

SOURCES FOR AUSTRALIAN HISTORY IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF NEW ZEALAND

by
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Lack of space, lack of staff, generally lack of support and appreciation of our true significance: these seem to be the problems of archivists throughout the world and New Zealand is no exception. This is why I welcome this opportunity of contact with Australians. My conviction that the comparatively small group of our calling in Australia and New Zealand should get together was reinforced during my recent visit to Canada, whence I returned with the firm advice that Australian and New Zealand archivists should do this.

How then can we co-operate? I think we can do this in two ways. Firstly, by the interchange of ideas – a pooling of knowledge and experience through reports of what we are doing and information about significant holdings. This, I am glad to say, has already been achieved in some measure and I hope this contribution will help in this direction. A step further would be the exchange of visits so that there could be person to person discussions and a first-hand opportunity to see what is being done, and how. As a corollary of this we should seek to co-operate in achieving a training programme and forming some archives-records management association. The second way is to combine to share in the economy of orders for such supplies as acid-free paper, archives boxes and folders.

In 1965 Pamela Cocks wrote of the holdings of New Zealand's National Archives [*Archives and Manuscripts, Nov. 1965, 3 (1)*]. I have decided to concentrate on items of Australian interest.

As close neighbours there is bound to be an interchange on most subjects between Australia and New Zealand. Remember that New Zealand began its European administration under the New South Wales government; a copy of the commission extending the limits of New South Wales so as to include New Zealand in 1839, is in the New Zealand National Archives (IA9/2).

From the earliest days there has been an interchange of people and of information, more especially relating to diplomacy, defence, trade and technical subjects, but also to law and the arts. The coverage of subject is broad but it is of interest to try to analyse in some detail the main sources of Australian significance to be found in New Zealand's National Archives. Obviously they cannot be itemised too precisely. However, I have tried to guide the searcher to the type of information and the classes of records in which such information is to be found. Where possible archives series references have been given in brackets. I have found that virtually every group in the National Archives, that is the archives of nearly every New Zealand government department, has some reference to Australia.

PEOPLE

Consider first the interchange of people; there are those who were famous or were to become so and will be of interest to a biographer. One can cite here

three such persons who had careers in both countries in the vice-regal sphere – Sir George Grey, E.J. Eyre and Sir Frederick Weld, New Zealand Prime Minister and Australian state governor for whom we have interesting diaries and papers. Leaders of each country corresponded with one another – politicians, prominent unionists, senior officers in the armed forces or civil service, personalities in science or the arts. The archives of the Prime Minister; the several government departments and the University of New Zealand are of use in such cases. Further, there are the special groups of the Seddon papers (1891 - 1906), those of Sir Walter Nash, covering a large part of this country. Seddon visited Australia in 1897 and 1906 and left correspondence and newspaper cuttings of the period.

There is the ordinary man in the street of both countries. His records are of genealogical or sociological interest. The place of origin is not readily available for many except assisted immigrants or those who required naturalisation. However, the searcher with some clues can sometimes be successful. Land transactions; miners' and publicans' licenses are helpful – the gold rush years of the 1860s brought quite a movement between the two countries. Rolls of military personnel, many of whom were enlisted in Australia during the Maori wars (see for example AD76 for rolls of personnel in the 1860s and later P8/5 for Melbourne recruits for the Armed Constabulary about 1869) provide good genealogical data, as do passenger lists for troops. The civilian shipping lists from Australia are limited, mainly to manifests for the period 1883-94 in the Social Security Department archives. There are also special immigration schemes in the 1870s which are worth noting (e.g. AP2, 75/558).

INFORMATION IN GENERAL

What of the interchange of information? This dates back to the very earliest days when Busby, the former New South Wales civil servant, was British Resident and kept in constant touch with the Australian authorities – primarily on such topics as law and order; customs; missing persons. Subsequently the Governor and Colonial Secretary and then the several different departments of government maintained contact on a constantly widening range of topics. The Colonial Secretary, for instance, kept a special letter book from 1840 to 1859 (IA 4/158) which included letters to Australian officials on such subjects as escaped convicts from the Australian states; military aid for New Zealand; the change over from New South Wales to local administration. Dating from as early as 1839 is a letterbook of correspondence from New Zealand's Governor Hobson to Governor Sir George Gipps in New South Wales (G36).

