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Chris A. Williams

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- 1 This is the fourth volume of an official history, and it goes a long way further than the anodyne and uncritical works that often occupy this category. It is organised in two main sections: a chronological overview followed by a study of the key occupational themes. The former section is more concerned with changes of personnel and style than of policy. New Zealand's police remained (and remains) a unified national institution under an Commissioner responsible to a Cabinet minister. After 1920, a brief period of reorganisation came to an end, and the police structure was largely static in the interwar years: a time during which 'the experiences of policing continued to have more in common with those of the 1880s and 1890s than the 1970s and 1980s'. Dunstall's own figures do not completely support his conclusion that the force faced a manning crisis in 1919 – although the fact that its level of annual wastage could be seen as problematic at less than 10% shows the extent to which New Zealanders expected to have a highly stable long-service force. If the raw numbers do not explain the sense of insecurity, then more stress can be put on other factors that he notes: an anxiety about

minor disorder that was in the main a product of rapid demographic change and urbanisation, and the fear of a post-war crime wave; and militant labour unrest. For one of the many strengths of this book is that it grounds the narrative history of the police in the context of contemporary comment and in an awareness of the broader social, economic and political situation obtaining in mid-twentieth century New Zealand. Account is taken of official sources, contemporary newspapers of various stripes, diaries, and personal contact with many of the men and women involved. Hence the book is able to provide a well-rounded and highly referenced picture of the changes undergone by the force in this period, what it was like to work in it, and what kind of impact it had on wider society.

- 2 Despite the tight public finances of the depression years, the police force escaped the cuts that hit most of the public sector: this was partly due to government desire to keep police morale high in a time of threatened disorder from the left and the unemployed, but also because successive inquiries concluded that there was very little more that could be cut from the 'Cinderella service'. Indeed, with economy the word from the top, the police Commissioners regularly under-spent their budgets. The financial demands of technological change were reluctantly accommodated through the period: motor vehicles were used sparingly since both police and criminals were seen as essentially pedestrians. Telegrams were preferred to telephones because they were subject to easier monitoring and control, radio was shunned, and many police were expected to provide their own cars, hire taxis to transport prisoners, and use public transport for enquiry work.
- 3 The largest part of the book sets out the everyday experiences of men in the various divisions of the force, and the tasks they faced, which were the classic policing demands: street patrol, regulation property crime, gambling, disorder, and the growing problem of traffic offences. In addition, a number of detectives and undercover officers were used to survey and infiltrate the extreme left, operations for which the police were not politically accountable, but were highly sensitive to the need to operation within the law. With a handful of exceptions, it was a force of Pakehamen: the institution of the Maori 'native constable' was allowed to lapse, and demands for policewomen were fended off until the 1940s by allocating a minor 'out-of-doors' surveillance role in the major cities to a very small force of traditionally-defined 'police matrons' whose main role was searching female suspects. Promotion was by a strict combination of examination and seniority. Resulting variations in vigour and the need for potential senior officers to have experience in all types of police work were dealt with by transfers around the country: the force had just 972 men in 1922 and 1,548 in 1945. The relatively small size and permeability of the CID appears to have kept corruption at a low level.
- 4 Within the culture of expectations that surrounded the force, there was an awareness of parallels within the English-speaking world, with Scotland Yard held up as an exemplar of the most modern and professional police practice. Rank and file officers were more likely to look to the levels of manning and funding in Australia as models. In the 1920s no union was set up: police were unhappy with the politics of the public service union which they were allowed to join, and successive Commissioners were uneasy about having to deal with a specific police staff association. With the advent of a reforming Labour administration in 1935, another period of reform begun, but although this saw the introduction of a Police Association and the attainment of the 48-

hour week for urban police, other reforms were halted by the onset of war. Long-serving and isolated, local police constables were an integral part of the communities which they served, to the extent that it was often easier for all concerned if illegal drinking and betting was raided by squads brought in from outside the area. Especially in the one-man rural stations, strict legislation against gambling and breaches of the laws relating to alcohol was usually enforced so lightly that periodic fines functioned as licences for ostensibly illegal (though widely supported) behaviour.

- 5 While his work is in essence a survey rather than an analysis, Dunstall keeps the question of the title in mind throughout. It is explicitly considered in a brief epilogue which concludes that in many respects interwar New Zealand was marked out by the governability of its people, and that its police reflected this. Disorder was rare and consent, bolstered by selective persecution of 'victimless' criminals, was more readily present than it had been in the late nineteenth century. Despite this, due to the wide variations between city, suburb, small town and village, there was no uniform experience of crime, and the expanding city suburbs cities in particular were capable of generating an enhanced fear of crime. The illustrations, index and bibliography are of a high standard, although some of the wealth of information in the endnotes might have been easier to access as part of the text. This volume will form an essential first point of call for those at all curious about the New Zealand police, and will prove invaluable to anyone who needs an understanding of the ways that the English-speaking world was policed in the twentieth century.

AUTHORS

CHRIS A. WILLIAMS

European Centre for the Study of Policing, Open University, UK, chris.williams@open.ac.uk