

# 2AQ (Taihape) Closes Down

**I**N 1922, when broadcasting in New Zealand was in its infancy, a young man in the rising bush town of Taihape became keenly interested in the possible developments of this new science. This young man, Mr. Morton Coutts, of Kuku Street, was to prove himself of unusual calibre, and to earn for himself a noted reputation

## OZ-2AQ Goes on the Air.

**E**ARLY in 1922, using the Radiotron receiving valves, UV201 and V24, this young man established his station, OZ-2AQ, which later was to be heard in all quarters of the globe. The receiver installed, on which Mr. Coutts heard music fairly regularly, consisted of two stages of RF and four audio stages. "In these days," says he, "we did not bother about quality. Volume was the first and last consideration every time."

By March, 1923, using a 10-watt transmitter, station 2AQ was heard broadcasting a concert—the Diggers' Concert from the Town Hall. This was one of the earliest in New Zealand.

Following this, reports were received from Sydney stating that both speech and music were being received there clearly. Mr. Coutts had established one of the first communications on telephony with the outside world.

New Zealand listeners looked forward to these broadcasts, which were becoming a feature for listeners situated some considerable distance from Taihape.

**I**N 1924, his broadcasts of concerts had become quite a feature, as a letter from a Cromwell listener, dated April 11, 1924, will show: "2AQ, Taihape, has been heard 310 yards from my loudspeaker. He is the loudest station I hear, including 4TG." A similar letter was received from Russell.

These transmissions were accomplished with a 201A receiving valve with 100 volts on the plate. The input was 5 watts. In Wellington music was picked up on a one-valve set.

June, 1924, saw 2AQ recognised as the most reliable New Zealand amateur and this reputation he retained.

## Communication With England.

**I**N May, 1924, by radiating 4½ amperes, morse from 2AQ was picked up at a distance of 3500 miles. This same month two new 95ft. Oregon pine masts were erected. A double cage aerial was employed leading down almost vertically to the transmitting room. For some time this new apparatus refused to function, but finally 2AQ went on the air to establish fresh records.

**L**ATE in 1925 communication was established with England and U.S.A. These tests were carried out on telephony as well as with morse. On one occasion, operating on shortwave two-way communication with 2CC, Stockton-on-Tyne, England, was established. Shortly afterwards a report was received congratulating Mr. Coutts. In the course of his letter the writer says: "Your strength is better than KDKA or WGY (powerful American stations) on 40 meters"—150 watts output had been used.

