

‘Bringing families up to scratch’

THE DISTINCTIVE WORKINGS OF MAORI STATE WELFARE, 1944–1970



IN 1947 the Hon. E.T. Tirakatene received a plea from Mrs Haldon, of Makirikiri, about her poor living conditions. Mrs Haldon and her two children lived in a one-roomed mud-floor shack, divided into two rooms with a curtain. It had two small windows and an open fireplace, and was draughty and damp; there were no conveniences. The shack contained a double bed, small table and cupboard, a chair and some boxes used as chairs. Mrs Haldon collected firewood from the Wanganui River some distance away, or cut gorse. Drinking water was carried from her neighbour's tank or from the river. The family were all suffering from colds, and the children had skin diseases. The district nurse had declared the place unhealthy. Mrs Haldon's husband, who was Maori, was away in the army and they had an application in for a state house.

The letter was referred to the local Maori welfare officer. She was unaware of the case and it had not been brought to her attention on visits to the district. Despite the nurse's concern she commented that the place was kept clean and tidy and there was a small flower and vegetable garden. Two months later the welfare officer contacted Mrs Haldon again. Her second report noted that the shack and the land were owned by Mrs Haldon's mother-in-law and two cousins and recommended that no further action be taken until the husband returned. She also noted that representations should be made to secure his early release on the grounds of family hardship. The officer observed that Mrs Haldon was a European while the Controller of Maori Welfare noted in the margin of the report that: 'As Mrs Haldon is a European and is no doubt in receipt of allotment and allowances she should be capable of seeking better accommodation for herself. She should be asked to say what steps she has taken in that direction.' The welfare officer made further enquiries and found that Mrs Haldon's husband was due to return home and 'she was told as a European to take steps herself'.¹

This inquiry reflects the fact that living conditions were a huge problem for Maori families. Poor living conditions, or 'living in native conditions' as it was often described, were widespread. In 1951, for example, there were 2275 occupied huts and whare; 568 tents and camps; and 32% of all Maori houses were either shacks or overcrowded houses.² The officers' reports give a tantalizingly brief insight into the process of investigations by Maori welfare officers and the different standard of assistance applied to non-Europeans. The case tells us much about how Pakeha – even when married to Maori – were expected to show greater standards of initiative and self-help than Maori, and that the status and welfare of the children was considered differently in this

context. Yet despite the availability of such suggestive sources, Maori (and by extension 'race') remain absent in much of the New Zealand welfare historiography. Until very recently, most scholars assumed a convergence of Maori and Pakeha interests (despite differential entitlement to pensions and other forms of discrimination), and therefore failed to explore Maori welfare services and client experiences more directly.³ Maori welfare services remain a little-studied area of state welfare provision.⁴

Two recent surveys begin to explore this area in more detail. Margaret McClure's history of social security policy integrates 'race' to a greater degree than any studies to date. McClure shows that after social security was inaugurated there was still a belief that Maori needs were smaller than Pakeha needs and that the Second World War, rather than the Depression, was the generator of change for Maori. The 1945 Maori Social and Economic Advancement Act finally stipulated an equal level of benefit payments to Maori.⁵ Bronwyn Dalley's history of child welfare policy and services also pays careful attention to policy for Maori. She notes that child welfare staff relied heavily on Maori welfare officers, Maori honorary child welfare officers and other local Maori welfare groups to carry out many of their services and other forms of assistance to children and families.⁶ Official child welfare policy was to keep Maori children with their whanau in their own tribal areas or with other Maori families. Despite lapses in practice and the inevitable fact that 'some policies, however well-intentioned, caused considerable harm to their recipients', Dalley concludes that child welfare agencies 'endeavoured to work with and within Maori communities to safeguard children and family welfare'.⁷

The discussion of Maori by these two scholars, while more sustained than earlier accounts, is limited by their particular institutional focus.⁸ The role of the Department of Maori Affairs recedes into the background in their works. This article extends existing analyses by examining directly the work of Maori welfare officers within the Department of Maori Affairs and the needs of Maori families who came into contact with them.

Focusing on Maori welfare services illustrates the complex nature of welfare provision within the welfare state. The welfare state was a compartmentalized system, but no endeavour stood alone, although the different parts did not automatically work for the same ends. The concept of a 'mixed economy of welfare' consisting of central and local government, families, voluntary groups and philanthropists in varying combinations has been a feature of recent welfare histories,⁹ but the work of officers in the Maori Affairs Department raises the possibility of a mixed economy *within* the state, and underlines the importance of scrutinizing social services across departments. The fact that the state is not a unitary force and that there is considerable diversity across the state sector is not always heeded. On the other hand, the voluntary sector has long been assumed to be complex and to have many and varied constituent parts.

The provision of state welfare for Maori families is one of the distinguishing features of New Zealand's welfare system and provides an opportunity for a fresh look at the relations between Pakeha and Maori in New Zealand society. These services were instituted during a period of enormous change in Maori

society and in the configuration of relationships between Maori and Pakeha. An examination of Maori experiences offers a new and more nuanced view of 'the welfare state decades' and of the state's relationship with indigenous members of society. Unlike in other countries, where social work services inflicted change upon indigenous clients, and children and families were deliberately dislocated,¹⁰ Maori welfare officers intervened in ways that made their work both acceptable and extremely useful to Maori families, even though it invited greater scrutiny of those families.

The Department of Native Affairs began providing welfare services during the Second World War. State contact and welfare work with Maori families was intermittent before then, partly due to Child Welfare's policy of leaving Maori children with Maori families, and working through kaumatua and local leaders. It was also because the Maori and Pakeha populations were to a large degree still living separately in both geographical and social terms. Maori were rarely seen in towns and cities, and in rural areas, 'there was a degree of racial antagonism that belied the widely held assumption that Pakeha were tolerant of Maori'.¹¹ At that stage, the Department of Native Affairs was primarily a 'legal and accounting agency', which then moved to a focus on land, and later added housing.¹² By 1940 the department's land and housing work dealt with only about 20% of the Maori population.¹³ Many Maori problems were invisible to the central government.

The Second World War and its associated urbanization created new economic and cultural issues for Maori. Men left home to serve overseas and 'manpowering' encouraged many people to leave their situation of rural subsistence and join the urban wage-labour market. Marginal and uneconomic incorporations and dairy schemes were rapidly abandoned as Maori travelled to the cities for work, money, and also for pleasure.¹⁴ Urbanization was facilitated by the Maori War Effort Organisation (MWEO), which was established in 1942 to harness Maori participation in support of the war. It set up a network of tribal committees to maintain recruitment, food production and facilitate 'manpowering'. Other areas of life such as housing conditions, education, vocational training, land use, and the alleged misuse of social security benefits were also brought into the MWEO's orbit as it became the largest and most comprehensive national Maori organization ever.¹⁵

At the end of 1942, the position of young Maori women working in Auckland and Wellington was brought to the MWEO's notice. Most of these women, who had 'grave social problems', worked in hotels and restaurants, lived in the poorest parts of the city, and had little contact with other welfare agencies. In response, women welfare officers were appointed to the National Service Department on the MWEO's recommendation to work with the Maori community in the main urban areas. They assisted with job placements and accommodation.¹⁶

As the MWEO's life was extended, the Department of Native Affairs increasingly felt that it was moving into areas over which the department should have jurisdiction, such as welfare. In his 1944 annual report, the minister proposed a system of welfare officers in his department. The new welfare branch

was set up in September 1944, beginning with a chief welfare officer and by March 1945 there were welfare officers in Ruatoria, Gisborne and a 'lady officer' at head office in Wellington.¹⁷

The Maori members of Parliament, on the other hand, supported the MWEO and wanted a new Department of Maori Welfare, which would continue, in peacetime, the MWEO's autonomy and efficiency and its grassroots way of operating.¹⁸ The 1945 Maori Social and Economic Advancement Act was an attempt at compromise. Drafted by the department, it kept the existing departmental structure but, somewhat uneasily, incorporated the tribal committees set up by the MWEO. Provision was made for expanding the department's existing welfare branch by appointing a Controller and as many welfare officers as were necessary. New officers were stationed at Te Kuiti, Paeroa, Opotiki, Ruatoria, Wanganui, Christchurch and Auckland.¹⁹

