

Instead what is offered is a straightforward factual testimony of the life and career trajectory of an honourable, conscientious Christian gentleman with a strong sense of family pride partnered with social responsibility. Given the underdeveloped state of biographical writing on Solomon Islanders this alone would justify publication. But that is not all; since of recent years the Solomons have been known for little more than corruption, inefficiency and violent lawlessness it is salutary to be reminded that there are still reserves of honesty, decency and rationality there that might one day be drawn on to underwrite the work of reconstruction.

Regarding content, the book is useful for tracing the career path of one of the first generation of indigenous officials in Solomon Islands and also for Gina's sad and thoughtful reflections on the wretched state of his country after a quarter century of independence: 'I do not blame the colonial regime for all today's ills' (p.280).

Also sad is the truth of the words of a colleague who told Judith Bennett that she 'would not get much credit for such a publication [as this one] in the university promotion stakes' (p.xix). On the authority of a faculty dean of my acquaintance, to invoke just one piece of evidence, this has also been the case at another New Zealand university besides that of Otago, where Dr Bennett works. And her response to that pusillanimous caveat? 'Too bad, that was not why I took on the work'. Certain other Pacific historians will know what she means.

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The Heather and the Fern: Scottish Migration and New Zealand Settlement. Edited by Tom Brooking and Jennie Coleman. University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 2003. 206 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 1-877276-33-2.

THE LAST 15 YEARS have witnessed an intensification of interest in the composition of New Zealand's European population, in the demographic and cultural differences between the various national groups that migrated here and in the contribution of each group to the nation's life and culture. Inspired by recent developments in British historiography as well as the rise of diaspora studies, scholars have sought to disaggregate the nebulous British immigrant and recognize the distinctive English, Scottish, Irish and even Welsh immigrant presence. First cab off the rank in this rediscovery of nineteenth-century newcomers were the Irish. A substantial body of work emerged in the wake of Donald Akenson's *Half the World From Home* (1990). This collection of essays sets out explicitly to match the energy of recent work on New Zealand's Irish, and in doing so sets an excellent platform for future research on the Scots in New Zealand.

The Heather and the Fern comprises several papers delivered at the 1998 Bamforth conference on Scottish migration as well as several supplementary essays. It includes contributions from leading international scholars of the study of Scotland and Scottish migration as well as locally-based writers. In the opening chapter, John MacKenzie, a distinguished imperial historian, emphasizes the very close connections between the modern history of Scotland and British imperial history, and shows the ways in which the empire came to constitute a critical part of Scottish identity both at home and abroad. He also illustrates that national groups' standing within the empire was dynamic and shows how the standing of the Scots was transformed between the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century as the predominantly Roman Catholic Irish were assigned the role of the empire's bad boys and girls. Eric Richards, displaying his deep knowledge of the Highland clearances, examines New Zealand's Highland emigrants in comparative perspective. Using a series of vignettes, Richards demonstrates how cultural markers

disappeared quickly in those contexts where immigrants were most economically successful.

Tom Brooking's introduction to the volume and his lucid chapter on the Scottish contribution to New Zealand dispel some longstanding myths about the origins and characteristics of the immigrants in New Zealand and then poses some significant challenges for future historians. At their heart is the key question of how influential Scottish migrants to New Zealand were. As Brooking shows, the proportion of Scots in New Zealand's nineteenth-century immigrant stream (21%) exceeded the Irish (18%), hence his concern that 'emphasis on New Zealand's Irish heritage over the Scottish is counter-historical' (p.11). But Brooking is also astute enough to realize the limits of the numbers game and his substantive chapter ranges much more widely, exploring the Scottish contribution to the economy, politics, national culture and literature. As he notes, a great deal of leg work will be needed before the place of the Scots can be accurately assessed, and he sets out a research agenda that should do much to refine current understandings of the Scots in New Zealand.

Other chapters, too, make noteworthy additions to our understanding of New Zealand–Scotland connections. Rosalind McClean's excellent essay examines Scottish women's changing attitudes to emigration. Where, she points out, nineteenth century Scottish men were willing participants in the European peopling of the New World, for much of the century women in Scotland were reluctant to depart their homeland. However, in the latter part of the century that reticence to depart diminished, and a woman's willingness to migrate eventually became an increasing point of attractiveness for potential suitors. Overall, this thoughtful chapter shows a firm command of the subject and confirms McClean's position as one of New Zealand's best scholars of migration. In other valuable contributions Jim McAloon examines the Scots in the colonial economy, Terry Hearn delves into the composition of the Scots population on the goldfields in the 1860s and Angela McCarthy explores twentieth-century migrants' experiences of New Zealand as revealed in personal accounts. The volume also has an interdisciplinary flavour, with chapters by Jennie Coleman and Alan Riach examining the transmission of music culture and verse.

In all, this is a stimulating collection of essays and one that establishes a comprehensive agenda for future research in this emerging field. However, the volume leaves open and unresolved a crucial issue which must move closer to the forefront in all forthcoming work on New Zealand's nineteenth-century immigration — contribution and how it is assessed. With advocates for various national groups now asserting their subjects' critical role in nation building a paradigm shift of sorts is necessary to move beyond the current state of play. In particular, it will be interesting to see if any historian is prepared to risk conceding that her or his group of immigrants were actually unimportant and to explain why this is so. I suspect such an admission of unimportance, when it does come, might end up telling us a very great deal about the constitution of New Zealand's national culture and identity.

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