

EXAMINER'S REPORT 2008

HISTORY OF NEW ZEALAND

Paper 8248/01

Paper 1

General Comments

All candidates tackled the examination in a positive manner. Only one candidate was clearly out of their depth. The source based question once again proved to be the more challenging section of the exam for those students who adopted a formulaic approach in their answers. However, again this year, a number of candidates made astute cross-references between the sources to construct a sound, comparative evaluation and arrive at a convincing judgement. One candidate usefully added a relevant degree of own knowledge. Candidates who performed less well in essays often knew a sound amount of content but did not shape it to the specific question being asked.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Candidates who performed less well in this question usually sought to challenge the validity of a particular source or sources. Few candidates noted that Source D, although superficially attacking the hypothesis, in fact supported it. The Source emphasised James Stephen's pervasive influence in the making of Imperial policy towards New Zealand in the period just before 1840. Candidates sometimes wasted a considerable effort in trying to disprove the relevance of a particular source. If such an effort is undertaken, it requires great skill and care. Every Source has been chosen for a considerable degree of relevance to the hypothesis. Argument as to why a particular Source might be more or less preferred in terms of analysis of the hypothesis was often deficient in answers. Statements cross-referencing one or more Sources with others need to be reinforced with brief examples to provide evidence for the argument.

Question 2

Generally this question was answered in a competent manner. Candidates rightly focused upon the much greater degree of cooperation than conflict which existed between 1800 and 1840. One candidate, usefully, even used early clashes between Maori and Pakeha in the period of discovery before 1800 to illuminate later content in the essay answer. There was often, however, little discussion on those episodes of conflict which did occur and analysis of the reasons why these occurred. Incidents such as *Elizabeth*, *Harriet* and *Alligator* were often glossed over in a single sentence.

Question 3

Disease, war, resulting population disruption and decline and the impact of 'legal' measures to relieve Maori of their land led to the later nineteenth century view that Maori were a dying race. Even some Maori commented that just as rats of European origin were supplanting the *Kiore*, Maori themselves were being supplanted by European peoples. In this context, the task of the white settler government was simply to 'smooth the pillow' of this dying race. However, although this view was usually eloquently contested, few candidates explored in any detail the various government measures designed to achieve that smooth pillow. Maori would have been justified in feeling that there was not a great deal of gentle smoothing of the pillow, either.

Question 4

This question was usually tackled in a competent manner. Most answers agreed with the notion that the question of sovereignty lay at the heart of the conflicts which occurred between 1860 and 1872. There was little discussion of the historiographical dimension to the debate over the origins of conflict. However, candidates rightly emphasised the role of the King Movement in generating the issue of sovereignty and noting the origins of conflict in differing interpretations of the Treaty of Waitangi. The later conflicts involving Titokowaru and Te Kooti received less detailed analysis in most answers.

Question 5

Answers to this question tended to focus upon economic development in general and did not link content to the type of resource being exploited or even its ultimate destination and use in terms of fuelling an Industrial Revolution. A very few candidates even muddled renewable and non-renewable resources. Answers tended to focus upon Gold, almost to the exclusion of any other activity such as Sealing, Whaling or even Timber exploitation. Candidates often had the material at their disposal to create a much better answer but simply got into a mode of writing about economic development **within** New Zealand. There was little discussion of New Zealand's links to the European Industrial Revolution and even the development of an export trade of butter and frozen meat to feed the urban industrial working population of Great Britain. Even the development of renewable resources could involve the decimation of an existing non-renewable resource. Reference could have been made to Rollo Arnold's work on the extent of massive bushfires in the 1870s-1890s that resulted in the belief, by some contemporaries, that New Zealand was 'burning'. Fires which destroyed vast areas of forest did provide a renewable resource, eventually – grassland farming. However, much unstable land was cleared of forest and the result was rapid erosion. The majority of answers lacked such a wider perspective.

Question 6

Michael King has argued that Vogel made **the** major contribution to the development of a functioning nation. New Zealand needed basic infrastructures, including the development of transport and communications systems, to become a functioning nation. Most candidates who answered this question made at least passing reference to technological advances throughout the nineteenth century. Improvements were made in both transport and communications. These developments were not always directly linked with the effective functioning of New Zealand's economic and political systems in the later nineteenth century. Some of the required planning and capital had come from provincial governments in the 1850s and 1860s. However, development was limited by provincial rivalries and the lack of funds. Vogel's abolition of the provincial assemblies received scant attention yet it was central to any development of a national perspective. Vogel recognised the need for a national programme for development. The Vogel initiatives arguably provided the 'nervous system' for a functioning nation. Reference should have been made to the way Vogel was instrumental in developing a national as opposed to a provincial infrastructure and even national mentality. Too often time was spent by candidates in attacking various perceived shortcomings of the Vogel initiatives.

Question 7

The few answers to this question focused, often ingeniously, upon small groups of settlers, in the early contact period. There was less discussion of the experiences of the later waves of migrants. Occasionally there was some reference to the impact of the depression of the 1880s upon migrant expectations and experiences but this was usually not developed.

Question 8

The one candidate who attempted this question should not have done so. However, the Liberal Government would still provide a relevant and interesting topic for student analysis. It is a compact period and the Liberal government and its reforms can be studied in a way in which this topic could provide future examination candidates with content which is accessible and adaptable to any specific question.