



Above: The landing of the whalers re-enacted.—When in 1831 the first whaling boat touched the shore at Otakau, the Maoris rushed down to the shore threatening hostilities, but they were pacified. The Peninsula saw the establishment of the first whaling station in Otago.

Below: The Governor-General unveils the tablet.

—Photos by courtesy "Evening Star," Dunedin.

The LANDING of the WHALERS

Historic Event
re-enacted
when Governor-
General unveiled
Memorial Tablet

A hundred years ago, Europeans were finding their way gradually to New Zealand, laying the foundations of our history. And so, during the next few years there will be many interesting centenaries. Last week, at Otakau, on the Otago Peninsula, the centenary celebrations in connection with the landing of the whalers in 1831 took place.

Occasion was taken for the Governor-General to unveil a tablet marking the landing ground of the pioneers. Arrangements were made for 4YA to broadcast on relay a running commentary, and although many difficulties were encountered with relay lines, the district telegraph engineer finally provided a remarkably good line, and a successful broadcast took place.

THE uniqueness of the relay took colour from the fact that the tablet which was unveiled was let into a rock of uncertain foothold, which is almost completely surrounded by water. This rock, named by the Maoris, "Te Umu Kuri," was the actual spot on which the whalers, the Weller brothers, who were the first pakehas, landed and hoisted the British flag.

The rock, which is quite small, is situated near the Otago Heads, and juts into the harbour, and there was little room for the 200 people who were fortunate enough to gain access to it.

On the highest point of this miniature peninsula was 4YA's microphone. From here, the whole proceedings were broadcast. The day being beautifully fine, those looking down upon the proceedings from the high cliff at the shore must have been rewarded for their climb by a striking scene.

The black rock jutting into the deep blue waters of the harbour was covered by pakehas and Maoris, the latter in their colourful Native costumes, with the Vice-Regal party standing on the rock's summit near the microphone.

After the official reception to their Excellencies by the Mayor of Dunedin, Mr. R. S. Black, the actual arrival of the original settlers was re-enacted. As three whaleboats rowed by red-capped and bearded sailors pulled in to the shore a band of Maoris rushed toward them shouting and gesticulating. The Maoris, after some display of force, were pacified with gifts, and a haka of welcome, poi songs, chanties, and songs by the Maori children were given. Although the songs were sung and the speeches delivered from several points of the rock the microphone caught everything, and listeners had the pleasure of hearing Native melodies, speeches by the Governor-General, the mayor, and chieftains of the Maori race.

The Maori children, as well as several of the older Maoris, were fascinated by the microphone, which they saw for the first time.

On one occasion the children came a little too close to the microphone until an aged Maori spoke to them, whereupon they drew back quickly. An inquiry being made, it was found that the children had been told that the "mike" was "tapu" or "forbidden."