

Bilingual Hansard reports of Maori speeches never eventuated, but became unnecessary for the English-speaking Maori parliamentarians of the 1890s.

Translators still struggled technically; legislative 'Maorish' generated obscure neologisms and transliterations, for example, 'tenata kemana' for tenants in common and 'hea' for share. The Crown Law Office and House interpreters never compiled the required glossary.

Parkinson concludes that by 1900 te reo Maori was irrelevant for communication in the regular business of government. He also acknowledges Mantell and Fitzgerald as the principal mid-century advocates of regular non-English translation after the attempts by Busby, Hobson, FitzRoy and Clarke had been jettisoned, along with the Treaty and other 'Native' inconveniences, by 'good Governor Grey'. He ends with a sombre observation about the difficulty of bringing back a language from the brink of extinction, especially without a predator-free environment.

This is a very useful and innovative introductory study of government documents, suggesting many further questions. Hopefully someone will soon investigate the process of communication to Maori of government documents, whether in Maori or English, and the Maori understanding of them.

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1 Parkinson quotes Governor Gipps as considering the Declaration 'a silly, as well as an unauthorised act . . . a paper pellet fired off at Baron de Thierry'.

*Worlds in Collision: The Gay Debate in New Zealand, 1960–1986.* By Laurie Guy. Victoria University Press, Wellington, 2002. 342 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 0-86473-438-7.

THE DEBATE OVER HOMOSEXUALITY that occurred in New Zealand between the 1960s and 1980s had many features in common with other Western countries but there were also some distinctive local twists and these give this book its special flavour. Until the mid-twentieth century homosexuality was rarely mentioned in the press, or in any public discourse, except for dismal court reports of men in disgrace after being convicted of offences such as indecent assault. Then from the mid-1960s, as in North America and Europe, there was a shift in public opinion on homosexuality and other moral issues. An early indicator was the founding in 1967 of the New Zealand Homosexual Law Reform Society, with a respectable leadership of prominent academics and professional people and a liberal–reformist agenda. With the beginnings of the gay liberation movement in the early 1970s, homosexual men and lesbians began to speak for themselves and demanded equality: not merely a circumscribed toleration but full acceptance. The public debate shifted from law reform to gay rights. Over the next 15 years, Guy argues, it became clear that the debate over homosexuality reflected a clash of values and world-views among New Zealanders. On the one side was a traditional Christian and conservative viewpoint that stressed the need to obey God's eternal laws, preserve society from moral decay and protect the family. On the other side was an ideology that emphasized the primacy of individual freedom and 'sexual self-determination' in a society committed to pluralism and tolerance. In Guy's phrase, 'worlds collided'. He sees the passing of Fran Wilde's private member's bill in 1986 as a watershed; conservative Christians were defeated and lost much of their political clout.

Guy's book grew from his PhD thesis undertaken at the University of Auckland. It is an authoritative account, thoroughly researched from a diverse range of primary sources. These include interviews with more than 20 participants in the law reform campaign. The tone is measured and even-handed. As a lecturer in the New Zealand Baptist Theological College, in a denomination whose members were mostly vehemently opposed to relaxing the law on male homosexuality, Guy understands the mind-set and rhetoric of religious conservatives and fundamentalists but he maintains a critical stance. Not many historians of this subject have managed to present the views of both sides with such balance.

Guy conveys well the extent to which the debate over legislative change in the mid-1980s permeated and polarized the whole of New Zealand. Homosexual law reform became an issue on which everyone seemed to have an opinion. The intensity of the opposition led by conservative Christians was demonstrated by the presentation to parliament in 1985 of a monster petition claiming some 800,000 signatures. The scale of this grass-roots campaign had no counterpart in any other Western country. In Australia, by contrast (as in the United States), the laws against male homosexuality were a state matter and the path towards homosexual law reform extended over 20 years, beginning with South Australia in 1975 and ending (following intervention by the federal Labour government) with Tasmania in 1994. The story of the latter campaign, which in Tasmania was as divisive as it was in New Zealand, has been told by Miranda Morris, *The Pink Triangle* (University of New South Wales Press, 1995).

One of the sub-themes of this book is the struggle, often acrimonious, between the academics and church leaders who supported law reform as an end in itself but were unhappy about giving moral approval to homosexual behaviour, and the activists of the gay movement who sought equality and full social acceptance. Another theme is the way in which medical and scientific evidence was used by each side to support its case. For instance, the idea that a homosexual orientation was inborn or formed in early childhood was favoured by the gay movement, whereas conservative Christians drew upon literature which claimed that homosexuality involved a degree of choice so that with appropriate therapy a reorientation was possible. In the mid-1980s the first reported cases of AIDS, seen as a 'homosexual disease', introduced another ingredient. For conservative Christians, AIDS reinforced their claim that the decriminalization of male homosexual behaviour would encourage a lifestyle that led inevitably to disease and death.

The debate over homosexuality occurred alongside the emergence in New Zealand of a visible gay subculture with its own 'community' newspapers, meeting places, clubs, religious groups and public celebrations. This shaped the context within which the political debate was conducted. However, this development is scarcely mentioned in Guy's book. There is more to be said on the influence in the 1970s of the Catholic priest and university lecturer Felix Donnelly and, as Guy admits (p.138), about the debate in the Anglican Church at the local level. But these are relatively minor points. *Worlds in Collision* is to be warmly welcomed as a significant contribution to our understanding of New Zealand society in the latter half of the twentieth century.

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