitter in the country, both broadcast and radio telephone, will beam it overseas. It will be picked up by the ABC Shortwave Service and re-broadcast by the high-powered short-wave stations of Radio Australia on a world-wide basis. The BBC will pick up these broadcasts for use on their own short-wave and Home services; and to safeguard against interference the speech will be transmitted over the direct New Zealand-London radio-telephone transmitter at Himatangi, and over two Navy transmitters at Waiouru. Other radio telephone channels will be used if required by other Commonwealth countries.

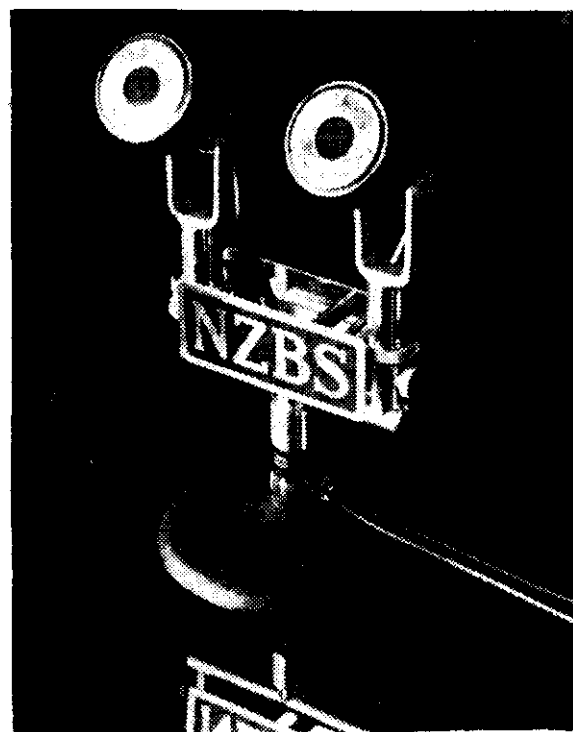
At Government House in Auckland all facilities will be duplicated, including microphones, amplifiers, and lines to the studios; and a stand-by power plant will be ready in case a power failure occurs during the broadcast. Two lines will carry the broadcast to Wellington, each by a different route, so that if one set of wires should be put out of action by any mishap, the other will still be open. The monitoring station at Quartz Hill will also pick up the broadcast from 1YA. It will act as a supplementary channel to the Radio New Zealand short-wave transmitters

which have the all-important task of sending the broadcast on to Sydney.

The chief hazard for listeners outside New Zealand, and one over which there is no control, is the chance of interference during transmission to Australia. This has been safeguarded against by choosing the transmission frequencies with the greatest care.

The widest possible coverage will be given to the tour by the NZBS. No part of New Zealand that is visited by the Queen will be left out. Elaborate use of toll circuits will be made to link with the nearest radio station, the smaller towns and places that the Queen will visit. An intricate schedule of staff movements has been worked out to ensure that the teams of observers and their technical assistants are in the right place at the right time. Even in towns and cities with their own radio stations local broadcasting teams will be strengthened by observers and technicians from other centres.

It is more than a year since plans for covering the Royal Tour were first discussed within the NZBS. For the past five months the planning has been intensively developed. Some time ago two of the planners—Cooper Marshall, for the administrative side, and Norman Johnston for the technical side—visited



★ THESE two standard moving coil microphones (of English manufacture), mounted together, will be used whenever the Queen is broadcast during her tour of New Zealand—except when she gives her Christmas message from Government House, Auckland, when two single microphones will be employed. ★

South With Vaughan Williams

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS'S seventh symphony *Sinfonia Antartica*, which he developed from the incidental music he wrote for the film *Scott of the Antarctic*, will be heard for the first time in New Zealand on the composer's 81st birthday, October 12, from all YC stations. It will be repeated from the same stations later in the week. The work is in five movements and was written for a large orchestra—it includes piano, bells, wind-machine, xylophone and (to be omitted "if absolutely necessary") vibraphone and organ. There is also a soprano soloist and a women's chorus. The recording New Zealand listeners are to hear was made by the BBC at a performance by the Halle Orchestra conducted by Sir John Barbirolli. The soloist is Margaret Ritchie and the chorus is sung by a section of the Croydon Philharmonic Choir.

On October 12 all YC stations will also broadcast a talk about *Sinfonia Antartica* which was first given in the BFC Third Programme by Scott Goddard, one of Britain's best-known broadcasters on music. In this Mr. Goddard shows how the work was



THE Terra Nova (left) and Fram in the Bay of Whales, 1912

developed from the music for the film (incidentally it is dedicated to Ernest Irving, the film's musical director), and he makes a critical analysis of what he describes as "a lusty hybrid, not absolutely a symphony, not completely a symphonic poem." The talk is illustrated at the piano by Michael Mullinar.

A BBC talk about Vaughan Williams given by Hubert Foss after the world premiere of *Sinfonia Antartica* will be heard from 2YC, 3YC and 4YC on October 12. The late Hubert Foss, whose study of the composer was published about three years ago, said in assessing his music: "His musical

language—so much his own—is also the musical language of the English people." And going on to speak of *Sinfonia Antartica* he said: "At the age of 80 Vaughan Williams has stood up before us as a new composer, offering us something unheard as a target for criticism, just like any young man or woman student from the colleges. And his theme is a modern theme—a story of our own time. That is typical of the man."

Music by Vaughan Williams, some of which was specially recorded by the NZBS to mark his 80th birthday, will be heard next week also from YZ stations.

every stop on the Queen's itinerary. They picked out suitable observation points and began work on local technical problems.

The planners have been able to take advantage of the experience of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation during the Royal Tour there in 1951. Gilbert Stringer, Administrative Assistant to the Director of the NZBS, who was abroad recently on an Imperial Relations Trust bursary, visited Canada on his way home and learnt something of the techniques used by the CBC. Canadian methods have proved a useful guide, and have helped to ensure that no possible way of giving the fullest and most efficient coverage has been left out. But in its broad plan and in detail the NZBS coverage will be the product of New Zealand brains and teamwork.

The key men in the coverage will be the radio observers, who have already been rehearsed in the kind of job they will have to do in December and January. They will equip themselves with the background information that will be necessary if their commentaries are to be in some degree informed reflections on the New Zealand scene rather than bare recitals of events. The Queen and the Duke will be making a journey of discovery through New Zealand, and the aim will be to convey something of this sense of discovery to listeners as the Royal party visits the towns and provinces and the farms and factories of the nation.

Broadcasts will not, of course, be confined to commentaries and speeches alone. A variety of programmes will be broadcast, including midday and evening reports of events, with selections from actuality relays. But the main task as the tour advances from day to day, scene to scene, and event to event, will be to bring its reality instantly to listeners everywhere.

N.Z. LISTENER, OCTOBER 9, 1953.