

LIFE AFTER POLITICS?

THE POST-LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES OF NEW ZEALAND PREMIERS
AND PRIME MINISTERS, 1856-2008.

BY

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Abstract

Political leadership has been a nebulous concept in New Zealand, one that has grown and changed as we have matured as a nation. Scholarship on political leadership in New Zealand has also matured, particularly over the last several decades, to now stand in its own right. Absent from this scholarship, however, has been a focus on what our leaders do after leaving office and why they undertake such activities. This thesis looks at the collective activities of New Zealand's Premiers and Prime Ministers from 1856 – 2008. Drawing upon the influence of both individual and situational variables, it highlights a series of patterns within three distinct groups of leaders. Firstly, the Colonial Premiers (1856-1893), who carved out a range of post-leadership activities, though the choice of many of these activities often reflected a need to stabilise their financial position, which had deteriorated during their time as Premier. The Kiwi Prime Ministers (1856-1960), whose choice of post-leadership activities was marked by the transformational events occurring during their lifetime: two World Wars, a Great Depression and a series of significant industrial disputes. Many of these 20th century Prime Ministers suffered significant physical or psychological decline during their time in office. Finally, the Modern New Zealand Prime Ministers (1960-2008) have set a distinct new trend in post-leadership activity. Though some have still suffered from the emotional and physical demands of office, many leaders within this cohort have used their time as Prime Minister as a stepping-stone to greater activities upon leaving office. This trend, noticeable in our last five Prime Ministers, is important in that signals that post-leadership activities will now become a significant feature of a leader's lifetime. Yet these illustrious post-political careers have occurred mainly outside of New Zealand, or behind the closed doors of the business world. This thesis suggests that we are losing a rich societal asset by not drawing upon the distinct skills and experiences of our former leaders and enabling them to become elder statesmen and women. The presence of such a community could contribute greatly to the future, as New Zealand navigates its way through debates of national significance and future crises.

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Chapter One – Introduction

The position of Prime Minister puts the individual in a critically unique role, particularly within New Zealand. Here the individual finds themselves at the centre of domestic politics, whilst also being exposed to events on the international stage. The longer a leader finds themselves in this position, the greater the distinct skill set they acquire. When they leave office they find themselves free to draw upon this skill set, and occupy a particular place within the domestic (and, sometimes, global) community. Yet despite the novel position that these former leaders occupy, little attention has been paid to their post-leadership activities. This may be because, over the course of historical scholarship, the concept of post-leadership activity is a relatively new one. Prior to the maturing of the British parliamentary system in the 17th century, political leaders around the world – monarchs, popes, tyrants – all largely stayed in office until their deaths. In some countries, this still rings true.

Though some nations have regulated (to a degree) those who can hold office, and for how long, for most Western democracies there are few, if any, restrictions on who can assume this leadership role.¹ The roll call of New Zealand leaders is especially unusual. As a nation, we have proved that age, gender, education level, financial circumstance and class background are no barrier to becoming Premier or Prime Minister. The array of backgrounds of leaders in New Zealand has inevitably led to a raft of variations on their post-leadership activities.

This thesis will look at how our past New Zealand leaders have taken advantage of this position in society and skill set, and will analyse the post-

¹ In the United States, this was through the advent of the 22nd amendment, which limited a President to serving a total of two terms in power. The President must also be born in the U.S and be of 35 years of age. Both Canada and Australia have effective minimum limits on the age of a leader, with members of the Canadian Senate needing to be over the age of 30, and the Australian Constitution dictating that a member of the House of Representatives must be over the age of 21.

leadership activities they undertake (or failed to undertake). It seeks to identify patterns of post-leadership choices in New Zealand, how these activities have changed over the last 150 years, and how the leaders' experiences of office have contributed to, or limited, the range of options available to subsequent leaders.

Chapter two reviews the current academic literature on post-leadership pursuits. This is an area of academic focus that has grown over the last two decades as more attention is paid to 'life after politics'. There are a number of reasons for this; firstly, in the last thirty years we have, on the whole seen a sharp decline in the average age of political leaders in many Western democracies.² Secondly, the growth of international institutions since World War Two has given many political leaders the opportunity to continue their careers on the international diplomatic stage in a way previously not possible. Finally, the so-called 'presidentialisation' of New Zealand politics, combined with the advent of television, has enabled the role of Prime Minister to become an extremely visible one. The literature review explores the initial scholarship on the 'twilight years' after leadership, before looking at the establishment of models of post-leadership activities. Chapter three then draws out both the individual and situational variables that impact on post-leadership pursuits. This enables the development of an analytical framework for assessing the post-leadership activities of former New Zealand leaders.

The review of New Zealand Premiers and Prime Ministers is split into three distinct periods, which covers the leadership spectrum from our first Premier in 1856, through to Helen Clark from 1999-2008. Not all political leaders across this period have been thoroughly explored; those considered are

² In New Zealand, the average age of the last seven leaders (Lange – Key) is 47 years, compared to an average of 56 years for the seven leaders to precede them (Holland – Muldoon). In Australia this difference (over the last seven leaders) is 51 years (Whitlam – Gillard) compared to 59 years for the seven prior (Forde – McCahon). In the United Kingdom the difference is even starker, with an average age of 51 years for leaders (Heath – Cameron) compared to 62 years of age for their seven predecessors (Chamberlain – Wilson).

chosen because of their post-leadership success, the unusualness of their post-leadership activities, or because of the lack of these activities (and the reasons behind that). In looking at each individual leader I have explored key aspects of their backgrounds and how these may relate to their choice of post-leadership activities; their individual experiences in office and how these may have contributed to their post-leadership activities (or lack thereof); and the nature of the post-leadership activities. The leaders are divided up in the following way: Chapter four explores the 'Colonial Premiers' (1856-1893), and how the cultural settings of life in a newly-formed colony, with a primitive parliamentary system, affected the choice of post-leadership pursuits. Chapter five explores the 'Kiwi Prime Ministers' (1893-1960) and how the development of a unique New Zealand identity shaped the careers of New Zealand Prime Ministers. It also considers how transformative events like World War One, the Great Depression and World War Two affected both our Prime Ministers, and the opportunities available to them on leaving office. Finally, chapter six examines the 'Modern New Zealand Prime Minister' (1960-2008) and considers how the rise of the medium of television, the creation of strong international institutions and the changing dynamics of the office of Prime Minister in New Zealand have transformed post-leadership activities. The pursuits of these New Zealand Premiers and Prime Ministers is finally analysed in depth in Chapter seven, which seeks to categorise New Zealand leaders based on the analytical framework created in chapter three. This analytical model helps to determine the reasons behind the varying post-leadership activities, and how these reasons have changed over time. It also looks at how trends within post-leadership activities speak to wider changes within the office of Prime Minister.

In building on the analysis of the post-leadership activities of New Zealand Premiers and Prime Ministers, chapter eight concludes the thesis by discussing what the trends in post-leadership activities may mean for future New Zealand leaders, and considers the options available to incumbent New Zealand Prime Minister John Key. In doing so, the conclusion explores

whether there is a role for a more formalised approach to post-leadership, and how New Zealand may benefit from such an approach.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

The concept of οστρακισμός/*Ostrakismos* [ostracism] in Athenian democracy, in which any member of the city-state could be expelled by popular vote, became a common way of dealing with the question of what to do with leaders at the conclusion of their time in office. For the Greeks, the policy of ostracism became a legitimate way of removing unpopular leaders and banishing them to the land of oblivion. At times, it seemed no leader was safe from this practice. In 480BC the Persian king Xerxes sent troops to invade Athens, perceiving it as a threat to the Persian Empire. In possibly one of the greatest military victories of all time, and in a brilliant act of subterfuge, Athenian leader Themistocles, though heavily outnumbered, defeats the Persian Army. For the Greeks, it was a sensational and conclusive victory, one which thrust Themistocles into the minds of the Athenian people as the saviour of their empire. Yet just eight years later Themistocles was ostracised after making several political enemies in Athens. He remained in exile until his death several years later. Greek historian Plutarch reflected “there are some who say that his father fondly tried to divert him from public life, pointing out to him old triremes on the seashore, all wrecked and neglected, and intimating that the people treated their leaders in like fashion when these were past service.”³ Plutarch’s detailed history on some of the leaders who suffered such fate becomes, in effect, the founding scholarship on the consideration of the lives of our leaders once leaving office.

The Greek policy of ostracism was a short-lived phenomenon, abused by the Athenian elites to remove political opponents and to push personal vendettas. In the contemporary form many leaders, whilst not physically barred from their homeland, have found themselves ostracised by the institutions they once led. But to what extent have academics pondered this subject? In reviewing the existing scholarship on the fate of our leaders after

³ Plutarch, (AD 75) *Parallel Lives*, last accessed 03/05/2013 from <http://classics.mit.edu/Plutarch/themisto.html>

leaving office, it is clear that little attention is granted to what becomes of our leaders after they have left the 'top of the greasy pole'. As Keane puts it, the subject of ex-office holders is "under-theorised, under-researched, underappreciated and – in many cases – under-regulated."⁴ Academics have readily focused on *how* leaders have left office, and processes of leadership succession, but the study of their experiences outside of office draws but a few dedicated articles enquiring into this experience. This chapter explores the existing literature dedicated to the study of the lives of our leaders upon leaving office, before looking in detail at the individual and situational variables that impact on post-leadership pursuits.

The rise of scholarship on the 'twilight years':

The activities of our former leaders have been well-documented by historians, biographers and political scientists alike, yet few have taken up the challenge of granting any critical enquiry or scrutiny into these activities. In a sense, this lack of enquiry into the roles, influence and achievements of our former leaders is understandable, as they struggle to compete with the spotlight on their successors. As Peter Just points out; "Whilst it is almost certainly true, to paraphrase Winston Churchill, that there can be no comparison between the position of a number one and a former number one, the position of a former number one is a position... By overlooking that position, academics have overlooked an important aspect of Parliamentary life."⁵ As such, it has only been within this last decade that a serious body of literature devoted to understanding the importance of these post-leadership activities, and why our ex-leaders have taken on the roles that they have, has begun to develop. And it comes as no surprise that the analysis had its foundations in the United States, where former Presidents appear to be held in esteem unparalleled to their Westminster counterparts, in somewhat of an 'elder statesman' role.

⁴ Keane, J. 'The Fate of Leaders After Leaving High Office' in Kane, J., Patapan, H. and 't Hart, P. (2009). *Dispersed Leadership in Democracy; Foundations, Opportunities, Realities*. (Oxford University Press; Oxford). p6.

⁵ Just, P. D. (2004) 'United Kingdom; Life After Number 10 – premiers emeritus and parliament' in *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 10(2-3). p66.

The question of what to do with our former leaders has been one that has lingered since the beginning of representative democracy, particularly within the United States and with the enactment of the 22nd amendment.⁶ Furthermore, scholars have been careful to detail the activities of former leaders after stepping down from office, and have even dedicated entire works to the twilight periods of leaders' lives.⁷ However, the consideration as to the meaning and contribution of these activities has been slow to gather speed. Marie Hecht's 1976 study of the activities of ex-presidents from Washington to Nixon is the first notable discussion of the drivers and themes of the *post officium* years of our former leaders. The work, though largely an amalgamation of anecdotes and details of the president's 'after-lives', is significant in that it reminds us that no "one rule of thumb can be applied... in considering the employment of ex-Presidential talents."⁸ This assertion was reinforced in Blondel's 1980 consideration of world leaders.⁹

Modelling life after politics; Belenky, Just and Theakston:

The last decade has seen a more comprehensive approach to international scholarship on 'life after office', with authors seeking to distinguish patterns in the post-office activities of former leaders. In looking collectively at such activities and attempting to draw patterns from it, the discussion moves from *what* our former leaders do, towards *why* they do them. In doing so, we begin to understand the key variables that factor into the choices that former leaders make. Irina Belenky provides perhaps the most comprehensive of

⁶ See for example Author Unknown (1908) 'Ex-Presidents as Peacemakers'. *The Advocate of Peace*, 70(2). pp 27-28 and Vieg, J. A. (1938). 'Making Use of Ex-Presidents and Also-Rans as Leaders of Public Opinion' in *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 2(2). pp276-281.

⁷ See for example Lyons, E. (1948) *Our Unknown Ex-President; A Portrait of Herbert Hoover*. (Doubleday; New York) and Norton-Smith, R and Walch, T. (1990) *Farewell to the Chief: Former Presidents in American Public Life*. (High Plains Publishing; Wyoming, U.S.). and Rosenbaum, H and Ugrinsky, A. (1994) *Jimmy Carter: Foreign Policy and Post-Presidential Years*. (Greenwood Press; Westport, U.S).