Upon its inauguration in 1944 the special welfare branch of the Department of Native Affairs envisaged a broad and multi-faceted role for its officers. 'Not only should this step ensure that full advantage of the various benefits and services available to the Maoris from the State is obtained — but also provide the means of better liaison or direct contact with the other State departments whose activities embrace matters of Maori welfare'.²⁰ The branch would also be a 'connecting link' between the department and voluntary organizations concerned with Maori welfare, such as churches, local bodies and Maori associations. As well as liaison and ensuring full assistance was provided, the officers would 'act as Placement Officers in furthering the material well-being of the Maori people in their absorption into the industry of the country' and cooperate with vocational guidance officers in advising parents and children leaving school. Officers would 'investigate cases of distress and explore avenues for improving the lot of individuals and families . . . and, generally, to seek means of improving social conditions and the implementation of the policy of the Government in measures taken for the improvement of the conditions of the Maori people'.²¹

These roles reflected the needs of a population living in marked disadvantage in material terms and in conditions of life (life expectancy, health statistics, mortality and so forth). The needs encompassed jobs and vocational training, as well as money, food and other more conventional aspects of 'welfare'. Moreover, officers had a key role in ensuring that Maori received all the benefits they were entitled to and in helping individuals in their interactions with government departments that had previously declined to deal with them. Fundamentally, Maori welfare officers dealt with every facet of their clients' lives.

Development of the Maori people as a whole was increasingly seen as part of the delivery of welfare services. As part of the implementation of the 1945 Maori Social and Economic Advancement Act the department's welfare operations were 'greatly expanded in an endeavour to meet the needs of the Maori people in a changing world'. The 1945 Act was 'designed to facilitate the full integration of the Maori race into the social and economic structure of the country'.²² Welfare officers visited their districts to publicize the 1945 Act,

explain what was available to Maori and to investigate problems. Welfare in this sense was linked to development and the ability to be a successful inhabitant of Pakeha society, in the sense of integration and assimilation, but not necessarily cultural absorption. 'An important feature of the [1945] Act is that it does not seek to impose standards from without; rather it calls upon the Maori people to exercise control and direction of their own communities in the essentials of good citizenship and responsibility'.²³ A degree of autonomy was implied in aim, if not always in practice. Addressing the 'essentials of good citizenship and responsibility' relied heavily on welfare officers' initiative in observing and defining 'problems' and therefore 'need'. The definitions of 'integration', 'standards', 'good citizenship' and 'responsibility' were to vex welfare officers and officials, not to mention Maori families, in subsequent years as officers tried to carry out their role of promoting social change.

Maori welfare officers were meant to be, and were in practice, proactive in discerning where assistance was required and acting as they saw fit. Their mode of working went far beyond the regulatory and surveillance duties required of child welfare officers, for example. It was noted by officials with regard to housing, but the claim applied to all their work, that the Maori Affairs Department was 'probably unique . . . in that it combines the functions of seeking out families . . . awakening them . . . to a realisation of their need and a willingness to co-operate in measures to meet it'.²⁴ This goal was unprecedented. Stirring up the desire for advancement and development was a key element of Maori welfare officers' work. Their mandate thus included overt direction leading to the articulation of appropriate needs and desires, and hence it involved socialization, as well as amelioration. Maori welfare officers and the Maori Affairs Department as a whole were directly and self-consciously concerned with 'race up-lift'. Their role shared many characteristics with the ideas of Black female welfare leaders in the American South at the beginning of the twentieth century: 'simultaneously charity, self-improvement through education, and campaigns for more respect for the race'. Such work necessarily involved fighting against discrimination and exclusion from white welfare programmes.²⁵ Black leaders in the United States undertook 'campaigns for more respect for the race', whereas Maori welfare officers were more frequently anti-prejudice advocates, rather than 'race' advocates, in the period up to the 1970s.

Now that Maori had proved themselves as citizens, it was a question of both claiming entitlement *and* developing them into better citizens in terms of lifestyle, housing, jobs and so forth, by telling them what their needs should be. 'The advice given by the Welfare Officers is intended to help the Maori people to realize and to face up to their obligations and responsibilities as citizens. It is the intention of the Act to make the Maori self-reliant rather than dependent upon others for assistance'.²⁶ This philosophy subverted the autonomy and self-direction promised in the MWEQ model. It entailed paternalism: by the mid-1950s welfare officers were 'primarily concerned to introduce modern ideas'.²⁷

Women had a special role to play in these developments. Female officers began to organize Maori women into small local groups to work on health and welfare issues concerning women and children in particular, and this move

enabled women's views to be heard outside the male-dominated tribal structure. The officers were encouraged to emulate the local branches of the Women's Health League, formed from 1937. The Controller of Welfare asked the Health Leagues and the groups working on health and welfare issues to form one national organization, under departmental guidance. In 1951, when the Leagues decided not to join but to revert to their independent status, the officer-initiated groups formed the national Maori Women's Welfare League (MWWL).²⁸ The MWWL had welfare officers as members and was formally supported by the department. It operated as an institutional counterpart to the tribal committees and executives.²⁹ Under the 1962 Maori Welfare Act the MWWL and tribal committees gained independence from the department, but the pattern of activity and relationship held fast. The tribal committees became Maori committees defined in geographical, rather than tribal terms. Their executives were organized at a district level and an umbrella body, the Maori Council, operated at a national level — a male body corresponding to the MWWL.

In 1968 Maori Affairs (as it had become in 1947) was amalgamated with the Department of Island Territories to become the Department of Maori and Island Affairs. There was no change in overall policy or the types of work done; Polynesian welfare officers were appointed to the staff to work with the small, but growing, number of Pacific Island immigrants.³⁰ The department now characterized its welfare work in cultural, as much as material ways: helping people 're-establish their cultural links, take a full part in the life of their community and develop the potential, both of themselves and their children'. The department contrasted this understanding with the first generation of officers who had 'forged a link between the Maori people and the department'.³¹ Yet in 1970 officers were still helping Maori to access state services. There had been increasing impatience during the previous two decades with the way that Maori clients were nearly always referred on to Maori welfare officers. Even though language or cultural obstacles might necessitate the help of Maori welfare officers, other departments did not feel the need to employ skilled staff to deal with Maori on an on-going basis in the way they might institute more limited programmes for immigrants or refugees.

In the 1940s and 1950s increasing numbers of officers were employed, but their workload continued to expand. From ten officers in 1945, there were 81 by 1970. Towards the end of the period honorary welfare officers were also employed: in 1970 they numbered 46.³² Total numbers of cases dealt with are available only for the first five years of the branch's existence.³³ These jumped from 7500 to 62,000 between 1947 and 1950, out of a total population of only around 110,000. Numbers continued to grow rapidly if the Tokerau district is a reliable guide. Covering the whole of Northland and half of the city of Auckland, Tokerau officers reported a rise in cases from nearly 7000 to just over 8000 between 1959 and 1961. There were just six officers in the district: a district welfare officer, a senior welfare officer, two male welfare officers and four female welfare officers.³⁴ In 1961 Northland alone contained 21,627 Maori or 12.9% of the Maori population. With the inclusion of central Auckland, the total population served by the six officers would have totalled 46,925 or 28% of the Maori population.³⁵

The biggest and most persistent problems were material, and centred on housing, social security benefits, and other necessities in life, such as blankets and clothing.³⁶ The frustration of officers unable to make any real headway with housing is frequently evident. When the local medical officer in Hamilton referred yet another case of unsanitary living conditions to a welfare officer, the dictatorial tone of his memo riled the welfare officer so much, that instead of personally talking it through with him he resorted to correspondence. In this case the welfare officer felt that Mr Ngarimu was quite able to make limited improvements to his dwelling because he was a carpenter and had done a lot of work for the Ngahiwi pa, 'but apparently he seems content to remain under his present conditions'. The officer noted that Mr Ngarimu was well known to the office and that he was aware of the assistance available under the 1935 Maori Housing Act. Until he made an application and satisfied the conditions, the Maori Affairs Department could do nothing to help him.³⁷ Mr Ngarimu's case raises the issue of whether families always wanted the 'help' they received. These kinds of living conditions were not necessarily seen by the welfare officers as just a matter of lack of suitable housing. For officials, housing conditions revealed character and racial defect. One woman was asked by a Pakeha Native Land Court Judge, 'how could I be so clean if I lived in a nikau house'.³⁸

A 'good home' was increasingly recognized by officials as 'the source of all social progress'.³⁹ There is much continuity here with the goals of child welfare officers in the same period — a decent family life centred on the house in the suburbs — albeit with different meanings for Maori. 'Social progress', with its echo of 'modernity', signalled the wider goal of Maori adjustment to modern life, implicitly contrasted with the traditional, rural pa and its extended living arrangements. Because family itself meant something different for Maori, the goal of a good home also meant something different in this context.

