

The Politics of Social Security. By Elizabeth Hanson. Auckland University Press/Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1980. 181pp. N.Z. price: \$14.20.

AS POLICY makers urge 'new directions' for the welfare state, this study of the origins of social security proves well-timed. Social security quickly became part of New Zealand life but, as Ms Hanson demonstrates, it was not enacted without considerable negotiation and debate. Then, as now, the cost of welfare was a matter of prime concern.

The Politics of Social Security divides into three parts. The first three chapters survey early steps toward social security in New Zealand and overseas countries, and outline the Labour Party's policy on social security before the 1935 election. Four chapters then examine in detail the process by which a general set of welfare proposals was hammered into practicable form by the first Labour Government. The final sections review later additions and modifications to the 1938 Social Security Act. These last chapters are particularly useful for their reference to the 1970s, when Accident Compensation and the superannuation schemes of both major political parties introduced new inequities into the social security structure.

The discussion of pensions legislation prior to 1935 is somewhat thin, with little mention of the group and individual pressures behind these measures. Closer analysis might have revealed just how emphatically welfare initiatives came back to the politicians in the 1930s. One would also like to learn more of Labour politicians' parliamentary activities in the 1920s and earlier, their contribution to the debate on family allowances and pensions for the blind, and the bills they themselves introduced in the 1920s. A brief mention of Savage's Motherhood Endowment Bills, for example, suggests that the 'politics of social security' began well before 1935.

The author is nonetheless admirably clear when dealing with forms of income maintenance. She traces the tendency in New Zealand to reject social insurance in favour of non-contributory, means-tested pensions, and establishes that by 1935 the Labour Party had evolved a distinctive policy on pensions, health, and unemployment insurance. This, she argues, went beyond a simple humanitarianism to incorporate long-held Labour principles.

The problem was to translate these broad principles into acceptable social policy. With extensive reference to the Nash Papers in National Archives, Ms Hanson reconstructs the negotiations of 1935-38, and in the light of this evidence examines existing accounts of this period. These are chapters much concerned with the deliberations of committees, negotiations between the Government and British Medical Association over health proposals, and the need to balance social and economic goals with financial necessity. John A. Lee's account of a split between cabinet and caucus is confirmed, but not in its entirety. Caucus insistence brought a more pragmatic cabinet back to original party principles, but the differences within the party were less fundamental than he implies.

The Politics of Social Security will remain the definitive political account of the 1938 Social Security Act. It provides a valuable survey of health and income benefits until 1978, and is particularly clear on the principles behind these measures. In so far as this book is concerned only with welfare politics, it invites further research into the social background of the Act. Later studies may also

reveal the extent to which legislators' intentions were realized in the day-to-day administration of their policies.

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Provincial Perspectives. Essays in Honour of W.J. Gardner. Edited by Len Richardson and W. David McIntyre. Published by Whitcoulls for the University of Canterbury, 1980. 149pp. N.Z. price: \$12.95.

THE LIMITED range of outlets available for the publication of historical research in New Zealand includes the occasional *festschrift*. Over the last two decades W.P. Morrell, W.T.G. Airey, J.C. Beaglehole and F.L.W. Wood have been among the historians honoured in this way. Now they are joined by W.J. Gardner who, while perhaps not quite as well-known to the general public as some of those just mentioned, has over the years earned the deep respect of his fellow historians in New Zealand for his contributions to the academic study of regional history.

In view of the considerable inadequacies of this volume, it is perhaps time to raise some questions as to the purpose of a *festschrift*.

In the first place, a *festschrift* honours an historian and commemorates his contributions to the discipline. In this respect, *Provincial Perspectives* falls short in several ways. The most serious is the lack of a bibliography of Gardner's writings. As is the case with most New Zealand historians, these are scattered in many places. If an historian's influence is considered significant enough to be commemorated in a book, then surely the editors owe us the duty of informing us where we can find the written sources of that influence. It is particularly strange that they should have allowed W.H. Oliver in his introduction to have casually mentioned various pieces by Gardner without telling us, even in footnotes, where these are located. One would also have appreciated the publication of more articles embodying the results of research supervised or influenced substantially by Gardner. The reader will find great difficulty in gauging from the contributions any clear measure of his influence on historical research and writing.

It is also regrettable that so many of the articles in the book are by authors whose views on the subjects covered have been published recently in book form or are shortly to be published. It is, for instance, hard to understand why space was given to what would appear to be little more than a summary by Professor McIntyre of the analysis of Henry Sewell's Canterbury career which he has just given the world at considerable length in his introduction to the Sewell journals. What one misses is a feature which gave great value to, for example, the Airey *festschrift* (*Studies of a Small Democracy*) or the University of Canterbury's other recent collection of historical essays, *Miners and Militants*—the publication of material, by research students in particular, that otherwise would not easily or quickly have found its way into print, given the limited number of publication