⁸ Hecht, M. B. (1976). *Beyond the Presidency: The Residues of Power*. (MacMillan; New York). p17

⁹ See Blondel, J. (1980). *World Leaders; Heads of Government in the Post-war Period*. (Sage, California). pp195-197. Though he effectively creates a model of post-leadership by separating former leaders into three groups (those who retire after office, those who move on to a successful career, and those who remain in Government), Blondel's assessment is superficial, with the book primarily dedicated to looking at the leadership whilst in office.

models in her 1999 grouping of US presidents, where she groups former US Presidents from 1797-1993 into six recurring models:

Figure 2.1: Belenky's model of ex-Presidents:¹⁰

Model	Description	Former presidents as examples
<i>Still Ambitious</i>	"Are those [leaders] whose appetites for power remained unsated even after serving in the nation's highest political office." ¹¹	Lincoln ¹² , van Buren
<i>Exhausted Volcanoes</i>	"Ill health, personal temperament, and individual circumstances are among the causative factors that explain their torpor after so many years of high excitement and ceaseless activity." ¹³	Washington, Coolidge, LBJ, Reagan.
<i>Political Dabblers</i>	"All four of the Political Dabblers eschewed efforts to return to office but avidly sought continued roles in the high drama of national politics. Their status as ex-presidents ensured that they could retain at least a corner of the public stage, but with a single exception [Andrew Jackson] they regretfully discovered that power resides in the office and not, however eminent, in the man." ¹⁴	Jackson, Truman, Eisenhower, Ford.
<i>First Citizens</i>	"Those ex-presidents who spent their retirement years in worthy endeavours of expansive scope, appropriate to men of great prominence. No single issue or concern, as such, motivated the four men in this category. Rather, a generalised sense of duty and ongoing purpose inspired their post-presidential actions." ¹⁵	John Adams, Madison, Harrison, Hoover.
<i>Embracers of a Cause</i>	"Devoted, or are devoting, their post-presidencies to the advancement of either a specific credo or a cluster of interrelated concerns." ¹⁶	Jefferson, Hayes, Cleveland, Carter.
<i>Seekers of Vindication</i>	"All five seekers of vindication suffered shattering setbacks whilst President. All of them, in different ways and with varying degrees of success, sought to reverse the	Buchanan, A. Johnson, Wilson, Nixon, Bush

¹⁰ Belenky, I (1999). 'The Making of the Ex-Presidents 1979-1993; Six Recurrent Models' in *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 29(1). pp150-165.

¹¹ Ibid, p150.

¹² Belenky's choice of Lincoln is unusual, given his assassination in office. She justifies the decision according to Lincoln's work-ethic, stating that "surely, William Henderson's famous description of his law partner's ambition as "a little engine that knew no rest" applies at least as much to the five ex-presidents as it did to Abraham Lincoln". p150.

¹³ Ibid, p152.

¹⁴ Ibid, pp153-154.

¹⁵ Ibid, p156.

¹⁶ Ibid, p158.

	historical verdicts against them through post-presidential endeavours.” ¹⁷	Snr.
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Belenky suggests that the changing demographics and increasing wealth of leaders leaving office will likely increase the number of those who fall into the ‘Still Ambitious’ or ‘Political Dabblers’. At the same time, it is possible for leaders to take on more than one post-presidential model, such as Bill Clinton has in his pursuit to remain active in world affairs (political dabblers) whilst pursuing a distinct humanitarian cause (first citizens). Theakston points out that in this sense, Belenky’s categories are “not, however, watertight and individuals may at different times seem to fit under a number of these headings.”¹⁸

In a similar vein in 2004 Just looked at a possible typology for the post-war British ‘Premier Emeritus’ in his study of the activities of Prime Ministers once leaving Downing Street.¹⁹ Just provides a basic categorisation in distinguishing between ex-prime ministers who became ‘Statesmen’, and those who remained as ‘Politicians’. He defines the former as:

“Statesmen are those premier emeritus whose interventions are motivated by a sense of responsibility... and are what might be termed behavioural icons. Admired for their own conduct as ex-prime ministers, they intervene within the legislature when they believe that someone is behaving, or something is being done badly, irresponsibly or unwisely.”²⁰

This is subsequently contrasted with his definition of ‘Politicians’ as:

“Those premier emeritus whose interventions are ideological in motivation. These former prime ministers are what might be termed ideological icons. Their parliamentary activity is designed to promote a certain set of views, of which views they are the representative within the legislature, and to give encouragement to those of a like mind.”²¹

Just’s typology, however, is a limited one, and the author concedes that his categorisations are of an idealistic nature, for “premiers emeritus cannot be

¹⁷ Ibid, p161.

¹⁸ Theakston, K. (2008, April). *What Role for Former Leaders?* Paper presented at Political Studies Association Conference, University of Swansea. Retrieved 12/03/2013 from <http://www.psa.ac.uk/journals/pdf/5/2008/Theakston.pdf>

¹⁹ Just, *Life After Number 10*, pp66-78.

²⁰ Ibid, p73.

²¹ Ibid, p74.

boxed.”²² Thus the focus in this model is not in identifying variables or prevailing patterns, but in highlighting those leaders who achieved the loftier post-leadership status of ‘Statesman’.

In his 2008 article *What Role for Former Leaders?*, Kevin Theakston identifies six key groupings of paths taken by former British Prime Ministers.²³ Like Just, Theakston’s motivation is to catalogue the vast array of careers (and non-careers) enjoyed by former British Prime Ministers. His grouping of leaders into six core categories (shown below) is thus an editorial convenience, and not part of any wider analysis of patterns in ex-prime ministerial activities. However, Theakston draws out the causal link between personal motivations and circumstances, and the activities these former leaders engage in. Theakston’s five categories are listed below:

²² Ibid, p72.

²³ Theakston, *What Role for Former Leaders?*, pp1-18.

Figure 2.2: Theakston's five categories of post-leadership:

Model	Description	Former Prime Ministers as examples
<i>Back in Government/ Political 're-treads'.</i>	Those leaders that remain within the grasp of power, 'serving in the governments of later administrations and under successor leaders.' ²⁴ Theakston notes that these leaders 'perhaps found it easier to swallow their pride and accept the reversal of political seniority involved in retuning to office', often due to their typically short tenure in the leaders chair.	Douglas-Home, Balfour, Baldwin, MacDonald.
<i>Other political/ public office holders.</i>	They will move into other official political roles (most commonly in the House of Lords), though not necessarily elected ones. It enables them to "play an active role in public and political life one way or another". ²⁵ Theakston believes that this option in particular has been what inspired calls for the United States to establish the position of senators for life for ex-presidents.	Callaghan, Churchill, Lloyd George, Heath.
<i>Money Matters</i>	Those leaders who used their former position to benefit financially, though the motivations behind this are somewhat diverse. Theakston notes "many of today's former leaders... seem only too willing to 'cash in' on their status as an ex-prime minister or ex-president, in addition to enjoying substantial official support and retirement 'perks'". ²⁶ He does however note that as in the infamous case of Harry S. Truman, some leaders will be forced by circumstances to seek financial rejuvenation after office.	Wilson, Thatcher, Major, Blair.
<i>Putting pen to paper</i>	Those leaders who dedicate their time to literary contributions after office. As well as being a lucrative post-leadership option, the opportunity to write their own memoirs gives leaders the opportunity to defend their record. Theakston notes they do this to varying success.	Lloyd-George, Churchill, Thatcher, Blair.
<i>Health and Age factors</i>	Those leaders, who through age and health factors, were limited in pursuing any significant <i>post officium</i> activities. This is largely attributed to the stresses of office, as "few leave them in as good physical shape as when they enter. It has been said, for instance, that British prime ministers age at two or three times the normal rate of advancing years while they are at Number 10". ²⁷	Law , MacDonald, Chamberlain, Churchill.

²⁴ Ibid, pp3-4.

²⁵ Ibid, p6.

²⁶ Ibid, p7.

²⁷ Ibid, p14.

Theakston, drawing from his criticism of Belenky's model, rightly suggests that in analysing the patterns of post-leadership activities, one cannot limit themselves to mutually exclusive categorisations. The models of post-leadership activities provided by Belenky, Just and Theakston show that patterns do exist in the careers of leaders *post officium*. However, it is salient to remember that leaders, particularly those who leave office at a comparatively early age, have the ability to take on a variety of post-leadership tasks. Thus any future model, including my own in the latter part of this thesis, must recognise the ability of leaders to transcend distinct categories. Belenky's and Theakston's models in particular have also been crucial in identifying not only the scale of variety in post-leadership activities, but also the variables that may contribute to what paths ex-leaders take.

Leadership scholarship in New Zealand:

In the first instance, the biographic material on New Zealand's former Premiers and Prime Ministers provided a rich source of material that helps to explain the situational context in which leaders found themselves, much in the same way that this material also provides valuable insights into the individual. Additional to this has been the supplementary material written not explicitly on the leader themselves, but on the Government and/or Party in which they were involved.²⁸ Yet on the whole, literature focused specifically on political leadership in New Zealand has been largely lacking, and has only begun to develop in a serious fashion over the last decade or so.

As the thesis traverses the former political leaders of New Zealand, from the Colonial Premiers (Chapter Four) to the Kiwi Prime Ministers (Chapter Five) to the Modern New Zealand Prime Ministers (Chapter Six), it becomes

²⁸ Of note are Hugh Templeton's 1995 book *All Honourable Men; Inside the Muldoon Cabinet 1975-1984* (Auckland University Press, Auckland); Barry Gustafson's exploration of both the National and Labour parties – see (1980) *Labour's Path to Political Independence; the Origins and Establishment of the New Zealand Labour Party 1900-1919* (Auckland University Press, Auckland) and (1986) *The First 50 Years: A History of the New Zealand National Party* (Reed Methuen, Auckland).

apparent that we have created our own niche of leadership that is unique to New Zealand. The development of a particular style of New Zealand leadership has also largely matched the development of New Zealand-based scholarship on political leadership. This scholarship has largely come in two forms; firstly, this has been through looking to pair New Zealand leaders against established international scholarship (and typologies) on leadership. John Henderson used James David Barber's prism of positive/negative and active/passive in his 1992 chapter on Labour's Modern New Zealand Prime Ministers.²⁹ Jon Johansson in 2009 also looked at our two 21st century Prime Ministers, Helen Clark and John Key, and explored their formative years as possible indicators of their approaches to political leadership.³⁰ Johansson weds Hargrove's model of political cycles against Clark and Key, suggesting that Clark was a consolidating leader whilst Key is a leader engaged in preparation. He does this with caveats, noting the difficulties of reducing leaders to sit comfortably within rigid frameworks.

The second notable form of initial leadership scholarship in New Zealand has been through the assessment of the comparative success in office of our former political leaders. This was initially achieved through Simon Sheppard's 1998 ranking of former New Zealand leaders, based on a number of criteria, such as 'crisis management' and 'leadership'.³¹ In 2013 Jon Johansson and Stephen Levine built on Sheppard's survey, this time with the inclusion of Jenny Shipley and Helen Clark.³² The revised survey was particularly illuminating for our last three leaders, with Clark ranking

²⁹ Henderson, J. (1992) 'Labour's Modern Prime Ministers and the Party: A Study of Contrasting Political Style', in M. Clark (ed.), *The Labour Party After 75 Years*, (Victoria University Press, Wellington) pp 98-117.

³⁰ Johansson, J. (2009) *The Politics of Possibility; Leadership in Changing Times*. (Dunmore Press, Palmerston North).

³¹ Sheppard, S. (1998). 'Ranking New Zealand Prime Ministers', in *Political Science*, 50(1). pp72-89. According to Sheppard's survey, the top five New Zealand leaders are: Seddon, Fraser, Savage, Ballance and Holyoake.

³² Johansson, J. and Levine, S. (2013) 'Evaluating Prime Ministerial Performance; The New Zealand Experience' in Strangio, P. 't Hart, P. and Walter, J. (Eds) in *Understanding Prime Ministerial Performance: Comparative Perspectives* (Oxford University Press, Oxford). pp291-307. Johansson and Levine's updated survey placed the top five leaders as: Seddon, Fraser, Savage, Clark and Bolger.

fourth, Shipley ranking 25th, and Jim Bolger moving up ten places from Sheppard's original ranking to now sit 5th.

Alongside this initial leadership scholarship has been the development of analysis of the leadership milieu in New Zealand, and the situational reasons for the unique style of political leadership that has evolved. Johansson identifies two traits that are key to this style of leadership; firstly, the 'village'-like size of New Zealand and the fact that "political leadership in New Zealand has therefore mirrored, by and large, the country's domestic concerns, as one would expect in any small village. And just like a village, there have existed in New Zealand various cleavages, inequalities, tensions and jealousies that have permeated the body politick."³³ Secondly, Johansson notes also the 'negalitarianism' pervasive in the leadership context, "nowhere better expressed than by Lipson, when he wrote: "in its anxiety to raise the minima, the country has deemed it necessary to lower the maxima""³⁴ Barry Gustafson adds to this list the occasional strand of populism within our former political leaders, namely Seddon, Savage, Massey, Holland and Muldoon.³⁵ Understanding the distinct nature of leadership in New Zealand will be critical in analysing the post-leadership activities of former leaders.

³³ Johansson, J. (2005). *Two Titans: Muldoon, Lange and Leadership*. (Dunmore Press; Palmerston North). p31. It's worth noting that this 'village' like quality has also served to influence scholarship on political leaders and on their biographic material. At times this will be detriment to the quality, whilst on other occasions that close association and access to political leaders enables an insight not available to many others.

³⁴ Ibid, p31.

³⁵ Gustafson, B. (2006) 'Populist Roots of Political Leadership in New Zealand' in Miller, R. and Mintrom, M. (Eds). *Political Leadership in New Zealand*. (Auckland University Press; Auckland) p52-53.

Chapter Three: Analytical Framework

The use of categorisation of post-leadership styles has helped to draw out the key variables that contribute to the nature of activities former leaders engage in once they leave office. These variables are centred on both the individual, and also in the situational context in which they operate. This chapter will explore these variables, both those drawn individually from the leader, and also those owing to the situational context in which they operate. It avoids the inherent 'Great Man' vs. 'situationalist' debate inherent in political science by positing that one does not typically dominate more than the other. Instead, the analytical framework draws out the main variables needed to consider why leaders have pursued the post-office activities that they have. This framework is also developed in reference to the unique New Zealand political environment, touching upon its political culture and structure of government in order to understand its peculiarity.

