

Doing Well and Doing Good: Ross & Glendining. Scottish Enterprise in New Zealand. By S.R.H. Jones. Otago University Press, Dunedin, 2010. 422pp. NZ price: \$49.95. ISBN 978-1-877372-74-2.

S.R.H. JONES, AN HONORARY RESEARCH FELLOW in Economic Studies at the University of Dundee, has provided a solid, well-written and generally engaging narrative economic history of the clothing and knitwear firm Ross & Glendining. The product of 16 years' research in the business records of Ross & Glendining held at the Hocken Collections, Jones's book traces the firm's foundation in Dunedin during the gold rushes in the early 1860s through to its acquisition by the United Empire Box group of companies in 1966. The story is outlined in five sections, which span the migration of the principal partners from Scotland to New Zealand, the diversification and consolidation of the company, its expansion from the long depression to the outset of the First World War, World War One through to the mid-1920s, and then the second generation's involvement in the company through to the company's demise.

With John Ross hailing from Caithness and Robert Glendining coming from Dumfries, the introduction and first three chapters give a brief summary of Scottish migration to New Zealand, the founders' Scottish background, the Otago setting and the voyage out. We learn that both men were apprenticed as drapers in their homeland, entered into partnership in 1862 and married two Scottish migrant sisters, Mary and Margaret Cassels. The book then proceeds to chart the company's history, nicely contextualized in the operation of society at large.

The ups and downs of the company's progress, together with its diversification, are charted throughout the book. This includes consideration of the deteriorating conditions of the 1890s which contributed to difficulties between Ross and Glendining, with the former wishing to convert their partnership to a joint-stock, limited-liability company. This eventually occurred in 1900, even though the firm survived the previous decade by being well run and capitalized. Warehouse expansion, meanwhile, characterized the early twentieth century at Dunedin, Christchurch and Wellington, with sub-branches established at Nelson and Wanganui. A successful branch was also established in Auckland, notwithstanding Glendining's opposition. Despite difficulties, the firm continued its expansion in the early twentieth century, and by the time of the First World War Ross & Glendining was a national enterprise and the leading textile mill in New Zealand. Yet difficult times were not far away; by 1921 the price of wool fell by half. Later that decade the company was hit hard but carried on through the Depression, and after the onset of the Second World War not only produced products for the forces, but diversified into the juvenile market. By the early 1950s, however, the firm began to struggle, due to fierce competition, overpriced goods and poor styles. Consequently, the firm began manufacturing under licence and restructuring followed. It was not enough, however, and Ross & Glendining was eventually taken over by the United Empire Box group of companies. In 1969 Mosgiel Woollen Mills acquired Roslyn Mills and closed in 1980 when the former went into receivership.

Primarily a narrative history, the book lacks conceptual and theoretical engagement. For instance, examples are given throughout the book of Ross and Glendining's preference to hire Scots-born workers, yet relevant work on ethnic networks in the Scottish diaspora is elided. And while the book's subtitle proclaims Scottish enterprise in New Zealand, there is only minimal discussion of Ross and Glendining's Scottish ethnicity, while minimal comparisons exist with other businesses established by Scots (or people of other ethnicities) throughout the country. We also obtain glimpses of transnational operations but, again, such themes are not developed. Nor is there a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the sources utilized.

Nevertheless, the book has considerable merits. Quite apart from mapping the main phases of the company's history and development, it gives us a sense of the uses of coarse

and fine wool. Developments over time also emerge, with the manufacture in the early twentieth century of felt hats, boots and shoes. We also learn of the competition generated by companies like Hallensteins, who produced clothing in the colony rather than sourcing it from abroad. Just as insightful are the tantalizing glimpses we gain of the characters of the key individuals. We learn, for instance, of John Ross and Robert Glendining's philanthropic exercises, with Ross contributing to the Presbyterian church, Knox College, the YMCA, the YWCA and St Margaret's College. He also established the Ross Institute in Halkirk, Scotland. Yet this 'doing good', although proclaimed in the title, is significantly less discussed than Ross and Glendining's 'doing well', a result of the focus on business rather than social history.

Also weaved throughout the book is the tense relationship between John Ross and Robert Glendining, exacerbated by the latter's problems with alcohol, which seemingly made him irrational, disagreeable and reckless. Dead by 1917 at age 75, he was soon followed in 1921 by his son Bob, also a heavy drinker. Ross, meanwhile, was knighted in 1922, and deceased by 1927. Both Ross and Glendining had difficult relationships with their sons, who appear in the book as less entrepreneurial and driven than their fathers. Such tantalizing insights add to the book, as does the selection of black and white photographs, which include depictions of early Dunedin, Auckland, Wellington and Napier; workers at the Roslyn mills; steam wagons with bales of wool; and male and female fashions.

There is, however, a further book to be written here, one that delves more deeply into the lives of John Ross and Robert Glendining and how their relationship shaped the ups and downs of the firm. Newly discovered Ross family letters, together with descendant reminiscences, would make a fine second volume, adding to the important work already produced by Jones.

ANGELA MCCARTHY

University of Otago

Golden Prospects: Chinese on the West Coast of New Zealand. By Julia Bradshaw. Shantytown (West Coast Historical & Mechanical Society), Greymouth, 2009. 294pp. NZ price: \$55.00. ISBN 978-0-473-15546-9.

THIS DELIGHTFUL BOOK addresses a major gap in the newly reinvigorated study of Chinese migration to Australasia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Julia Bradshaw draws upon an impressive range of documentary and material evidence to illuminate the everyday lives of the West Coast Chinese.

Most of these people came from small rural villages in the Pearl River Delta region of southern China and about 90% were Cantonese-speakers from the county of Poon Yu. Contrary to popular wisdom, the first arrivals on the goldfields were not miners but cooks or gardeners like Ah Sing, who took up land at Donnelly's Creek in 1866. Small groups began mining in Westland from mid-1867, but many were dissatisfied and left for Otago. Bradshaw shows that a 'continuous inflow' did not take place until the early 1870s — mainly to districts close to Greymouth and Hokitika — and fresh waves followed between 1880 and 1882, and again at the end of the decade. Thereafter, the number of Chinese migrants declined precipitously, an outcome that reflected the economics of gold-digging and the impact of the poll-taxes. At their highest point, in the 1880s, the Chinese-born comprised about 5% of the West Coast population and perhaps as many as one-fifth of all miners. Yet the broad figures conceal significant local concentrations. In the 1870s, for example, there were residential clusters around No Town, Ahaura, Greenstone and Stafford; and at Cronadun, Boatman's and Reefton in the following decade. By the early twentieth