

# PERMANENT RECORDS OF THE ROYAL TOUR

JOURNALISTS, as well as historians, have often had reason to feel rueful about the shortage of good written and pictorial records of past State occasions in New Zealand. It seems hardly possible that future writers could have the same complaint to make about the Queen's visit. Thousands of photographs, thousands of feet of film, tens of thousands of words have so far been made ready for the archives, and the work done by New Zealand official teams—described below—is only a fraction of the whole.

IN a fireproof vault at the National Publicity Studios, Wellington, is preserved the still photographic record of the Royal Tour. When *The Listener* called at the Studios' photographic section the Royal couple were still in Wellington, but the total of pictures had reached 500, and was growing rapidly. The final total was expected to be the better part of 1000, with subjects ranging from the Queen and the Duke to an anonymous child in the crowd, from Air Force trumpeters to an order of service, from Maori welcomes to military cordons.

One photographer from the N.P.S. travelled continuously with the Royal party during the tour. Others assisted, at points where the programme was too exacting for one man. The principal difficulties encountered were obstruction by enthusiastic amateurs (one example is seen below), and unpredictable flash failures. According to E. P. Christensen, the N.P.S.'s touring photographer, the most serious of the latter occurred at Wellington and Waitomo. At Wellington, the failure of the electronic flash occurred as Mr. Christensen was about to photograph the meeting of the Privy Council. But, with the help of strong daylight and all the ballroom lights of Government House, a picture was made. At Waitomo rigorous pre-testing of equipment showed it to be in perfect order. But at the crucial moment (it always happens at the crucial moment) the flash failed. "You'll have to try again, Mr. Christensen," said the Queen. The photographer fiddled with his equipment—and the flash went off in his face. "Now," said the Duke, "you'll know how we feel!"

Wherever possible, however, the accredited photographers with the Royal party have spared the exploding flash. Only where light conditions have been unsuitable have flashes been used, and the photographers have ceased work when each is satisfied he has a good shot. Mr. Christensen found, too, that in spite of the supposed "dog eat dog" tradition of daily journalism, the news photographers on the tour co-operated in friendly fashion, helping one another to get better shots, and collaborating in the darkroom work and dispatch of pictures which is a large part of their work. This has been particularly noticeable on occasions when only one photographer has been permitted. Then the entire party has had to rely on a "pool" photographer, who takes the required pictures and supplies prints to all his colleagues.

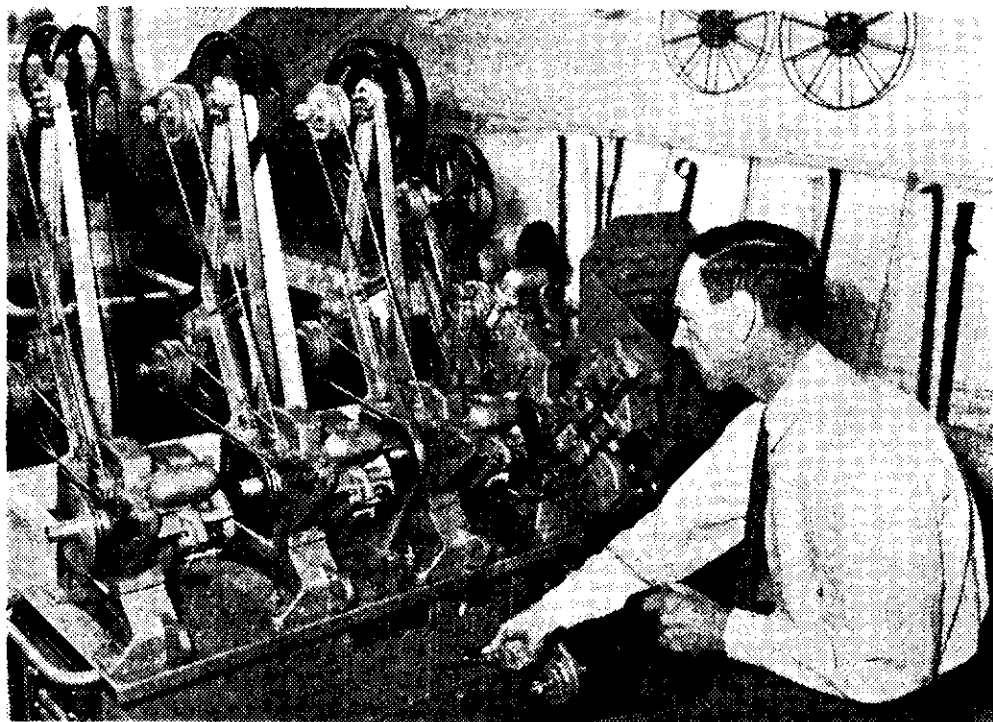
The "pool" photographer has a somewhat frightening responsibility. P. W. Walker, of the N.P.S., who was the only still photographer allowed in the Council Chamber at the opening of Parliament, confesses to "butterflies in the stomach" before the event. He had three cameras lashed to the railings of the gallery (see picture at foot of page 7), and had to work them by reaching through the openings between rails. In the

