

Tangiwai. Medical History of New Zealand prior to 1860. By L.K. Gluckman. Privately published, Auckland, 1976. 265 pp. N.Z. price: \$13.

ALTHOUGH presented as 'a medical history of nineteenth-century New Zealand', *Tangiwai* does not provide the comprehensive systematic study we might expect from the title. Rather, Dr Gluckman's book is 'a series of contributions' (to use his own words) to this subject. Most interesting contributions they are, but taken as a whole they do not add up to more than a useful compilation of material bearing on parts of a large and neglected topic. Awareness of the book's genesis will help to explain its limitations. Dr Gluckman tells us it 'developed accidentally' from notes he had accumulated in the course of other researches, and this is an origin consistently evident in the jumbled and largely autonomous chapters each collecting together a good deal of more or less related information on a variety of topics.

What does unify the book and give it value beyond that of a mere compilation is the author's special contribution as a historian qualified in medicine, and, more importantly, sympathetically understanding of the Maori social and cultural background that is so essential to his story. As a medical man he is able to comment authoritatively on the medical evidence he reviews. A great many topics are dealt with and much valuable information brought into the light of day. The first part of the book is based on an assiduous reading of numerous journals and other accounts, mostly published, by early nineteenth-century voyagers, missionaries, travellers and visitors. Dr Gluckman has gone through this body of material and abstracted everything he could find of medical interest, enabling him to assemble a dozen chapters on the first ninety years of European medicine in New Zealand. He displays a particular interest in the medical practitioners of these years, dealing with them both as individuals and as a profession, and making a valuable contribution to this part of our social history. Reference is made to the missionaries' attitude to medical work, and these chapters tell us something of European ill-health and its treatment in this period, recording such medical milestones as the first 'hospital' in New Zealand (du Fresne's in 1772), the first paranoid psychosis (1773), the first Maori to be vaccinated (1824 or 1825, in England), the first resident physician (Ross, 1833), the first operation under general anaesthetic (1847), and the first medical journal (Fischer's *Homeopathic Echo*, 1855-56). Documented also are many early references to Maori health, reflecting European doctors' consistent interest in the diseases and treatments of the native population. But to a large extent Dr Gluckman has merely collected and summarized all this evidence. Here and there he makes an interesting medical judgment (though perhaps not everyone will agree with his most startling diagnosis, or even with the need for it: that the irrationalities detectable in Governor Hobson's behaviour can be explained by organic brain-damage induced by progressive neurosyphilis of which the stroke he suffered in 1840 was a clinical manifestation). His opening chapter on Cook is original too, discussing medical aspects of the voyages and suggesting that the anti-scurvy regime aboard his ships owed its success more to Cook's rigorous application of the findings of his scientific supernumeraries than to any personal understanding of scurvy as a nutritional deficiency disease. But this has been published elsewhere (*New Zealand Medical Journal*, LXX (1969)). Apart from these more substantial passages,

and parts of some other chapters, there is little analysis or even thematic unity in this section.

It is in the second and third sections that Dr Gluckman's most valuable work is to be found. As a practising psychiatrist with an unusually deep insight into Maori attitudes to health and ill-health, he is amply qualified to argue that current problems of Maori health can only be understood and combatted with reference to the history of contact with Europeans and its effects on physical and cultural aspects of health. The book is inspired throughout by this essential understanding. Again diligently mining a wide variety of published contemporary sources, he has provided a more comprehensive survey of Maori health in the early colonial period than any other we have available. Yet here also the results are sometimes disappointing. His coverage of pre-European health is unsystematic and inconclusive, and the brief discussions of nineteenth-century diseases are essentially summaries of descriptions by contemporary medical observers. Tuberculosis he finds was an introduced disease; information on venereal disease, mental illness, gynaecological and obstetrical practices, and the use of alcohol, is collected and presented. Leprosy is given a more substantial treatment, but this has been published before (*New Zealand Medical Journal*, LXI (1962)). The scanty comment he makes on the general causes of Maori population decline is largely derivative. He is more original and adventurous in discussing infanticide and cannibalism, arguing that the distastefulness of these institutions has deflected attention from their important role in promoting Maori health, by controlling the pressure on scarce food resources in the case of infanticide, and contributing valuable protein to Maori diet through the practice of cannibalism.

