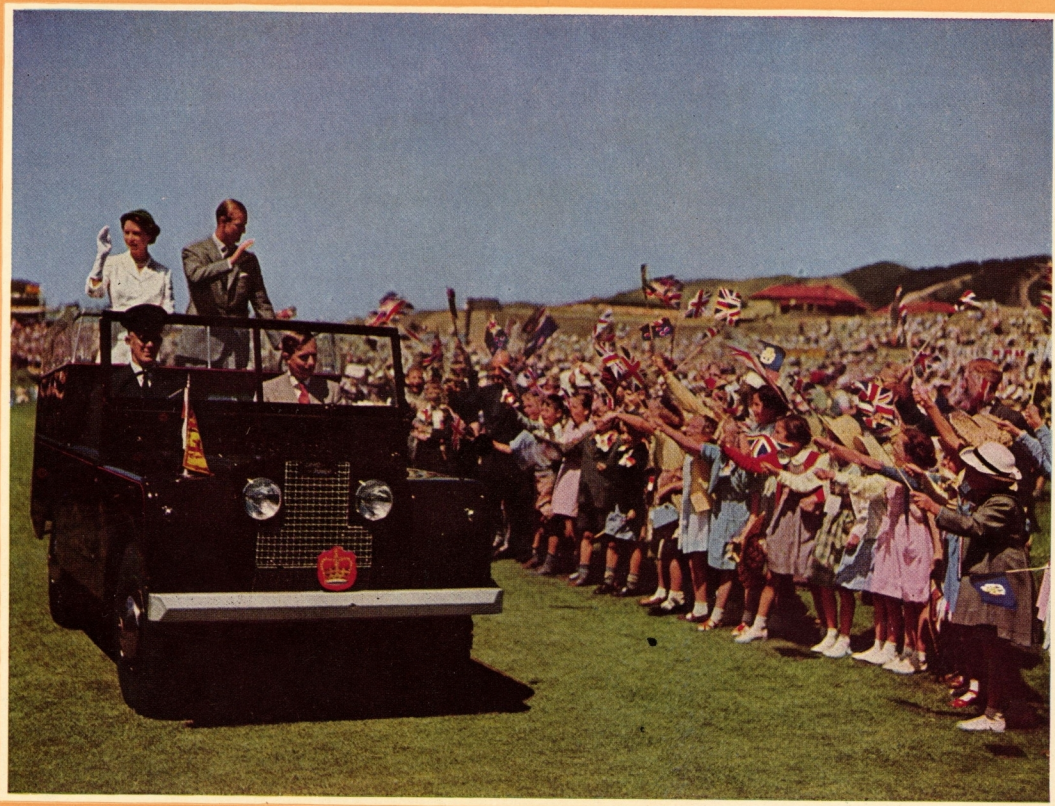


# *The Royal Visit to New Zealand*



Commemorative Volume



## EASTWARD BY AIR

*January 6, 1954*

REFRESHED BY their stay at Moose Lodge, the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh drove to Rotorua Airport on January 6 to board the New Zealand National Airways Corporation's Heron aircraft which was to take them coastwards to Gisborne, principal town of the now inappropriately named Poverty Bay district. Their pilot was Captain H. C. Walker, chief pilot of N.A.C., a competitor in the 1934 London-Melbourne Air Race, and one of New Zealand's best-known fliers.

Before she entered the plane the Queen paused to speak to an admirer who had been living since Queen Victoria was only 28, one year older than Queen Elizabeth. Mrs. Ellen Muriwai, said to be 107 years old, had been sitting waiting for two hours to see the Queen.

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Taking Her Majesty's gloved hand between hers, she retained it for perhaps half a minute, speaking softly to Her Majesty who leaned forward to catch her words. As the Heron took off and climbed out of sight the old lady's eyes filled with tears. "I said how proud I was to meet our Queen Victoria's great-great-granddaughter," she told those about her.

The sky was cloudy and the aircraft had to climb to 6,500 feet to ensure a comfortable flight. Captain Walker apologised to his Royal passengers for having to deprive them of the view by flying above cloud, but made amends to the Duke by inviting him into the cockpit, where His Royal Highness chatted with the pilot and co-pilot as a fellow flying enthusiast for a quarter of an hour.

For the last part of the 69-minute flight the sky was clear, but half a gale was blowing as the Heron began to let down. A few bumps did not mar a copybook approach and a perfect three-point landing on wind-swept Darton Field, Gisborne, exactly on schedule.

Despite the wind, the Queen and Duke lingered on the tarmac to thank the crew for a pleasant trip. But conditions were unpleasant enough to force them to use a closed car for their drive into the town, to the disappointment of the crowds, including some 6,000 children, who were braving the swirling dust to line the route.

