

2ZB HAS A MAORI



PRIME MINISTER PAYS HIGH TRIBUTE

'REO IRI RANGI" was probably the most spectacular entertainment ever produced by Maoris in Wellington. Played by a cast of 70, it captured much of the spirit and history of an ancient race whose civilisation was the most advanced and virile in the Pacific. The declamation of the fiery canoe songs and the stirring music captured the imagination of the huge audience. But the gathering had its ceremonial significance as well. In a special message the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. M. J. Savage, wished 2ZB "Many happy returns," and paid a striking tribute to the success of the Commercial Service.

"TIME passes so quickly," he said, "that it hardly seems a year since 2ZB was officially opened by my friend and colleague, the Honourable F. Jones. And it doesn't seem so long ago that certain people were loud in their criticism of the Government's decision to establish Commercial radio stations in the Dominion. They even went so far as to say that listeners did not want this new form of entertainment and publicity. However, I believe Station 2ZB alone, during the past year, has received more than 50,000 congratulatory letters and many thousands of telephone calls—a substantial reply to critics.

"I am sure Station 2ZB has given good service to the listening public. Its activities have by no means been entirely commercial. Its interest in hospitals has proved a boon to thousands. Not only has it broadcast special sessions for the sick, but it has been responsible for equipping many hospital wards with radio sets. In other directions, too, the station's work has been outstanding—notably in its attention to the Maori people of the Dominion, the returned soldiers, and many other sections of the community.

"It was also stated by critics that the advertisers would

Wellington's commercial station, 2ZB, celebrated its first birthday with a pageant of Maori history at the St. James Theatre on Sunday night. Hundreds were refused admission to the theatre, which was packed to the doors to see and hear Oriwa's symbolic play, "Reo Iri Rangi," played by Mr. P. K. Paikea and his Ratana Maori players.

not support the service because they could not receive value for their money. At the present time the Commercial stations are unable to cope with the demand for time on the air during their evening programmes. That, again, is a fairly sound answer. This success was achieved in spite

of great opposition, for I do not know of any enterprise which has had to overcome so much organised resistance to its establishment.

"I would like all listeners to know that the policy of the Government when the Commercial chain was established has not been altered. We charged the Commercial Service with two things—one, to provide listeners with an excellent service and, secondly, to support itself.

"I DON'T think there is much doubt about the service these stations give. Station 2ZB, in common with the other three units of the Commercial Service, operates eighteen hours a day for seven days in the week, a greater time on the air than any other broadcasting station in Australia or New Zealand, with the exception of one station in Sydney that is on the air for twenty-four hours a day.

"Further, the service maintains a full 18-hour schedule on fifty-five days in the year when it receives no revenue from advertising. The charges for week-day advertising are based upon the cost of providing this service, and, such profits as are earned from time to time will be used for improving it. If there is anything over when that has been done, good use will be made of the money.

"Despite the fact that the service has been in operation under a year, it is already self-supporting.

"Listeners will be interested to know that the Commercial Service was not financed by any special grant by the Government; its initial capital was lent to it out of the