The individual variables contributing to 'life after office':

a. The psychology of the individual:

In assessing whether personality and politics can be studied systematically, political psychologist Fred Greenstein suggests that whilst it is "possible and desirable... systematic intellectual progress is possible only if there is self-conscious attention to evidence, inference and conceptualisation."³⁶ Greenstein draws on Abraham Kaplan's 'parable of scientific opportunism' to explain the challenges within political psychology; "Kaplan relates the story of the drunkard who lost his keys in a dark alley and is found searching for them under a street lamp, declaring 'It's lighter here'. The drunkard's search is a poor model. If the connections between the personalities of political actors and their political behaviour are obscure, all the more reason to illuminate them."³⁷ Though Greenstein notes the difficulty in analysing the

³⁶ Greenstein, F. (1992). 'Can personality and Politics Be Studied Systematically' in *Political Psychology*, 13(1). p106.

³⁷ Ibid, p123

relationship between personality and politics, he highlights there is some merit in trying to use one to explain the other. This is particularly true for political leadership.

Though political scientists have accepted the relationship between personality and politics, how these two interact, the resulting outcomes have been the subject of significant debate within political science. The human focus of psychology has led to a natural inclination towards understanding the psychology of the political leaders. In his 1978 study of leadership James Macgregor Burns acknowledges the role of psychology when he casts it as one factor of his dichotomy in 'transactional' vs. 'transformational' leaders.³⁸ Burns places particular emphasis on the formative years of leaders, linking the childhood experiences of Gandhi, Hitler and Stalin to patterns within their behaviours as leaders; "there are parallels in the early experiences of both "great leaders" and notorious rulers or power wielders despite contrary uses they made of their resources."³⁹ Stanley Renshon also included psychology in his study of leadership, though Renshon limited his psychological assessment to 'character' alone. He notes that character is;

"Pervasive not only across time and circumstance, but *across personality itself*... character, in contrast, stands at the core of the personality system and is the basic foundation in which personality structures develop and operate. Character shapes beliefs, information processing, and ultimately, styles of behaviour. It is therefore deeply embedded in the most basic and important foundation of psychological functioning."⁴⁰

Renshon goes on to develop a three-tiered framework for the assessment of presidential character: ambition ("the capacity, desire and ability to invest oneself for the accomplishment of one's immediate life purposes"), character integrity (the notion of "ideals, and the capacity to realise them") and relatedness ("one's basic stance towards relationships with others") are the fundamental building blocks of character.⁴¹ Where Renshon's model has proven valuable is in its ability to be cast as a framework for leaders across political systems in assessing their actions and style in office.

³⁸ Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. (Harper and Row; New York).

³⁹ Ibid, p24.

⁴⁰ Renshon, S. A. (1998). *The Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates*. (Routledge; New York). p179.

⁴¹ Ibid, pp179-203.

Renison's three main blocks of character (ambition, character integrity and relatedness) however form only one part of the psychological equation for post-leadership analysis. The other necessary element to understand here is the psychological impact of office on the leader, and how this influences their post-leadership pursuits. Bruce Buchanan considered the effect of the presidency on the individual in his 1979 book *The Presidential Experience; What the Office Does to the Man*.⁴² Buchanan bemoaned the "little systemic attention [that] has been given to the question of how the presidency influences presidents – in recurring and consequential ways".⁴³ Though he acknowledges the differing historical context each president faces, he concludes that, based on the experiences of Woodrow Wilson and Lyndon B. Johnson, only leaders with high self-esteem are able to deal with the psychological pressures of the job.⁴⁴ In his article *Hubris Syndrome*, neurologist-cum-British Foreign Secretary Lord David Owen details the psychological impacts of leaders wedded to the spoils of office.⁴⁵ Owen's hypothesis is that we can add another mental health illness solely into the forum of political leaders: *Hubris Syndrome*, where the power of office impacts on the mental health of that leader. He provides a 'tentative list' of symptoms which include:⁴⁶

- A narcissistic propensity to see the world primarily as an arena in which they can exercise power and seek glory
- A predisposition to take actions which seem likely to cast them in a good light
- A disproportionate concern with image and presentation
- A belief that rather than being accountable to the mundane court of colleagues or public opinion, the real court to which they answer is much greater: History or God
- An unshakeable belief that in that court they will be vindicated

⁴² Buchanan, B. (1979). *The Presidential Experience: What the Office Does to the Man*. (Prentice Hall; New Jersey).

⁴³ Ibid, p2.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p153.

⁴⁵ Owen, Lord D. (2008). 'Hubris Syndrome' in *Clinical Medicine*, 8(4). pp428-432. See also Owen's follow-up 2012 book *The Hubris Syndrome; Bush, Blair and the Intoxication of Power* (Methuen, London).

⁴⁶ Owen, 'Hubris Syndrome', pp428-429.

- Loss of contact with reality, often associated with progressive isolation

Owen's link between the spoils of power and mental illness is at times a stretch, and is complicated by his choice of candidates suffering from the syndrome and his own political background.⁴⁷ Where Owen's work is critical is in that it reminds the reader of the trauma that may be associated with leaving office, particularly if that leader goes on to be ostracised or shunned by the public. Bynander and t'Hart also touched on this critical juncture in the leader's life, suggesting that leaders have three possible reactions to the threat of, or loss of, office: denial, resistance and acceptance. Whilst the authors recognise that "only a number of incumbent political leaders leave their positions entirely of their own will", they note that "in other cases, leaders may themselves retain a realistic picture of their political strengths and weaknesses... and may decide that they want to leave on their own will before they are forced to."⁴⁸ The impact of leaving office, especially in being removed unwillingly, will undoubtedly play a significant role in the post-office affairs of our leaders. How they deal with the loss of office, especially if unexpected or unwanted, will also ultimately depend on their character, or more specifically, their ambition, character integrity and relatedness.

b. Socio-demographic and physical considerations of the leader

The mind of the leader is but one area of consideration of the individual. Additional to this will be their physical and socio-demographic characteristics: their age, health, wealth, familial situation, previous employment history and level of education.⁴⁹ As this thesis works through the former Premiers and Prime Ministers, these key details will be drawn from the available

⁴⁷ Owen suggests that Lloyd George, Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair all suffered from Hubris Syndrome at various points during their leadership. Lord Owen was a Labour Party MP from 1974 before changing allegiance to the Social Democratic Party in 1981. Owen is currently an independent member of the House of Lords.

⁴⁸ Bynander, F and t'Hart, P. (2006, October). 'When Power Changes Hands: The Political Psychology of Leadership Succession in Democracies' in *Political Psychology*, 27(5). pp 707-730.

⁴⁹ I have added here familial considerations given that 'spending more time with the family' was a noted motivation amongst many leaders. I have purposely, however, excluded spousal considerations, given that only one leader in our history had ever divorced (Lange, though Grey in effect did separate from his wife).

biographies and autobiographies of New Zealand leaders. The quality of such information comes in varying degrees, with perhaps the most comprehensive work coming out of Gustafson's work on Savage, Holyoake and Muldoon. Unfortunately a number of New Zealand leaders, particularly our early premiers, have no biography and little written on them as individuals. In some instances this has been part of the reason not to analyse their post-leadership activities, such limitations are noted in the relevant sections.⁵⁰ Added to the biographic material will also be a number of secondary sources, such as interviews, news items and *Hansard*. All will help to inform an understanding about the limitations or advantages that the leaders have.

These two elements, the psychological and the 'physical', help to sketch out the necessary 'individual' considerations of the leader's activities upon leaving office. Together they form one half of my post-leadership framework for New Zealand:

Figure 3.1: Individual variables in an analytical framework for assessing 'life after office'

A post-leadership framework	
Individual variables	Situational variables
Psychological factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character, specifically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambition (their post-leadership desires) • Character integrity (how a leader's ideals influence post-leadership activity) • Relatedness (the leaders relations with their peers and connections made during their time in office) 	

⁵⁰ Though it is worth noting the valuable contribution made by Guy Scholefield's 1947 book *Notable New Zealand Statesmen: Twelve Prime Ministers* (Whitcombe and Tombs, Christchurch), and also the volumes of *New Zealand Heritage*, and Te Ara's biographic material (<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/teara-biographies>)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions under which that leader left office, and their reaction to it • The psychological impact of office <p>Socio-demographic and physical factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health (including any impact on health due to leadership) • Age • Wealth • Education • Previous employment history • Familial considerations 	
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The situational variables contributing to 'life after office':

Understanding the role of the individual plays a significant part in analysing the post-leadership experiences of former Premiers and Prime Ministers. But a full understanding of those activities cannot be gained without also looking to the situational context in which leaders find themselves. This balance has been a long standing debate in leadership academia, stretching back to Carlyle's 'Great Man' theories, contrasted against Tolstoy, Hegel, and Marx's contribution to social and cultural determinism. Their situationalist theories centred on the belief that history is shaped by factors larger than, and beyond the control of, individuals. In understanding post-leadership activities, the point will not be which of the forces is stronger than the other, but how did they each contribute to the choices made by our leaders at the conclusion of their time in office.

The importance of the situational context has been partly considered by some scholars reflecting on the post-political experiences of past leaders. Schenker for example noted the importance in the distinction between nations that placed limits on the lengths of political leadership and participation. He contrasted the effect of the 22nd Amendment in the United States against the Westminster parliamentary system that, in theory, allows a

leader to remain in office indefinitely.⁵¹ The lack of formal limitations on political leadership will invariably influence the decision-making of former New Zealand leaders. The ability to be recycled within the institution is also another important consideration. Though only two twentieth century New Zealand Prime Ministers have succeeded in having two non-successive spells in office, it has not been uncommon for leaders to continue on to contest the leadership (or hope to) in future elections.⁵² Schenker also noted that it was more common in Westminster parliamentary systems to recycle into other parts of the parliamentary institution, such as into an Upper House. Whilst this was true of New Zealand for a time, the elimination of the Legislative Council in 1951 removed this option.

a. The political culture of New Zealand

The Westminster political system that New Zealand inherited from the British places the locus of power, in theory, in the Executive Wing of Government – Cabinet. Cabinet's doctrine of collective decision-making has often led New Zealand scholars to minimise the importance of the Prime Minister in the political system. There are a number of reasons for this; firstly, our conception of political leadership in New Zealand has been a nebulous concept. Our links with Britain meant that, for the early part of our nation's history, leadership was at times irrelevant, given our ability to turn to the mother-country for guidance. The second reason is due to our inheritance of the Westminster style of government, and the belief that the Prime Minister is but *Primus Inter Pares*. Much of the New Zealand political science literature of the twentieth century gave but a passing consideration to the importance of the Prime Minister, and instead turned to the body of Cabinet as the source of political leadership.⁵³ The rise of television, however, has derailed

⁵¹ Schenker, A. (1985) 'Former Prime Ministers and Presidents: Suggestions for Study and Comparison' in *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 15(3). p499.

⁵² Ward and Holyoake are the two twentieth century Prime Ministers that have had separate spells in office during the twentieth century. The lack of a formal party structure meant that this was quite a common feature amongst New Zealand's Premiers.

⁵³ See for example McLeay, E. (1995). *Cabinet and Political Power in New Zealand*. (Oxford University Press, Auckland); McGee, D. (1985). *Parliamentary Practice in New Zealand*. (Government Printer, Wellington New Zealand); and Harris, P., Levine, S., Clark, M., Martin, J. and McLeay, E. (Eds) (1994). *The New Zealand Politics Source Book*, (Dunmore Press, Palmerston North).

the equality the Prime Minister had (if any) amongst their Cabinet peers. Thus we have seen in the past few decades the rise of what Mughan refers to as the 'presidentialisation' of New Zealand leaders, and their increased centrality within the New Zealand political system.⁵⁴

Adding to our formal political structures in New Zealand are the ingrained values and cultural beliefs that form the backbone of New Zealand society. Many of these values can be traced through the development of a unique New Zealand identity as we moved away from our Colonial parent. As such, New Zealand culture, particularly its political culture, has been a fluid concept: one where major events in our history have had a fundamental impact on how we saw ourselves as kiwis.⁵⁵ For New Zealand, being the first country in the world to grant women the right to vote became a way of viewing ourselves as different and humane. Johansson touches on our fervent use of the 'first in the world' rhetoric, though notes that we underpin this with a culture of 'negalitarianism': the unintended desire not to let anyone rise above our collective station. As such, political elites in New Zealand have been viewed at times with contempt, and often find themselves ranked as the least trusted profession in New Zealand.

"New Zealand has never developed a strong tradition of elevating *leadership* to something we should value for its own sake. We shall confront the cultural phenomena soon enough, but suffice to say that there has been a strong strand of the New Zealand character which has tended to ostracise those who would call themselves leaders, who raise their heads above the parapet, only to become disillusioned by the criticism they encountered."⁵⁶

This ultimately flows through to expectations on our leaders upon leaving office. For a country with a political culture that restricts the value it places on political leadership, by default it will also have limited expectations of leaders after leaving office.

⁵⁴ See Mughan, A. (2000). *Media and the Presidentialisation of Parliamentary Elections*. (MacMillan; Basingstoke). p3.

⁵⁵ Examples would include the right to vote, WWI and WWII, the Great Depression, the 1951 Waterfront strike, Hillary conquering Everest, the Springbok Tour, the sinking of the Rainbow Warrior, the move to MMP and the extension of the powers of the Waitangi Tribunal.

