

Quay, joining those already there. The crowd was soon so dense the Prince's car was slowed to walking pace. As he passed, spectators peeled off to rush along the side-streets and join up again further along the route, adding to the crush. The police gave up trying to clear a way and concentrated on keeping people from jumping on the running board.

They could do nothing about the cars behind, though. In one of them was Louis Mountbatten, cousin of the Prince and later to be the last Viceroy of India. He had been brought on the tour as a companion to the Prince, to try and keep him cheerful. One of his tasks was to keep the tour diary, and in it he wrote how 'twenty or thirty people' crowded onto the following cars, all the way up to Government House. When one woman fell running between the cars, the 'chauffeur put his gear in reverse in a desperate attempt to save the woman, and the car leapt back on to the fifth car, crushing the leg of a boy who was sitting on the bonnet The boy was removed, still cheering.'¹⁸ Because the cars were going very slowly no-one seems to have been badly hurt.

At the front of the procession the Prince was now standing, hatless, waving and smiling, soon covered in confetti, with Halsey clutching his coat tails to keep him steady. An almost full moon and the light of the illuminations meant he seldom disappeared into the darkness, and as he entered Manners Street a searchlight picked him out until he turned up Cuba Street. By the time he got to Kent Terrace the crowd had thinned a little. In all, it took an hour to get from the railway station to Government House.

The Wellington confetti-throwers started a trend, soon followed by other crowds as the tour moved south. A few days later, on the eve of the Prince's arrival on the West Coast, a local newspaper published a letter from Wellington urging confetti restraint. It was, the writer said, inconvenient for the Prince 'to sit through an official luncheon with confetti making its way down the back of his neck.' Furthermore, some people 'threw the boxes as well and sometimes they hit the Prince in the face.' But there were other missiles to worry about. Partway through the Australian leg of the tour Halsey wrote in a letter:

[T]he people, in their excitement, throw all sorts of things into the car, and they do hurt – bunches of flowers are all right but when it comes to chocolate bars and fruit and parcels of all sorts it gets very dangerous – even coins are thrown which hurt horribly sometimes.²⁰

He was referring mainly to the Australians, but New Zealanders were not much more restrained, although perhaps they had more sartorial taste. The dapper Prince was known for his walking canes, and the West Coast's Wellington correspondent noted that 'quite a number of people have thrown their walking sticks into the Prince's car.' One was even 'broken upon Admiral Halsey's head.' By the time the