ment paid attention to young families with the universal family benefit. But for most of a century the needs and the rights of the old have dominated the system. Old people have been confident of their rights, respectable and articulate, and their spending habits or sexual behaviour have rarely been queried. In a society which has taken for granted that it provides a great place for children, the financial needs of families have been obscured, and it is surprising that parents or mothers have not been a more powerful lobby group. It is the children and their mothers in one-parent families who face the greatest hardship today.

Finally – we should welcome the return of welfare history that is symbolised in the publication of these three books together. In the post-war period the most detailed writing on social security and social welfare has often been by economists, public policy analysts or sociologists. These analyses have been valuable, but their language has often been abstract and unwieldy. They have focused on Wellington, and 'few ordinary people ever appear'.[9] It is good to see welfare analysis embedded in narratives again as historians return to the field.

Notes

1 W. Pember Reeves was a politician as well as historian, justifying his political activity in *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand*, 2 vols, London, 1902. See also Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, Harmondsworth, 1959; J.B Condliffe, *The Welfare State in New Zealand*, London, 1959.

2 Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward led the way in the USA; see *Regulating the Poor*, London, 1972. For New Zealand, see W.H. Oliver, 'An Historical Overview', in Royal Commission on Social Policy, *The April Report, vol 1, New Zealand Today*, Wellington, 1988; and Margaret Tennant, *Paupers and Providers: Charitable Aid in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1989.

3 The most elegantly argued case is by Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians*, New York, 1991.

4 J.K. Galbraith, *The Culture of Contentment*, London, 1992; Robert E. Goodin, *Reasons for Welfare: The Political Theory of the Welfare State*, Princeton, 1988; Michael Ignatieff, *The Needs of Strangers*, London, 1984; and Theda Skocpol, *Social Policy in the United States: Future Possibilities in Historical Perspective*, Princeton, 1995.

5 An exception is Alice Kessler-Harris, 'Designing Women and Old Fools: The Construction of the Social Security Amendments of 1939', in Linda Kerber, Alice Kessler-Harris and Kathryn Kish Sklar (eds), US *History as Women's History*, Chapel Hill, 1995.

6 Mrs J.M.D to George Gair, 24 Feb. 1979, B&P, 12/7/11/ 1, pt.8, DSW.

7 Letter, Anonymous to Nash, [1951], Nash Papers, 1302/0373, National Archives, Wellington.

8 J.T. Paul, *NZPD, vol* 156, 1911, pp.815-9 David Thomson, 'Society and Social Welfare', in Colin Davis and Peter Lineham (eds), *The Future of the Past: Themes in New Zealand History*, Palmerston North, 1991, p.102.

FAMILY MATTERS

Bronwyn Dalley

FAMILY MATTERS is a history of government child welfare policy and practice. The work of the various government agencies responsible for child welfare (CWB, CWD, DSW) clustered around several main areas of child welfare, and I examine all of these in the history: juvenile delinquency and youth offending, residential care, the provisions made for ex-nuptial babies, adoption services, foster care, supervision and preventive policies, child neglect and abuse. The history was commissioned by the Department of Social Welfare to provide a historical perspective to the development of welfare policy. In social welfare generally, and in child welfare in particular from the mid 1980s, there has been a tendency to castigate, rather than to understand past practices; the recent publicity surrounding the British child migrants is a case in point. In *Family Matters* I try to contextualise child welfare policies of the past (which includes the early 1990s) to understand where such policies came from, how they built on or reacted to those that had gone before – and in the end, to show that cycles of policy and practice reform and revision have been successive loops in the cycle of welfare provision, each predicated on the belief that the reform and change was a step in the right direction.