In later years the Governor's archives include correspondence from Australian State Governors, 1863 - 1915 (G9) and with the Admiral of the Australia Station of the Royal Navy, 1874 - 1913 (G12). The Gore Browne papers provide additional more personal information, included in letters to and from Australian governors in the 1850s and early 1860s. In 1861 Sir Thomas and Lady Gore Brown wrote from Australia when they stayed at Government House, Sydney. Eventually, of course, Sir Thomas became Governor of Tasmania, 1862 – 8. The comment in the Gore Brown papers on the political scene is of great interest.

From the political and diplomatic side, the archives of the Governor from 1839 and those of the Prime Minister from the 1860s are the main sources. Since

1919 we have files for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. All these sources and also the archives of the Department of Internal Affairs include information on such topics as colonial and imperial conferences (e.g. G40, IA20). The Navy Department archives also include files relating to conferences.

On the political scene, a notable subject is that of New Zealand joining the confederation of Australian states. For instance there was a Commission of Inquiry into union with Australia, 1900-1, and the papers including evidence taken in Australia and New Zealand are amongst the archives of the Department of Internal Affairs (IA106). There are other references to negotiations with Australia on union in the Internal Affairs files. The Seddon and Governor's papers are also relevant.

DEFENCE AND THE WAR EFFORT

There has been close contact through service personnel from the days of Australian-based warships on duty in New Zealand waters, as evidenced in the papers of the British Resident, Governor and Colonial Secretary. Troops were sent from Australia in the 1840s, as witness the archives of the Governor and Colonial Secretary, and during the Maori wars of the 1860s – the Governor and Colonial Secretary's groups and also that of the Army Department are relevant, as already mentioned (e.g. IA14/12).

The ships of the Australia Station of the Royal Navy continued to operate in New Zealand waters. Correspondence of the officers appears in the archives of the Governor (G12 and G16) and amongst those of the Colonial Secretary. On a more personal level, some, for example Commodore Loring, correspondent with Governor Gore Brown (Gore Browne papers). On the closing of the station in 1913, records of the old station were divided between Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand. What has remained in New Zealand as the archives of the Royal Navy Australia Station (RNAS) is of less direct Australian concern. It does, however, include files on activities in New Guinea and the Solomons in the 1880s and 1890s. It is of interest that in the Seddon papers there is reference in 1903 to a scheme for the Australian and New Zealand naval force (Seddon 2/21).

In more recent years New Zealanders have trained at Duntroon and Portsea. There has been further liaison in joint manoeuvres and interchange of ideas in the three armed services. These factors are covered in the archives of the Governor and the Army, Navy and Air Force. For example, there are records of visits between units of the respective naval forces. The archives of the Department of Internal Affairs such as IA1, 108, provide a further source. Sir James Allen was New Zealand's Minister of Defence, 1912-20; his papers include a limited amount of correspondence with his Australian opposite numbers.

From the point of view of defence planning we have the example of visits by British experts like Admiral of the Fleet, Lord Jellicoe, who reported on the situation in both countries (N10/3). Special files of the Governor should also be noted (G48). This inter-relation of defence needs has led to further activity and has its influence on proceedings in imperial conferences from as early as 1886.

War time relations are in part another aspect of the diplomatic area mentioned elsewhere and for this the archives of the Governor, External Affairs and the Prime Minister are relevant, as well as those of other civil departments concerned with the war effort. Though Army, Navy and Air Force records are relevant, for actual operations during World Wars I and II, the main source lies in the War Archives group, especially when New Zealand and Australian forces acted together – for instance, at Gallipoli and in Palestine in the 1914-18 war and in the Middle East and Greece and Crete in the 1939-45 war.

LAW AND ORDER

Law and order was one of the key factors leading to the inauguration of a form of European government in New Zealand. Some of the earliest correspondence – of British Resident Busby in 1832 and 1833 – is directed towards the apprehension of escaped prisoners from “Port Jackson” or “Van Diemen’s Land”. Information continued over the years in the correspondence of the Colonial Secretary, Governor, Justice Department and Police, which covers the interchange of information on legislation, on crime and penal reform, as well as co-operation in the tracing of wrong-doers.

