

inevitability about it, given the origins of the venture. The problem is the resolute refusal to restructure the economy, advocated by Walter Nash at the Industrial Development Conference in 1960, promoted by the IMF investigation in 1968, and latest of all, recommended in the Porter Report. For without this restructuring the implicit contract between the generations is unenforceable. The problem is the one recognized in 1976 by Morris Janowitz: the failure of the welfare state to generate a political, social or intellectual basis for sustaining and transforming itself. The problem is, in Thomson's own words, 'the tame scholarship' which has masked 'and so sustained the manipulation of the implicit contract between the generations', which collectively have treated the two most fanciful Utopias of this century, socialism and the welfare state, as matters of self congratulation rather than scepticism.

HARVEY FRANKLIN

*Victoria University of Wellington*

*Governors and Settlers: Images of Authority in the British Colonies, 1820-80.* By Mark Francis. Canterbury University Press, 1992. 331pp. NZ price: \$69.95.

FORTY YEARS AGO imperial history occupied a very prominent place in the curriculum of New Zealand university history departments, and rare was the student who completed his or her major in history without learning a great deal about such topics as the Durham Report and the Statute of Westminster. From the fifties the decline of the Empire itself was accompanied, with the customary time-lag, by the decline of the prominence given to matters imperial. The Empire became a forgotten subject.

This new book by Mark Francis appears to confirm that 'imperial history' is re-emerging in a new, one might even say, post-modern, or at least post-structuralist, guise. Old topics are being looked at in startling new ways, and some unexpected new insights are emerging. One thinks for instance, of Ronald Hyam's work on sexuality and the empire or, to come closer to home, the profound disturbance which James Belich gave to conventional views on New Zealand's wars of the 1860s.

Francis provides a study of the political culture of British settler colonies, focusing on the period 1820-1850 when governors were more than titular figureheads. He has rescued from oblivion some quite intense debates about the ideas of governance which were held by these men and those over whom they governed. This is viewed against the background of political debate in Britain itself from which the governors were but temporary exiles and in whose affairs some of them wished in due course to have a renewed involvement. Colonies were seen as laboratories for experimentation in forms of political organization which were not yet safe or wise in Britain itself. The book stresses the consequences of the weakness of patterns of deference in the colonies. There was abundant questioning of the ways in which authority was exercised.

This is a study of discourse. There is much emphasis on ceremonial and what is meant. The author investigates in considerable and often entertaining detail the many rituals and ceremonies in which governors engaged, often because this was what was expected of them. He teases out the hidden agendas, the strategies, the unspoken meanings of these occasions.

This is a book which needs and largely repays careful and close reading. It suffers from a rather disjointed presentation in which there is some risk that a reader who does not have a reasonably sound prior knowledge of colonial history may go astray. There is no attempt

to present a narrative framework, and the book comes to an abrupt conclusion without a drawing together of threads.

Francis has selected a small number of governors for close study and explains that in choosing them he was motivated by a desire to stir up controversy among historians of colonial societies: this is badly needed, he thinks. The governors are shown as serving as moral exemplars and as representatives of the qualities of an idealized monarchy. This meant that much, indeed often extreme, importance was attached to a governor's character and personal style. These were minutely scrutinized in what were usually tiny and isolated communities in which the governor was more often than not on his own, struggling to survive and appear an embodiment of authority in a rapidly changing new society. There was a great deal of biting satire and cruel exposure of real or impugned personal weaknesses.

There is a chapter on New Zealand with discussion of FitzRoy, Grey and Gore Browne. He concludes that 'since government was more of an ideal than a reality, basic theoretical issues were more prominent in New Zealand than in other colonies.' However, he also argues that their personalities were of critical importance, not least because of the way they were regarded by Maori, and the book contains some pungent thumb-nail sketches of their foibles and eccentricities. In a few pages Francis engages vigorously in a defence of Grey against his numerous critics and claims that Grey was a sincerely religious man. His concern for the welfare of Maori if the settlers should receive self-government has been unfairly obscured by the willingness of historians to accept the misrepresentation of him by contemporary leaders of settler opinion as power-hungry and devious. Francis sees New Zealand as different from the other colonies in that the ceremonies involved and appealed to the indigenous people as a recognition of their crucial significance for the establishment of sovereignty.

This is an original book whose interpretations are certain to have a considerable influence on the writing of nineteenth-century colonial history.

DAVID HAMER

*Victoria University of Wellington*

*Fatal Success. A History of the New Zealand Company.* By Patricia Burns. Edited by Henry Richardson. Heinemann Reed, 1989. 327pp. NZ price: \$39.95.

THIS BOOK begins with 12 gentlemen at dinner in Hampstead in March 1839. Key members of the New Zealand Land and Colonization Company, they were gloomily considering a tangled history of past endeavours, their company's tardy subscription list, and its failure to gain a charter, when William Hutt MP 'dropped a bombshell' — the government was about to legislate for its own pre-emptive right over land in New Zealand. Thereupon Edward Gibbon Wakefield galvanized that gloomy dinner table by recommending the immediate dispatch of an expedition to 'acquire all the land you can'. His maxim, 'possess yourselves of the Soil & you are secure', reverberates throughout the book. This policy was pursued to 'Fatal Success'.

This is a fast moving narrative throughout, with thumbnail sketches of the participants, a feel for their changing moods, and indications of the errors and ignorance associated with their thoughts and actions. *Fatal Success* is perhaps as much in tune with *Pride and Prejudice* and *Vanity Fair* as with the central purposes of today's historians. Patricia