One lady welfare officer's report demonstrates the types of judgement that frequently coloured provision, and also the close relationship of decision-making to the Pakeha norm: 'Homes, homes and more homes is the general cry throughout the Dominion, for without homes we cannot educate our children from early childhood in the simple rules of hygiene. Only when our populace is adequately housed can we expect to compare with the pakeha. There are of course certain types of people who are content to live in hovels, and would make no honest efforts to better themselves, suggestions fall on deaf ears, the simple word "deposit" when referring to housing loans being sufficient to scare them away. Happily these types are rare.'⁴⁰

Welfare officers brought 'to the Maori the basic conditions of the pakeha social and economic structure'.⁴¹ They concentrated on the provision of adequate and modern housing: assisting and advising with applications for loans for state houses; investigating and reporting on housing applications under the Maori Housing Act. District welfare officers were members of the District Priority Committee and the Maori State Housing Allocation Committee, and kept local welfare officers informed. Although there was a shift from rural to urban cases as the population urbanized, a significant rural portion remained. From the late 1940s and right through the 1950s housing applications formed a large part of

officers' work, as did accommodation for newly urbanized workers. By the late 1950s the focus was almost wholly on housing and relocation programmes.⁴² Many of the houses allocated to Maori were of poor quality, which meant that following up structural defects and maintenance was a continual job. The question of who to talk to about applications or problems was also an issue. The Controller noted in 1949 that individuals visiting offices were only seen by Maori welfare officers and not necessarily passed on to other officers with more technical knowledge.⁴³

Housing problems could be entwined with other difficulties, rather than just stemming from shortages, defects or loan approval. For example, an honorary welfare officer phoned the Controller in 1961 about three families who were in 'dire straits' concerning their housing conditions. Two of the families were struggling because their breadwinners were in gaol. He was also concerned about the education of the children and wanted some suggestions to assist in the matter. For two years he had been trying to get an interview with a Maori welfare officer through Child Welfare, to no avail, hence he was writing to the top. He had been doing things himself such as arranging credit extensions at the grocer's.⁴⁴

The equation of a 'good life' (in health, family and material terms) with a 'home' echoed strongly the drives and ambitions of many families. There was a huge emphasis on home pride at this time generally as part of the 'decent' family life, Maori 'development', and welfare of a broad kind. Not all Maori shared these aspirations at this stage, although more would do so; their collective and extended family social structures were at odds with this nuclear, individualistic focus. Increasingly welfare officers' duties extended to overseeing repayments of loans and advising about the furnishing and care of houses. The department published a booklet *Your New Home* in 1954, which was given to owners of homes built by the department. 'In simple story form this booklet will show the way a new home owner plans his [sic] home and grounds, furnishes, decorates, builds some simple improvements in the home, and meets his [sic] various new financial obligations, including some money laid by for future maintenance needs'.⁴⁵ Officers also supported the MWWL's widespread 'best kept home and garden' competitions, and some suggested further competitions for the best-kept Maori home with an emphasis on grounds and exterior homecraft.⁴⁶ As Kuini Te Tau recalled, 'all these people moving into their homes — didn't know what it was to pay rent or anything So we used to make them wear short pants and dress the kids and teach them to have a garden and what to grow. But I got very unpopular. Dad said to me "Oh, very smart with those leagues of yours, the next meeting you go and tell them, you buy toilet paper — you don't use the *Auckland Weekly!*"⁴⁷ These steps were taken before the outcry in 1964 over the Education Department's *Washday at the Pa* booklet. That publication was accused by the MWWL, among others, of portraying a less than favourable image of Maori life. Its critics charged that through its depiction of a dwelling without electricity and hot water, the booklet suggested that all Maori lived in sub-standard conditions and were happy to do so, that they were accustomed to a 'pre-modern' way of life. The MWWL asked for the booklet to be withdrawn

from circulation. But at the same time the MWWL was aiming to uphold the maintenance of traditional family roles, rights and obligations and 'traditional' Maori arts and crafts. There were tensions in the desire for 'modern' homes, between modernizing and defending or preserving existing practices, as welfare officers found in other areas of their work.

A focus on a well-appointed home in the suburbs brought further difficulties, which were seen as problems of adjusting to town life, but were often largely of a financial nature. In 1963, 70 Maori families in Whangarei, about a third of whom had moved in within the last five years, received advice from the Home Counselling Society. Some brought with them 'a pile of debts and judgement summonses'. It was argued that budgeting advice, including printed budget sheets, should be given upon application for a house.⁴⁸

Other government departments and their committees saw these financial issues, and the exclusion of many Maori from rental housing because of a perception of not being good tenants, as a problem of Maori adjustment. They classed them as examples of 'problem housing'. The district officer at Auckland reported a rather different story in 1957: the numbers of families housed that were giving trouble or had 'moral problems' was only 7.5%. He noted that this was a very low proportion and that the welfare staff had each problem case in hand. No families that had been housed had problems involving the preservation of law and order, although police had been involved in three cases because of overcrowding or the need to ensure good behaviour. He noted that many families had been re-housed on the grounds of overcrowding and decadent living conditions, with the support of the Health and Welfare Departments. The district officer brought up one of the reasons for problems with Maori housing: the colour bar or discrimination encountered when applying for rental houses or flats. As other historians have noted, there was a colour bar in jobs, the rental and real estate markets, when being served at hotels, with seating at cinemas, and even at hairdressers.⁴⁹

Housing was also refused because of 'irresponsibility', although the officer did not define what that was. He concluded that of those who had been housed by the department, 92.5% 'have been seized with their civic responsibilities and live up to normal European standards'.⁵⁰ There were questions about how many people lived in Maori houses, the larger number of children present, and the larger gatherings in them for social occasions. The responsibilities and the European standard, it went without saying, were defined as living in a suburban home in a particular way. Maori used houses very differently from Pakeha. The files reflect this wider discomfort with Maori usage. Tuberculosis cases, families who needed loans to sort out their financial worries, and the occasional family or alcohol problem were all perceived in 'Maori' terms, despite the particular circumstances, and they were defined as not being of 'European' standard.⁵¹

Identification of problem housing was concurrent with a set of problems dealt with by welfare officers, but not initiated by families: complaints about behaviour by neighbours. These are evident from 1949 and reflect the greater visibility of Maori families in Pakeha suburbs as well as the policy of 'pepper-potting' Maori families by distributing them among Pakeha (often single Maori families in

streets consisting entirely of Pakeha families) after the publication of the 1960 Hunn Report. This report was 'one of the first systematic attempts to document the racial disadvantage of the Maori, and it presented this issue as a problem that had to be addressed by New Zealand society'.⁵² It spelt out in chilling statistical appendices a range of measures — population, land settlement, housing, education, employment, health, land titles, legal differentiation, crime — which itemized gross disparity between Maori and Pakeha, and 'questioned the myth of racial equality'.⁵³

Complaints by neighbours were about specific forms of social behaviour, such as consumption of alcohol and extravagantly free hospitality in the disapproving eyes of Pakeha. This was another form of ill-defined 'unsatisfactory' living conditions. The Keith family was visited because of their 'weakness for alcoholic drinking and their apparent disregard for those things that would help them in bettering their lot'. Their neighbours found the family a nuisance, and believed the parents and three children lived in unsatisfactory conditions. The welfare officer noted that they had been there for 12 months and had not shown 'any improvement in their personal possessions and code of living'. She believed that the children should be taken from their parents until they could prove they were fit to look after them. Interestingly the senior child welfare officer, who also investigated this case, disagreed with this conclusion. She thought that despite the 'really appalling' conditions, Mrs Keith was making the best of the situation: the home was clean and tidy and the children looked well and were suitably dressed.⁵⁴ The Maori welfare officer clearly had higher expectations and standards.

