



"CITY OF THE STRAIT"

WELLINGTON may not be New Zealand's biggest port, but it has the reputation of being the best-equipped one south of the equator. In 1943—the peak year so far—the harbour accommodated no fewer than 2,358 ships, their cargo tonnage was well above the three million mark. And of that figure, 38,000 tons were wool, worth a fabulous fortune at today's prices, compared with the three and a-half tons which were Wellington's first wool export back in 1843. In those days bush grew right down to the Petone foreshore—"Pit-one" (the end of the sands) as it was then called—and whales sported in the harbour. Today the port, with its deep

blue water and encircling hills, is a brilliant scene of maritime activity, dotted with overseas liners and coastal boats, and made picturesque by its floating dock and coal hulks. Most of the dockside is built on piles, or on land reclaimed from the harbour, and wharf workers now tread where the cutters of His Majesty's fleet once sailed.

The story of the port is told in an NZBS programme, *Port of Wellington*, a half-hour documentary feature which will be broadcast from 2YA at 4.0 p.m. this Sunday, January 22, the Province's Anniversary Day. In it listeners will hear the voices of Captain Todd, the chief pilot, and others whose object it is to ensure the port's smooth running.

(continued from previous page)

how adamant he can be if they aren't. Throughout the winter, too, there may be marked fluctuations in the degree of heating, which are, one has reason to suspect, not entirely due to the quantity and quality of the fuel or to the efficacy of the apparatus.

Perhaps the least agreeable aspect of this set-up arises from the fact that the police sometimes avail themselves of the *concierge*. If they should have occasion to make routine inquiries, or possibly special investigations, into the movements and general behaviour of tenants, it is to the *concierge* that they often address themselves first. This again is reasonable enough, for he is a convenient and ready source of information—but the practice contains obvious possibilities for abuse. I knew of one case where a French girl, applying for a fairly responsible job, found that the police, acting on behalf of her prospective employer, had gone to the *concierge*

of her apartment to check up on the references she had submitted. In this case, as it happened, she did finally get the job—which possibly meant that she deserved it, but could just as easily have meant that she was "in" with her *concierge* at that moment. At any rate it was the *concierge* himself who kept her posted about what was happening and what her prospects were likely to be!

The basic weakness of the *concierge* system lies no doubt in the fact that these people receive such a miserable wage from the landlords of apartment-houses that they have to depend very largely for their livelihood on the gratuities which they can obtain from tenants. But it will be easily seen what opportunities for abuse and bad feeling exist in the system as it is. New Zealanders may therefore feel glad that they are able, a good many of them, to live in their own private homes, reasonably safe from fear of burglary and without any need for the *concierge* and his ways.

N.Z. LISTENER, JANUARY 20, 1950.

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