

A sad disappointment awaited me on landing in Christchurch. I was informed at the American Base Headquarters that the *Hercules* aircraft specially equipped for the Radar Ice Survey had not yet left the Lockheed factory in Marietta, Georgia, USA, where it was being modified. The special antenna for the radar had dropped off the plane twice during trial flights—a blessing in disguise for me and my Newspaper.

I immediately telegraphed my Foreign Editor, informing him of what I had been told—a delay of about 10 days, and I suggested to him that I would spend my time on reporting New Zealand science. This was approved, there being little alternative available! For me, the delay during the redesign of the antenna gave me a lucky chance to do what I liked best, talking to scientific friends and write about their work. I was also able to make a few sketches; while travelling through their beautiful country.

My first report from Christchurch was about the presence of four women scientists who were to go to the Antarctic ice, a few days after I met them. It was an unheard-of event that women should be in the Antarctic, it had never happened before in the century-old history of exploration on the ice continent. There was still much prejudice against them, and Dr Lois Jones told me that it had taken her four years before she obtained permission from the US Navy to carry out her research program in the ice-free areas of Victoria Land. My published story was 18 column-centimeters.

My second story from Christchurch dealt with the big Weather Watch planned for 1976 in which the famous GHOST balloons (Global Horizontal Sounding Technique) were to play a prominent role. Designed to float permanently in the jet-stream between 6 km and 16 km height around our planet, they would radio back either directly to Earth or to satellites, information about wind speed, humidity and temperature. By November 1969 the record flight of a Ghost balloon was 1 year and 2.5 months, circling the Earth 35 times.

About the discovery of a new deep ocean current I learnt from the American Oceanographic Research ship *Eltanin* which had then just docked at Lyttleton, NZ, on its return from surveying and measuring the new current. Dr Bruce Warren, the chief scientist aboard, explained to me the great economic importance of this new current as it would increase our knowledge of krill, the shrimp-like minute ocean creatures, the principal food for many whales. Krill exist in millions in huge swarms, thus feeding the whales. The krill itself depends for its food on the microscopic plankton, which in turn gets its nutritions from the salts brought up by the deep ocean currents.