TRADE, COMMERCE AND FINANCE

For trade and commerce, the correspondence of diplomatic representatives (the archives of the former Department of External Affairs) and those of the Department of Industries and Commerce and the Treasury are certain places to find information. Treasury archives, for example include pension accounts; financial arrangements with the banks; investigation into company promotion such as that in 1934 regarding a group of Auckland companies who had New South Wales operations. Even *Tatts* rates a file.

There are other less obvious groups of material. For the earliest years we have “Sydney prices”, invariably quoted in the Old Land Claims Commission papers, which relate to pre-1840 land claims. Claimants more often than not were Sydney residents or connected with them. The papers of the British Resident provide interesting sidelights – in those early days Sydney traders and shipping played a significant part in New Zealand history.

The New Zealand Company archives have some Australian context; as early as 1841 we have the well-known Sydney and Melbourne firms, such as J.B. Were and Sons, corresponding with Company officers (NZC 108). Subsequently the Governor and the Colonial Secretary’s archives are involved in developments which were not only on a national but also a provincial scale. Other noteworthy topics include correspondence between the two countries about imperial trade in 1912 (IA 111). At this period, too, the Allen papers, covering Sir James Allen’s period of office as Minister of Finance, 1912-15, have some bearing on Australian finance. As far as imports and exports are concerned, such topics as coal imports are referred to in Mines Department files. Coal supplies also figured in letters from Massey (PM 9/9).

In a rather different field the Marine Department provides files on the export of oysters to Australia and the operation of whalers in the Ross Sea and trawlers

on Australian and New Zealand coasts.

The Archives of the Department of Island Territories provide data on the marketing of Cook Island fruit in Australia. Other Pacific trading which bears reference to Australian companies, also features in this group.

New Zealand imports of livestock as far back as 1911, and grapevines, fruit and the restrictions thereon, appear amongst Agriculture Department files. This Department also covers exports of fruit to Australia and trade relations between the two countries.

Tariff policies and kindred topics have further coverage in the Prime Minister's archives for the 1935 period. The Colonial Secretary from 1840, and later the Customs and Marine Departments, provide evidence of the frequency of shipping contact and the nature of cargoes. For 1883 - 94 the Social Security Department's archives include ships' manifests amongst which are those for ships travelling to and from Australia.

Later, air traffic comes into the picture, in Air Department and also Civil Aviation files. However, Navy Department was involved in the late 1920s; also regarding the flying boat service in 1937. The Governor was concerned in trans-Tasman air services as well (G48). Pioneer flights were those of Hood and Moncrieff, supported by the Marine Department, and Kingsford Smith, 1933, to which Post Office files have reference. Smith's epic flight was recorded by a ciné film of his arrival at Timaru in the *Southern Cross*.

MISCELLANEOUS

There is a wide coverage which might be called interchange of information on scientific and technological subjects: for example, the Agriculture Department's correspondence with Australia on plant diseases and the control of rabbits and opossums and that of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research on various scientific investigations. The Dairy Products' Marketing Board, which has transferred records to the National Archives, kept files relating to the visit of officials to Australia, 1940-1. Also in the primary produce area, the 1896 inter-colonial stock conference at Sydney was covered in the papers of the Sheep and Cattle Branch of the Colonial Secretary's Department (IA 72/3). The Marine Department discussed trout culture and sundry regulations as far back as 1925.

The field of exchange of information is not confined to science and technology. To name but a few samples: the Child Welfare Division received information from South Australia in 1927; the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation corresponded about programmes; the Health Department followed poliomyelitis in Australia and many another health topic; the Labour Department received information on labour legislation and workers' compensation and made arrangements about recipients of compensation and entry permits. The Marine Department also was involved in labour conditions and relations. The archives of the Statistics Department include an interchange of information as early as 1924 and summaries of persons travelling between the main Australian and New

Zealand ports from 1927. The Department of Internal Affairs is concerned with a wide variety of activities and this is reflected in the number of different topics of Australian concern amongst the archives – cultural exchange; wildlife administration; working papers on local government (IA 64/191) and commissions on the civil or public service, 1866 and 1912 (IA 92 and 110) and Racing 1969 (IA 126).

Finally, there is the coverage of national celebrations, such as Australia's 150th anniversary; exhibitions, for example that at Melbourne in 1888; and events like the 1931 yacht race – this is a Marine Department concern. The departments of the three armed services, the Tourist and Publicity Department and the Departments of Internal Affairs and Industries and Commerce were all involved in this field.