Publicity in the press about other instances of problematic behaviour did not help the reputation of Maori families. Press coverage sometimes stimulated investigations. The elements of racism entailed in the complaints illustrate that rather than having 'the best race relations in the world' as many contemporaries and historians later thought, there were unforeseen difficulties in the official assimilationist policy. The complaints were not necessarily to welfare officers. Often they were more formal, and used official channels, such as writing letters to senior staff. The complaints had become so frequent by 1961 that the Maori Affairs Secretary wanted all reports about social behaviour, especially those relating to complaints from neighbours and other people, collated, analysed by type and locality, so that consideration could be given as to what action, if any, would be worthwhile.⁵⁵ This move, together with the existing defences made by officers, suggests that the department was engaged in a conceptual struggle, attempting to establish Maori as entitled recipients of state assistance. The struggle had 'race' and class dimensions and tied in with wider developments. As Maori became more conspicuous recipients of state benefits, especially housing, and became more urbanized, living in close proximity to Pakeha, popular understandings of 'the welfare state' hardened. Pakeha believed it was not designed for, nor should be directed primarily at, 'them'. There was a fear that, given the obviously greater need of Maori, too many welfare resources would be swallowed up by Maori families. This harked back to the earlier racist undercurrent that Maori were 'unworthy' or unable to make use of such resources properly.

The Auckland district welfare officer reported that one of the most significant aspects of the work in his office for that year was 'the indifferent social behaviour of many Maoris'. Because the number of complaints was increasing to such an extent, he feared a large-scale breakdown in public relations, not only between Maori and Pakeha, but also between welfare officers and the complaining public. He was worried that 'the objectionable conduct of some Maori individuals and families would inevitably harden public opinion against the Maori people as a whole'.⁵⁶ He had investigated 25 cases and believed complaints would increase as the number of houses increased, that rural families moving to the city had a poor standard of 'social education', and that trouble between Maori and Pakeha neighbours was a cause of bad relations and likely to increase. Almost all of a random sample of 18 cases concerned parties, visitors, late hours, noise, bad language, fights, cars and trucks coming and going, children unattended and 'lack of consideration for the comfort of all those in the vicinity'.⁵⁷

A Dannevirke case illustrates the kind of complaint and the lengths to which officers went in their response. Mr Henderson, a Pakeha, was unhappy with his neighbour Jackie Reihana, citing 'wild parties', and the constant presence of Reihana's 'notorious in-laws' the Marshalls, so that sometimes up to 20 or more people were in the house at one time. The Controller asked the local welfare officer to undertake a full economic and domestic survey of the family, including details of the ownership of the house, ascertain the landlord's view if applicable, and to itemise 'what efforts have been made in the past to bring this family up to scratch'. The officer also had to investigate the extent of involvement by the tribal committee, the health inspector, the borough council, and Child Welfare. Finally he was to see whether prohibition orders against those attending 'wild parties' would effect any improvement.⁵⁸

The case history was ambivalent in a number of respects. Mr Reihana was described as 'not a bad sort of man, but he is easy-going and shiftless'. It seemed that the Marshall family was a bigger problem, 'notorious for immorality, impecuniosity, dirtiness, disease, and irresponsibility'. However, their behaviour had not so far been bad enough to warrant court prosecution. Reihana did not have the strength of character to keep his wife's nearest relatives out of their home. Mrs Reihana 'is only a fair housekeeper and although the house is not very clean it is not very dirty. The grounds are in much the same state.' The officer was obviously equivocal. Significantly, he believed that if the house were in another area of Dannevirke, it would not stand out, but it happened to be in a very select area. The officer had 'long discussions' with Mr Reihana, warned the tribal committee that offensive behaviour would not be tolerated in this house or any other, and that Mr Reihana's house would be kept under observation. Child Welfare would be asked to look into the children under Mrs Marshall's care. He concluded his report by saying that most Maori in the area were well behaved.⁵⁹

Besides issues to do with housing, another key element in material need concerned pensions and benefits. Up until 1945, when benefits were finally paid to Maori and Pakeha on an equal basis, access to benefits and the lower rates generally paid to Maori were the principal issues. Families in isolated

rural areas often did not know what they were eligible for, and their qualification for benefits was frequently clouded because of questions over the legitimacy of customary marriage and the widespread practices of informal fostering or tamariki whangai. With the Maori Purposes Act of 1950, customary marriage was excluded from law, although family benefits were paid for all children whether legitimate or not. The Minister of Maori Affairs reiterated this policy to the department's Secretary in 1955, in relation to the suggestion of a well-meaning nurse in Gisborne, who advocated withholding family benefits in her area as a way of encouraging parents to marry.⁶⁰ Maori welfare officers continued to have a role in defending access to benefits, even after they were granted in full.

By far the greatest issue for families and welfare officers after the war was how the benefits were spent. The 1946 universal family benefit in particular made a huge difference to many poor and rural Maori families, and the ready and comparatively sizeable amounts of cash were very evident in local communities. Alleged mis-spending of benefits betrayed how thin a veneer the commitment to equality expressed in the 1945 Maori Social and Economic Advancement Act was. As Margaret McClure has argued, 'the idea that social security symbolised citizenship and was a shared community right was less clear in the state's relationship to Maori'. Maori communities were not allowed the 'freedom from official curiosity and supervision, which was vital to other citizens, and which social security had been designed to dispel'.⁶¹ Part of the reason for this was the different nature of welfare for Maori. The job of the welfare officers was to 'awaken need', to make access easier. In other words, official curiosity, albeit for positive ends, was actively promoted. Again welfare officers were caught in an ambivalent position, not only between defending and modernizing as discussed above, but also between gate-keeping and prying, and overseeing and encouraging use. The ambivalences and the multiple possibilities of welfare provisions through cash payouts, most obviously in family benefits, are apparent.

During the war, tribal committees had been directed to intervene in benefit spending, report on abuses and recommend Maori agents where necessary. This role continued into peacetime. Their efforts were patchy: some operated very enthusiastically and others were more concerned with community affairs.⁶² After the MWWL was established in 1951 its members took over this supervisory role in many places, overseeing spending and highlighting misapplications of the cash and so forth. Yet even in this role league members showed some ambivalence and were alert and acted upon the other possibilities offered by cash payouts. Mona Wiikaira related how she helped women stand firm against their husbands' assumption that the benefits were for their use, thus bolstering women's independence: 'The family benefit had started to come in then and most of the women around here that I had known, their husbands used to wait and collect the money. The league taught them to assert themselves; they had no independent thought at all.'⁶³ Mira Szazy battled against men who suggested that the family benefit, rather than a portion of their wages, be used as house payments.⁶⁴ Whether from within the league or from the department, the female

Maori welfare officers played a similar role to their Pakeha counterparts in terms of intervening in the balance of power within families, often on the side of the weaker members, and between spouses.

By the 1950s and 1960s, more pleas appeared in the records from individuals asking for help with benefits on their own behalf, for example, on the occasion of losing a social security book. Mrs Millen had lost her book five months earlier, had an unemployed husband and a new baby, and was becoming frantic. She had to be contacted through their neighbour.⁶⁵ Many Maori families lacked the usual amenities that Pakeha families had, such as telephones. Others had problems filling out forms and doing the paperwork. Mrs Simpson wrote to head office saying she was in a desperate plight. She had just come out of hospital and had a sick husband. It transpired that benefit money was waiting for her but she had to file a Nil Return Schedule and her husband had to forward a medical certificate. The officer expressed her frustration with Mrs Simpson and what must have been a great many similar situations. Despite Mrs Simpson saying that she 'didn't have a clue' about these processes, the officer declared her to have a 'dilatatory attitude . . . They have brought the attitude upon themselves by being so apathetic in completing forms. Incidentally, there does not appear to be any starvation in the family. Mrs Simpson weighs all of 16 to 17 stones.'⁶⁶ Officers were often caught between helping and defending. They were better educated than their clients and much more familiar with systems and bureaucracy. They were also usually of reasonably high status in their own communities.⁶⁷ While the focus in this article is on their relationship to the Pakeha world and policies of integration, there were also issues of stratification and class within Maori society.

