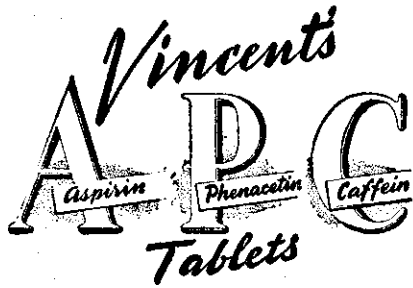


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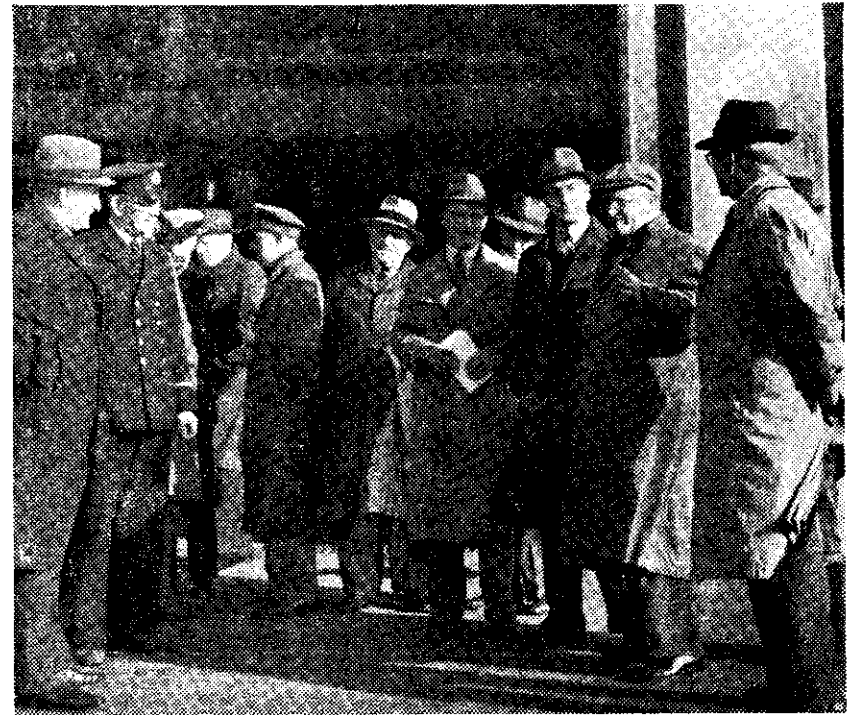
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PAGEANTRY BEGINS IN THE BACK ROOM

HOW the new Governor-General, Lieutenant-General Sir Bernard Freyberg, V.C. arrived in Wellington on June 17, and how he was received on the wharf, at the Town Hall, and at Parliament House, is a story that will have been told by all the daily papers long before this issue of *The Listener* reaches its readers. There is another story, the story behind all that precise formality and perfect timing, that gives a more human picture of these occasions. The *Listener* was given a "listening brief" to attend the conferences in Wellington at which every minute detail of that busy morning was worked out in advance, with every allowance that could be made for what might happen and what might not happen, alternative plans for wet and fine weather, and all sorts of minute interlocking points of procedure to be settled quickly by representatives of 15 or 16 different concerns.

Two of the conferences we watched and listened to were held on Pipitea Wharf, on the spot where his Excellency landed; one was held in a room in the old Government Buildings in Wellington. There were representatives of the three fighting Services, the Harbour Board, the Wellington City Council, Post and Telegraph Transport Section, the New Zealand Shipping Company, the Police, the R.S.A. (Wellington Branch and Dominion Executive), the Public Works Department, Government House, the City Traffic Department, the Tramways, the Clerk of the Executive Council, and the Department of Internal Affairs.

There was no such thing, at these conferences, as "Mr. Chairman. . . ." We found that out in the first two minutes, and it was true to the end, even when chairs and a table were provided for the final check-up conference. But that is not to say there was no one in charge, to co-ordinate all the little points of detail, to shepherd the band of people around on the wharf and at the war memorial, or to be a sort of point of refer-



THE UNDER-SECRETARY for Internal Affairs, J. W. Heenan (second from right) explains a point of procedure at the conference on Pipitea Wharf

ence for the dozens of minor problems that can only be decided in the end by someone's instinct for a decision between two alternatives.

There always is someone to do all this when these State functions have to be arranged. This is the Under-Secretary for Internal Affairs; and any account of how such an intricate piece of organising and timing is worked out from such chaotic initial detail must necessarily be an account of his methods.

The first act in the whole affair was the receipt by the Department of Internal Affairs of word that Sir Bernard Freyberg had embarked on the Ruahine, and the second was the preparation of an invitation list—about 700 names. From there on, occasional reference to the recorded detail of previous occasions of the same kind provided some sort of guide; photographs in old newspapers proved so valuable that it was decided to encourage photographers this time to obtain a complete record of each stage.

Representative Citizens

The list of 700 people to whom invitations for the ceremony at Parliament House were sent includes representatives of the Government, Members of Parliament, Foreign Ministers, High Commissioners, Judges, the Clergy, Consuls, Government departmental heads, the Forces, Magistrates, local bodies boards, federations, associations and societies, commercial and industrial and political organisations, the R.S.A.—in short "representative citizens."

Next came the preparation of an invitation card, and a speculative allocation of seating based on someone's estimate of how many would actually be able to come, the printing, and the

posting, which had to be put off until the precise day and time for the ceremony was known. Two seating plans had to be done by Internal Affairs, one for the steps in front of Parliament House, for fine weather, and one for the Legislative Council Chamber for wet weather. On the actual morning, it was still someone's responsibility to decide whether the day was fine or not—there was no doubt, as it happened, about June 17, which was one of Wellington's best. Internal Affairs prides itself on its luck with the weather. In the last eleven years, it has only had to take one state outdoor function indoors, and even then, it could have been held outside, though the ground itself was wet. That was VJ Day.

Wharf-shed Conference

But the informal conferences were our own first introduction to all this preparatory work. The first one we went to, being actually the second, began on Pipitea wharf, at the point likely to be used for disembarkation. First it had to be settled where the gangway would come down. Shipping company and Harbour Board men had to name which door could be used irrespective of which way the ship would berth, bow south or stern south.

Harbour Board men had to undertake to have all the cargo cleared out of the shed in time. The shed is 750 feet long and 110 feet wide—one of the biggest clear floor spaces in the Dominion. Army men had to agree where to have their telephones to be able to signal the battery to begin the Royal Salute as soon as Sir Bernard set foot on New Zealand. Harbour Board men had to see where

(Continued on next page)

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