

On a Roll: A History of Gambling and Lotteries in New Zealand. By David Grant. Victoria University Press, Wellington, 1994. 336 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 0-86473-266-X.

COMMISSIONED TO WRITE a history of lotteries, David Grant secured a broader brief, encompassing recreational gambling. Participants in lotteries have shared the same impulses and been subject to similar fluctuations of moral censure and state control as those who pursued profit from other games of chance. Even so, Grant discusses the development of lotteries separately.

Thus the book falls into two broadly symmetrical parts comprising three chronological chapters each. Gambling (and more specifically, betting) is the focus of the first part which provides an over-arching context for the later discussion of lotteries. Though a 'definitive history' of recreational gambling is not attempted, Grant provides a fairly comprehensive survey, nonetheless. 'Cultural Baggage' sketches in characteristically vivid detail how the British masculine gambling tradition was transplanted to the colony 'within a culture of class'. In its diverse forms, gambling was 'widespread' in the early settlements, amongst the male elite, the 'plebian' goldminers, and the Chinese with their fantan and pakapoo. It became 'rife' in colonial sporting contests which soon attracted gambling entrepreneurs, notably bookmakers. Thus was established a multi-faceted pursuit of pleasure and profit that would resist attempts to suppress and control. 'The Politics of Wowserism' examines such attempts. The title encapsulates Grant's (and the conventional) explanation for the rise in anti-gambling sentiment: the increased advocacy of moral purity by evangelical protestants. Women whose 'concerns were primarily social rather than morally doctrinaire' are also seen as a key influence in the first decade of this century, when the anti-gambling movement rose to the peak of its influence. Yet Grant's own evidence suggests that the anti-gambling leagues garnered leadership and support from wider social and ideological sources — such as trade unionist J.A. McCullough and Chief Justice Stout, for example.

The quarantining of legal gambling to the totalisator on the race course, and the banning of bookmakers from 1910, represented the high point of attempts to suppress and control. But, as Grant notes, the 'scale of soldier gambling during the First World War would become the ultimate repudiation of the anti-gambling passions'. In 'A Penny Here: A Pay Packet There', he shows that, while betting on horse races was the most 'prominent gamble' until the 1960s, a variety of other long-standing (and illegal) forms continued, with a degree of immunity or lack of it according to class, ethnicity, and locality: poker, two-up, pakapoo, large-scale schools organized by gambling entrepreneurs in clubs, and the variety of local enthusiasms in the 'parochial gambling tradition' of the West Coast, for example. Here, as elsewhere, photographs and interviews are used to excellent effect.

Ultimately the mesh of controls had perverse effects. In particular, the banned bookie flourished until the late 1940s, meeting the demand for illegal off-course and doubles betting. Also to be noted, however, was the extent to which the banning of bookmakers assisted the development of amateur sports (notably rugby) on which gambling became insignificant. And while the bookies might flourish, the anti-gamblers and the supporters of the 'tote' had succeeded in giving them an ambiguous status — as 'unclean', social parasites, inherently dishonest — even though individuals were deemed honourable by clients.

Thus, when the state finally sought to bring the law closer to popular practice, it was the 'tote' (long a rich source of tax revenue) which secured the monopoly of legal off-course betting. Not that bookies disappeared from their long-standing haunts in the workplace and the pub, as Grant shows. More prominent in working-class pubs and clubs (legally so from 1959) was housie, which grew rapidly in popularity, prize-money and

the possibilities of scams — ensuring, as with other games of chance, on-going state surveillance and control. Nonetheless, the advent of housie and the TAB signified relaxing attitudes towards gambling, and also a shift from its predominantly masculine culture.

At this point Grant turns to the story of lotteries, which has a similar pattern (in the chapter 'Selling Hope') of mid-nineteenth century popularity and attempted suppression from 1881, yet with exemptions ('Art Unions' and small sweepstakes), circumventions (local raffles, Tattersalls and other overseas lotteries), Presbyterian condemnation and Catholic tolerance, and state connivance (fundraising for the public good).

In 'Gambling by Euphemism', Grant examines in detail the development of state-controlled 'Art Unions' from 1932, with prizes in cash, rather than the legally stipulated 'alluvial gold', and organized by a private company so as to keep the state at arm's length from the possible taint of sponsoring 'immorality'. Competition from overseas lotteries, and the insatiable demand for the Art Unions' profits (especially to fund cultural pursuits) led to a new expanded lottery, the Golden Kiwi, from 1961. From this point, the path was set, seemingly inexorably, to ever bigger and more profitable lotteries, culminating in the 'Rolls-Royce of Lotteries', Lotto.

While Grant was right to seek to place the story of lotteries in a larger context, the structure of his account frustrates his purpose to some extent. Integrating the discussion of lotteries into the larger history of gambling would have allowed connections to be pursued more closely. The issues of sweepstakes and of Chinese gambling, and how they were dealt with, straddle both parts of his account awkwardly. Integration would have prevented a measure of repetition and allowed issues such as competition between various forms of gambling, class and gender differences in participation, the evolving definitions of 'respectable' versus 'non-respectable' gambling, and the arguments of the variety of anti-gamblers to be pursued more closely.

That said, I enjoyed this book. It is lively, well-researched, and frank in its assessments. It provides the best perspective yet on the making and remaking of a significant aspect of our popular culture. Gamblers, 'winners and losers', are portrayed empathetically. Not so the 'wowsers' however — they are history's losers in Grant's book: 'It was no contest'. Yet gambling behaviour in the 1990s seems a world away from the 1870s — on Grant's evidence. Despite relaxing attitudes, legal gambling remains quarantined and state-regulated. Though 'New Zealanders' wish to gamble' might seem to be 'an unquenchable thirst', Grant's statistics of the 'average' amount spent and the differences by socio-economic status suggest a large measure of prudential behaviour by a significant proportion of the population. Is this a measure of New Zealand becoming a white collar society; or has the propaganda of the anti-gamblers had a more enduring message than we care to admit?

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James Dilworth. By R.C.J. Stone. Dilworth Trust Board, Auckland, 1995. 269 pp. NZ price: \$49.95. ISBN 0-473-02990-1.

RUSSELL STONE has written an excellent biography of James Dilworth, the Auckland pioneer, property-owner, and philanthropist. It could not have been an easy task. Dilworth, a very private person, left little, apart from voluminous business records for