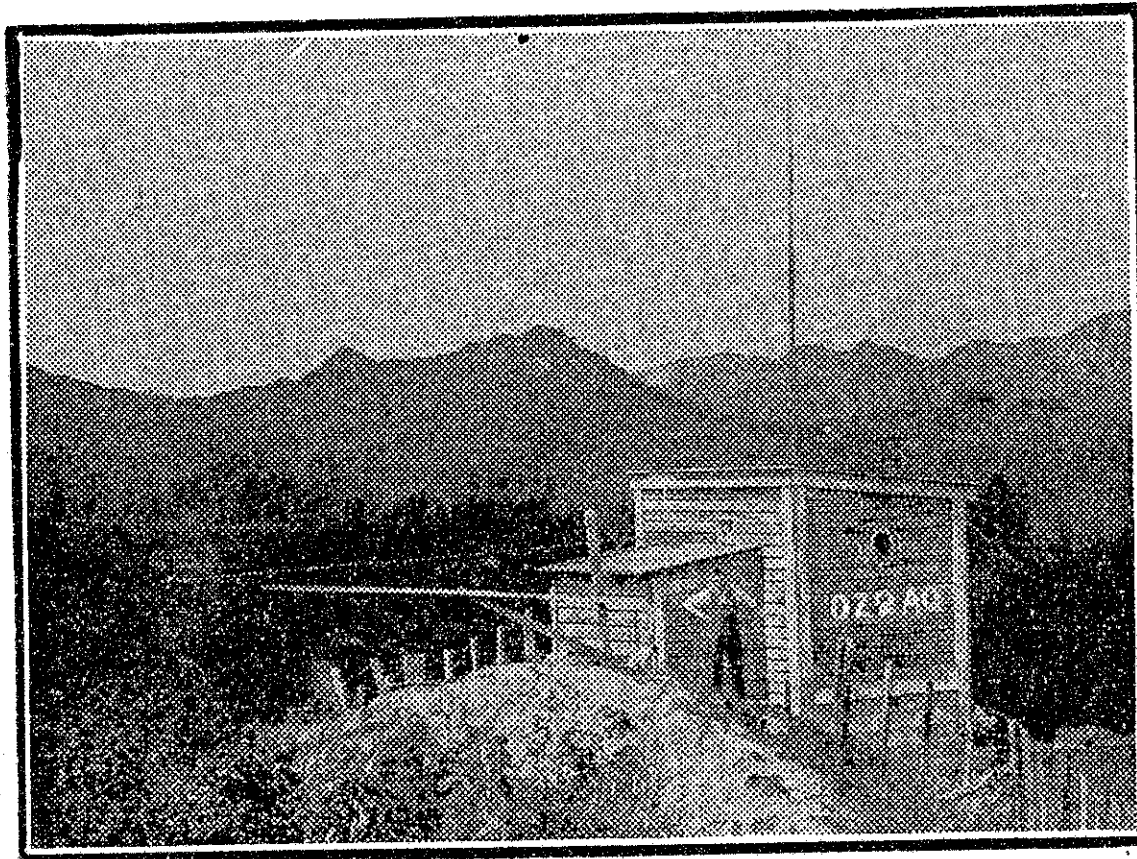
Early in 1926, 2AQ resumed concert

broadcasting, which he had neglected during his experiments on shortwave. His oscillator was a 250 watt Marconi valve, power input 200 watts with an output of 100 watts. The modulator valve was a 5 watt Radiotron, while the microphone was taken from an old Federal telephone. Listeners claimed that, with this humble microphone, music and speech which could not be surpassed in the country was produced.

## The New Station.

**A**BOUT November, 1926, the interference caused by nearby motors became so bad that work on the long waves became impossible, and the whole outfit was moved to a high position on the outskirts of the town. The illustration shows this new station.

In 1927 OZ-2AQ was considered the best amateur heard in Australia, as this extract from "Radio" of November, 1927, shows: "OZ-2AQ is the best of the New Zealanders; in fact, without exaggeration, he is putting out the best transmission in Australasia



Site of 2AQ (Taihape) now closing down.

amongst the amateurs. His signals are R8-9 here; he is also being received in America at R6-7." In January of this year the same paper says: "OZ-2AQ comes in like the proverbial ton of bricks, and should give five minutes' notice whilst operators place weights on their loudspeaker diaphragms." By this time he had adopted crystal control, and was confining himself almost exclusively to the shorter waves.

## Important Tests.

**I**N April of this year far-reaching fading tests were carried out, but owing to the temporary long wave aerial being blown down in a gale these were not completed. However, the following data was obtained:—Power used ranged between 200 and 300 watts. The aerial was a single No. 14 wire, about 200 feet long, with a counter-poise consisting of three wires the same length as the aerial spaced four feet apart at the far end, and brought together at the near end.

With the aerial 60 feet above the counterpoise, strength was still R9, but

fading slight. Aerial 12 feet above counterpoise, strength R9, but fading slightly more. Owing to the mishap with the aerial, Mr. Coutts was unable to finish this test, so it is not known if it was the difference in height or capacity of the aerial which made the difference.

It was found that by using a high percentage of modulation in the carrier wave fading was slight, but when the fade did occur the music was distorted. By cutting down the percentage of modulation fading was still about the same, but the music was not distorted the length of the fade period.

These facts were derived from about 1000 reports from all over New Zealand.

## To Pioneer Television.

**N**OW the pioneering work in radio has been completed, Mr. Coutts is closing down and selling his excellent plant. He is leaving for Auckland, and is afraid his plant would interfere with crystal users. But his researches have not finished, and provided he can obtain a permit he will erect a low-

ing telephoned 5CL immediately after the landing, and stated that the aeroplane had come down in a rough paddock and was smashed.

It was immediately recognised at 5CL that anxiety would be felt in the south-east for the safety of the passengers, who had embarked in the plane at Mount Gambier, and within a few minutes of the news being received at the studio, a car had left for the scene of the landing, with representatives of the station on board.

Within an hour these representatives secured all the details of the landing, and telephoned the studio. This enabled 5CL to assure the Mount Gambier listeners of the safety of the passengers hours before most Adelaide people had even heard of the plane's descent. Recently, too, 5CL was heard calling for medical assistance for a fever-stricken man at an inland constructional camp.

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## Wireless Relieves Uneasy Minds

**A**NOTHER instance of the service that may be rendered to the community by the co-operation of broadcast listeners and the broadcasting stations was seen in the case of the recent forced landing of the "Old Gold" passenger aeroplane at Uraidla, a town in the hills near Adelaide. A broadcast listener living near the scene of the land-