The dwindling value of benefits over this period had a greater impact on Maori than on Pakeha. The 1951 census showed, for example, that the median male Maori income was 72.4% of the median Pakeha income, and it had to be spread over larger families.⁶⁸ Yet from the officers' point of view it was inability to use money wisely and well that was the problem, rather than the insufficiency of it. In 1952 the Kaikohe Welfare Office noted in its annual report: 'The Maori people are getting wonderful opportunities through the advent of the Social Security benefits. It is up to the individual Maori now to put such benefits to good use and purpose. He is, however, a long way behind in that respect owing to many reasons. The Maori on the whole possess no knowledge of weighing his coin, in other words, lack the knowledge of economy. He has no value for money.'⁶⁹ Budgeting was seen as the solution and welfare officers continued to hold up Pakeha familial life as the model, disregarding the different nature and circumstances of Maori families. It appears that in this area of need Maori were not given the reasonable license that child welfare officers and social security officers awarded to careful and prudent Pakeha, because the focus was on development of the people as a whole, as much as, if not more than, individual need. Development of the 'social entity' took precedence. It was deemed that Maori could not handle money, not that they had other ways to use it or that there were ambivalences and a range of possibilities surrounding its use. K. Laurence, the Palmerston North district officer, had emphatic views on this

issue, but was perceptive enough to note that: 'When Maori families get out of their depth in money matters it must build up other tensions and what is observed in excessive spending on liquor and gambling may be more the effects of ineffective money management rather than any particular desire to drink heavily or gamble recklessly'.⁷⁰ Even allowing for reckless and heedless individual families, it appears that Maori could not win. They were expected to 'embrace a modernity enjoyed by white society'⁷¹ without the same experience and skills, yet they were harshly judged when they lapsed, even though Pakeha were falling into the same traps.⁷²

Beyond housing and benefits, there was a multitude of other needs. Partly this broad range was because of the all-encompassing nature of Maori welfare officers' work, but it was also a response to the greater degree of need of all kinds. Over the 1950s and 1960s the needs changed gradually (but not completely) from instances of absolute poverty — for example, cases of underfed and poorly fed children,⁷³ the need for blankets and clothing for those living in 'native conditions'⁷⁴ — to furnishing houses, buying school uniforms, paying electricity arrears and so forth. This perceptible shift reflects the changes among Maori as they urbanized and entered into predominantly Pakeha lifestyles, based on permanent employment, a cash economy, more participation in education and a house in the suburbs. The problems of transferring to a totally cash society are evident in cases of unfamiliarity with how banks and bank accounts operated.

Although many Maori had less money in their pockets than Pakeha, they shared the aspirations of the growing consumer society. Case files pay regular attention to the particular perils of hire purchase.⁷⁵ There are frequent references to victimization by door-to-door salesmen as well. Mrs Makara, for example, got into repeated trouble for trying to 'live like the Joneses'. She was supervised by the budgeting scheme for three years because of her inability to budget and to 'keep her accounts within reason'. As part of the scheme she was answerable to a 'sponsor' but this relationship foundered. The sponsor returned her accounts to her and no one else would take her on. The officer did not think she 'was really bad' but that she 'has at times divorced herself from the hard realities of life'.⁷⁶

While officers voiced heavy moral assessments in some cases of material need, other kinds of privation were recognized and addressed with less judgement. These cases involved the distribution of monies from a specific fund — the civil list — and from a separate source in Vote: Maori Affairs. The civil list was designed for 'purposes generally beneficial to the Maori people'.⁷⁷ Ironically, it had been called 'Victorian Bounty' previously, and appears to have been a legacy of nineteenth-century government arrangements for the care of indigenous peoples. Several thousand pounds were available each year. In 1947, the first year of its operations, £6862 was spent.⁷⁸ Under section 12 of the 1950 Finance Act it was renamed 'Welfare Work: temporary assistance in necessitous cases' and was also known as 'distress grants', although the term 'civil list' continued to be used. By 1963, £3490 of the civil list was spent on 'welfare', clothing and furniture and £7000 was budgeted.⁷⁹ In 1968 \$13,255 was granted, including \$1420 on education, \$2801 on welfare, \$340 on clothing, \$400 on

furniture, \$280 on funerals and \$831 on miscellaneous needs. Clubs and marae received \$7183 from this source.⁸⁰ These are similar or perhaps equivalent amounts given the conversion to decimal currency and inflation. The expenditure was small in terms of the overall expenditure of the welfare section. Initially the civil list funds were not recoverable but all grants became part recoverable. Most grants were much smaller amounts of £5 each to tide people over in immediate circumstances and these were often used for travel. In 1965 the figure was increased to £10. Civil list grants ranged anywhere from tens to hundreds of pounds. There were both one-off and infrequent demands from families but some recipients turned into long-term cases that became troublesome.

The grants covered almost everything imaginable, from money to get a ticket back to a home district, for coal and wood, clothing, furniture, furnishings and bed linen, to payments for electricity arrears, funeral expenses and groceries. Educational expenses such as fees, books and uniforms were sometimes covered, and one grant assisted families of several Maori All Black team members while they were away on tour. The general welfare nature of the Maori Affairs Department was cemented with these grants and they show how the department attempted to both fill gaps in the larger welfare state and also support cultural practices, such as going home for tangi. Providing this kind of financial assistance also kept families coming to Maori Affairs instead of, or as well as, going to other agencies, and perpetuated the dilemma about where Maori families should go for assistance.

Hemi and Marama Davis applied for £50 from the civil list. They had recently been allocated a state house in Otara. Before this their family of seven children had lived in a dilapidated shack in Northland. One of the children was a suspected tuberculosis case. Although a good worker, and with a new job at the Ministry of Works, Mr Davis was reported to be unreliable financially. The family had budgeting assistance. Charitable organizations had supplied most of the furniture they would need, but they still required blinds and linoleum. The officer noted that it would be some time before the family would be able to stand on its own feet and that is why they should receive a grant of £50 for furnishings. The letter Mr Davis received from the minister perfectly captures the tone of this interaction:

These are things you must have for reasonably comfortable living; and in order that you may have them without running into debt — which you should avoid as far as you possibly can — I have the pleasure in approving a grant The District Officer . . . will advise you soon of arrangements for the purchase of the articles you need.

I am pleased that your housing difficulties have now been solved, and I would urge you to look after the house carefully, and to make full use of the household budgeting advice which I understand you are receiving.⁸¹

Grants from the civil list and temporary assistance funds were made to families where the outlook was positive or officials felt they would uphold the reputation of Maori more generally. With little training and lots of pressures, Maori welfare officers made many finely balanced assessments and put faith in many families to 'do the right thing'.

In rural districts welfare officers were called upon to check truancy and absenteeism. Welfare officers frequently responded to headmasters' written enquiries about alleged neglect and poor feeding of school children, their deprived appearance and clothing and related issues. In these cases lady welfare officers, district nurses and MWWL members were brought into the welfare circle. Like the complaints of neighbours, these were comments on 'Maoriness' as much as on poverty. They were imbued with moral value judgements, which the parents did not necessarily share.

Domestic conflict occurred regularly and appears to have intensified, or become more visible, under the pressures of urbanization, relocation and living in a nuclear family style. Money troubles and the commonly accepted high rates of Maori drinking only made matters worse. In 1958 the Secretary informed the Minister of Maori Affairs that welfare officers were constantly being called upon to mediate in 'domestic disputes' and needed 'tact and diplomacy plus a fair share of good fortune' to solve such cases. The reports coming in from the districts suggested excessive drinking, unequal distribution of family income, unfaithfulness, and bad living conditions, among other things, as reasons.⁸² The department began to explore the possibility of training welfare officers in marriage guidance, but only wanted to undertake it as long as the Marriage Guidance Council realized Maori attitudes were different and that Maori would want to be counselled by Maori.⁸³ None of the cases read for this study used marriage guidance counsellors; instead officers seemed resigned to leaving a couple to separate when things had gone too far, and otherwise to make sure the requisite social security benefits were applied for, and accommodation was sorted out. Sometimes family connections were brought into the situation to help, if the officer knew the couple.⁸⁴

Officers also had to deal with problems between parents and children. During the war the category of 'moral welfare' appeared in the department's annual reports. As other historians have argued, the perception of increasing female juvenile delinquency was linked to wartime social change, partly because of the presence of so many young men in the main centres that were close to training camps. Officials reported increases in young women being charged with morality offences. Anxiety over female sexual delinquency was also racialized. Maori women, who were believed to be 'naturally' promiscuous and have lax moral attitudes, had, it was understood, a detrimental effect on Pakeha young women.⁸⁵ Parents shared these worries, if not the reasoning. In 1948 and 1949, for example, families wanted assistance with young women camping out with men in Addington and drinking with ex-soldiers. In the latter case neighbours also complained about the girls' behaviour. More general requests for help in controlling children were also evident, and it is not surprising that welfare officers dealt with these situations as well, given their involvement in most facets of family life.

