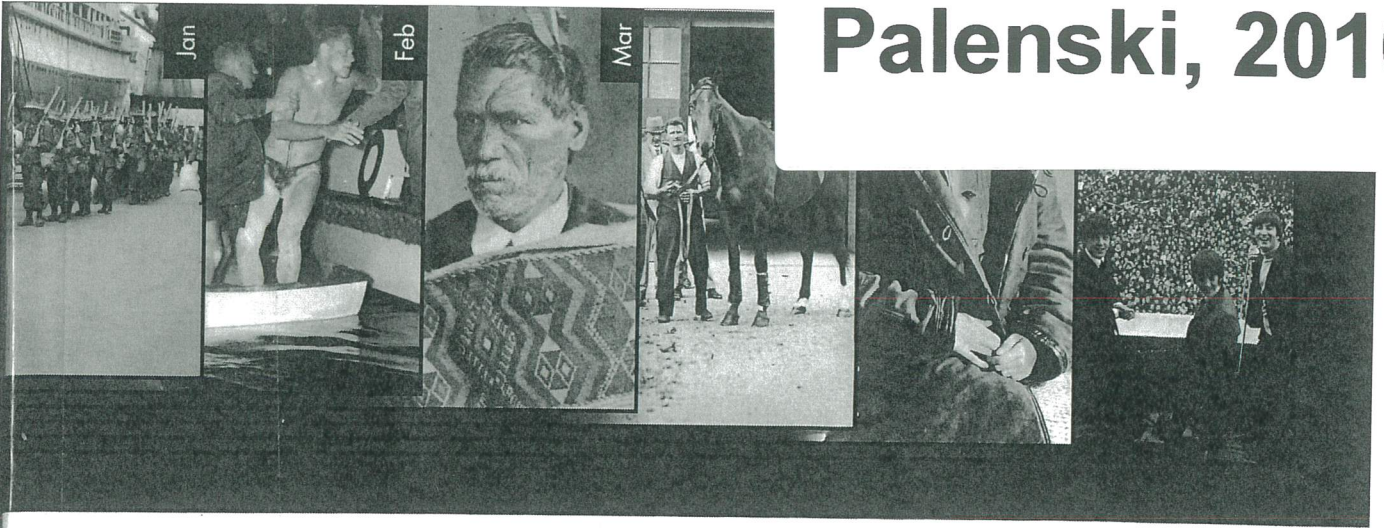


1858

Palenski, 2010



on this day in New Zealand

Ron Palenski



3rd

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May

May 1

1893 The deputy leader of the Liberals, Richard John Seddon, took over as leader of the party and as premier after the death the previous month of John Ballance. There has been speculation that Ballance wanted the job to go to Sir Robert Stout but by the time he was re-elected in a by-election in June, it was a month too late. Seddon became the longest serving premier (the title changed to prime minister while he was in power) in New Zealand history (13 years 44 days). His government introduced a number of reforms and social changes and was regarded by overseas observers as a 'social laboratory'. Seddon was regarded as an astute politician whose antennae were attuned to popular opinion and he acted accordingly. He was also regarded as an arch-imperialist, although he was also a staunch and proud New Zealander who habitually used the phrase 'Godzone'. His pro-English stance may have been motivated by New Zealand's reliance on the British market for its primary produce.

1945 New Zealand troops made first contact with Yugoslav soldiers in the Trieste area on the eve of the German surrender. The 2nd Division entered Trieste the next day and received the German surrender on the 3rd. Despite the end of German resistance, tension mounted because of the apparent intention by the Yugoslavs to occupy Trieste and its surrounding areas. High-level talks over the next three weeks eased what some soldiers thought may have been the start of another war.

May 2

1858 A Waikato war chief, Te Wherowhero, was crowned the first Maori king in a ceremony at Ngaruawahia. The Maori king movement (kingitanga) was established by Maori, who were concerned about a diminished influence and by increasing land sales — not all of them legal. There was an apparent feeling that if they had their own king, they would be of sufficient status

to deal with the governor, who represented the British queen. Te Wherowhero, who took the name Potatau on his coronation, was chosen by a meeting of chiefs as the first because of his warrior attributes and a lineage that traced back to the captains of the original Tainui and Te Arawa waka.

