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ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN  
NEW ZEALAND  
1880-1910

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates entrepreneurial activity in New Zealand between 1880 and 1910. Economic indicators, population, import and export patterns, provincial differences, and industrial development are examined to understand entrepreneurship and its relationship to economic growth. In addition, a case analysis of 133 entrepreneurs is presented, which analyses the backgrounds, education, reasons for venture start-up, venture types, methods of growth, incidence of failure, and sources of capital for nineteenth-century New Zealand entrepreneurs.

This study suggests that a range of structural characteristics present in the New Zealand economy at this time, such as rapid population growth, technological innovation, isolation of markets, business structures, public works investment, immigration, and fiscal policies, encouraged and fostered entrepreneurial activity. Common characteristics among those who undertook new ventures over this period are highlighted; these include skill, commercial experience, limited capital, partnership, networks and the propensity to undertake multiple business ventures. Overall, entrepreneurial activity by small and medium-sized enterprises emerged as an important mechanism by which the colonial economy expanded both in scale and scope.