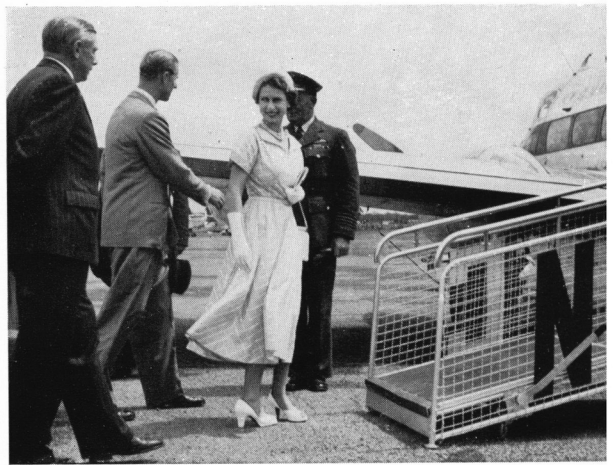
The stay in Gisborne was brief—a few hours only—but neither wind nor intense heat could detract from its significance to the people, many of whom made the most of the time by hurrying from one vantage point to another to see as much of their visitors as they could. Hats blew under the Royal cars during the drive through the town, and at the civic reception the Mayor and the wind struggled together for possession of the address of welcome. The flapping of spectators' clothing blended with the wild fluttering of streamers and flags in a boisterous display of mass enthusiasm.

Passing between crowds up to ten deep and under lines of flags suspended above the roadway, the Royal cars drove on through the heart of Gisborne and up Kaiti Hill, where the Queen and Duke got out to stand in the blustering wind and look over the panorama of town and countryside, pointed out to them by the Mayor.

An even more comprehensive view offered itself as the Royal Dakota of 42 Squadron climbed over Gisborne, taking the Royal visitors on to Napier, principal port of the East Coast and New Zealand's third busiest exporting point. Flying part of the way over the sea, the Dakota landed at Westshore aerodrome again exactly on time, to find a strong wind still blowing and vast crowds waiting.

The seven-mile drive into and through the city was lined by 13,000 cheering people, with another 17,000 assembled in McLean Park, where a civic reception was tendered. The Duke, who had been unable to see the sheep-shearing demonstration given by the Bowen brothers at Hamilton on account of his absence at Wellington to attend the Tangiwai funeral, had expressed the wish to see them in action. They gave a second demonstration at McLean Park that afternoon.

At the hotel on the foreshore where they were to spend the night, the Royal couple were greeted by huge crowds who emulated the efforts of those in other centres with the persistent chant of "We want the Queen!" This demonstration was to be deplored wherever it occurred by those who worried for the Queen's well-being in her

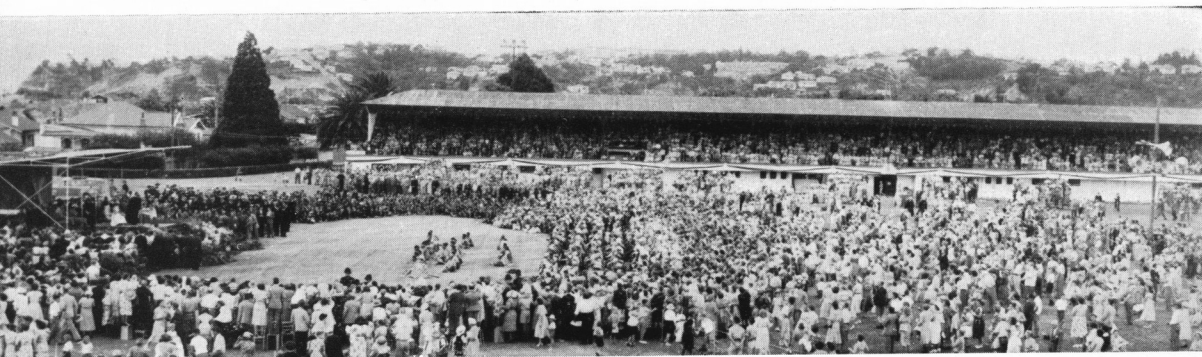


After their brief rest at Moose Lodge the Royal couple continued their journey by motoring to the airfield at Rotorua and flying over the lakes, State forest plantations and the heavily timbered ranges eastwards to Gisborne. The Darton Field airport was reached about noon on Wednesday, January 6. Above: The Queen and the Duke board a Heron en route to Gisborne.



From Darton Field airport they drove to the civic reception at Gisborne Intermediate School. A brief visit was made to Kaiti Hill, where they looked down at the historic spot on Kaiti Beach where Captain Cook first landed in 1769. Above: The Queen is greeted by the Mayor of Gisborne. Below: Mr. W. M. Jenkins escorts the Queen past the cheering crowds at the civic reception.





