

## New Zealand Science ..... Title 191

Before leaving Christchurch I must describe its two remarkable statues to Antarctic explorers, Scott and Byrd. Scott's life-size bronze figure stands in a small park on a high plinth: He is dressed in the full antarctic protective clothing of his period, and on his head there always sits a seagull, whose excretae have given Scott a white halo. The statue was sculpted by his wife, Lady Scott, and it is another bronze cast of the one in the centre of London in Waterloo Place, near the top of the Duke of York steps and the Royal Society.

Byrd's memorial in Christchurch can only be described as a three-dimensional triangle pointing south. Made of concrete, it is adorned with small stones from the Antarctic and on its north side, it has a recess, in which there is a bronze head of Byrd, with dedication: "The Great White Continent of Peace." Scott died in 1913, Byrd in 1957.

From Christchurch in the South Island I flew to Wellington in the North Island, the centre of New Zealand Science. I had a good friend there, Sir Charles Fleming FRS, then the President of the Royal Society of New Zealand, who later joined the Editorial Board of *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews*. I discussed with him the most important aspects of local science, which I was to review and which might be of sufficient news value for Fleet Street publication, always an essential aspect to bear in mind.

We agreed on the following subjects, here only given in the headlines under which they were published: "Pine Forest Harvest in New Zealand" (29 Column Centimeter, CC); "Search for Sulphur in New Zealand" (14 CC). This report originated as a by-product from my visit to Wairaki, the famous geothermal station where the superheated steam from the ground drives a turbine coupled to an electricity generator. It was called "Underground Steam" (31 CC) and was a detailed account of NZ geophysical research.

As New Zealand is prone to earthquakes, much research has been devoted to safer buildings, to recording earthquakes fully and to explore the depths below the surface of the Earth. A new shock recorder had been developed to be placed in tall buildings to measure their ability to withstand shocks and tremors. It proved so successful that it was mass-produced under licence in America, where its installation is now mandatory in California.

Another revolutionary research technique was described to me by Dr Trevor Hatherton, the Director of Geophysical Science of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. He borrows the electrical power lines from the national grid at 02.00 hours and sends a gigantic electrical pulse through them, which penetrates to a depth of 30 km into the Earth. In the regions of hot geysers and of geothermal power, where the nearness of the magma is greatest, he found new hot areas deep down. These were later confirmed by drilling and will in future yield new power for geothermal electricity.