

A Small But Renowned Station

2YB New Plymouth, originally intended to be the first of a Chain of Relay Stations, carries on by Voluntary Support for Two Years

A LITTLE over two years have passed since the opening of station 2YB, New Plymouth, and during this time the 100-watt Taranaki station has been performing sterling service. It has, in these two years, become a decided asset to the province, and its programmes, which are all supplied on a voluntary basis, have been of an exceptionally high standard.

The need of a station in Taranaki arose because of the peculiar screening effect of Mt. Egmont. It was found that in certain parts of the district, 2YA could not be received with any degree of certainty and the other YA stations were too distant to provide first-class service. Representatives of the North Taranaki Radio Society approached the Broadcasting Company to see what could be done in the matter. When the idea of a relay (as it was then intended) station was suggested, it was not adversely met and the Company decided to use parts from the other stations and assemble a 50-watt plant. The work was carried out in Christchurch under the direction of the chief engineer of the Company. Preliminary test showed that it was a beautifully-toned station with a wide range. Some of these test transmissions were received in New Plymouth. In addition to the plant, the Company agreed to make a small annual grant and pay for the services of one operator who was to be found by the Society.

The plant, on its way from Christchurch to New Plymouth, was installed in Wellington and transmitted the 2YA programmes simultaneously with the larger station. Further favourable comment was passed on the tone, and many declared that it was superior to that of 2YA. This, of course, was due to the fact that at that time few sets were able to deal effectively with the large output of the 500-watt station. Like 2YA, the station was not well received in the Taranaki district; in fact the transmissions from Christchurch came in much better. The official opening was set down for April 27, 1929.

AT this ceremony were present many New Plymouth citizens who are still identified with the station, including Mr. Ed. Payne, then president and now vice-president, and Mr. H. Morey, official pianist, who still acts in that capacity.

But auspicious as this occasion was for the Taranaki district, it was still more so for the whole country, for Mr. Ball, on behalf of the Company, outlined the system whereby it was hoped to provide "A" class service for all districts, and this was to be accomplished by means of conveniently-placed relay stations. Mr. Ball stressed the point that the opening of 2YB, although of momentous importance, was only a

temporary measure and it was hoped that in a short time it would be absorbed in the new and comprehensive plan that was then being placed before the Government. In conclusion, he wished the society well, remarking that so long as it remained an active unit in the provision of programmes, so long may it enjoy unbroken reign of popularity and prosperity.

Mr. Payne, in replying, stated that he felt it was a big venture, but that in seeking to run a volunteer service he would have the fullest co-operation of the province. In preliminary tests, the station had been well received in Dargaville and Christchurch. The actual opening ceremony was performed by the Mayor, Mr. H. V. Griffiths, and Mr. S. G. Smith represented the Postmaster-General.

Just how events have gone since then is common knowledge.

THE proposal for relay stations was rejected by the Government, and 2YB was left to look to its own destiny and could not be absorbed into the system of relay stations outlined by Mr. Ball. A restatement of that plan in detail appears elsewhere.

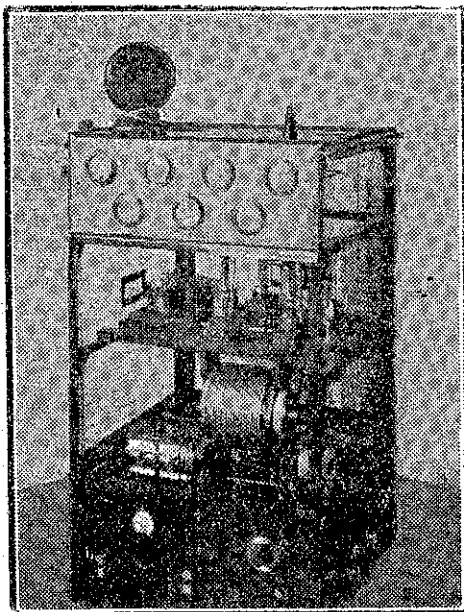
For twelve months the station operated well, and programmes of exceptionally high merit were broadcast. But evil days fell upon the society, and at the end of the year its

finances were in precarious position. It was necessary for them to remove the station from Collier's Buildings to another site where the rent would have to be paid. At the time they had 160 members, but unless others were forthcoming the station would have to go off the air. At a very largely-attended meeting of citizens, it was decided that under no circumstances must this popular station close down. Its finances were assured for a further twelve months, and the station was shifted into the Empire Buildings and refurnished.

Here it commenced upon a further year of service, this time with Mr. F. Davis as president and Mr. Payne as vice-president. Just how well it has succeeded is known from Auckland to the Bluff. A station, run almost entirely by volunteer service, has to face difficulties of which a normal broadcasting station knows nothing. Three and four times a week this station has gone on the air and provided a programme that is indeed a credit to its organisers. They have had the support of local artists, and concert parties have come from Stratford, Inglewood, Hawera and other outlying towns and districts. The Maoris have readily responded to invitations and have broadcast some excellent fare. There have been relays from ships in the harbour, from the mountain-side and from the various parks. They have broadcast commentaries of important sports events, and in this respect have had the fullest co-operation of sports bodies. The amount of novelty introduced is commendable. So realistic have been some of the stunts that listeners have communicated with the studio asking "if the man who fell overboard was injured" and "if the collision between the boats was very serious."

The children's session calls for special comment. It is arranged as a miniature entertainment for young and old, and a very high standard is set. There are birthday greetings presented in novel and interesting manner, stories, recitations and songs. Juvenile performers have been as ready to assist in these programmes as have the adults in the evening and other sessions.

Thus 2YB has carried on against difficulties and provided a service of very real value to the province. They have kept going for two years in the face of odds, in spite of the fact that they were started off as a temporary expedient only. Their financial year is now almost concluded and again the Society must rely on the support of the district if 2YB is to remain on the air until at least the end of the year, when some national settlement will, it is to be hoped, be arrived upon. It behoves the citizens of Taranaki to rally round and support their station for just a little while longer. Even though the period might be short, there is no possibility of the station continuing unless support is readily forthcoming.



The transmitting plant of 2YB, New Plymouth. At first of 50 watts power, it now is rated at 100 watts output. It has been received well in Australia.