⁵⁶ Johansson, *Two Titans*, p31.

b. The opportunities available to former leaders:

The 'presidentialisation' of political leadership in New Zealand, combined with the 'negalitarian' political culture, makes for a particularly unique environment. Added to this will be the opportunities available to the leader upon leaving office. Again, this touches on the 'Great Man' vs. situationalist debate in political leadership. In the context of post-leadership activities one can ask, to what degree is the individual free to choose the roles they take on after leaving office? This is particularly true of the opportunities at their disposal. The rise of globalisation, the efficiency of air transport and the growth of international institutions all will play a role in where the leader can move to at the conclusion of their time in office (all other factors aside). Arguably, some political circumstances will also lend their way to further opportunity, particularly in times of crisis (such as during both World Wars). As such, as this thesis traverses the former political leaders of New Zealand, consideration will be given to the era in which they operated. It is clearly unfair to pair the pursuits of Alfred Domett against the achievements of Helen Clark. In making such a consideration, a distinction of situational contexts will be broadly made across our political history, with leaders split into three distinct groups: the Colonial Premiers, the Kiwi Prime Ministers, and the Modern New Zealand Prime Ministers. These three groups capture major changes in the situational context for leadership, and therefore the available opportunities for our former leaders.

These situational variables make up the second half of the analytical framework:

Figure 3.2: An analytical framework for assessing 'life after office':

A post-leadership framework	
Individual variables	Situational Variables

<p>Psychological factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character, specifically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambition (their post-leadership desires) • Character integrity (how a leader's ideals influence post-leadership activity) • Relatedness (the leader's relations with their peers and connections made during their time in office) • Conditions under which that leader left office, and their reaction to it • The psychological impact of office <p>Socio-demographic and physical factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health (including any impact on health due to leadership) • Age • Wealth • Education • Previous employment history • Familial considerations 	<p>Generally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities available to that individual (owing to the era in which they lived) • Their place in history, particularly if they are in office during a crisis <p>Specific to New Zealand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of expectations on the New Zealand leader • 'Negalitarianism' • Ability of political leaders to either remain in (or try to) or be recycled in their political system.
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This analytical framework will form the basis for assessing the post-leadership activities of New Zealand Premiers and Prime Ministers. It enables the reflection of key individual variables that each leader possesses, and considers the impact that these leader-centric variables had on post-leadership pursuits. This is contextualised both in the circumstances of their time in office, but also in the particular milieu which these leaders find themselves post-leadership. This framework enables a fluidity to capture both the socio-demographics of the former Premiers and Prime Ministers, but also the changing situational context in which they were placed. It also allows for flexibility in importance of the variables. (For example, post-leadership opportunities, owing to the situational context, will be the significant explanation of a leader's post-office role. Further, a leader's personal or

psychological health can also be another determinant of what role a leader does or does not take on at the conclusion of their time in office). This analytical framework is therefore critical in highlighting trends of post-leadership activity in New Zealand.

Chapter Four – The Colonial Premiers: 1856 - 1893

This section looks at the Colonial Premiers, from Henry Sewell to John Ballance, so called because of their heritage and role in establishing the parliamentary system and developing the New Zealand colony. Over their time as leaders, New Zealand moved from an under-developed, recently settled country to a nation that was starting to form an identity in her own right. The leaders that are reviewed here played a central role in the foundation of New Zealand and in establishing the office of the Premier. This task was not easy; the lack of any formal political party system meant that their time as Premier was often short-lived, and changed frequently over the 37 years these leaders were collectively in office. Further, the undeveloped nature of the Premiership brought particularly unique pressures to these leaders, especially in the financial sense. This often had a critical impact on both the pursuits of leaders post-premiership, but also in Premiers' attitudes to the role.

I have identified a select group of leaders to examine their lives post-leadership. The choice of those leaders reviewed is based on:

- The numbers of years lived after leaving office
- The nature of their contribution to leadership in New Zealand
- The available information on their post-leadership activities and the available primary material
- The uniqueness of the activities they pursued post-leadership

Leaders at a glance:

The Colonial Premiers have 14 within their sample: Sewell, Fox, Stafford, Domett, Whitaker, Weld, Waterhouse, Vogel, Pollen, Atkinson. Grey, Hall,

Stout and Ballance. This section will look at ten of those leaders, with Sewell, Waterhouse, Pollen and Atkinson being the exclusions.⁵⁷

Out of the **14** in this group:

- **No** leaders were born in New Zealand
- **Seven** leaders died in New Zealand, and the remainder died on English shores
- Spent on average only **48%** of their lives in New Zealand
- Lived on average **21 years** after leaving office
- On average, died aged **72 years**
- The mean age at becoming leader was **48 years of age**
- **Nine** leaders had a university education
- There were, on average, **six** previous leaders alive during their time in office.

Sir William Fox (May – June 1856, July 1861 – August 1861, June 1869 – September 1872 and March 1873 – April 1873):

A pillar of the New Zealand Company, Sir William Fox is typical of the Colonial Premiers of his time. With four separate spells as leader, Fox also highlights the tumultuous nature of New Zealand politics prior to the establishment of a recognisable political party system. Fox played a critical role in consolidating the New Zealand parliamentary system, yet is not credited with leaving an indelible mark on the Premiership; “Although he was four times Premier of New Zealand, Fox lacked the sufficient depth of character and thought to have a lasting effect on the country’s development.”⁵⁸ Fox is further described as:

“The ‘Hotspur of Opposition’. Impetuous, vehement, unrivalled in sarcasm and in force of invective, and always eager for the fray, he had at his command eloquence, humour, political knowledge, debating power and all the artillery of attack... but these qualities in a great

⁵⁷ These four leaders were excluded for the following individual reasons: Sewell, Pollen and Waterhouse were only in office for a very short period of time, and there is a lack of quality information on Atkinson’s post-leadership activities.

⁵⁸ Author Unknown (1971) ‘William Fox’ in Knox, R. (Ed). *New Zealand’s Heritage; the Making of a Nation*, (Vol. II.). (Hamlyn; Wellington). p781.

measure incapacitated him for success as Prime Minister, in whom discretion, self-restraint, reticence, tact and other great negative qualities are essential.”⁵⁹

Fox finally managed to gain the Premiership off Stafford in 1861, following a vote of no confidence. He used this opportunity to halt the confiscation of Māori land, and to quell the rising conflict between the government and Māori. Fox found himself at odds with many other prominent members of the New Zealand Parliament, including Governor George Grey, and fractured any sense of unity within the Government. Fox subsequently lost a vote of no confidence a year later, though he remained a Minister and representative for Rangitikei until 1865. After a short time out of office he successfully regained his seat in 1868, and defeated Stafford for the Premiership in 1869, this time serving for three years as Premier. However, a difficult relationship with Treasurer Julius Vogel undermined the political coalition and Fox’s long-standing rival Stafford once again defeated him for the Premiership in 1872.

There is evidence to suggest Vogel’s poor relationship with Fox became a catalyst for his growing lack of interest in the Premiership role in the early 1870s, particularly given the dominance of Vogel in the Cabinet. Scholefield notes that “Vogel knew he was disliked, and he needed better-known personalities to make his cabinets acceptable. Anybody might call himself premier so long as they would dance to Vogel’s tune and let him leave the Colony whenever he felt inclined”.⁶⁰ Despite a brief stint again as premier, Fox at this time moved away from the local political scene, and instead toured Britain in 1874 as a lecturer on the prohibition movement. Despite his absence from New Zealand, Fox was elected once again to the Wanganui seat in 1875, though he did not resume his duties until 1877. Upon his return Fox found himself in the throes of a leadership struggle with George Grey. Fox was elected to lead the opposition against Grey in the 1879 election:

“In the ensuing election Fox lost his seat by 46 votes. He bitterly attributed his defeat to the influence of the Catholic Church, whose hostility he had incurred during the introduction of state education in

⁵⁹ Gisborne, W. (1897). *New Zealand’s Rulers and Statesmen from 1840 to 1897*. (Sampson Low, Marston and Company; London). p126.

⁶⁰ Scholefield, *Notable New Zealand Statesmen*, p62.

1877, and decided that this was the end of his political career. Being made KCMG in 1879 appeared to confirm this decision.”⁶¹

Fox returned to the Taranaki and became involved in the development of the region. Though he mostly turned his attention to his retirement, climbing Mt Taranaki in his later years, and focusing on his art, he couldn't resist the occasional dip back into the political scene. Fox continued as a vocal member of the prohibition movement in New Zealand, and in 1887 moved to Auckland to campaign for the New Zealand Alliance, a prohibition movement. He died at the age of 81 in 1893.

Sir Edward Stafford (June 1856 – July 1861, October 1865 – June 1869 and September 1872 – October 1872).

Sir Edward Stafford served three terms as New Zealand Premier, in a political career that spanned several decades. Stafford's first term as Premier brought a stability not previously seen in New Zealand politics, spending over five years at the helm of the New Zealand parliament. As Premier, Stafford is perhaps best remembered for his progressive relationship with Māori, particularly in the establishment of the Māori seats in Parliament in 1867.

As a politician, Stafford was regarded as a pragmatic and efficient leader, if not a man who did well for the skills he possessed. Scholefield details that “Stafford was neither imaginative nor ambitious, but his principles were of a high order and he was palpably honest. He was neither a great moralist nor a great philosopher, but he was a good organiser and a practical legislator”.⁶²

This view is supported by Gisborne, in his personal account of Stafford;

“[Stafford was] a man of great mediocrities, but with a statesman-like mind, and a fair knowledge of men... his faults are outward, and it needs a closer search to find his latent fund, which he has in large measure, of political ability. He talks too much, puts himself too much in the foreground, and is wanting in the suavity of manner. But behind these rather repellent features there is in him a large reserve of public worth. It is not that he has unusual talents, but that those he has are

⁶¹ Sinclair, K and Dalziel, R. (2012). 'William Fox; Explorer, Politician, Premier, Social Reform' last accessed 23/06/13 at <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1f15/fox-william>. KCMG refers to Order of St Michael and St George medal.

⁶² Scholefield, *Notable New Zealand Statesmen*, p73.

suitably proportioned to each other, and are so well combined as to ensure their greatest usefulness.”⁶³

Stafford’s pragmatism and principles strongly shaped his political career, with Stafford on many occasions turning down the Premiership because of other political commitments or because of the personalities present at the time.

It is perhaps because of these personalities that Stafford began to tire of the New Zealand political scene and its personal toll, though Bohan disputes Gisborne’s assessment that Stafford was never entirely wedded to the idea of being a leader in New Zealand:

“Stafford did grow tired of politics, but only after more than thirty years’ involvement. To suppose that he had never really cared about them in the first place was a fundamental error. Stafford’s life from 1843 until 1872 was dominated by such an obsession with politics that his private affairs and his family suffered; more, perhaps, than anyone outside his family circle realised or understood, or even cared.”⁶⁴

Stafford returned to Canterbury in 1872 following his third and final, one-month stint as Premier. Though Stafford retained the seat of Timaru until 1878, a promise of the post of Agent-General in London was the push Stafford needed to remove himself from New Zealand politics. Despite the post not eventuating, Stafford returned to England and invested his remaining time with his family and in advancing his financial interests. Close friend Edward Wakefield recalls;

“When I arrived in London early in 1890 after a long stay in the United States, I was delighted to find Sir Edward Stafford well and happy in the bosom of his family, for he was before all things domestic, and enjoying the attachment and respect of a very wide circle of friends, for he had a genius for friendship and society. He had long abandoned the idea of entertaining political life in England, and had applied his activities mainly to business of the high financial order.”⁶⁵

Stafford’s long political career had not aided him well financially, and this strain was exacerbated in London during the financial crisis of the 1890s.

⁶³ Gisborne, *New Zealand’s Rulers and Statesmen 1840-1897*, p115.

⁶⁴ Bohan, E.(1994). *Edward Stafford; New Zealand’s First Statesman*. (Hazard Press; Christchurch). p383.

⁶⁵ Wakefield, E. (1922). *Sir Edward Stafford G.C.M.G; A Memoir*. (Walbrook & Company; London). p46.

Stafford's decision to return to England is a particularly illuminating one; like many of his compatriots, Stafford never seemed to view himself as a New Zealander, despite the mark he made on the nation. After his return his business interests in New Zealand remained the strongest link Stafford kept, though he corresponded with close friends over his remaining years. This correspondence sheds little light on Stafford's prevailing attitude to New Zealand and his time as Premier, reflective perhaps of the honour and pragmatism so characteristic of him. His legacy in New Zealand has been a quiet one, though his impact on the nation was immeasurable. As Wakefield notes; "the value of his work for the Empire has never been recognised as it deserved, but, in New Zealand in particular it may be said of him in the words of Wren's epitaph at St Paul's; 'if you seek his monument look round you'".⁶⁶

Alfred Domett (August 1862 – October 1863)

Alfred Domett's political legacy in New Zealand politics is not a particularly flattering one. Ranked as one of the worst leaders in New Zealand, it is perhaps a fair reflection that Domett's talents as a poet and artist perhaps suited him to a different career than politics.⁶⁷ Domett served just over a year as Premier, and in the New Zealand Parliament from 1855-1866 as the representative for Nelson.

Like many other politicians of his time, Domett viewed New Zealand as a remote colony of the British Empire, though his reasons for embarking to New Zealand are markedly different from his premier peers, for as Scholefield notes:

"If Stafford was not a New Zealander, Alfred Domett was even less so. If he had lived to be a hundred years old his conversion would not have made any progress. Nor was he especially an Englishman. His spirit soared in the clouds. He shuffled out of Cambridge without a degree, wandered in the romantic regions of Europe and met the poets, sketched, wrote verse for Blackwood's which attracted minds like Browning's. Wandered again in America. Then back to England;

⁶⁶ Ibid, p48.