Another flight the same afternoon took Her Majesty and the Duke across Hawke Bay to Napier, where the civic reception was given at McLean Park. The Duke met ex-Naval officers at 6 p.m. and the night was spent at the Masonic Hotel. Left: The crowd which filled the grandstand and ground at McLean Park.

strenuous tour but it was motivated by purely spontaneous sentiments of deep love and a loyalty which insisted on expressing itself in some active form. As always, the demands prevailed, and the Royal visitors made one of those appearances which throughout their tour meant so much to the people who had waited hours to see them.

Soon after, the Duke of Edinburgh reappeared at the hotel entrance, where his car awaited to take him to a gathering of ex-Naval officers in the Art Gallery. Once more there was a change in the official arrangements. Smiling broadly, the Duke merely nodded to the chauffeur and set off on foot, accompanied by the Prime Minister and the aides, to walk the few hundred yards to the reception. It was the kind of gesture loyal subjects appreciated. The unco-operative weather had again necessitated the drive into the city being made in a closed car, and the Duke's decision to walk gave the people of Napier a real chance to see His Royal Highness at close quarters.

When the Duke returned from the Art Gallery it was to meet another gathering, this time of serving officers of the Hawke's Bay Regiment, of which he had consented to become colonel-in-chief and whose members had lined

his route to the Art Gallery reception. He asked many questions about the regiment, and as on many other occasions impressed everyone with his evident interest in them and his friendly manner towards them.

At many times in the year Napier's marine parade becomes the gathering place of thousands. On such occasions as New Year's Eve the scene there is one to be remembered. But when the citizens of Napier forgather to sing and dance and celebrate some event of the future they will remember above all others the night they massed before the Masonic Hotel to call again and again for their young Queen and her husband.

They will remember for the rest of their lives their radiantly lovely Sovereign as she appeared that night, waving and smiling from the balcony with her handsome partner at her side; the world's most popular young couple, belonging, as it seemed, for a few precious hours to them alone. Unforgettable, unforgotten—it will remain for long years to come the supreme occasion in the lives of thousands, to whom it will always epitomise the happiness of their own youth in the youngest city of a brave young land.



The Queen ascends the dais at the park accompanied by the Mayor of Napier.



The Queen had met Godfrey and Ivan Bowen, world champion shearers, at Hamilton, but at the request of the Duke, who had been in Wellington at the time, they made another demonstration of their skill at Napier. Both Royal visitors were interested spectators as the brothers kept pace with each other.





## ACROSS THE ISLAND

*January 7-9, 1954*

A BUZZ OF EXCITEMENT ran through the crowd waiting to see the Royal couple leave their Napier hotel on Thursday morning, January 7, when they noticed the hood of the Royal car being lowered. Many people who had waited in the previous day's blustery weather for a close glimpse of the Queen, only to be disappointed when a closed car had to be used, knew they would, after all, see Her Majesty clearly as she passed. Though a special plastic hood had been prepared for use in bad weather, and had actually been used once, in Auckland, it had been abandoned as unsuitable, largely because of its lack of ventilation.

Grey skies stretched over Hawke's Bay, and the breeze was still troublesome as the car drove slowly along the

marine parade, running for two miles beside the sea, before turning inland to pass between orchards, market gardens and fields of crops. Flowers by the roadside formed a natural decoration for the route and at one place a thick carpet of petals had been laid across the full width of the road.

At Hastings, flourishing centre of the region, the familiar crowds waited. Loud and prolonged cheering greeted the Royal couple, and once more the prevailing sentiment of everyone was—"Here at last; it couldn't be true!"

But it was, and for those who had waited long hours in Civic Square to see the Queen alight from her car and ascend the red-carpeted dais, all imagined happiness was fulfilled. From the dais Her Majesty waved to the crowd

and the happy cheering swelled to an even greater pitch.

From the civic reception, the Royal party drove to the large canneries of J. Wattie Limited, one of New Zealand's biggest light industrial concerns. Touring the six-acre plant they saw for themselves the source of millions of cans of vegetable and meat products which annually supply homes throughout New Zealand and many in the United Kingdom. Escorted by Messrs. James and Gordon Wattie they watched peas being processed, baked in giant pressure cookers and turned out at nearly 600 cans each minute; heard the clatter of the cans themselves being manufactured from sheet metal at 300 to the minute; and saw the finished products being packed for dispatch.

They asked many questions, and at one stage the Duke lagged behind the rest of the party for some minutes, seeking a detailed explanation of a process. Several of the young women employees, carrying on their work despite the strongest temptations to stop and stare, were spoken to by the Duke who seemed to want to know every detail of the many processes he was shown.

From Hastings the Royal visitors made their first rail journey in New Zealand. Their tour so far had taken them on the sea, in the air, and by road. Now they sampled the fourth method of transportation, which was to take them right across the North Island in a V-shaped route with its apex at Palmerston North, within 100 miles of Wellington, and its end at New Plymouth, leading town of the Taranaki Province, one of New Zealand's richest and most historic areas.

