

# Byrd's Departure for the South

## Special Speech through 4YA

**W**HEN the Byrd Antarctic Expedition was in Dunedin, 4YA took every opportunity of rendering service. The famous American broadcast on two occasions—at the civic reception and on the morning of departure from Dunedin.

For some days prior to sailing for the Antarctic, the two ships of the expedition, "The City of New York and the Eleanor Bolling, were moored at the Rattray Street and Victoria wharves, where crowds of people were to be found daily. The cargo from each boat had to be unloaded and stored in the Harbour Board's shed, where it was resorted and loaded again

on the ships, not only all the crew but all members of the expedition, which included many scientific and university men, being engaged in the work.

The eighty-two Alaskan dogs were in camp on Quarantine Island, down the Otago Harbour, near Port Chalmers, and to this place each day ferry boats carried large crowds of people to see the dogs which will play such an important part in the expedition, once the Antarctic is reached.

4YA was able to keep listeners in touch with the various activities in

connection with the expedition, but while listeners hoped to hear Commander Byrd it was doubtful if he could be induced to broadcast. At first he had firmly declined. Later on, however, he consented to speak into the microphone at the Dunedin civic reception tendered to him in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall.

### Civic Reception.

4YA officials at the reception endeavoured to get the local speakers to talk into the microphone, but without great success. Upon Commander Byrd being called upon to address the gathering, he adjusted the microphone so that he might speak directly into it. This resulted in every word he said being heard. He gave a most interesting address, outlining some of the tasks before the expedition, and amusing his hearers with some quaint humour.

The big event which listeners were looking forward to, however, was the departure of the ships. This was scheduled to take place at noon on Saturday, December 1. The Otago Harbour Board rendered valuable assistance to 4YA by building a wooden stand on a roof adjoining one of the storage sheds. Upon this the microphone and relaying equipment were installed, and this enabled the announcer to obtain a fine view of the ships and all operations on the wharves. When noon arrived on the Saturday it was found that the departure would have to be delayed for some hours, as rain during the morning had impeded the progress of the final loading, and although hopes were held that the expedition would sail at 5 p.m. and later 7 p.m., it was finally found that sailing could not take place before daylight on Sunday morning. Accordingly, the last of the cargo was taken aboard, including the eighty odd crates containing the dogs.

At 4.30 a.m. on Sunday morning 4YA officials arrived at the wharves to test the line and commence the relay description. At that hour there was no sign of life on either of the ships, but within half an hour the silence changed into great activity. By this time numbers of people were beginning to arrive. Further small lots of cargo were taken on, and at last everything was in readiness.

During this stage, when apparently all members of the expedition were up and alert, one member at least was unconcerned, rolled up in blankets with his head on a comfy pillow. This member was fast asleep up on the fore-deck, and although cranes were creaking, and dozens of dogs were yelping the sleeper did not stir. His slumbers continued, until four members of the crew awoke him with severe shaking. His surprise was exceedingly great when he became conscious of the fact that he had provided amusement for a large number of people, who had congregated on the wharf alongside the boat.

### Byrd Speaks Again.

COMMANDER BYRD had previously been prevailed upon to speak a few words before the boats' departure,

and accordingly, a few minutes before the moorings were taken in, he was seen coming ashore towards the microphone. In a short speech he thanked the people of New Zealand and particularly those of Dunedin for the kindness and help that had been extended to himself and the expedition. He stated that the expedition would be away two years. He also spoke of the high hopes held in connection with securing scientific data, which was the chief aim of the expedition. A large crowd had gathered round the microphone while the Commander was speaking, and at the conclusion of his talk gave three hearty cheers. Within a few minutes The City of New York, which had been lashed to the side of the Harbour Board's tug, commenced to leave the wharf, and after turning, headed for the channel, amid loud cheering from the people on the wharves and waving of the men on the boat. A few minutes later the Eleanor Bolling turned and steamed down the channel to the accompaniment of further cheering.

4YA's announcer gave an interesting description of everything that went on at the wharf and with the aid of a pair of glasses watched and described

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