⁶⁷ See for example Sheppard, 'Ranking New Zealand Prime Ministers', pp72-89 or Johansson and Levine, 'Evaluating Prime Ministerial Performance', pp291-307.

travelled and yawned for six years in the Inns of Court... He was a dilettante and dreamer; a poet by inclination. What on earth made such a man turn his back on Robert Browning and come to New Zealand?"⁶⁸

It was Domett's sense of adventure that brought him to New Zealand, though surprisingly his time in the colony was largely dedicated to politics and the development of government institutions. Following his time as Premier, Domett remained in New Zealand serving in posts such as the Secretary of Lands and Registrar-general of Lands. Though showing a 'great capacity for the fulfilments of very practical duties',⁶⁹ Domett did not impress a longstanding mark in his remaining time in New Zealand, and Scholefield notes that "it seems not to have been noticed that he was absent from the Legislative Council until two years after he had brushed the dust from New Zealand from his shoes".⁷⁰

Upon his return to England, Domett ventured wholeheartedly back into his passion for literature, writing a series of successful novels and poetry. His return to writing, after three decades in New Zealand dedicated to fact and Government, seemingly reveals Domett's true passion, and is a vast contrast from his time in the colony. Whilst Domett appears to have been unable to see himself as a New Zealander, his novel *Ranolf and Amohia* became a tribute to the impact the colony left upon him.

Sir Frederick Whitaker (October 1863 – November 1864 and April 1882 – September 1883)

Born into a family of privilege, Sir Frederick Whitaker's decision to leave for the colonies is unusual, given the likelihood of a lucrative legal career in England. Grant suggests this stemmed from a "feeling that anything – rather than the strict prescriptions of the law – was possible in the raw, unformed,

⁶⁸ Scholefield, *Notable New Zealand Statesmen*, p82.

⁶⁹ Gisborne, *New Zealand's Rulers and Statesmen 1840 – 1897*, p138.

⁷⁰ Scholefield, *Notable New Zealand Statesmen*, p88.

unexploited colonies.”⁷¹ Though Whitaker’s time as Premier was short, he managed to carve out a largely successful legal career within the New Zealand government, serving intermittently as Attorney General and on the Legislative Council. There are some indications that Whitaker preferred the post of Attorney-General to Premier, as Downie-Stewart notes: “One one occasion he [Whitaker] took the Attorney-Generalship with precedence over the Prime Minister, whereupon a political wag declared that Whitaker declined the Premiership, but insisted upon being served with soup at Government House before the Prime Minister!”⁷² Whitaker began to move away from the Wellington political scene, tiring of the turbulent nature of New Zealand politics at the time, and in 1883 moved back to Auckland to pursue his private legal business interests. Again, Whitaker appears to have been significantly disadvantaged by his time in office; “Despite the honours and years of steady achievement, his declining years were not happy ones... Sir Frederick was in poor shape financially when he died some months later after leaving Government for the last time.”⁷³ Though he did return again briefly to the post of Attorney-General in 1887, his health continued failing and Whitaker died in Auckland shortly afterwards.

Sir Frederick Weld (November 1864 – October 1865)

Frederick Weld’s decision to travel to New Zealand came at the behest of his tutor, who encouraged him to pursue a career in the colonies, rather than in the military. A man of considerable intellectual talent, Weld quickly assimilated into the circles of New Zealand notables, and was offered several regional political posts soon after his arrival. However, it was not until 1853 that Weld entered the political fray, taking up the seat of Wairau in the newly formed New Zealand Parliament. Weld remained firmly in the New Zealand political mix, including his one-year stint as Premier, until poor health forced him to return to England in 1866.

⁷¹ Grant, I. (2003). *Public Lives: New Zealand’s Premiers and Prime Ministers*. (New Zealand Cartoon Archive; Wellington). p38.

⁷² Downie-Stewart, W. (1937). *The Right Honourable Sir Francis H. D. Bell: his life and times*. (Butterworth, Wellington). p290.

⁷³ Grant, *Public Lives*, p40.

Despite his brief term as Premier, Weld left a lasting impression on New Zealand politics. Though characterised by his dedication to the Empire, Weld stands apart from many of his political peers in his view of New Zealand. Whilst the policy largely failed, Weld aggressively pursued colonial self-reliance for New Zealand, taking perhaps the first step for New Zealand to nationhood. This experience had a lingering impact on Weld, as Grant explains:

"To look at Weld simply with his ministry of 1864-65 is to give a distorted view of the man himself. It overlooks his earlier success as a pioneer pastoralist and explorer and ignores his subsequent career as a colonial Governor. For while it is true that Weld made but a modest contribution to this country's heritage, it is equally true that his years in New Zealand made a lasting impression upon him and greatly influenced the nature of his administration in other colonies."⁷⁴

With improving health, Weld embarked on further adventures in the colonies, with several terms as Governor across Western Australia, Tasmania and the Straits Settlements (now Malaysia and Singapore). But Weld continued to be plagued by poor health, and was forced to retire in 1887, though he kept abreast of affairs of the Empire, largely through his association with the Royal Colonial Institute. Weld died in England in 1891 after contracting an illness during a brief trip to the Straits Settlements.

Sir Julius Vogel (April 1873 – July 1875 and February 1876 – September 1876)

Born into a wealthy family, Julius Vogel was expected to take up the reins of his family business at adulthood. But the appeal of the gold rush in the colonies was a temptation Vogel could not ignore, and in 1861 he left London in search of his fortune in Australia. When this did not eventuate, Vogel decided to try his luck in the Otago goldfields. Though the gold-mining venture was unsuccessful, Vogel found himself quickly drawn into the politics of the local community, and found a new challenge in the establishment of what was to become the Otago Daily Times.

⁷⁴ Author Unknown (1971) 'Sir Frederick Weld' in Knox, R. (Ed). *New Zealand's Heritage; the Making of a Nation*, (Vol. III,). (Hamlyn; Wellington) p849.

Journalism soon became politics, as Vogel successfully stood for the seat of Dunedin in 1863. Whilst Vogel became de facto Leader of the Opposition during Fox's overseas travel throughout the late 1860s, it was not until 1869 that he was able to make a real impact on the New Zealand political scene. Here Vogel took up the post of Colonial Treasurer, and embarked on an ambitious scheme aimed at significantly building up the New Zealand infrastructure. Vogel's plan was in fact not dissimilar from Muldoon's 'Think Big' scheme over 100 years later, particularly in the sense that both were plagued by the need for large overseas borrowing which led to significant deficits. This scheme was to become Vogel's magnum opus, though the demands of seeing such a project through naturally had flow-on effects for his other parliamentary commitments. None was more evident than during Vogel's (reluctant) time as premier, where Vogel was forced to concede the premiership in 1875 due to the demands of overseas travel brought about by his scheme. Though Vogel again found himself in the role of Premier once again in 1876 following the resignation of Daniel Pollen, it came only as an unnecessary distraction. Indeed the hubris of leadership never charmed Vogel, and in 1876 he left New Zealand politics to return to England.

Vogel remained closely connected with his own 'think big' scheme, and served as Agent-General following his arrival home. However, his attention soon turned to his own financial position, and Vogel enjoyed a brief foray into the business world in an attempt to secure some financial security. During a visit back to New Zealand in 1884 Vogel briefly returned to the political scene in an attempt to pull the country out of a long depression. He ultimately failed, and left New Zealand for the last time in 1888 to return to England.

His next career move was a rather unusual one, as Vogel authored what was New Zealand's first science-fiction novel, *Anno Domini 2000*. This new career did not reflect a long-suppressed artistic spirit within Vogel, but rather was a desperate attempt to strengthen his increasingly vulnerable financial position. As Dalziel notes, Vogel had long been personally plagued by his political career;

“For Vogel personally his triumph had some shadows. His health remained very indifferent... Money, or the lack of it, was a constant worry. As long as ordinary politicians remained unpaid, life for someone like Vogel, who depended on his wits for a living, meant walking a financial tightrope. He was acutely aware that in pursuing his political ambitions he was neglecting his duty to his growing family and sacrificing the chance to establish a good financial position.”

Panned by the critics, the book was a plan that ultimately failed, and Vogel remained plagued by financial uncertainty.⁷⁵

Vogel's return to England was not unexpected, given that he had spent only 18 of his 64 years in New Zealand. He thus becomes yet another Premier who was unwilling or unable to see himself as a New Zealander. With his health failing, and money worries troubling his final years, Vogel falls into a long decline shortly after publishing his first book. Vogel died in 1899, before the true impact of his fiscal legacy was able to be fully understood. As Scholefield accurately captures, “even today, seventy years after he propounded his policy, it is not easy to say with confidence that any one of his successors made a greater contribution than he to purely economic organisation in New Zealand.”⁷⁶

Sir George Grey (October 1877 – October 1879)

Sir George Grey is perhaps the most decorated and distinguished of our 19th century Premiers. Though his legacy as Premier in New Zealand is not overly notable, Grey had a remarkable political career that spanned across the British colonies. During Grey's first posting as Governor in New Zealand from 1845 – 1854 he oversaw a quelling of growing racial tension in the new colony. Grant notes that;

“Grey's measured and meticulous conduct of Māori affairs in the 1845-1853 period was possibly his greatest achievement as a colonial governor. He observed the Treaty of Waitangi, constantly reassuring Māori that their land rights would be scrupulously observed... Personally, though, he became fluent in Māori and studied their

⁷⁵ The book did, however, garner significant attention in the late 1990s when Vogel's prediction that in the year 2000 New Zealand would be a nation achieving gender equality, ruled by women seemed to come to fruition with Helen Clark as a woman Prime Minister.

⁷⁶ Scholefield, *Notable New Zealand Statesmen*, p130.

traditions, legends and customs with his usual energy and thoroughness, Not surprisingly, his mana among Māori was high.”⁷⁷

Much of this career was in the post of Governor, both for New Zealand, and also in Australia and South Africa. The post of Governor suited Grey, a man “of black and white. Sir George Grey is said to have inspired mild feelings in no one. He was admired, frequently detested and bitterly resented”.⁷⁸ Grey was a leader who liked total control and the ability to have the final say, hence the autocratic nature of the post of Governor suited him well.⁷⁹ Again, like most of the Premiers of the time, Grey held on to his identity as first and foremost an English man. This attitude is especially prevalent in Grey, with his years of service in the colonies strengthening his view that he was in service of the Empire.

Grey entered Parliament in 1875 after a short semi-retirement brought on by the Colonial Office firing him from the post of New Zealand Governor in 1868 because of his increasing disregard for their instructions. Though new to the parliamentary environment, Grey settled in quickly and found himself in the position of Premier shortly afterwards in 1877, following the collapse of the first Atkinson government. Grey’s time as leader was a difficult one; he was unable to secure a stable majority, and oversaw the country moving into the most severe depression it had ever seen. When it became clear Grey no longer had enough support to govern, he resigned, and served the remainder of his parliamentary years as a backbencher. It was a steep decline for Grey, who quickly faded into the background. Sinclair notes that during this period Grey “often made extremely emotional speeches, and raising several hobby-horses, such as his demand for elected governors... He had, however, little political influence or standing. His enemies thought him mad, but he was still capable, on occasion, of action”.⁸⁰ Though his character may have caused

⁷⁷ Grant, *Public Lives*, p61.

⁷⁸ McLean, G. (2006). *The Governors: New Zealand’s Governors and Governor-Generals*. (Otago University Press, Dunedin). p40.

⁷⁹ This aspect of Grey’s nature was pervasive across his life. It is telling of Grey’s constitution that, in 1861 following an accusation his wife was having an affair with a fellow shipmate whilst travelling to South Africa, he ordered her to be dropped off when they next ported in Rio de Janeiro. He did not speak to her again for 36 years.

⁸⁰ Sinclair, K. (2012). ‘George Grey: Soldier, Explorer, Colonial Governor, Premier, Scholar’. Last accessed 23/06/2013 at <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1q21/grey-george>.

the decline of his political standing, Grey remained politically active until the end of his life. Elected again to the seat of Auckland in 1893, Grey returned to England owing to ill health, and resigned in 1895. He died a few years later in 1898.

Sir John Hall (October 1879 – April 1882)

Sir John Hall had a formidable role in 19th century New Zealand colonial history, though today he remains largely an unknown. Whilst he has been labelled (somewhat unfairly) as ‘more of an official than a statesman’⁸¹ and ‘New Zealand’s first middle-class premier’,⁸² Hall had a lengthy political career and contributed to some of the more significant political developments during the colonial era.⁸³ Hall’s ascendancy into the seat of Premier, following the demise of the Grey government, was not an altogether welcome one, as Hall noted:

“I have gone into the Harness again very much against my own inclination, but the times and the occasion were such that no man had a right to hold back if he could do any good. I look back with a sigh to the good old days when the Colony lived within its income and the bulk of its Representatives were honourable, patriotic men. Now we are in troublesome times and it will be all the best pilots can do to keep the ship off the rocks.”⁸⁴

The challenges of leadership came with difficulty to Hall, who throughout his career questioned his public speaking ability and was unwilling to lower himself to populism. Whilst serving only two and a half years as Premier, Hall found the challenges of leadership stressful; throughout his leadership, he had survived on five hours’ sleep a night. By early 1882, his health had deteriorated badly and he complained that “my memory fails me terribly, and I have several attacks of weakness and dizziness”.⁸⁵ The physical toll of leadership was significant for Hall, though much less is known of the mental toll. Although Hall was astute in assuring that his personal records and diaries

⁸¹ Gisborne, *New Zealand’s Rulers and Statesmen 1840-1897*, p140.

