

Arrangements were made by this section for various celebrations, the chief of which were the national ceremony held at Government Buildings on the 9th May, 1945, at which His Excellency the Governor-General made the official pronouncement of the cessation of hostilities in Europe, and the national ceremony held in the Town Hall, Wellington, on 16th August, 1945, to mark the cessation of hostilities with Japan.

The arrangements for the official reception to the 28th Maori Battalion, Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force, were also handled.

On 11th October, 1945, a State luncheon was held in honour of New Zealand winners of the Victoria Cross, 1939-45.

Hospitality was extended to officers and men of visiting warships, including Vice-Admiral Sir Philip Vian of H.M.S. "Indefatigable," H.M. Ships "Wizard," "Urchin," "Newfoundland," and "Swiftsure," and the U.S.S. "Vincennes."

IX. WAR HISTORY BRANCH

By decision of War Cabinet dated 16th February, 1945, the War History Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs was set up to co-ordinate the collection of war archives in the Service and civil Departments and to undertake the preparation of New Zealand's official history of the Second World War.

Since the effective establishment of the Branch in April, 1945, the object has been to build up an organization capable of supplying the materials for a comprehensive account of New Zealand's war effort, Service and civil, overseas and at home. Each Service now has an archive section in New Zealand and, where necessary, an overseas section, while separate sections deal with the specialized medical and dental services. In civil Government Departments work in connection with war archives and war history is handled by departmental historical officers in conjunction with the record clerks. The direction and co-ordination of the whole enterprise is undertaken by the Chief War Archivist and liaison officers, who keep in close personal touch with all sections of the organization and periodically issue directives standardizing methods and procedure for the collection of records and the compilation of preliminary narratives.

The Branch does not itself hold any large collection of war records, but in the meantime chiefly confines itself to supervising the collection and processing of archives in the various sections of the organization. It was apparent at the outset that in the civil Departments no clear line of demarcation could be drawn between records of the war and other types of records; accordingly, in order to prevent the loss of historical material, a system for the disposal of official records of a routine nature was instituted by the Chief War Archivist working in conjunction with the Controller of Dominion Archives. This is the beginning of a system which, with the development of the Dominion Archives, will ultimately regulate the disposal and transfer of all non-current official records.

In view of the importance of photographs in a modern historical collection, special efforts have been made to ensure that adequate collections of photographs and other illustrative material are available covering each phase of the war effort. This work has been the responsibility of an Illustrations Editor, who joined the staff in July, 1945. The several collections have now reached the stage when it will be possible to issue an appeal for supplementary material now in private hands.

Following the example of most other countries, on the inception of the Branch the decision was taken to go one stage beyond the collection of records by preparing a series of preliminary narratives covering the whole field of the war effort. By this means it is hoped to assemble in a convenient form the scattered sources of the war history, to test these sources while gaps and deficiencies can still be made good, and to reduce the time that will be needed to compile the history itself. In this branch of the work, also, a policy of decentralization has been adopted and the narratives are being compiled in