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OLD-AGE PENSIONS IN NEW ZEALAND
1898 - 1939

A thesis presented in partial
fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Master of Arts
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In memory of
Brian

ABSTRACT

The Old-age Pensions Act of 1898 is a major feature in New Zealand welfare historiography, and is seen by many, both at the popular level and by historians, as the foundation of the Welfare State in New Zealand. The aim of this thesis is to give some sense of what the old-age pension system proved to be. This involved looking beyond the legislation into the area of administration. The main conclusions are that the scheme was marginal to the majority, changed little across its first forty years in terms of pension numbers or value, deteriorated over time for Maori, and that many punitive spirits dominated and continued to affect how it was administered. In addition, the role of administration in determining policy outcome is explored, and the evidence suggests strongly that considerable power lay with administrators rather than legislators. These findings not only raise questions about the accolades surrounding the 1898 Act in New Zealand welfare historiography, but leave the sense that harder questions about impact and outcomes should now be asked of the post 1938 era.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<u>AJHR</u>	<u>Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives</u>
Census	<u>Census Report of New Zealand</u>
CPI	Consumer Price Index
DU:HO	Hocken Library, Dunedin
IT	Island Territories
NA	National Archives, Wellington
NEB	National Efficiency Board
<u>NZJH</u>	<u>New Zealand Journal of History</u>
<u>NZH</u>	<u>New Zealand Herald</u>
<u>NZOYB</u>	<u>New Zealand Official Yearbook</u>
<u>NZPD</u>	<u>New Zealand Parliamentary Debates</u>
OAP	Old-age Pensions
<u>ODT</u>	<u>Otago Daily Times</u>
SS	Social Security
WTU	Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington