

G. R. Hawke, *The Making of New Zealand: An Economic History*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. Pp. viii, 362, figures, tables, bibliography, index. \$44.50.

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The Making of New Zealand is a tightly written and sophisticated analysis of the economic development of New Zealand from the early days of white settlement to the 1980s. In it G. R. Hawke seeks to delineate how New Zealand has reflected international economic currents and how it has departed from them. He does both convincingly.

Much revolves around key developments: the appearance of practical refrigeration in the late nineteenth century, which made possible meat sales abroad and ended economic stagnation; the advent of a controlled economy in the wake of the exchange crisis of 1938, a development furthered by wartime exigencies soon after; and the devaluation of 1967

and oil crisis of 1973, whose effects exacerbated the dispiriting sense many New Zealanders had that their country was not keeping up with other developed nations. Yet there are important continuities. From the beginning, settlers in New Zealand looked to the colonial government for help in meeting their needs; traditions of active government turned talk of laissez-faire and free trade into empty rhetoric. Ties to Britain were ever strong, reinforced as they were by the cords of commerce and finance. Shortage of foreign exchange was an on-going problem that constrained economic development. And, even in the beginning, New Zealand seems not to have been so much exploited as ignored by the world's major economic powers (including, at times, Britain itself).

Hawke extracts insights from available economic data with the skill one would expect from the author of *Economics for Historians*. His focus is on the macroeconomic picture. He shows the general trends of New Zealand's economic evolution, and in the process demonstrates the shortcomings of various earlier interpretations of such key developments as the Great Depression.

Hawke's approach is at once the great strength and greatest weakness of the work. The famous Dutch historian Pieter Geyl once wrote that "the historian is the guardian of the particular." One gets little sense of the particular, the individual, from this work. The various sectors of the economy are analyzed separately, but the overall picture is painted with broad strokes. The economic fortunes of the Maori are traced in some detail and the problems of the coal mining districts on the west coast of South Island are touched upon, but this only partially alleviates the sense that one is getting of an overgeneralized picture. The changing place in New Zealand's economy of Pacific islands and of Wellington-where, ironically, Professor Hawke teaches-are scarcely alluded to. The rise of Japan as a major trading partner since World War II gets only slightly more attention.

Those steeped in business history will hunger for information on the key entrepreneurs who stood behind events. Those interested in social history will wonder how differences in the dominant ideas of different classes affected decisions and policies, suspecting that New Zealand was never as intellectually homogenous as Hawke's approach makes it seem. Those with a background in historical geography will wonder about the course of change as economic development moved into new areas-there is no sense of frontier, a concept central to analysis of the development of the American West-and will suspect that data for New Zealand as a whole obscure regional variation and the spatial aspects of economic change.

To meet the needs of such readers would necessitate a different book. Hawke has done well what he set out to do. If he leaves business and social historians, historical geographers, and perhaps others hungering for more information, rather than quibbling with his conclusions, that should be taken as a sign of strength. Supplemented though it may be by future works to be written by those operating from different vantage points, *The Making of New Zealand* will surely stand for years to come as the standard analysis of the major trends in the nation's economic development. Those interested in international trade and economic development, not just those concerned with New Zealand per se, will find it of value. Although also intended "for use as a textbook" for courses on the economic history of New Zealand, students will find it heavy going.