Welfare officers were also most concerned about 'carnal knowledge' cases, although this was not necessarily a problem for the families concerned. As with adoptions and marriage, Pakeha law was at odds with Maori practice. The very young age of marriage and childbearing for Maori is reflected in these cases. The different view of family structure and relationships held by Maori meant

that adoptions were not entered into in very great numbers. Tamariki whangai were theoretically outlawed in 1909, but the practice continued right through this period. The Native, and then the Maori Land Court dealt with adoptions of Maori children by Maori and applications increased markedly in 1944, because social security agents told Maori that children needed to be legally adopted to get the family benefit.⁸⁶ The 1955 Adoption Act closed Maori adoptions as well but registrations remained the province of the Maori Land Court. The 1962 amendment transferred proceedings to Magistrates' Courts and applications actually declined.

There were never large numbers of Maori or Maori-Pakeha couples wanting to adopt. As Child Welfare's senior inspector bewailed in 1966, there had 'been little progress in Wanganui in the attitudes of Maori re custody and "possession" of children since he had gone there in 1947'.⁸⁷ Anne Delamere recalled that in the 1960s nine out of ten adoption cases she dealt with were not closed: the adoptive and birth parents knew each other and had agreed before coming to see her that they wanted the adoption to go through.⁸⁸ In some areas child welfare officers were involved and most attempted to work with local Maori officers and share the responsibility, as well as information on suitable placements.⁸⁹ Yet child welfare officers did not understand the importance of bloodlines and descent to Maori and therefore of kin knowing where a child was being placed for adoption. Even in cases of prospective adoptive children with both Maori and Pakeha parents, child welfare officers often failed to realize that the respective families might have different wishes.

Unsurprisingly, it was in the area of family relationships that Maori welfare officers had most contact with child welfare officers. Finding suitable homes for Maori children under Child Welfare's care was a constant worry, because it was felt that Maori wards should be fostered with Maori families, otherwise one would be asking 'for delinquent problems which are not apparent in [the child's] own environment'.⁹⁰ The main issue that Maori families approached Maori welfare officers about was the fate of their children once under the care of Child Welfare. Despite the fact that Child Welfare sought Maori care situations and worked with Maori families over long periods of time, there was a perception that Child Welfare officers were 'those people who come to take your children away, and you never see them again'.⁹¹ Cases in Maori Affairs files offer some support for this view. In one straightforward case where the boys were committed through the courts, the mother, Mrs Warahi, was advised to deal with Child Welfare; Maori officers declined to assist. In Mrs Moke's case it is not clear what eventuated, and the circumstances were more ambivalent. Her poignant letter to the Under Secretary of Maori Affairs is one of the few preserved in the files:

I now appeal to you to get my children home. I have sent in applications but they have always been declined by Miss Riley I have seen Mr Royal, been to the Child Welfare, in Wellington, seen Dan Taylor, even had Mrs Hirini Boyle as my mouth piece, but all turned out a failure.

The cause of it all its through living a moral life. I'll be frank why I took to this man hes made my home a mansion to me hes kind to my children & myself.

I have two children by him at home now. Well Sir I think I've just about explained everything now so I hope to hear from you in the very near future.

PS. My children were taken away cause my husband had TB which he died of 3 years ago.⁹²

Interviews and advice dominated the early years of Maori welfare officers' work. In some of the early case notes, the positions of interviewer and interviewee appear to have been reversed, although that may be a stylistic quirk of the more formal language Maori welfare officers used. One Christchurch welfare officer reported: 'An urgent call over the phone called me to Rangiora and on arrival I was interviewed by the above named soldier's mother'.⁹³ This tendency may also illustrate the flavour of the welfare relationship when it involved straightforward material assistance, rather than the more paternalistic provision in terms of development, integration or good citizenship. It does, nevertheless, convey the way that, regardless of articulated or perceived need, Maori welfare officers were there for the people, to help in any way they could. This role was as important as distributing a closely regulated and economically run programme that filled gaps in existing provision, tided families over, or helped them deal with difficult personal situations. Obvious signs of respect and deference were, nevertheless, part of the drive to 'lift' standards and citizenship, and point again to evidence of stratification within Maori communities.

The use of the term 'lady welfare officer' is another example of the more formal relationships structure that operated in the Maori welfare area. The term continued to be used into the 1960s. As 'lady welfare officers', female staff had an elevated role with regard to women in the home, respectability, and supporting capable housewives. Even though gender roles took on particularly heightened meanings in this decade more generally, they contained specific significance with regard to Maori women. 'Race' was not only classed, it was also gendered.

The need for knowledge and guidance continued in a different form in the 1950s and 1960s but remained an integral part of a Maori welfare officer's work. It was not commented upon as much as in the earlier years, except in reference to social security. Rather than being tied to wartime exigencies and industrial development, Maori continued to need assistance accessing government departments, running the house and handling money, furnishing the house and caring for the property suitably. It is not always clear if the families themselves sought out this counsel. Given the paternalism and socialization goals of officers, it appears that, especially in the 1960s, many clients felt they had more than enough advice to be going on with.

The views of families and welfare officers were often quite divergent. There is evidence of assistance matching need, and satisfaction and gratitude all round. Yet other families were clearly frustrated and unhappy and felt powerless. Initiative lay with officers and other officials, rather than in their hands. Some officers noted that adequate information was not always given to clients, that

they did not understand their situation, and so clients became embittered. Other prospective clients were angry and cynical because wrong information was given to them before they came to the department.⁹⁴ Welfare officers recommended more training as well as the publication of brochures publicizing what they did. Mrs Katene, after sorting out her electricity arrears, but 'brassed off' at still being shuttled around between Social Security, Maori Affairs and the Power Board, told her officer that she had had 'enough of Govt Depts who have spent some considerable time enquiring into her affairs with no result and it appears that this is the attitude she adopted when interviewed by the Social Security Dept'.⁹⁵

Paternalism and the potentially demeaning and negative impact of state help was always a feature of Maori families' relationships with welfare officers. Yet despite their socializing role and their aim of 'introducing modern ideas',⁹⁶ officers knew the limits to which they could go and they, too, relied on families' willingness to enter the spirit of the relationship.

For their part, officials were often in an invidious position. Maori welfare officers were 'nearly all of the Maori race'. For example, in the mid-1950s only four out of 45 welfare officers were Pakeha.⁹⁷ They were looked down upon and misunderstood by other government departments, and within the department there was still much paternalism and racism, especially given that many officials and successive ministers in this period — except Tipi Ropiha (1948–1957) — were Pakeha. At times officers appear to be manifesting the departmental spirit of social change and paternalism, although in face-to-face contact with families they were more likely to be sympathetic, even if they shared the official goals. Male officers in particular were impatient to be seen to be moving beyond charity and such basic welfare work. For example, one officer who received an offer of a parcel of used clothing for the needy felt whakama (ashamed at having lost face). He handed it over to the MWWL to distribute instead.

Their exasperation and stress was quite palpable at times, as they dealt with recalcitrant clients and other departments who wished they dealt with all Maori cases. The ever-present bureaucracy and issues of professional development and training impeded their work. Overwork was compounded by the extra work for other departments' officers. The task was becoming 'most intolerable', wrote one officer in 1954. There was no local social security staff in his area and the registrar came only once a month, and sat in his office for half a day for both Maori and Pakeha cases. His own office was full of social security correspondence and the local Maori were already accustomed to coming to his office.⁹⁸ Members of the public in places such as Invercargill complained that Maori welfare officers were neglecting their towns. The challenges of geography that Maori welfare officers faced were clearly far greater than for other government welfare officers.

