REVIEW

S. R. H. Jones, *Doing Well and Doing Good: Ross & Glendining, Scottish Enterprise in New Zealand*. Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2010. Pp. 422. ISBN 978-1-877372-74-2. CAD\$50.00.

In an era of growth and commerce, many nineteenth-century businessmen left their homes in Scotland to work overseas where more business opportunities were available. This was the case of John Ross and Robert Glendining, who in the 1860's migrated to New Zealand to start a business trading soft goods. The soft good trade included clothing and household fabrics made from cotton, linen and woolen fabrics. Shortly after their arrival in New Zealand they founded Ross & Glendining, a business which would survive for one hundred years, eventually incorporating and expanding in different labels while always being family owned and operated. The history of this company is documented in S.R.H. Jones' *Doing Well and Doing Good: Ross & Glendining, Scottish Enterprise in New Zealand*.

Using personal letters, newspaper articles and accounting books as his main sources, Jones tells the story of Ross & Glendining, from its start and development in the late nineteenth-century; to its successes at the turn of the century; to its failures in the late 1940s and 1950s; and to its eventual demise and sale in the 1960s. Although starting as merchants and constantly surrounded by impressive and aggressive competition, Jones demonstrates how Ross & Glendining were at one point one of New Zealand's largest manufacturing enterprises. As a result of this legacy, Jones argues that their story "exemplifies the progress of many merchant houses around the world during the course of the nineteenth-century"

and “exemplifies many aspects of the transition from merchant to manufacturer in New Zealand’s economic history.” Jones asserts that it was the strong network of Scottish businessmen in New Zealand, who supported the new businessmen, that allowed the company to be successful in its first decades of operation.

The title, *Doing Well and Doing Good*, would seem to be an appropriate title for a book about Presbyterian businessmen in the nineteenth-century. Religion was an important part of life in Victorian Scotland and the title of the book derives from “a Calvinist belief that worldly success was a reflection of virtue ... doing good and doing well were inextricably linked.” Jones argues that the business approach exhibited by Ross and Glendining reflected their Presbyterian values and as a result, to both businessmen “doing good was undoubtedly as important as doing well.” Therefore, it would appear that the motivation behind Ross and Glendining’s successful business was their desire not only to do well professionally but also to do good for their community. However, Jones devotes very little discussion and detail to the ways in which Ross or Glendining “did good.” While Jones is successful in demonstrating how Ross and Glendining did *well*, by describing the achievements of the business in detail, he fails to equally demonstrate in detail the ways in which Ross and Glendining did *good*, mainly their works of philanthropy. Jones discusses donations made and charities established only briefly in the introduction and similarly throughout the book. Interestingly, Jones even states in the epilogue that the only remembrance of Ross and Glendining is not their business but the donations and charities set up by the men during their lifetime. If the charitable institutions are the only legacy left by Ross and Glendining, and if business and faith were so intertwined, why did Jones choose to focus more on “doing well” than “doing good”?

Although Jones does mention the philanthropic works of both Ross and Glendining briefly, it is over-

shadowed by Jones' detailed descriptions of the affairs of the business and the results of Ross and Glendining's "well doing." However, what Jones lacks in matters of religion and philanthropy he more than makes up for in his discussion of business. Having spent sixteen years going through the extensive archival material held at the Hocken Library at the University of Otago, Jones is able to include several graphs, charts, maps and a glossary which help make the historical analysis of Ross & Glendining understandable and clear. Jones is able to take the reader on an extensive exploration through the world of clothing manufacturing, from the different materials used to the evolution of the equipment used in the factories and in trade. Using examples of other New Zealand businesses in comparison to Ross & Glendining, Jones is able to show how the original partners made the most out of their opportunities while the following generations failed to live up to their predecessors' strong business skills. Providing detailed and clear descriptions of the successes and failures of the business, Jones is able to draw the reader in and successfully demonstrate the valuable place Ross & Glendining hold in the history of New Zealand's soft goods trade.

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