



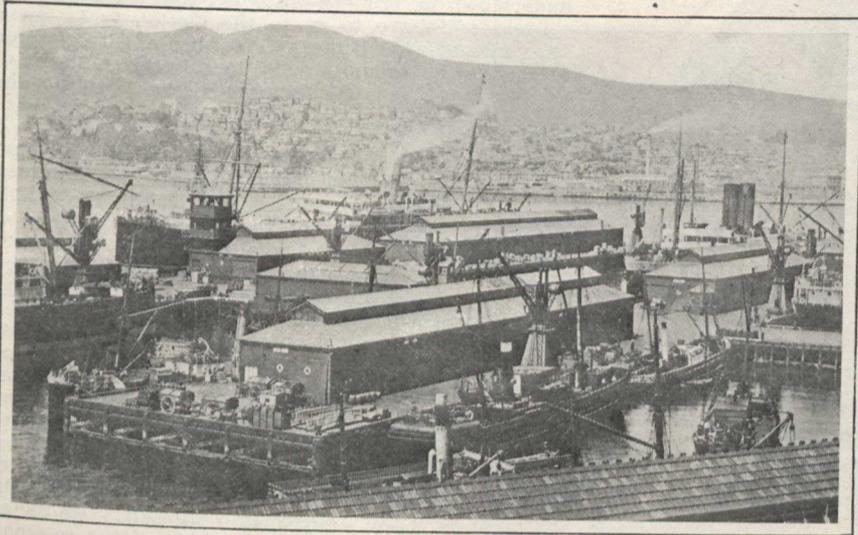
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Wellington, a seaport town, the commercial as well as political capital of New Zealand.



Wellington, whose handsome residences give some idea of the wealth and prosperity of this Antipodean city.

# A City Owned by Citizens

*Wellington, N.Z., a Small Rival to Berlin, Germany, for Civic Thrift*

By FRANK H. MORGAN

**H**AD an aboriginal (Maori) resident on the shores of the waters of Poneke, in the year that Queen Victoria ascended the English throne, been gifted suddenly with prophetic vision, he would probably have found the possession dangerous. For if, looking across the narrow, fern-clad flat of Te Aro, on to the sunlit bay, whose surface was broken only by a lonely fisherman's canoe, above which wheeled and screamed the ever-watchful gull, he had described the scene as it would appear within the brief space of a man's lifetime, he would have been regarded by his fellows as "porangi" (mad), and they would no doubt have taken suitable measures to render him innocuous without delay. The natives were not wholly unused, even at that day, to the presence of white men; whalers and a few other adventurous spirits had visited these coasts since Captain Cook's time; but the Maori, judging the foreigner by the standard of the whaler, was not favourably impressed.

**H**AD our seer told of great smoking ships that could carry the people of a score of "pas" or "kaingas" (settlements) floating where then came only the fishing canoe or the occasional war craft, with its fifty glistening brown-skinned warrior-paddlers; or how a new race of men had come and made wonderful roads and "whares" (houses) on the narrow bit of valley and the fringe of level by the bay's edge, and, greedy for room, had turned the sea into solid land to carry yet more houses; while strange shapes flitted about the roads like sentient (but odourous) beings, or hovered overhead with the birds; his picture could to-day be presented in real form and colour. Out of the ashes of the fern and flax and forest clothing the fringing flats and hills of Poneke has arisen the city of Wellington, political and commercial capital of the Dominion of New Zealand. Into the deep, spacious waters of Port Nicholson come ships of all nations, and there are none so big that they may not enter.

**W**ELLINGTON was founded in January, 1840, the first settlers landing on a level stretch of country in a valley at the head of the harbour. This was soon abandoned as a site for the main settlement of the New Zealand Company, which colonized the district, and the village was established on the south-western side of the bay. Here there was deep

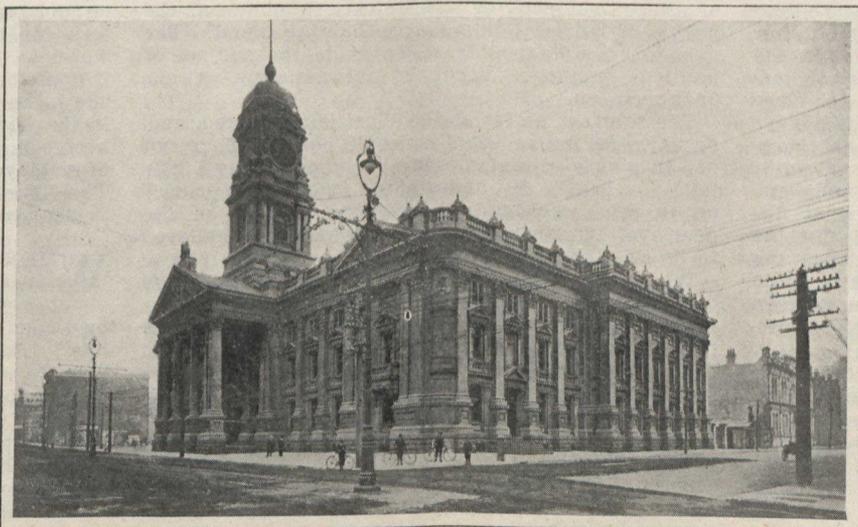
water close inshore, and less danger from floods, which had threatened the pioneers at Britannia, as the first settlement was named. This designation became merged in the Maori "Pito-one," now corrupted to Petone, the name borne by the considerable town occupying the site once abandoned.

**W**ELLINGTON'S early years were fraught with many anxieties. True, the people had not the same troubles with the natives that those in other districts had; no serious wars threatened extinction; yet progress was slow. Port Nicholson was isolated, and was surrounded by hills that barred access to splendid lands lying not far away. The central Government was at Auckland, away at the other end of the North Island, and jealousy reigned. In 1863, however, Wellington became the seat of government, and made better headway. Then, as railways pierced the circling hills, and roads stretched their tentacles into the country, Wellington's natural advantages as a port for big ships became available for the export of the products of the soil. Since then her march forward has been uninterrupted. To-day we find a city of 67,000 inhabitants, or if adjoining suburbs be included, 74,000, well furnished with all modern conveniences such as good streets (the main thoroughfares wood-blocked), electric light and tramways, water supply, motor fire brigades, drainage systems and refuse destructor, libraries, baths, parks and abattoirs. All these are controlled by the municipality, which is also represented in the management of the harbour. This has many wharves, splendidly equipped with the latest appliances for the quick handling of cargo, and ocean liners ply to the principal ports of the world, while a fleet of smaller vessels is engaged in an extensive coastal trade.

The capital value of the city, covering 9,505 acres, was last year £19,161,000, and the annual revenue of the corporation amounted to over £443,000. Formerly the city snuggled under the hills on a narrow strip of beach, but as it grew it spread over an adjoining flat space till that was occupied. Then the sea front was filled in with spoil from the hills. To-day the wharf line is a quarter of a mile from Lambton quay, the leading thoroughfare, which once was washed by the tide. Where traders used to lie at anchor or tie up to small private wharves there are now miles of streets and fine blocks of public buildings, offices, and warehouses.



Wellington—The Botanical Gardens.



Wellington—the Town Hall is English in design—the overhead wires are purely Colonial.