Maori welfare services covered a wide range of needs and desires. The malleable nature of need was absolutely central for Maori. It was greatly influenced by the marked disadvantage of Maori relative to the coexisting Pakeha population. Maori need was linked to poorer material conditions — housing, income, assets and access to education and jobs — and the social consensus surrounding ways to deal with 'race up-lift' and the imperative for 'development'. State assistance

therefore had a much larger positive effect on Maori compared with Pakeha, because Maori living conditions were generally so much worse. Equally importantly, the different perceptions of 'need' by Pakeha and by Maori welfare officers were critical factors. Individual Maori had to battle continually to establish entitlement and legitimate need. They also lived in a culture that was different to the one embodied by the welfare state, which was predicated on Pakeha familial models. Some Maori attempted to adopt this model and others ignored it. Consequently some Maori families had needs that were quite outside the experience of Pakeha families. The more directive role of Maori welfare officers in the Department of Maori Affairs was both a catalyst and consequence of these realities. As I have shown, Maori welfare officers were mediators and frequently acted as 'go-betweens' in relation to other state departments and to the larger Pakeha society, at both an individual and group level. In contrast to Pakeha welfare officers, Maori officers often demonstrated a greater amount of paternalism in the casework relationship, but this hinged on the wider contemporary ideology of integration. In turn, this protectiveness was intersected by a sense of responsibility for Maori as a group and the need to defend them. The different articulation of needs by Maori and their varying ability and desire to live up to Pakeha norms and standards required Maori welfare officers to mount public relations exercises on behalf of their clients in the face of mounting Pakeha criticism of Maori entitlement and behaviour. The definitions and patterns of work used by Pakeha welfare officers proved impractical and meaningless in a Maori context because Maori families (and Maori welfare officers) had a unique relationship to the state and defined their needs, and therefore 'welfare', in quite different ways to Pakeha. Examining Maori welfare helps throw the characteristics of and motivations and functions of *all* welfare into sharper relief.

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NOTES

1 Under Secretary to Maori welfare officer, Wanganui, 25 November 1947; Maori welfare officer to Controller, 4 December 1947; Registrar, Wanganui, to Under Secretary, 19 January 1948. Maori Affairs (MA) 1, 36/1, vol.3, National Archives (NA), Wellington. All names of individuals have been changed to preserve confidentiality. I would like to acknowledge Charlotte Macdonald and Edward Dickinson who supervised the original research on which this article is based.

2 Michael King, *After the War: New Zealand Since 1945*, Auckland, 1988, p.288.

3 Linda Bryder and Margaret Tennant, 'Introduction', *New Zealand Journal of History* (NZJH), 32, 2 (1998), p.91.

4 The background policy has been described and there is acknowledgement in a number of accounts that such welfare services were operating, but their extent has not yet been explored. See Claudia Orange, 'A Kind of Equality: Labour and the Maori People 1935-1949', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1977. See also Claudia Orange, 'An Exercise in Maori Autonomy: The Rise and Demise of the Maori War Effort Organization', NZJH, 21, 2 (1987), pp.156-72; Claudia Orange, 'Fraser and the Maori', in Margaret Clark, ed., *Peter Fraser Master Politician*, Palmerston North, 1998, pp.91-107; G.V. Butterworth and H.R. Young, *Maori Affairs*, Wellington, 1990; Ranginui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou/Struggle Without End*, Auckland, 1990. Although important voluntary agencies such as the Maori Women's Welfare League are the subject of a number of books, accounts of them do not focus on their welfare activities in any detail, nor do they place them in the context of welfare history. See Tania Rei, 'Te Ropu Wahine Maori Toko i te Ora/ Maori Women's Welfare League, 1951-', in Anne Else, ed., *Women Together: A History of Women's Organisations in New Zealand/Nga Ropu Wahine o Te Mou*, Wellington, 1993; Anna Rogers and Miria Simpson, eds, *Te Timitanga Tatau Tatau: Early Stories from Founding Members of the Maori Women's Welfare League/Te Ropu Wahine Maori Toko i Te Ora, as told to Dame Mira Szaszyc*, Wellington, 1993.

5 Margaret McClure, *A Civilised Community: A History of Social Security in New Zealand 1898-1998*, Auckland, 1998, pp.111-24.

6 Bronwyn Dalley, *Family Matters: Child Welfare in Twentieth-Century New Zealand*, Auckland, 1998, pp.119-200, 154.

7 Bronwyn Dalley, 'Moving Out of the Realm of Myth: Government Child Welfare Services to Maori, 1925-1972', NZJH, 32, 2 (1998), pp.190, 191. Dalley reconsiders the prevailing, almost wholly negative, view of government welfare policy toward Maori. *Puao-te-ata-tu*, the 1986 report of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Maori Perspective for the Department of Social Welfare, and other works by Maori argued vehemently that state involvement had been a negative experience for Maori. They claim that the state made Maori families dependent on it and was thoroughly interventionist and racist, removing Maori children to institutions, that it ignored wider whanau and iwi concerns and values, and kept Maori society as a whole out of the state's decision-making and policy processes. See *Puao-te-ata-tu*, Report of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Maori Perspective for the Department of Social Welfare, Wellington, June 1986, pp.7-21.

8 Michael Belgrave, 'New Welfare Histories Reviewed', *People's History*, 29 December 1998, p.8.

9 See for example, Jane Lewis, 'Family Provision of Health and Welfare in the Mixed Economy of Care in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', *Social History of Medicine*, 8, 1 (1995), pp.1-16, and Jane Lewis, 'Gender, the Family and Women's Agency in the Building of "Welfare States": the British Case', *Social History*, 19, 1 (1994), pp.37-55.

10 For an account that focuses on child welfare, see Robert van Krieken, *Children and the State: Social Control and the Formation of Australian Child Welfare*, Sydney, 1991.

11 Orange, 'Fraser and the Maori', p.92.

12 Orange, 'An Exercise in Maori Autonomy', p.163. Under Sir Apirana Ngata's development schemes of the 1920s, some project leaders or 'foremen' performed duties slightly wider than land consolidation or development, and were known as 'welfare officers'. These positions were apparently abolished as an economy measure during the 1930s. See Butterworth and Young, p.74; Orange, 'An Exercise in Maori Autonomy', p.165, fn.42; Native Minister to Mayor of Auckland, 2 August 1943, MA 1, 36/1, vol.1.

