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INDIGENCE AND CHARITABLE AID IN NEW ZEALAND

1885 - 1920

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the
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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the administration of public relief through the charitable aid system in New Zealand, 1885 - 1920. This was a formative, and somewhat neglected period in the history of New Zealand's 'welfare state', one in which notions of social efficiency mingled with the more benevolent motives usually attributed to social welfare. Politicians and charitable aid administrators found it hard to reconcile the presence of 'social evils' with the hope and promise of a new society, and assumed that they could distinguish between the 'deserving' and the 'undeserving' poor. The thesis also studies policy implementation, noting first the points of tension in the governing Act. It examines the different 'levels' of administration, represented by the Department of Hospitals and Charitable Institutions, as it was first called, by the different types of hospital and charitable aid boards, and by the relieving officers and others involved in the daily administration of relief. It is argued that those on the receiving end were no less important in shaping the charitable aid system than those administering it, and the later chapters examine the different categories of 'the poor', the forms of assistance given them, and the interaction of charitable aid with wholly state welfare activities, and with voluntary charity. There was a gap between policy aims, which were based on a rigid assessment of the poor, and actual achievements. Rigorous policy aims were undermined by a complex social reality.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AJHR	<u>Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives</u>
EP	<u>Evening Post</u>
JPH	<u>Journal of the Department of Hospitals, Public Health and Charitable Aid (later New Zealand Journal of Health and Hospitals)</u>
NZH	<u>New Zealand Herald</u>
NZPD	<u>New Zealand Parliamentary Debates</u>
ODT	<u>Otago Daily Times</u>
OYB	<u>New Zealand Official Year Book</u>