

Chiefs of Industry: Māori Tribal Enterprise in Early Colonial New Zealand. By Hazel Petrie. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2006. 320 pp. NZ Price: \$50.00. ISBN 1-869403-76-2.

MANY MĀORI KEENLY AND SUCCESSFULLY ENGAGED in the new economic possibilities offered by Pākehā colonization up to the mid-1850s, producing wheat and potatoes for export and for local settlers, and investing heavily in flourmills and coastal schooners. Māori production of low-cost food products, particularly for export and the Auckland market, was initially the powerhouse of the economy. From such a promising start Māori then faded from the scene. Although a number of historians have asked why this boom and bust occurred, Hazel Petrie's *Chiefs of Industry*, based on her doctoral research, is the first book that comprehensively investigates Māori involvement in the market, incorporating an exhaustive amount of primary source material, including Māori-language sources. The book is also adorned with numerous contemporary images.

The question that came to my mind when reading this book was, to what extent in the decisions that we make are we pragmatic, rational individuals, or bound by the confines of culture and society? Contemporary Pākehā commentators sometimes spoke of Māori 'mania' for new things, including ships and flourmills, which were soon discarded once they had lost their novelty. What value was a new flourmill once all hapū possessed one? The missionaries Benjamin Ashwell and Thomas Chapman criticized Māori for purchasing expensive capital items then failing to maintain them. Petrie believes that some historians who suggest that Māori engaged in commerce for cultural reasons rather than sound economic ones have taken too much credence of these missionaries' disparagement of Māori capitalism. Ann Parsonson and James Belich, who both argue that competition for mana between tribal groups spurred Māori economic activity, immediately come to mind. Petrie does not directly confront opposing theories but instead seeks to show that although culture may have influenced how Māori went about their business activities, their decisions were made on sound economic grounds given the information they had at the time.

Chiefs of Industry first investigates the pre-contact Māori economy, then the 'cross-cultural exchange' opportunities provided by Pākehā before 1840. Although she does not dwell on the complexity of the interconnections between Māori and the early whalers, traders or missionaries (compared, for example, with Dorothy Urlich Cloher's *Hongi Hika*) Petrie nevertheless develops her argument that Māori were innovative and responded to trade opportunities in a rational, fiscally prudent manner. She then explores how Pākehā both intellectualized and influenced Māori commerce through the philosophies of Christianity and British political economists, such as Adam Smith and Richard Whately. Both missionaries and the government promoted the production of wheat, which they considered a potent symbol of civilization. Colonial officials, such as George Grey, also had pragmatic reasons for encouraging tribal enterprise. The New Zealand economy needed Māori agriculture, and Māori consumption of British goods helped fund the government through duties. For Grey also, commerce implied relationship. He believed that as Māori wealth increased, they would be less likely to risk losing it by rebelling against the government. Grey also gave seeds and agricultural equipment as presents to chiefs, and provided loans for ploughs, flourmills and schooners. Such favours were not without strings: largesse generally stopped once Māori had sold their lands.

Petrie then explains why Māori tribal groups were prepared to invest huge sums of money purchasing water-powered flourmills and coastal ships (again for pragmatic reasons), and how these investments meant new or changed relationships with Pākehā. She also sets out to demolish the notion that Māori primarily sought mills or ships for

mana or as novelty items: some mills operated for years, and there were varying modes of ownership, other than just hapū based. Māori reacted to the market pragmatically, but economic changes greatly affected the social structure, particularly chiefly power already weakened by missionary-influenced change. Chiefs retained the cultural responsibilities of leading tribal projects (whether providing hospitality or purchasing a flourmill) but with less economic capability, whereas commoners were able to make and keep their own money. During this period Pākehā surpassed Māori in number, and gained self-government. Although the increasing settler population provided more mouths for Māori to feed, the balance of power had tilted towards Pākehā.

From 1856 Māori began to withdraw from the market, a significant historical development with repercussions for the subsequent armed conflict. Various historians have speculated on 'what went wrong'. For example, Belich and Parsonson imply that Māori were no longer excited by the novelty or mana of mills and ships; R.P. Hargreaves suggests that economic slump, maintenance problems with mills and ships, and weakened wheat strains led to Māori dissatisfaction with the new economy; Keith Sinclair asserts that Māori antipathy to Pākehā grew with the latter's demands for land, and that economic withdrawal represented growing Māori nationalism and a rejection of European mores; and David Pearson states that Pākehā competition drove Māori from the market place. Petrie only marginally engages with the historiography, but provides her own set of causes, suggesting first that Pākehā politicians made it difficult for Māori producers. This is unconvincing: while government subsidies to steam vessels no doubt undermined Māori shipping, the demand for produce in Auckland remained, with settlers having to import flour. She also asserts that increasing landlessness diminished economic power. While this became true, it was Waikato iwi, who still retained most of their land, who pulled out most significantly — most likely for political rather than economic reasons. Petrie also asserts that Māori sold considerable amounts of land to buy mills and ships, even suggesting that because 'during Grey's first governorship 32,634,769 acres were purchased for a total of £61,847 or an average of £1 per 527 acres' that a £400 ship was equivalent to 210,800 acres. This calculation is severely distorted by the huge South Island purchases: for North Island groups such a vessel would have been a fraction of that figure. It is more likely, as Petrie's own data shows, that most Māori made the money, or went into debt, to effect large purchases.

Chiefs of Industry is a valuable addition to Māori history. Notwithstanding any reservations on how it explains why Māori commerce collapsed, the book offers sound theories on why and how Māori engaged in the market in early colonial New Zealand. It also provides copious examples from the primary data that will be of great interest to social and economic historians.

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Wealthmakers: A History of the Northern Employers' and Manufacturers' Associations. By Selwyn Parker. Employers & Manufacturers Association (Northern) Inc., Auckland, 2005. 368 pp. NZ price: \$49.95. ISBN 0-473-10334-6.

THE AUCKLAND MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION commenced in 1886 (initially called the New Zealand Industrial Association) and the Auckland Provincial Employers' Association in 1901. In 1996, the two organizations combined forces to become the Employers and Manufacturers Association (Northern).

The founding of such associations was part of a national and international move to galvanize promoters and proprietors into administrative and informational bodies