13 Orange, 'An Exercise in Maori Autonomy', p.163; Orange, 'A Kind of Equality', ch.3.

- 14 Walker, pp.197–8; Joan Metge, *A New Maori Migration*, Melbourne, 1964.
- 15 Orange, 'An Exercise in Maori Autonomy', pp.159–60; King, p.303.
- 16 Orange, 'An Exercise in Autonomy', p.161.
- 17 *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives* (AJHR), 1945, G-9, p.2.
- 18 Orange, 'An Exercise in Autonomy', p.165–6; Walker, p.203.
- 19 AJHR, 1946, G-9, pp.2–3.
- 20 AJHR, 1944, G-9, p.3.
- 21 AJHR, 1944, G-9, pp.3–4.
- 22 *New Zealand Official Year Book* (NZOYB), 1953, p.951.
- 23 *ibid.*
- 24 Draft memo from Maori welfare officer to Minister of Maori Affairs, 3 December 1956, MA 1, 30/1/41.
- 25 Linda Gordon, 'Black and White Visions of Welfare: Women's Welfare Activism, 1890–1945', *Journal of American History*, 78, 2 (1991), pp.559–90 and Linda Gordon, *Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare*, New York, 1994, pp.116ff. See also Felicia A. Kornbluh, 'The New Literature on Gender and the Welfare State: The US Case (A Review Essay)', *Feminist Studies*, 22, 1 (1996), p.190.
- 26 AJHR, 1949, G-9, p.13.
- 27 AJHR, 1954, G-9, p.7.
- 28 Reina Mehta, 'Women's Health League, 1937–', in Else, pp.30–33; 'Historical Background', in Rogers and Simpson, p.xiv.
- 29 As the 1952 annual report noted, AJHR, 1952, G-9, p.7.
- 30 Butterworth and Young, p.105. Work with Pacific Islanders formed a tiny part of the total welfare work. In 1970, for example, only \$1313 was spent on the 'welfare of islanders in New Zealand'. AJHR, B-7, pt 1, p.156.
- 31 AJHR, 1971, G-9, p.6.
- 32 AJHR, 1965, G-9, p.16.
- 33 At the end of 1949 the Controller sent out a reprimand to all Maori welfare officers about the high number who were failing to file returns and quarterly reports. Touching on an issue that would recur repeatedly, partly because welfare officers were not well trained in bureaucracy and were always overworked, but also because they preferred face-to-face encounters, he reminded them that it was not legitimate for them to claim that they had primarily a field job and therefore spent most time in the field. He warned them that failing to file returns indicated either 'forwardness or lack of interest and ability'. Controller to Maori welfare officers, 16 December 1949, MA 1, 35/1/11. Perhaps another reason for stopping the publication of detailed annual tallies was because the total had already climbed so high that officials were reluctant to draw further attention to it.
- 34 Maori Affairs Welfare Division, Tokerau district, 31 December 1963, MA 1, 36/29/1, pt 7, p.1.
- 35 *New Zealand Census*, 1961, vol.8 Maori Populations and Dwellings, pp.4, 17.
- 36 For example in 1949 the five largest categories of cases were: 25,343 interviews and advice, 14,212 miscellaneous, 5746 housing, 3006 meetings, and 1694 social security. Annual report, AJHR, 1950. By 1961 in the Tokerau district, the 6722 cases were divided up as follows: general 2022, housing 3002, education 1022, employment 371, adoptions 305. Maori Welfare Annual Report, Tokerau district, 31 December 1961, MA 1, 36/29/1, pt 7.
- 37 Maori welfare officer to Medical Officer of Health, Hamilton, 24 August 1949, MA 1, 36/1, vol.3.
- 38 Cited in Lauris Edmond with Carolyn Milward, eds, *Women in Wartime: New Zealand Women Tell Their Story*, Wellington, 1986, p.143.
- 39 AJHR, 1948, G-9, p.1.
- 40 Phrasing as in original. Lady welfare officer's general report, Zones 2 & 3, 1 April 1951–31 March 1952, MA 1, 36/29/1, pt 1.
- 41 AJHR, 1954, G-9, p.5.
- 42 See fn 29.
- 43 Controller to all welfare officers, 5 October 1949, MA 1, 35/1/11.
- 44 Secretary, Maori Affairs to Palmerston North Office, 7 September 1961, MA 1, 36/1, vol.9.
- 45 AJHR, 1954, G-9, p.6.
- 46 District officer, Rototua, to Head Office, 2 August 1963, MA 1, 1/9/11.
- 47 'Kūmi Te Tau', in Rogers and Simpson, p.275.

- 48 District welfare officer, Whangarei to Head Office, 2 August 1963, MA 1, 1/9/11.
- 49 See Redmer Yska, *All Shook Up: The Flash Bodge and the Rise of the New Zealand Teenager in the Fifties*, Auckland, 1993, pp.50–52; Angela Ballara, *Proud to be White? A Survey of Pakeha Prejudice in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1986, pp.98–103.
- 50 District welfare officer, Auckland to Secretary, Head Office, 8 July 1957, MA 1, 30/1/41.
- 51 See cases in MA 1, 30/1/41.
- 52 Paul Spoonley, *Racism and Ethnicity*, Auckland, 1988, p.75.
- 53 J.K. Hunn, *Report on Department of Maori Affairs*, Wellington, 1961, p.13; Spoonley, p.75.
- 54 Maori welfare officer to Under Secretary, Maori Affairs, 9 June 1949; senior child welfare officer to Under Secretary, Maori Affairs, 6 July 1949, MA 1, 36/11, pt 2.
- 55 Circular dated 29 May 1961, MA 1, 36/1, vol.9.
- 56 'Social Problems' [1961], p.1, MA 1, 36/1, vol.9.
- 57 'Social Problems' [1961], p.2, MA 1, 36/1, vol.9.
- 58 Controller to Maori welfare officer, Hastings, 13 February 1950, MA 1, 36/1, vol.4.
- 59 Maori welfare officer, Hastings to Controller, 15 February 1950, MA 1, 36/1, vol.4.
- 60 Secretary, Maori Affairs to Minister of Maori Affairs, 12 September 1955, MA 1, 19/1/38.
- 61 McClure, p.111.
- 62 See the various reports in MA 1, 36/23.
- 63 'Mona Wīkaira', in Rogers and Simpson, p.312.
- 64 Barbara Brookes, 'Nostalgia for "innocent homely pleasures": The 1964 New Zealand Controversy Over *Washday at the Pa*', *Gender and History*, 9, 2 (1997), p.253.
- 65 Memo dated 19 April 1964, MA 1, 36/1, vol.11.
- 66 District welfare officer, Hamilton, to Head Office, 8 January 1968, MA 1 36/21/2, pt 3.
- 67 For more detail on the background and training of the officers see Bronwyn Labrum, 'Family Needs and Family Desires: Discretionary State Welfare in New Zealand, 1920–1970', PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2000, pp. 127–8.
- 68 Cited in Brookes, fn.9, p.258.
- 69 Resident officer, Kaikohe, to district welfare officer, Auckland, 24 April 1952, MA 1, 36/29/1.
- 70 K. Laurence, district officer, Palmerston North to Secretary, Head Office, 7 August, 1963, MA 1, 1/9/11.
- 71 Brookes, p.242.
- 72 Bronwyn Labrum, 'Persistent Needs and Expanding Desires: Pakeha Families and State Welfare in the Years of Prosperity', in Bronwyn Dalley and Bronwyn Labrum, eds, *Fragments: New Zealand Social and Cultural History*, Auckland, 2000, pp.188–210.
- 73 In this case reported in the newspaper, the report noted that after the lady welfare officer had been there a year, the situation had much improved, and that several Pakeha families were among the ones causing concern. See Controller to Minister of Maori Affairs, 20 July 1948, MA 1, 36/11, pt 2.
- 74 See, for example, a 1949 case in MA 1, 36/11, pt 2.
- 75 See the series of exchanges: Head Office to Palmerston North, 31 July 1963; Palmerston North Office to Head Office, 7 August 1963. Acting Secretary to Palmerston North Office, 9 September 1963, MA 1, 1/9/11.
- 76 District officer, Rotorua, to Head Office, 7 September 1964, MA 1, 36/5/4.
- 77 Letter from Peter Fraser, Minister of Maori Affairs, 4 May 1948, MA 1, 100/14/2.
- 78 AJHR, 1948, G-9, p.12.
- 79 AJHR, 1963, G-9, p.15.
- 80 AJHR, 1968, G-9, p.11.
- 81 Minister of Maori Affairs to Mr D —, 21 January 1964, MA 1, 18/3/3, vol.2.
- 82 Secretary to Minister, 11 July 1958, MA 1, 36/1/16.
- 83 Secretary to Justice Department marriage guidance adviser, 11 August 1960, MA 1, 36/1/16.
- 84 See for example, Domestic Dispute: M— Family, Panmure, 22 September 1966, MA 1, 36/1, vol.11.
- 85 Philip J. Fleming, "'Shadow over New Zealand': The Response to Venereal Disease in New Zealand, 1910–1945", PhD thesis, Massey University, 1989, p.186.
- 86 Judge of Native Land Court, Waiariki District, to Under Secretary, Native Department, 20 April 1944, MA 1, 1/15, vol.1.

- 87 Child Welfare (CW) 1.4/16/3, pt 4.
- 88 Anne Else. *A Question of Adoption: Closed Stranger Adoption in New Zealand, 1944–1974*. Wellington, 1991, p.185.
- 89 Dalley. *Family Matters*, p.234.
- 90 Circular to district officers, 5 September 1955. MA 1, 36/11, pt 1; District child welfare officer, Christchurch to Superintendent, Child Welfare, 9 November 1949. MA 1, 36/11, pt 2.
- 91 Anne Delamere, quoted in Else, *A Question of Adoption*, p.181.
- 92 Mrs. M— to Under Secretary, Maori Affairs, 4 June 1949, MA 1, 36/11, pt 2.
- 93 Maori welfare officer, Christchurch, to Controller, Maori Welfare Division, 2 July 1947. MA 1, 36/1, vol.3.
- 94 Welfare officer to Head Office, 3 July 1963, MA 1, 1/9/11.
- 95 Chairman, Social Security Commission to Assistant Controller, Maori Welfare Division, 11 May 1964; district accountant to assistant district officer, Wanganui, 22 June 1964, MA 1, 18/3/3, vol.2.
- 96 AJHR, 1954, G-9, p.8.
- 97 NZOYB, 1953, p.951.
- 98 1954 conference notes, day two, 20 May 1954, MA 1, 36/2/1.