silence of the chamber the loading of the cameras sounded (to him) like the rasping of coarse sandpaper, and the click of the shutters like rifle shots. The shots he took were distributed to the press of the world.

Apart from the negatives and prints which go into the archives, the N.P.S. has supplied prints as usual to Government bodies in New Zealand and abroad. The country's representatives in London, Washington, Ottawa, Canberra, San Francisco, Tokio, Sydney, Melbourne, Colombo, New Delhi, Singapore, New York, South Africa and Fiji have received their quotas of Royal Tour pictures for exhibition. Many of these are in colour, and though they are delayed to avoid competing with news-photo services, they are expected to provoke considerable interest abroad.

Editors, technicians and cameramen of the National Film Unit have been working round the clock since the day the Royal Yacht *Gothic* arrived at Fiji. Their task has been threefold: to make a feature-length colour film covering the New Zealand tour, a two-reeler in colour and a two-reeler in black and white covering the visit to Fiji and Tonga, and six one-reelers in black and white for immediate release as each successive stage of the tour of New Zealand is completed. The seven black and white shorts are being shown in theatres as weekly Royal Tour releases in the *Pictorial Parade* series. Master negatives of all Royal Tour films made by the N.F.U. will as a matter of course be stored in their vault, said the Unit's director, Geoffrey Scott.

The full-length colour film—its title is still a well-guarded secret—will be between 6000 and 7000 feet long, and is being made in conjunction with the J. Arthur Rank Organisation. The director is Oxley Hughan, and the scenario of the film, which has been scripted down to the last detail, was done in the N.F.U. offices. Five cameramen are working on it, including one from the Rank Organisation, Edward Candy. The final colour processing and editing will be done in London, the type of colour



AT TOP: C. G. Wickstead, Sound Director of the National Film Unit, aligning soundtracks on a multiple head moviola. The aligned tracks are then re-recorded on the mixing console, seen in the foreground in the lower photograph

film being the same as that used in the Canadian Royal Tour film of 1951. The film will be released throughout the world.

Although many overseas cameramen, including a representative of the Newsreel Pool in London, are covering the tour, the Film Unit is also supplying a great deal of material taken by its own men to the Newsreel Pool, to Australia, and to United States television circuits. The negatives are processed in the N.F.U. laboratories and fine grain master duplicates are flown immediately to the countries concerned. Organisations which draw from the Newsreel Pool in-

clude the BBC's Television Unit, so that British viewers will see the tour largely through the lenses of N.F.U. cameras. In the case of the Royal opening of Parliament the N.F.U. was the only organisation with suitable equipment for such a special job, where blimped cameras (shielded to eliminate camera noise) had to be used.

The general opinion of men working on the tour is that the Queen makes an ideal subject. "She is always perfectly composed and calm, even when faced with batteries of cameras and banks of the very bright lights required for colour