⁸² Grant, *Public Lives*, p64.

⁸³ Such as universal male suffrage and triennial elections – all of which were passed during Hall’s time as Premier.

⁸⁴ Hall, quoted in Garner, J. (1995). *By His Own Merits; Sir John Hall – Pioneer, Pastoralist and Premier*. (Dryden Press, Hororata). p165.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p188.

remain, little is known of his attitudes towards the leadership. His biographer, Garner, notes that this 'absence of a commentary on his inner thinking' is telling on its own: "Here the shortage illustrates Hall's character. He did not indulge in soul searching. He was a man of action and today would probably be regarded as a workaholic. His diaries deal with his doings and encounters and he rarely registers his personal response."⁸⁶ Though his Ministry was elected back into office in 1881, Hall resigned shortly after and travelled to England in the hope that the absence from politics would restore his health. Whilst Hall had a brief foray back into the New Zealand Parliament in 1887, following the election of the Vogel-Stout Ministry and his concern over Vogel's excessive government borrowing, the return was short lived and Hall once again resigned in 1893. In his retirement his attention turned to his family, and he undertook numerous trips to England to advance his children's education and his business interests. However, Hall's health declined quickly following the death of his wife, Rose, in 1902 and he died at the family's Rakaia estate in 1907.

Sir Robert Stout (August 1884 – October 1887)

Sir Robert Stout is one of the most notable intellectuals in New Zealand history and a "man of varied accomplishments. His premiership of New Zealand was possibly remembered as the least of them."⁸⁷ Stout's legal accomplishments were far superior to his political ones, but his blend of personal characteristics always kept politics close to whatever role he found himself in. Gisborne recalls of Stout:

"He was distinguished by the great promise of ability which he showed, and by the leading position which he took in a very short time, both in his profession and in the House. Mr Stout had considerable intellectual power, and he was indefatigable in its exercise; his mind, clear and logical, was always at work; and he was over accumulating, by careful and intelligent study, of valuable sources of information."⁸⁸

Stout had already established a successful legal career in New Zealand before his foray into politics. His intellectual ability and refined debating skills

⁸⁶ Ibid, p13.

⁸⁷ Grant, *Public Lives*, p67.

⁸⁸ Gisborne, *New Zealand's Rulers and Statesmen 1840-1897*, p271.

made both his legal and political careers somewhat inevitable. However, Stout was never able to assert his dominance in the role of Premiership, serving in the post but in the shadow of Julius Vogel. Indeed it was only when Vogel's popularity waned that Stout was able to have any large impact on the political domain. After losing his seat and the Premiership in the 1887 election, Stout returned to his legal career but remained closely interested and active in New Zealand politics. He returned to Parliament in 1893 and quickly became the preferred successor in light of John Ballance's rapidly declining health. Stout was unable, however, to politically outmanoeuvre Richard Seddon, and left Parliament for good in 1898 when it became clear his chances of leadership were all but gone. At that point Stout assumed the role of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, remaining in this post for 27 years.

Whilst Stout assumed a post-leadership role that came naturally to him, his experiences during his time in office were characteristic of his colonial peers.

As Hamer details;

"Stout never became established as a politician. Every spell in Parliament left him adversely affected financially and obliged to retire to the law to recoup his finances. He found it increasingly difficult in pursuing this dual career, and usually the law prevailed when he had to make a choice."⁸⁹

It is also further documented that, even in his short time as premier, the physical tolls of office "severely strained even his remarkably robust constitution".⁹⁰ These impacts are far from evident during his time as Chief Justice, when Stout flourished, and continued on in a long and successful career. Stout died at the age of 85 in 1930, 32 years after leaving parliament.

John Ballance (January 1891 – April 1893)

⁸⁹ Hamer, D. (2012). 'Robert Stout: Lawyer, Politician, Premier, Chief Justice, University Chancellor'. Last accessed 23/06/2013 at <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2s48/stout-robert>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

John Ballance became the last of the Colonial Premiers, serving two years in office as the predecessor to the Seddon Government, which marked the beginning of party politics in New Zealand. Though Ballance died in office at the age of 54, it is important to consider whether Ballance paved the way for Seddon, and whether he would have achieved the success of Seddon had it not been for his untimely death. Ballance spent nearly twenty years in Parliament prior to becoming Premier, including several ministerial posts. In the history books Ballance's greatest achievement is often listed as playing a formative role in advancing the women's suffrage movement (though Ballance himself did not live to see the suffrage bill become law). Ballance's greatest achievement may in fact lie in sowing the seeds of party politics in New Zealand. As Grant notes; "One of Ballance's enduring legacies was the nationwide party organisation, the Liberal Federation he established: this and his effective leadership of caucus produced a political party that would remain in power an unprecedented 20 years."⁹¹ Given his short time as premier, it is unfair to predict where Ballance may have been able to take his Government, and whether he would have emulated the success of Seddon. Whilst the pressures of office certainly took their toll on Ballance's health, his appetite for politics showed no signs of waning. McIvor details;

"Ballance tried to keep the seriousness of his ailment a secret. He wanted to hold on to the leadership for as long as possible, with the appearance of firmness and confidence... Balance resolutely struggled to stay out of bed and at work. In part this effort reflected his enormous commitment to his job, his drive and his self-motivation. In part it was an attempt to squash rumours about his uncertain future."⁹²

Ballance's disregard for his health as a result of choosing to stay as Premier may therefore have made his death a foregone conclusion.

⁹¹ Grant *Public Lives*, p74.

⁹² McIvor, T. (1989) *The Rainmaker; A Biography of John Balance, Journalist and Politician 1839-1893*. (Heinemann Reed, Auckland). p232.

Chapter Five – The Kiwi Prime Ministers: 1893 - 1960

This section discusses the development of a unique New Zealand brand of leadership.⁹³ During this period, leaders such as Seddon were mocked for their 'provincial' New Zealand accent; Ward, Massey and Fraser carved out roles on the international stage during World War One and World War Two; and Francis Bell became the first New Zealand-born Prime Minister. This period, which saw New Zealand achieve Dominion status in 1907 and the adoption of the Statute of Westminster in 1947, was critical in seeing New Zealand move from infancy in identity towards becoming an increasingly mature nation. Leaders during this period faced unfamiliar challenges: two World Wars, a Great Depression and a series of industrial relations crises that caused deep national divisions. These events not only greatly challenged the strength of the young country, but took a deep personal toll on the leaders involved.

Once again, the choice of leaders in this period reflects:

- The numbers of years lived after leaving office
- The nature of their contribution to leadership in New Zealand
- The available information on their post-leadership activities and the available primary material
- The uniqueness of the activities they pursued post-leadership

Leaders at a glance:

The Kiwi Prime Ministers have 12 within their sample: Seddon, Hall-Jones, Ward, Mackenzie, Massey, Bell, Coates, Forbes, Savage, Fraser, Holland and Nash.⁹⁴ Eight of the leaders are explored in detail in this section, with Hall-Jones, Mackenzie, Bell and Forbes being excluded.⁹⁵

⁹³ This period also marked a change from the title Premier to Prime Minister, in 1901, under the leadership of Richard Seddon.

⁹⁴ Though Holyoake technically falls within this period, after taking over from Holland for four months in 1957, his main contribution to office from 1960 deems him to be grouped in the next section.

⁹⁵ Hall-Jones, Mackenzie, Bell and Forbes were all excluded owing to either their lack of time in office or the lack of significant post-leadership activity.

Of the **12** reviewed:

- **Francis Bell** became the first New Zealand-born Prime Minister, with Coates, Forbes and Holland also born here.
- **Six** of the twelve leaders died in office, or shortly after leaving office.
- Lived to an average of **73 years of age**, three years less than their Colonial peers.
- On average, they lived for just **eight** years after leaving office, a colossal 13 years less than their Colonial peers.
- The mean age at becoming leader was **58 years of age**, compared to 49 years for the Colonial Premiers.
- Just **one** leader had a university education (Francis Bell), compared to ten of the fourteen Colonial Premiers.

Richard Seddon (April 1893 – June 1906)

As New Zealand's longest serving Prime Minister, it is almost fitting that Richard Seddon died in office. With an array of monuments to the leader spread not just across New Zealand, but the Empire, Seddon has firmly established himself as one of the best political leaders the country has seen.⁹⁶ Seddon carved out a premiership in a fashion distinctive of his long association with the West Coast. Seddon was proud of his provincial New Zealand heritage, reflecting that "a spirit of self-respecting independence already marks our people and I would have the title "New Zealander" imply, the world over, a type of manhood, strenuous, independent, and humane."⁹⁷ Indeed Seddon seemed determined to become the first to forge an identity as a truly New Zealand premier.

Seddon was not only our longest serving Premier, but perhaps also one of the most dominant political forces seen in the New Zealand Parliament. Burdon details the Machiavellian nature of Seddon, quipping that "few

⁹⁶ See Sheppard, 'Ranking New Zealand Prime Ministers', pp72-89 and Johansson and Levine, 'Evaluating Prime Ministerial Performance', pp291-307.

⁹⁷ Seddon, R. J. quoted in Burdon, R. M. (1955). *King Dick; a Biography of Richard John Seddon*. (Whitcombe and Tombs; Christchurch). p313.

politicians have been so successful as he in applying the principles of democracy where others were concerned and simultaneously rejecting their application to his own actions.”⁹⁸ Though Seddon died at the relatively young age of 60, his 27-year career in the New Zealand Parliament makes it difficult to foresee the life Seddon may have led after such a long political career. It is necessary then to turn the attention to the last few years of Seddon’s career (and life) to review what impact the leadership role was having, and how this would impact on any activities post-premiership.

Seddon successfully won the general election in 1905, taking on an unusually high number of Ministerial portfolios – a reflection of Seddon’s concern about the level of competence around him. This workload did not go unnoticed, and the Lyttleton Times remonstrated that “there would be no need for him to work himself to death with so many portfolios”.⁹⁹ Seddon continued at full steam, spending the early months of 1906 travelling the length of the country, as was customary for him during parliamentary recess. Concern for Seddon’s wellbeing was shared by Seddon’s family, with son Tom writing;

“In 1904 my father’s declining health was a matter of grave concern to our family. He would not spare himself in his political work and undertook the responsibility of too many Portfolios. Some friends respected his difficulties, but others were importunate and pressed him for personal favours. Mary Stuart who had become one of his personal secretaries, valiantly struggled to stave off unnecessary personal interviews and moreover she contrived to see that he found time for meals and refreshments.”¹⁰⁰

The concerns over Seddon’s health and strain from the time in office were not new, with Seddon being diagnosed with a heart condition as early as 1897.¹⁰¹ Despite his condition, Seddon maintained a hectic work schedule throughout his premiership and expected those around him to keep his pace. Scholefield recalls:

“By hard experience I learned that the working day had 24 hours and that anyone associated with Seddon on tour must snatch an hour’s

⁹⁸ Burdon, *King Dick*, p320.

⁹⁹ *Lyttleton Times*, quoted in Grant book, *Public Lives*, p77.

¹⁰⁰ Seddon, T. (1968). *The Seddons; An Autobiography*. (Collins; Auckland). p147.

¹⁰¹ See Hamer, D. (2012). Richard John Seddon: Politician, Premier’. Last accessed 23/06/2012 in <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2s11/seddon-richard-john>

sleep where he could, night or day, and be thankful. It was his practice, after long hours of travel, speechmaking, deputations and dictating, to throw himself on the seat of a railway carriage and sleep soundly in the midst of turmoil, to wake refreshed and vigorous at the next stop.”¹⁰²

Seddon seemingly continued at odds with doctor’s advice to slow-down, and it is only in early 1906, before his final trip to Australia, that Seddon appears to realise the grave nature of his position; “the doctors tell me I must get away or risk my life”.¹⁰³ Though Seddon scaled back on some duties, he seemed unable to release himself for the long hours he had become accustomed to as Premier. Seddon returned to the *Oswestry Grange* on the night of Saturday 09 June 1906, with the ship due to sail for New Zealand in the early hours of the morning. Having not slept since Thursday, he worked until 2am before returning to his cabin to rest. Seddon died from a major heart attack the next afternoon, on his voyage back to New Zealand.

Despite his failing health, Seddon remained solidly in command of the premiership right up to his death. On his final journey, Seddon wrote to an old political opponent in England and noted:

“On May 1st I commenced my fourteenth year of office as Premier, and the papers say – and I suppose when both the Conservative and Liberal Press say it they cannot be far off the mark – that I am firmer in the saddle now than ever. However, I have my troubles before me, although the whole of our party returned and only with a few new members (or in other words ‘young colts’) to break in, the duties of the whips and the driving of the coachman will not entail much anxiety... I think this might claim to be a record in parliamentary history.”¹⁰⁴

Within the Liberal Party there seemed to be no vocal agitation for a new leader, although some consideration was given to a successor in light of his health concerns. Indeed the dominance of Seddon as leader suggests that, should he have lived to see the day, he would likely have stepped down on his own terms. Burdon supports this belief, suggesting that Seddon had “begun to regard his retention in office as a matter of course”.¹⁰⁵ There are suggestions, however, that Seddon was seriously considering retirement, and

¹⁰² Scholefield, *Notable New Zealand Statesmen*, p186.