1940 The Second Echelon of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force (428 officers and 6410 other ranks) left Wellington in three troopships, to be joined by another that had left Lyttelton the previous day. The convoy was escorted by the New Zealand-based cruiser *Leander* and the Australian cruisers *Australia* and *Canberra*. It was joined off Sydney by Australian troopships, including the *Queen Mary*. While in the Indian Ocean, the convoy's destination was changed from Egypt to Britain via the Cape of Good Hope because of the increasing German threat to Britain. (Germany invaded the so-called Low Countries on May 10.)

1964 The last tram in regular service in New Zealand made its final trip from Thorndon to Newton in Wellington. It was led on its last run by a brass band and a stop was made at Parliament Buildings where 'Auld Lang Syne' was played. Although a regular crew was on board, the Mayor of Wellington, Frank (later Sir Francis) Kitts, was an honorary motorman over the final stages of the journey, which was watched by thousands of people lining the route. Some trams have since reappeared but none as part of regular passenger services.

1980 Christchurch cyclist Paul Jesson became the first New Zealander to win a stage in one of cycling's 'grand tours' when he won the 178 km 10th stage of the Vuelta a Espana (Tour of Spain). Jesson crashed in the Dauphine Libere in France a few weeks later and had to have a lower leg amputated. (The other 'grand tours' are the Tour de France and the Giro d'Italia.) Chris Jenner of Wellington shared a team win in a Tour de France stage in 2001 and Greg Henderson of Dunedin won a Vuelta stage — in Venlo in the Netherlands — in 2009.

May 3

1922 Playwright JM Barrie, the creator of Peter Pan, delivered a celebrated rectorial address at St Andrew's University in Scotland on 'Courage', in which he singled out Bernard Freyberg, who was in the audience. Barrie related how Freyberg had swum ashore at Bulair in April 1915 and lit flares on the beach in an attempt to deceive the Turks about where the Gallipoli landing would take place. Freyberg was naked and painted black. 'He is a VC now,' Barrie told the students, 'and you would not think to look at him that he could ever have presented such a disreputable appearance.'

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there is nothing to shew to what cause her loss is to be attributed.' The inquiry found that the ship was seaworthy in every respect when it left London and that its cargo had been stowed according to regulations.

1893 An Auckland boxer, John Nicholson, was acquitted of a charge of manslaughter resulting from the death of his opponent, Richard Forgie, in a 35-round fight in Auckland. Police stepped into the ring and stopped the fight when it became evident Forgie could not continue. He went to work the next day but died that night, and Nicholson was charged with manslaughter. The trial judge told the jury the fight was illegal and that Forgie died as a result of it, but the jury saw fit not to convict, telling the judge that the police should have stopped the fight sooner. Three members of the jury made a public statement that they disagreed with their colleagues.

1901 A Royal Commission on Federation appointed by Premier Richard Seddon recommended against New Zealand joining the Australian federation and becoming a state of Australia. The commissioners, chaired by lawyer Albert Pitt, concluded 'that merely for the doubtful prospect of further trade with the Commonwealth of Australia, or for any advantage which might reasonably be expected to be derived by this colony from becoming a State in such Commonwealth, New Zealand should not sacrifice her independence as a separate colony, but that she should maintain it under the political constitution she at present enjoys'. The Australian colonies federated to form the Commonwealth of Australia on January 1, 1901.

1925 A Kaipara farmer and returned soldier labelled a hero, Gordon Coates, became prime minister after Sir Francis Dillon Bell stood down after just two weeks. Coates, who had originally sided with the Liberals in Parliament, joined William Massey's Reform Party because he disagreed with the Liberals' policy on freehold land for farmers. By the early 1920s he was seen as a successor to Massey. The Reform Party under Coates was re-elected in the 1925 general election but lost power three years later to a combination of Labour and a quasi-Liberal party called United.

1941 Three days after evacuation orders were first issued, organised resistance by Allied forces on Crete came to an end. The Allied commander, Bernard Freyberg, was ordered back to Cairo against his wishes. New Zealand and other troops had gradually withdrawn over the mountainous spine of Crete and waited patiently to be taken off by ship. An official communiqué conceded: 'Our losses have been severe.' Of the 7702 New Zealanders on Crete, most of whom had evacuated from Greece, 671 were killed, 1943 were wounded and 2180 were taken prisoner. Many New Zealanders stayed hidden on the island, working with locals against the German occupiers.