It is when Dr Gluckman comes to Maori attitudes to health and ill-health, their modification by western contact, and their persistent survival, that he is at his best. Maori concepts of health were previously the subject of his unpublished clinical researches in ethnopsychiatry, and *Tangiwai* is based on the historical material he found it necessary to gather in order to explain the persistence today of non-western beliefs about health and disease. In reviewing the question of whether Maoris had developed any rational medical system, he concludes that their empirical medical knowledge was not more than 'minimal'. The almost complete reliance on spiritual factors in the causation of illness discouraged any considerable belief that the progress of disease could be interfered with, or, if treated, could be arrested by other than spiritual methods. With the arrival of Europeans there came familiarity with the idea that many classes of disease were amenable to empirical treatments. Confronted with competition from missionaries and doctors, the *tohunga* was able to maintain his position in Maori society by taking account of the appeal of new medical beliefs and practices. Western notions of prescribing and nursing were incorporated into the continuing structure of belief in the spiritual causation of many illnesses, herbal remedies increased rapidly in number and acceptance, and the importance of the 'newer syncretistic *tohunga*' has persisted even to this day. These questions would bear even further investigation, and Dr Gluckman is aware that his conclusions conflict with those, for instance, of Buck, who argued for extensive pre-European Maori medical knowledge.

A recognition of the continuing influence of non-western ideas and attitudes is well-founded. Maori awareness of being different is an intangible

but nonetheless important factor in many more than the merely medical aspects of post-European history, and Dr Gluckman is right in stressing the role of 'nationalism' in perpetuating non-western attitudes and motivations. However the sense of Maori identity and the will to maintain it was surely not confined, as he implies, to such limited manifestations of 'nationalism' as Hauhauism and Ringatu. Another question of general historic interest is opened up by the author's speculations about what might have been. Pointing out the failure of nineteenth-century governments to pay any serious attention to the problems of Maori health, he tentatively suggests that land-hunger might well have been a factor in the Pakeha's complacent acceptance of a sickly and declining Maori race. While we must certainly acknowledge the effects of such attitudes on government policies, most of the explanation could well lie in the sort of thinking that until the latter part of the century did not include supervision of the people's health (Maori or Pakeha) among the responsibilities of government. Commonly too, reliance was placed not so much on direct action against low standards of Maori health as on assimilating Maoris into superior (and healthier) Pakeha lifestyles.

Dr Gluckman's book is privately published. This aspect is unfortunate, for not only would a reputable publisher have excluded the many typographical errors (in a work that comments at one point on the poor proof-reading of one of its nineteenth-century published sources), and insisted on a much more polished and organized presentation, but a wider market would have been ensured for what could have been an even more useful contribution to an important aspect of our social history.

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Oceania and Beyond: Essays on the Pacific since 1945. Edited by F.P. King, Greenwood Press, Westport and London, 1976. xxii, 265 pp. N.Z. price: \$29.24

TO DESCRIBE this book as 'an anthology of sixteen new essays', 'hopefully' with 'a coherent design' is wishful thinking on the editor's part. Few of the essays have the picked quality one would expect in an anthology. Several would not even rate as good journalism. To divide this mixed bag into three parts does not disguise a lack of editorial planning and control. Nor does it comfortably accommodate C. Hartley Grattan's 37-page, distinctively American 'overview' of Australian and New Zealand security policies in Pacific-Asia and W.T. Roy's lightweight, eleven-page review of New Zealand's defence dilemmas in the 1970s.

The editor has made a brave attempt to explain and justify this diversity. The major topic, being examined, he says: 'is not colonialism or imperialism or neo-colonialism as such, but bilateral isolation of the sort that has