¹⁰³ Seddon, R. quoted Seddon, *The Seddons*. p167.

¹⁰⁴ Seddon, R.J. quoted in Drummond, J. (1907) *The Life and Work of Richard John Seddon, Premier of New Zealand*. (Whitcombe and Tombs; Christchurch). p359.

¹⁰⁵ Burdon, *King Dick*, p320.

Drummond believes that during his final journey home “he had made up his mind to retire from the Premiership when he returned to the colony after attending the Premiers’ Conference in London in April, 1907”.¹⁰⁶ Whether Seddon would have been able to tear himself away from an institution in which he had become so embedded is a question that remains unanswered. What is clear from Seddon’s story is the toll that the role of leadership played upon his health.

Sir Joseph Ward (August 1906 – March 1912 & December 1928 – May 1930)

The political career of Sir Joseph Ward spanned over 27 years, and Ward is distinct in having the longest period of time between serving in the highest office, with a 13-year gap between his two premierships. Ward's time in Parliament stretched over some of the most difficult decades of New Zealand history, and Ward was at the parliamentary forefront as New Zealand battled the First World War, followed shortly after by a descent into the Great Depression. Though not always immediately visible, Ward's lengthy political career (and lengthy ministerial career) has meant that he has made an indelible mark on New Zealand history.

Ward moved easily into the national political domain, with his successful businesses giving him the means and the visibility to win office. After entering Parliament in 1887, Ward quickly proved his worth and became Colonial Treasurer in the Ballance government in 1893. His business interests however suffered, and Ward was forced to file for bankruptcy towards the end of the century. Following financial and reputational rehabilitation, Ward was welcomed back into the close confines of the Seddon Cabinet, taking on an impressive array of ministerial portfolios upon his return to parliament in 1899. Ward's close association with Seddon meant that he was a natural successor, and Ward moved into the post of Premier

¹⁰⁶ Drummond, *The Life and Work of Richard John Seddon*, p364.

shortly after Seddon's death in 1906.¹⁰⁷ But Ward was plagued by the faltering momentum of the Liberal Government, and his inability to establish a rapport with key constituent groups meant that he was unable to rejuvenate the Government in any meaningful way. With there being no clear winner following the 1911 election, Ward nobly resigned from his government before a vote of no confidence could be taken in 1912.

Ward was not to remain out of office for long. The beginning of the First World War in 1914 fundamentally changed the political landscape, and newly elected Premier William Massey looked to form a national coalition for the duration of the war. As Leader of the Opposition, Ward took up the responsibility of Deputy Prime Minister from 1914-1919. The relationship between Ward and Massey was, however, fraught with distrust and dislike of each other, and grew into an intense rivalry between the two. At the conclusion of the war, Ward found himself in a political no-man's land, with Massey retaining the leadership and Ward losing his Awarua seat. It was a bitter loss for Ward.¹⁰⁸

The enforced retirement came as a shock to Ward, and he was unprepared for a life outside of Parliament. At the age of 63 Ward's health had noticeably declined, and Ward spent much of the early 1920s travelling both throughout the country and abroad.¹⁰⁹ Ward appeared to drift away from Parliament, and chose not to contest the 1922 election. The rivalry with Massey, however, remained near the surface and Ward seemed unable to let it go. Eventually he couldn't resist, and decided to chance his fate at the 1923 Tauranga by-election. Bassett credits the rivalry as one of the leading motives for Ward's attempted return to Parliament; "Ward, however, had already made up his

¹⁰⁷ Following a short interim Premiership by Sir William Hall-Jones in mid-1906.

¹⁰⁸ Ward blamed the loss on fervent anti-Catholic campaigning, led by the Protestant Political Association. Bassett details that "There seems to be little doubt that the campaign against Ward had Massey's blessing. A document exists which, if it is correct, confirms that the campaign began in Massey's office early in 1918 at a meeting involving the Prime Minister, William Earnshaw MLC and the person who became the PPA's Awarua agent against Ward." See Bassett, M. (1993). *Sir Joseph Ward: A Political Biography*. (Auckland University Press; Auckland). p248.

¹⁰⁹ Ward had recently been diagnosed with diabetes, and was experiencing heart problems.

mind: he would make one last attempt to dispose of the Protestant Premier."¹¹⁰ Though unsuccessful in this attempt, he was soon to return for his final stretch in Parliament following success in gaining the Invercargill seat in 1925.

Upon his return to Parliament, Ward found himself isolated and without a broad base of support. Gone were his former Liberal colleagues, as was his former nemesis, Massey, who died shortly before the 1925 election. In Massey's place was Gordon Coates, who struggled to consolidate power for the Reform Government. Sensing an air of opportunity, a coalition United Party was formed to challenge the Coates Government at the 1928 election. Against all odds, Ward found himself at the helm, with challengers for the leadership having been successfully eliminated in earlier rounds. Although there were lingering concerns over Ward's state of health, the concerns were not great enough to thwart Ward's return to political leadership. The *Auckland Star* noted at the time:

"To undertake such a task at his age is an act of courage on Sir Joseph Ward's part that will be widely appreciated. It would be absurd to suggest that Sir Joseph is as vigorous as he was, but he is still active in mind and body, and there is no one in the House whose experiences of public affairs approaches his. His supporters are as strong as ever".¹¹¹

Though Ward was eager to return to the role, the signs of his declining health were ominous. In October 1928, just a month before the election, Ward made an incredulous public speech in which he promised to borrow heavily in order to stimulate the economy, directly at odds with his party platform. Bassett credits the error to Ward's diabetes:

"Vincent, who on 17 October 1928 was sitting immediately behind his father, recalled at one point, well into his speech, Ward turned to him and asked whether the lights in the hall had failed. Vincent whispered 'no', but the old man kept speaking for another fourteen minutes... During that critical fourteen minutes in what was probably a state of diabetic blackout, Ward made New Zealand's most lavish election promise to date. The magnitude of Ward's gaffe was immediately apparent. Davy shielded him from the press the next morning and Vincent quickly returned Ward to Heretaunga to the care of no fewer

¹¹⁰ Bassett, *Sir Joseph Ward*, p254.

¹¹¹ *Auckland Star*, quoted in *Ibid*, p264.

than five doctors."¹¹²

The voters, however, were unaware of the true state of Ward's health, and ousted Coates from the role of Prime Minister at the 1928 election. After a 16-year absence, Ward once again found himself in the role of Prime Minister. His return was not, however, matched by experience within his Cabinet, and Ward found himself obliged to take on a heavy ministerial load to compensate for the inexperience of his peers. Although Ward was able to initially bear the strain on a heavy workload and travel diary, he was unable to continue for long. Mid-way through 1929 the Prime Minister's health further declined, and he began to cancel engagements and restrict travel. The large burden of ministerial portfolios held by Ward meant that the Government effectively ground to a halt. Initially optimistic about a recovery, Ward refused to consider either resigning or rescinding his ministerial portfolios. Yet with a country sinking deeper into a depression, and the Government unable to function without a chief at the helm, Ward's resistance could not last long. Following pleas from his family and medical advisors, on 15 May 1930 Ward resigned as Prime Minister and became a Cabinet member without portfolio. It was too late for Ward, however, and he died just six weeks later.

To speculate on Ward's possible life after office is difficult. Ward's dogged persistence to return to office following his initial period of leadership suggests that he had no great desires other than to be amongst the surrounds of Parliament. Indeed, despite the toll that the office had on his health, Ward remained determined to continue. Whilst Grant notes that "Sir Joseph Ward's reputation has suffered from the length of his political career and the farcical aspects of its later stages", it is difficult to the impact that Ward had on New Zealand's political landscape.¹¹³

William Massey (July 1912 – May 1925)

¹¹² Ibid, p266.

¹¹³ Grant, *Public Lives*, p87.

The imposing scale of the Massey memorial on the north-end of Miramar peninsula in Wellington hints at the sizeable impact that William Massey had on New Zealand politics. Serving as leader throughout the duration of First World War and beyond, Massey went on to become our second-longest serving Prime Minister. Yet the legacy of his contribution to politics – at a key point in the development of a uniquely New Zealand way of doing things – remains a quiet fact of our history. Though his record is impressive, he lacked the charisma and idiosyncrasies that led so many of the leaders from his era, like Seddon, Savage and Fraser, to become an iconic New Zealand Prime Minister.

Born to Scottish parents, Massey immigrated to New Zealand as a child, with his family quickly establishing themselves as part of the notable rural community, in both Canterbury and Auckland. As Massey grew into adulthood, he became a respected member of the Auckland community, chairing several local community organisations. It was only a matter of time before he made the natural progression to the New Zealand Parliament, winning the Waitemata by-election in 1894. But Massey's timing was not ideal. Richard Seddon's Liberal Government had just been elected to office, and would dominate the political landscape for the next decade. At times, political opposition to the Liberals was virtually non-existent.

"The small, dispirited, loosely organised coalition collection of conservative independents whom Massey joined in the parliamentary opposition were no match for the completely dominant Liberal government of Richard John Seddon."¹¹⁴

For Massey, the experience almost became too much. In 1896, just two years after entering Parliament, and at the age of 40, Massey considered giving it all away. The isolation from his family, combined with the financial strain of being an unpaid Member of Parliament, had taken its toll. His career was saved only by a win in his home constituency of Franklin, which allowed him to be closer to his family.

¹¹⁴ Gardner, W.J. (1969). *William Massey*. (Reed, Wellington), p24.

Massey proved to be an effective, hard-working Member of Parliament, rising to Leader of the Opposition in 1902. It wasn't until the death of Seddon in 1906, however, that Massey saw any chance of being in government. The decline of the Ward Government and the restlessness of the electorate finally enabled Massey to be elected to the post of Prime Minister in 1912. The election was not an outright victory for Massey's Reform party, and it was not until 1919 that Massey held an outright majority in the New Zealand Parliament. It was of little consequence, however, as Massey worked effectively in coalition with Joseph Ward to form a national coalition Government for the duration of the First World War.

With the conclusion of World War I Massey found himself confronted by a desperate domestic situation. As Gustafson notes;

"If the war brought upheaval to New Zealand, the 1920s brought uncertainty. The long era of prosperity came to an end in 1921, and New Zealanders learnt the bitter truth that a war might be won, but a peace lost. The security they took for granted seemed to be slipping away; their country was caught up in economic currents beyond the control of governments all over the world, and the price of New Zealand produce seemed to depend on a kind of international lottery."¹¹⁵

Faced with the crisis, Massey embarked on a campaign to consolidate national cleavages, focusing on a public spending campaign to grow the economy. In 1922 Massey, though retaining the leadership, lost his majority in the House. Forced to devote a significant portion of his time to consolidating power by negotiating with parliamentary independents, Massey was besieged by inner-parliamentary politics. He is recorded as saying to a parliamentary colleague at the time; "Never try to carry on a Government with a majority of only two or three; it is hell all the time."¹¹⁶ Massey gradually built a delicate web of parliamentary support based on concessions, promises and favourable appointments. The strain of maintaining this balance eventually took its toll. As Burdon writes;

¹¹⁵ Gustafson, B. (2012). 'William Fergusson Massey: Farmer, Politician, Prime Minister'. Last accessed 23/06/2013 from <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/2m39/massey-william-ferguson>

¹¹⁶ Massey, W. F. quoted in Farland, B. (1995). *Coates' Tale: War Hero, Statesman, Politician, Statesman, Joseph Gordon Coates, Prime Minister of New Zealand, 1925-1928*. (Farland, Wellington). p546.

“Towards the end of 1924 his health began to fail. He grew irritable and ever more dictatorial. The constant vigilance imposed upon him by the Government’s small majority put an intolerable strain on his waning energy. ‘If members want to die they must die in the House’, he snapped when told that one of his party was absent because of sickness.”¹¹⁷

Massey struggled to continue on as Prime Minister as he battled cancer, and was reluctant to relinquish the leadership. Massey had few options to replace him. As the cancer gradually overcame him throughout 1924, the Reform Party’s Foreign Affairs Minister, Francis Bell, took control of Massey’s duties.¹¹⁸ It was not a role Bell relished, and he declined the party’s offer to stay on as Prime Minister. Gordon Coates stepped forward as the successor.

Farland suggests that, despite the toils of his final few years in Parliament, Massey desired to remain in Parliament, and tellingly made no reference to his state of health at the conclusion of the parliamentary session in 1924. Farland points out:

“A nurse who cared for him in his last days told the late John Barr that he was very concerned about the possibility that Coates would succeed him, as he did not believe he was yet ready to be Prime Minister. Massey, like many a self-made New Zealander, may have been partly to blame for this but he had been such a colossus. No one living was his peer. Neither did any of them believe they could fill his shoes.”¹¹⁹

Massey died aged 69 on 10 May 1925, whilst officially still in office as Prime Minister. It is telling, though not conclusive, that Massey’s passage from cancer diagnosis to death lasted less than a year. Like so many of his Prime Ministerial peers, Massey may have simply worked himself to death.

Joseph Gordon Coates (1925 – 1928)

Despite only serving three years as Prime Minister, Gordon Coates had a lengthy political career and became a dominant political force for the majority

¹¹⁷ Burdon, R. M. (1965). *The New Dominion; A Social and Political History of New Zealand*. (Reed, Wellington NZ). pp 58-59.

¹¹⁸ In doing so, he became the first New Zealand-born Prime Minister.

