managers and consultants alike taking it very seriously indeed. Their anxiety to contribute to Professor Browne's royalties suggests that decision making is not necessarily about making decisions and that your reviewer may be quite wrong.

Stuart Macdonald
Warwick Business School
Coventry, UK

Wire & Wireless. A History of Telecommunications in New Zealand 1860-1987 *by A. C. Wilson* (The Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, 1994) pp. 235, A$29.95 ISBN 0-86469-210-2

This book provides a comprehensive account of developments in New Zealand telecommunications from the beginnings of the government-owned telegraph in the Canterbury Province in the early 1860s to the break-up and deregulation of the national postal and telecommunication services in 1987. In his brief acknowledgements and introduction the New Zealand author, who holds a PhD in the History of Ideas from the Australian National University, reveals that his study was ten years in the making, having its origins in 1984 when, as an employee of the New Zealand Post Office Museum and Archives, he set out to update Howard Robinson's *A History of the Post Office in New Zealand* (1964). After the splitting up of New Zealand Post and Telecom in April 1987, his earlier institutional and administrative bias gave way to a broader account of the history of telecommunications in New Zealand during the 'Post Office era': that is, when these services were run as a government monopoly by a department of state. Although giving credit to staff of the New Zealand Post Office and Telecom for providing information and assistance, his study was not commissioned by either of these enterprises. Much of the work was completed while he was a resident fellow at Victoria University's Stout Research Centre. He thus writes as both an insider and an outsider to the telecommunications organisations that are central to this historical study.

It is somewhat anachronistic to apply the term 'telecommunications' to describe the history of postal, telegraphic and telephonic services over the first generations covered in this story, since the word began to be used officially only in the early 1930s. However, this contemporary concept serves a useful purpose in this context because of its comprehensiveness.

In his introduction the author highlights four broad themes running through his history: firstly, 'the international context', secondly, the specifically 'domestic factors' which shaped New Zealand's telecommunications; thirdly, 'the impact of specific politicians...and senior department staff'; and fourthly, the 'imperatives generated by the equipment and technologies'. In his very useful opening chapter on overseas antecedents, and in his subsequent chapters (ten in all, apart from the introduction and conclusion), he regularly returns to the theme of the importation and adaptation from overseas of new communication technologies into the New Zealand environment. Indeed, he generally succeeds in alluding to his broad themes throughout the narrative chapters, which follow successive chronological periods.

The book is grounded on a wide reading of official archival sources, notably in the

National Archives in Wellington, and in the records of the old Post and Telegraph Department, augmented by other government records and newspapers. In addition to over 20 pages of chapter endnotes, he includes six pages of secondary sources. It may appear churlish to query why the author did not consult other recent publications, but this Australian reader was surprised to find no reference to Ann Moyal's magnificent history of Australian telecommunications, commissioned by Telecom Australia, *Clear Across Australia — A History of Telecommunications* (1984) which appeared in the very year that Wilson began his New Zealand study. By not taking account of Moyal's *tour de force*, Wilson missed the opportunity to learn from this model institutional communication history. So, too, he overlooks the work of some important North American communication historians, notably James W. Carey, James R. Beniger and Daniel K. Headrick, who would have provided him with a more comparative and theoretical framework for his attempts to balance his provincial and international themes.

Despite his constant refrain about the impact of overseas technologies on New Zealand, the author does adopt a more insular tone than is warranted. A reading of some of the comparative literature noted above would have reinforced his claims that New Zealand telecommunications history can only be understood in a broader international context. The fact is that New Zealand's cable links to the rest of the world from the mid-1870's, and especially at the turn of the century (with the Pacific Cable, finally laid in 1902), were dependent on joint decisions with the Australian colonies. Yet Wilson's neglect of Australian communication historiography has meant that he has not reflected on the many close links between Australia and New Zealand in this field of communications, especially New Zealand's regular participation in the debates at the many intercolonial conferences, held over many years until the late 1890s, about sharing international cable connections, especially the Pacific Cable.

Moreover, the more centralised and unified political culture of New Zealand in the late 19th century provides an interesting contrast to the intercolonial rivalry and cooperation among the Australian colonies in the pre-federation era that culminated in the federalising of telecommunications in 1901. Thus, it is interesting that Wilson notes that New Zealanders agreed on a standardised Mean Time as early as 1868, without placing this in a comparative context. (It took the Australians until 1893 to agree on their three major standard time zones: in itself a significant achievement eight years before federation). For the Australian reader, then, Wilson's account of New Zealand's communication history often has a provincial tone about it that fits oddly with his references to the international influences on New Zealand's communication developments.

What Wilson has achieved is significant. He has covered many important themes that lift his study above a chronology of successive technical developments and services. These themes include (for the 19th century): case studies of technology transfer; the convergence of communication services (mail, rail and telegraph); the dominance of newspaper proprietors, big businesses and government departments in boosting the use of the telegraph and the telephone; and the crucial role played by powerful and determined politicians and by influential technocrats.

Wilson gives due attention to the key politicians and senior departmental staff who figure prominently in his story, as he promised in his opening exposition of the book's themes. He rightly emphasises the dominant role of two of New Zealand's long-serving and most influential political leaders, Julius Vogel and Joseph Ward, both of whom vigorously represented New Zealand's interests at Australasian and imperial conferences discussing major communication issues. He comments, though, on their propensity to blur the distinction between private and public finances.