Careful arrangements had been made to ensure absolute safety during the rail journey. Railways Department men were stationed outside tunnels and alongside all bridges to guard against the slightest mishap, while police and traffic officers watched all road overbridges and main level crossings. Every inch of the permanent way was pre-inspected, cattle were kept at a safe distance, facing points were securely locked and spiked, and a pilot train of two Diesel locomotives, two carriages and a van preceded the Royal train by fifteen minutes throughout the journey.

Precautions were based on the assumption that the weather would be the worst possible, with special measures all through the craggy Manawatu Gorge where heavy rain might cause landslides across the line. All the same, everyone was relieved to see the weather turn out fine. There was not a hitch anywhere.

The Royal train was hauled by two Diesels, the leading one decorated with the Royal Arms surmounted by two Union Jacks. The Royal party boarded the seven-carriage train at a siding near the cannery, and with its

whistle blowing it moved off slowly, at processional pace, until the cheering crowds began to thin out and it was able to gather speed towards its first stop, the farming centre of Waipawa, 27 miles from Hastings.

Though the massed crowds had been left behind there was never a mile of the journey along which some sign of affectionate loyalty did not appear. Cars trying to keep pace with the train along nearby roads blew their horns and their passengers fluttered handkerchiefs and flags through the windows; farmers and their families, tenders of some of the country's finest sheep-raising country, stood at gates and fences to wave and cheer; even the gaunt white faces of lime quarries bore in huge black lettering the slogans "Welcome to Your Majesty" and "The Queen, God Bless Her".

Waipawa represented no more than a few minutes' halt in this Royal progress, but to a few thousand children and grown-ups gathered there to see the Queen and the Duke receive an official welcome on a rail-side dais they were minutes to be burned into memory for ever.

At Waipukurau—a name which once mastered by the travellers on the Royal train would not easily be forgotten either—the Queen and Duke walked some distance from their carriage between avenues of overjoyed children, to a dais surrounded by a carpet of pink and blue blossoms, and listened as they left to the singing of "Will Ye No' Come Back Again?" by the waving crowds.

Lunch was taken in the open countryside near Takapau. The Royal party ate in their coach, but members of the entourage took advantage of a grove of willow trees dipping gracefully over a brisk little stream near by and made a picnic of the halt.

Hours of travelling, by whatever means, are trying to anyone, but Her Majesty was clearly in the best of spirits when she left the train at Dannevirke for a civic reception before 7,000 of her people, many of them descendants of the Scandinavian settlers who founded the township. Just before leaving the Royal couple walked forward to the extreme edge of the dais and stood for a few minutes in full view of the crowd, an unexpected thrill for everyone.

There was one more civic reception, at Woodville, where a great forest once stood and horse-drawn coaches used to make a welcome halt, before the train entered the tortuous Manawatu Gorge. The Queen and Duke stood on the observation platform of their coach for an unimpeded view of the four-mile stretch of frowning cliffs and flood-swollen waters. Light river craft swept past and their occupants received a special Royal wave in return for their own.

But it was at little Ashhurst on the fringe of the Mana-





The Queen and the Duke arrive at the Civic Square, Hastings, by car on the morning of January 7. The road between Napier and Hastings had been lined by cheering crowds.



After the civic reception they are seen inspecting the J. Wattie Canneries, where they take a keen interest in this modern plant.



At the canneries they board the train which is to take them on a triumphal tour through the smiling countryside of North Island farming districts.



The first stop on the day's journey was at Waipawa, where the Royal couple left the train to meet the people of this country township.



At Waipukurau, a few miles further on, a great bank of flowers bedecked the stand where the Queen greeted the local residents.



At Dannevirke patients from the hospital, a number of them in beds, lined the track. A huge crowd assembled outside the station.



The Queen is accompanied by the Mayor of Woodville as she passes rows of excited, flag-waving children in the afternoon.



The Royal train arrived at the Square, Palmerston North, at the end of a long day. That night there was a civic dinner, and the Queen and Duke stayed at the Grand Hotel until the next morning.





For five precious weeks they lived among us—shared our life, our sorrows, our sunlight and our great happiness of which they were the source.

Two million of us saw them. Some watched them pass a score and more times in the space of days; others had to be content with one brief but unforgettable glimpse.

For us all, however near or distant we stood, there were the same fresh smiles or waves that seemed meant for each one alone. Some thousands of us were specially privileged with a handshake and a few friendly words.

We were honoured to be their hosts; proud to conduct them round our lovely land. Now they are gone, but in the heart of every one of us something of them will remain for ever in a treasured store of memories of a supremely happy time.