Family Matters traces the changes in child welfare from 1902 until 1992, from when George Hogben,

Inspector-General of Schools, completed an overhaul of the industrial school system to when the New Zealand Children and Young Persons Service came into being. These 90 years have seen many changes in responses to children and young people deemed to be in need of care or state attention. The client base of child welfare work has altered markedly. Always the majority of child welfare cases, male Pakeha children and young people have become less predominant, as Māori and Pacific Islands children form a disproportionate minority of the clientele base. The grounds on which attention or committal to care were regarded as necessary has changed: no longer are such things as being mischievous, giving cheek or being uncontrollable grounds for comment and action, let alone committal to the care of the state. The notion of committing to care has changed fundamentally, and especially in the last decade, the basis on which children were removed from their homes and their guardianship vested in the state has tightened exponentially. Residential care, once the solution for all manner of problems relating to child welfare, has not been seen as the first option since the 1920s; increasingly, care solutions within family groupings has come to the fore and this is now written into legislation. Residential institutions themselves have changed markedly. Numerous large structures dotted around the country taking in all manner of children and young people for a number of years disappeared in the late 1910s, only to re-emerge again in the 1950s and disappear once more in the 1980s. The time young people spend in institutions has over the century dropped from several years, to one, two, or a few months. The walls of some of these institutions are certainly not as porous as they once were, as interaction between residences for young offenders especially and their surrounding communities can be very fraught.

Particular forms of child welfare work have come and gone, and sometimes returned again: child abuse has been discovered, forgotten, and rediscovered; adoption has waxed and waned – the social work methods for dealing with these issues are very different from those in the past. Some child welfare issues, such as infant life protection – the provision made for babies maintained apart from their birth families – have disappeared completely. Other have been refocused: foster care in private homes blossomed from the 1920s and especially from the 1950s as new forms of foster care were developed. Such 'out-of family' arrangements are not now considered the most desirable option of working with children and young people. Voluntary groups and families have always played an important role in child welfare, in what one historian has dubbed the 'mixed economy' of welfare. This economy became formalised in the late 1980s, with both non-governmental agencies and families recognised in the child welfare legislation, if not always the practice.

While there have been many changes – some for the better and some for the worse – there have also been strong continuities. The major one that I trace is the core role of the family in child welfare. As the title of this book suggests, family matters, and it has mattered to government welfare agencies since the late 1910s. Child welfare policy makers have long enunciated the importance of a domestic, family environment as the best site for maintaining children's welfare: the importance of the family in the care network is not an invention of the mid 1980s, and has been used for both 'conservative' and more 'liberal' ends. The parameters of that 'best' environment have changed, and of course, the policy was not always adhered to in practice. Sometimes, the best family environment has been considered to be a foster family, or an adoptive family; in the 1990s, the best family environment is seen as the kin network – in all of its cultural ramifications which apply to New Zealand. The nuclear family has never been held up as the sole ideal in child welfare work – as has been argued for other areas of welfare: at times, the family care provided by sole parents or extended family groupings was considered to be sufficient. None of these family-based care situations is unique to the 1990s or even the 1980s: a reliance on the family as the crucible for children's welfare can be traced in all aspects of child welfare policy and practice since the late 1910s.

This is a history of child welfare policy and of practice, of what was meant to happen, and of what did happen. Child welfare work – in the

1920s as in the 1990s – is predicated on personal casework and a close relationship between government agent, the child and family, and sometimes voluntary agencies. It is a different type of welfare assistance and intervention as compared with the delivery of income support such as superannuation or the community wage. Examining the practice of policy is unavoidable when looking at child welfare, but this type of focus accords with my own view of writing on the subject. I was a student at Massey University, where scholars such as Bill Oliver, and then Margaret Tennant and David Thomson, espoused a welfare history which incorporated policy and practice and examined the role of welfare administrators and the experiences of welfare recipients. I had this broad vision impressed upon me, and I have tried to keep to it here. Welfare history has become increasingly confined to policy, or narrow accounts of income support which gloss over the impact of that support. It is here that I think these three histories make a contribution towards pointing a way that welfare in New Zealand can continue to move along a different trajectory. In terms of child welfare in particular, I suggest methods of integrating child welfare into New Zealand welfare history, for here and elsewhere, it sits outside the mainstream; it's not really merged into what is considered to be the welfare state.

Bringing child welfare in, I hope, will encourage us to continue to explore the richness and complexity of New Zealand's welfare past which has always encompassed much more than the transfer of money, and in which more groups than 'the state' have played a part.

FAREWELL COLONIALISM

The New Zealand International Exhibition, Christchurch 1906-07

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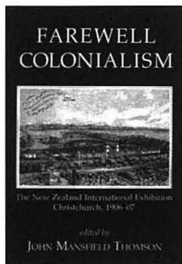

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