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# AN AMBIVALENT AGENCY

THE ADMINISTRATION OF NATIVE AFFAIRS BY THE  
LIBERAL GOVERNMENT 1893-1906

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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NICOLA BLACKBURN

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# ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the administration of Native affairs by the Liberal Government from 1893 to 1906. In 1893, just two years after the Liberals came to power the Native Department was dismantled, with the Justice Department forced to take over the majority of its work. However, as this thesis argues, such attempts to administer Native affairs without a single, focussed agency failed. Accordingly the department was re-established in 1906.

This thesis begins by discussing how the newly-elected Liberal Government set about abolishing the Native Department in 1893, and describes the transfer of the department's functions to a range of other state agencies. The dismantling of the department was seen as the logical result of several decades of attempts made by other Ministries to wind down the department. However, the decision to abolish the Native Department was taken by the Liberals against a background of sharply divided opinion, among both Maori and Europeans, as to the appropriateness of the measure.

For a period of thirteen years Maori were denied the right of a specialist Government agency working in their interests. The thesis describes how other agencies managed Native affairs, and especially points to the problems that arose following the fragmenting of Native affairs administration. This was especially evident after James Carroll became

Native Minister in 1899. Soon after his appointment, a Maori Land Administration Department was established, whose purpose was to service in a limited way the new Maori land administration councils.

However, in the context of increasing activity in the area of land administration, and in the light of the perceived failure of the councils, and of the Maori Land Administration Department, the Department of Native Affairs was re-established in 1906. This thesis discusses the context for this re-establishment of the agency so determinedly abolished in 1893, and draws some broad conclusions concerning Liberal Maori policy, especially land policy during the period.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AH</i>	<i>Auckland Herald</i>
<i>AJHR</i>	<i>Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives</i>
<i>Gazette</i>	<i>New Zealand Gazette</i>
<i>J</i>	Archives of the Justice Department
<i>MA</i>	Archives of the Maori Affairs Department
<i>MA-MLA</i>	Archives of the Maori Lands Administration Department
<i>N</i>	Archives of the Native Department
<i>NA</i>	National Archives
<i>NZH</i>	<i>New Zealand Herald</i>
<i>NZJH</i>	<i>New Zealand Journal of History</i>
<i>NZPD</i>	<i>New Zealand Parliamentary Debates</i>
<i>PBH</i>	<i>Poverty Bay Herald</i>
<i>Statutes</i>	<i>Statutes of New Zealand</i>
<i>WCT</i>	<i>West Coast Times</i>
<i>WS</i>	<i>Wairarapa Standard</i>
<i>WTU</i>	Alexander Turnbull Library