He also recounts at length the reign of Charles Lemon, who managed the national

telegraph service for over 25 years, from 1867 to 1894, and his successor, J. K. Logan, until his retirement in 1910. He comments on the way they fostered an aura of technical omnicompetence which enabled them continually to persuade the politicians to support ever expanding networks. Despite his extended treatment of their contributions to the growth of the New Zealand's telegraph service for over 40 years, however, Wilson does not really bring these influential figures to life. At the same time he does recount the roles played by groups of skilled workers who provided the telecommunication services: especially telegraphists, linemen and women telephonists—the latter welcomed if patronised when they came, from the beginning, to make up the staff in the telephone exchanges.

The history of New Zealand telecommunications in the 20th century is closely integrated with the nation's social and economic history. Communication networks increasingly became instruments of economic growth as New Zealanders showed they were prepared to adopt and adapt the new technologies. Thus, New Zealand, with its Wireless Telegraphy Act in 1903 (two years before Australia's comparable legislation) was one of the earliest countries to move wireless telegraphy into the mainstream of the Post and Telegraph Department well before the outbreak of the First World War.

In his two chapters on developments during the war years, Wilson records the expansion of government regulation and the imposition of censorship, but at the same time notes that there were openings for many more women to find employment. Yet, the 7000 women employed in the last year of the Pacific war in 1945 were working in a narrow range of jobs, and the principle of equal pay adopted in that year by the Public Service Commission was not implemented until 1960.

In the postwar years the predominantly male post and telegraph employees were among the best looked after in the country, as the economic prosperity of these years created labour shortages. In these 'golden years' there was rapid growth in the demand for telephony services, with the number of subscribers more than trebling from 250,000 in 1950 to more than 800,000 by 1970, and staff nearly doubling in that time. The 'public service' principle remained important within the department and for successive governments during these years, but by the late 1960s and early 1970s there was growing internal and external pressure for a more business oriented approach to postal and telecommunication services.

In his final chapter Wilson provides a judicious analysis of the fundamental changes which occurred in the administration of New Zealand telecommunications in the 1980s: the decade in which the movement for deregulation of government owned instrumentalities overtook postal and telecommunications services. In an epilogue the author recounts the New Zealand government's sale of the state-owned Telecom (established only in 1987) to a consortium, including two American companies. In his brief conclusion, after recalling the four themes that he had spelled out in his introduction, Wilson concludes that the faults of the management of the previous state-run telecommunications enterprise—especially its overcentralisation and its limited marketing capacity—made it inadequate for New Zealand's need in the 1990s.

This book is a timely addition to a growing literature in the field of international comparative communication history. The author has mined the extensive archival and published records (although it is surprising that he does not record making use of oral history approaches). Wilson has produced a scholarly work which should be read by scholars and readers with an interest in comparative telecommunications, combining interests in policy and history studies. The book is free of typographical errors, except for one serious mistake which can hardly go unreported: the title on the cover of the book shows the timespan covered as 1890-1987, whereas the title page and the contents clearly show that the narrative begins in 1860. For this, the publisher

rather than the author is presumably responsible. This book deserves a wider readership than simply its country of origin.

Kevin T. Livingston
University of Ballarat

Taking the Risk out of Democracy *by Alex Carey, edited by Andrew Lohrey* (University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 1995), xvii + 214pp, $22.95, ISBN 0 868 40 358X.

Andrew Lohrey has done us a signal service by bringing together eleven papers by the late Alex Carey. To me, Carey was the independent scholar par excellence, a man who felt passionately about many social issues: e.g. propaganda in democracies, opposition to the Vietnam War, the Family Law Act and the Council for Civil Liberties.

The bulk of Carey's work remained unpublished at his death in 1988. In Lohrey's words, *Taking the Risk out of Democracy* is a selection of papers which "taken together, add up to a history of democratic propaganda in the United States and Australia" (p. 4).

Part I Closing the American Mind traces developments within the United States. Part II turns to Exporting Free-enterprise Persuasion. Part III deals with Propaganda in the Social Sciences.

Rational utilitarian man, the Invisible Hand and the democratic vote have long been regarded as a trinity for an economic and political faith in a free enterprise democracy. Each has been subject to continuous pressure. A widely prevalent assumption has been that with rich and sure information, everyone can make quick, costless decisions. The reality is limited, costly and asymmetric information, in circumstances leaving much scope for misinformation and the actions of those once labelled in an OECD study as the embezzlers of knowledge.

Kenneth Boulding long ago drew attention to the most rapidly rising business expenditure in the United States: spending to promote not products, but the business system itself. This trend was a reflection of developments Carey emphasized: "the growth of corporate power, and the growth of corporate propaganda as a means of protecting corporate power against democracy".

Carey's work was recognized by Noam Chomsky - the Herman and Chomsky book, *Manufacturing Consent The Political Economy of the Mass Media,* 1988 was dedicated to his memory. In a Foreword to Lohrey's book, Chomsky wrote:

> This was far more than a testimonial to a close personal friend and valued co-worker. It was also a bare and inadequate way to try to express our indebtedness to him for his uniquely important work on 'the ideal of a propaganda-managed democracy' that the highly class-conscious business community of the United States sought to achieve, with the dedicated support of major segments of the intellectual culture (p. vi).

The information society is far removed from the assumptions on which mainstream economics are based. Given tastes, technology and institutions leave no room for endogenous changes. Yet advertising seeks to change tastes, R&D and other experimental activities change technology, and the institutions, which we might see as information handling-arrangements, are modified with changing information and information costs. This opens up many opportunities for Carey's propaganda-managed democracy, creating preferences for ways of organizing and for new technologies and with risk reduction for the dominant participants.