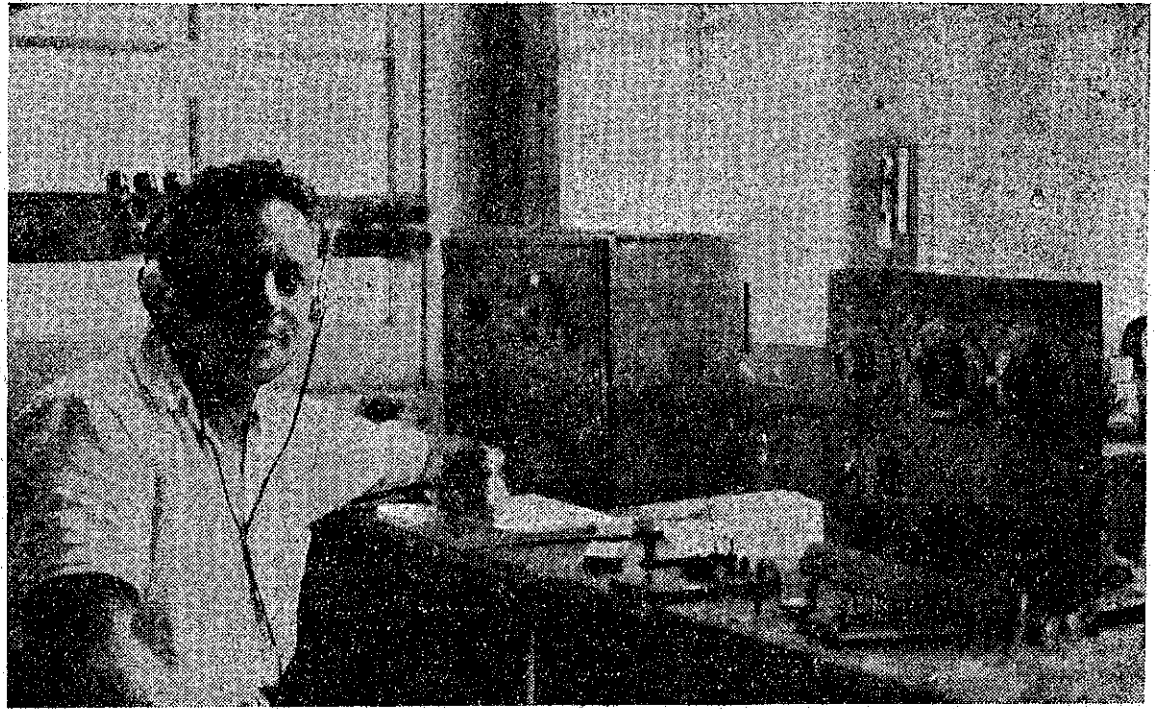


# Crashed in

## quickly on the tact with world

### Representative

*Mr. J. E. Tyler at work at the portable transmitter which on the low power of 2 watts maintained contact with 2GK of Wellington. The receiver is on the left.*



now burning ruins.

"I went for my life and dived into one or two shops that I knew had radio gear. The fire was rapidly approaching them and everything was frightfully battered about. I rescued a couple of accumulators and three "B" batteries and got them home."

Then came the work of reconstruction. The main transmitter was useless, for the power available was altogether inadequate. The batteries were few enough for the portable set, but they were made to work.

"At about one o'clock I was chirping good," said Mr. Tyler, "but I could not raise anyone. I was on 40 metres and I suppose Wellington was being skipped"

One o'clock. Two hours after a tragedy that would have numbed the imaginations of nine out of ten people,

*The aerial masts of 2ZJ, Hastings, still stand though all around them is in ruin. This popular "B" station went off the air only a few weeks prior to the earthquake.*



this amateur station was on the air calling CQ. No stopping to recover, no inactivity.

But fortune was against 2GE. No one was to be heard, probably because so few knew of the disaster, and two hours of fruitless calling ensued. At last, the call was answered by a Christchurch ham. Forthwith, without courtesies or pause, 2GE poured out the terrible story. One pause was made: to send a message to the postmaster that contact had been made and in that time Christchurch contacted Wellington over air and through wire. 2XP, Wellington, Mr. W. M. Dawson, picked up Christchurch and learned the poignant story. He made rapid arrangements and was soon on the way to the earthquake area, equipped with radio transmitting and receiving gear to do his bit.

In the meantime, Mr. S. Perkins, of Wellington, heard Napier calling and caught the first messages that were heard directly in Wellington. "Hang on for dear life," clicked over the air. This was at 4 p.m. Without wasting any time, 2GK contacted the Wellington Post Office and received orders to stand by to work traffic. His thus became the first official station—a definite channel had been formed between Wellington and Napier. In a very short time an experienced telegraphist and radio amateur, Mr. W. Asbridge, was sent from the Post Office, and 2GK was taken over.

Messages then came through thick and fast. The Napier amateur, 2GE, whose indomitable courage had at last borne fruit, commenced now upon work in real earnest. All the while, his town was trembling with quakes, which although not comparable with the first one, were enough to keep almost all the population out of doors. All around people were preparing for the night in the open. Tents were going up, beds being taken into the open, and women and children making for the beach and other open spaces. No one knew when another violent shake might bring down the remaining buildings. Early in the evening there was one that did further damage, yet 2GE's key pounded away unceasingly. No sooner was one message finished than another was begun. An organisation between the civic headquarters and the station was soon established. Runners connected headquarters with the station and news and official messages for all parts of the world were taken.

IN the midst of this anxiety and distress Mr. Tyler pleaded with his wife to leave and take to safety herself and the young family. But she, like her husband, would not leave the station. "While 2GE is on the air I will be here to look after him," she said, and so through that terrible night

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