¹¹⁹ Farland. *Coates’ Tale*, p551.

of his time in Parliament. After working his way to the head of the Reform Party, Coates won the 1925 general election, and became only the second New Zealand born Prime Minister, after Francis Bell. Coates' political success was attributed not to political skill and ideological zest, but rather to the fact he was a "practical bloke".¹²⁰ After a three-year stint serving overseas in the First World War, Coates returned to Kaipara a hero, and was appointed as a Cabinet Minister by Prime Minister Massey. For the next decade, Coates remained an entrenched fixture of Government, and became a natural successor to Massey following his death in 1925.¹²¹

Coates' time in office came as New Zealand began the slow decline towards recession, though the true effects were yet to be felt. Voters, uncertain about the economic future under Coates, found it difficult to back his Reform Government, and he was defeated at the polls at the following election in 1928. Although the Labour Party and the United Party formed a governing coalition, Parliament effectively ground to a halt as a result of Prime Minister Joseph Ward's health and his refusal to resign. His eventual death in 1930, followed by the withdrawal of support in the coalition by Labour, seemingly paved the way for Coates to return to the highest office following the election in 1931. It was a role he had been agitating for since his humiliating loss in 1928. Coates was unable to outwit coalition partner George Forbes, and eventually succumbed to Forbes' suggestion that the Reform and United parties merge. It was an unsteady partnership, and Coates continually doubted the ability of Forbes; "While our Prime Minister is now doing what he can with his team... I feel like he is much like a fish out of water. He lacks conviction and makes fairly hard going of his new roles."¹²² Coates' desire to return to the post of Prime Minister was not owing to the hubris of office, but rather to the belief that Reform's policies would do more to lift New Zealand out of the crippling depression that the country now found itself in.

¹²⁰ Wolfe, R. (2005) *Battlers, Bluffers and Bully Boys; How New Zealand's Prime Ministers Have Shaped Our Nation*. (Random House; Auckland). p139

¹²¹ Following interim leadership by Francis Bell in May 1925.

¹²² Coates, J.G. quoted in Bassett, M. (1995) *Coates of Kaipara*, (Auckland University Press; Auckland). p163.

Coates eventually moved into the post of Minister of Finance in early 1933, as the effects of the Great Depression were being harshly felt across the country. Here Coates became the visible Governmental face of the economic hardship, and the voters were unforgiving. When the 1935 election came around the Coalition was ignominiously removed from office in favour of Savage's First Labour Government, while Coates only narrowly held onto his seat in Kaipara. Coates felt deeply affected by the blame placed upon him for the country's economic woes, and appears to have become largely disenfranchised from his party and New Zealand politics:

"I am myself one of the most disinterested persons in the country as far as personal feeling about it all is concerned. My attitude is that if the public should choose someone else – well, I will be able to get up from my desk which leaves one without a moment to oneself and one's family. There are also hobbies that one may have, but which have had to be neglected entirely. Being just a plain old 'cockatoo' one wants to get back into the wilds, to get on a saddle, and to be back amongst the people one was brought up with."¹²³

But in battling the country's economic depression, Coates had consistently neglected his own deteriorating financial position, and limited thoughts he may have been entertaining about retiring. His position was not assisted by his salary as a member of the opposition accounting for only a third of what he was earning as Prime Minister. Bassett suggests that this may have been one of the only reasons he remained in his Kaipara seat:

"He was wholly reliant on his parliamentary salary, and it seems certain that a central consideration influencing him to stay on in politics was the reality that he could not afford to retire. There was no parliamentary superannuation until 1947, and there were already too many other people dependent on the income of Ruatana."¹²⁴

Coates now appeared to become disillusioned with politics, particularly the policies of the Labour Party. Though remaining largely in the political background, Coates gave a series of speeches around New Zealand in the late 1930s where he bemoaned the Communism creeping into parliament. It highlighted he was losing touch with New Zealand politics, and the popular Savage Government. He was a leading force in the 1938 National Party campaign which "instead of building on the work of the Coalition in the years 1933-35 and devising a policy to make the economy more sound decided 'to oppose everything and admit nothing' and to drag out the old bogey

¹²³ Ibid, p224.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p238. Ruatana was Coates' farm.

‘socialism’.”¹²⁵ Coates, by all accounts, had become an “isolated and lonely man”.¹²⁶

Ironically, Coates’ reputation was partly salvaged by the Labour Party. As New Zealand descended into World War II, Coates was called upon by Peter Fraser to join the War Cabinet, and the two were to become close friends. Though this move put him at odds with the National Party, Coates became a key figure in New Zealand’s defence strategy, frequently travelling to international destinations to represent New Zealand in key discussions on World War Two. He remained in this role until his sudden death in May 1943 from a heart attack. The value of Coates’ contribution to New Zealand’s war effort was perhaps most telling when “it was his Labour colleagues and constituents, more than those in his own party, who mourned his passing”.¹²⁷ Coates, disillusioned with politics in the late 1930s, concluded his remaining years in Parliament (and of his life) in dignity, re-engaged with the institution in which he had become so firmly embedded. After Reform’s defeat in 1935 it became highly unlikely that Coates could ever return to top political office, but, should he have lived to see that day, it is likely Coates could have eventually retired in circumstances more fitting of the service he gave to the New Zealand Parliament.

Michael Joseph Savage (December 1935 – March 1940)

Though in office for only five years, Michael Joseph Savage has become one of the most iconic New Zealand Prime Ministers. Savage’s unrelenting commitment to the working class and the most vulnerable of New Zealand society became the driver behind the formation of the modern welfare state in New Zealand. This determination was arguably formed during Savage’s humble childhood, growing up in rural New South Wales, Australia, where his widowed father constantly struggled to put food on the table. Savage left

¹²⁵ Nordmeyer, A. Quoted in Farland, B. *Coates’ Tale*, p144.

¹²⁶ Farland, *Coates’ Tale*, p145.

¹²⁷ Basset, M. (2012). ‘Joseph Gordon Coates: Farmer, Politician, Soldier, Prime Minister’. Last accessed 23/06/2013 at <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3c24/coates-joseph-gordon>

school at the age of 14 to take up work in a liquor store, in order to support his family. The death of his brother Joe when Savage was 19, followed by losing his job a year later, led Savage to leave the family farm in search of work further afield in the mines of New South Wales. It was during this time that Savage first involved himself in politics, joining the General Labourers' Union and the Victoria Political Labour Council.

After the closure of Ruthglen mine in 1907, Savage set sail for New Zealand in search of more secure employment. It wasn't long before Savage found employment in Auckland and a political home in the union circles. From here he began a slow and steady progression toward Parliament, unsuccessfully standing in the 1914 election, before being elected to the Auckland City Council in 1919, and finally to Parliament in 1920 in the seat of Auckland West. Savage was 47 years old.

Savage worked tirelessly with his Labour Party peers Peter Fraser and Harry Holland to establish the party as credible opposition to the Reform Party, which had dominated politically for most of the 1920s. But political tensions between Holland, the leader of the party, and Savage, his deputy, began to grow. The party began to agitate for change;

"Ill, tired, confused, disillusioned and unable to identify clearly his political and personal priorities, Holland by 1928 had lost much of his drive and direction as leader. Factions based on geographic groupings, personal friendships and shared perceptions of what should be the party's policies and tactics started to emerge even more openly than they had in the past."¹²⁸

Change would not come, however, until Holland's death in October 1933. Savage was the obvious successor, campaigning tirelessly against the rising unemployment and poverty arising out of the Great Depression. Savage found an audience ready to listen, and convincingly won the 1935 election. At the age of 63, Savage became the first Labour Prime Minister of New Zealand.

¹²⁸ Gustafson, B. (1986). *From Cradle to the Grave; A Biography of Michael Joseph Savage*. (Reed Methuen, Auckland). p136.

Savage launched headlong into Prime Ministerial duties, often working sixteen hour days, seven days a week. The demands of office placed significant strain on Savage, and it did not go unnoticed by the public:

“During the closing stages of the last session it was freely commented upon that a good deal of his old-time geniality and animation were missing... his duties have been of an exhausting nature, but he was always in his place, even though he did not appear to be quite his usual self.”¹²⁹

The long-hours and high stress levels were not the only reasons for Savage’s exhaustion. As early as 1931 Savage began experiencing stomach pains, the first sign of the cancer that was to eventually claim his life. As the illness ate away at him over the course of his Prime Ministership, Savage was forced to fight rumours of impending retirement due to ill-health. But despite his grave medical situation, Savage continued to carry on as leader, telling the Labour Caucus; “I have been burning the candle at both ends, as a man must do in this job of mine, and I am paying for that now.”¹³⁰ Desperate to quell rumours about his illness, and determined to win the 1938 election, Savage deferred a potentially life-saving operation. It was not until Savage collapsed in August 1939 that he finally underwent the operation. It was too little too late, with doctors informing Savage that in spite of the operation, his condition was terminal. Despite the prognosis, Savage continued on as leader, to as much degree as his health permitted. Gustafson suggests that his motivations for not resigning office were not owing to the hubris of office:

“The Prime Minister concealed the real nature of his illness in order to oversee the passage of social security legislation, which he did not completely trust Fraser and Nash to accomplish [given his belief they were colder and more conservative than himself], to carry through undiluted in his absence”.¹³¹

Savage could only endure for so long, and after an exhausting final personal and political battle with maverick Labour MP John A. Lee, Savage died in March 1940, at the age of 68.

¹²⁹ *Truth*, (1937) quoted in Ibid.

¹³⁰ Savage, quoted in Gustafson, *From Cradle to Grave*, p217.

¹³¹ Ibid, p256.

Savage's five years in office were plagued by his ill-health. Though Savage was likely already suffering the effects of cancer before he entered government, the demands of office led Savage to the fatal decision to delay a critical operation that may have saved his life. It is impossible to know if Savage had the operation in time whether it would have made any difference to his chances of survival. But should this have been the case, it would be fair to speculate that Savage would have successfully continued on in Government after 1940. Fraser's nine-year stint in office following Savage's death suggests that the public still had an appetite for a Labour Government, and the public outpouring of grief at Savage's death showed he was still incredibly popular. As Grant details:

"The country had not seen a funeral like it before; 50,000 mourners filing past the casket at Parliament, the solemn requiem mass, the ceremonial send-off from the Wellington Railway Station, the train stopping 20 times on its way north, thousands more lining Auckland streets to watch the gun carriage pass, and the burial at Bastion Point, with 200 boats bobbing at anchor nearby."¹³²

It is an alternative history that will never be known. Savage became yet another New Zealand leader to put his leadership before his health, and paid the ultimate price.

Peter Fraser (March 1940 – December 1949)

As one of New Zealand's most recognised and adored Prime Ministers, Peter Fraser has been ranked as one of our greatest leaders.¹³³ Fraser followed in the footsteps of another great New Zealand leader, Michael Joseph Savage, yet managed to carve out a legacy entirely of his own during his nine years in office. His path from unemployed carpenter in London to Labour Prime Minister is a compelling one.

In 1911 Fraser left the United Kingdom, bound for New Zealand, drawn by the ground-breaking welfare state and chances of employment. Within a

¹³² Grant, *Public Lives*, p112.

¹³³ See for example Sheppard, 'Ranking New Zealand Prime Ministers', pp72-89 or Johansson and Levine, 'Evaluating Prime Ministerial Performance', pp291-307.

year, Fraser had becoming centrally involved with both local and national labour unions, securing a position on the New Zealand Federation of Labour. Fraser's rise through the union movement was swift, and reflected his talents as a skilled orator and debater. Over the next decade Fraser's attention turned from wharf to war, and to the military conscription introduced in New Zealand in World War I. It was in this arena that Fraser became a public face on the New Zealand political scene, after being jailed for 12 months for speaking out against the Military Service Act. Though contentious, the imprisonment did not hurt Fraser politically, and he built on the political capital gained, successfully winning the seat of Wellington Central in 1918.

With Savage and Harry Holland, Fraser built the foundations of the New Zealand Labour Party, working tirelessly to see it become a significant political force throughout the 1920s. The death of Holland in 1933 saw Savage move into the role of leader, with Fraser naturally slotting alongside him as deputy. Fraser's spectacular political rise continued with the election of the First Labour Government, built on promises of entrenching and developing a welfare state following the terrible experiences suffered during the Great Depression. As Minister of Education and Health during 1935-1940, Fraser took on a significant volume of work. Savage's declining health further increased the burden on Fraser, with Fraser often stepping in for Savage, including taking on significant international travel.

Savage's death in early 1940 saw Fraser assume the role of Prime Minister. The outbreak of war in 1939 placed Fraser at the cornerstone of history, and Fraser built upon his earlier connections established during his travels (created as Savage's stand-in) to play a significant role in international wartime affairs. Fraser took his responsibilities seriously, taking on an almost authoritarian attitude to wartime leadership, granting his government significant controls over press, property and the public during the war.

"Partly, however, Fraser's dominance of government reflected his unrivalled ability as well as his temperamental compulsion to do

everything himself. At times he seemed unable to discriminate between the great issue and the small, nor could he delegate.”¹³⁴

The workload became exhausting, and Fraser was admitted to hospital several times in the mid-1940s.

The conclusion of war in 1945 led Fraser to enter what was to become the most important period of his career which saw Fraser play a significant role in the establishment of the United Nations and the passing of the Statute of Westminster in 1947. Grant details:

“After his visits to London and Washington, Fraser had won the respect of the Allies’ most senior politicians. His international stature was further boosted at the meetings that established the United Nations where, speaking for small countries, he vigorously opposed veto powers for the great powers”.¹³⁵

It is for these activities that Fraser is perhaps best remembered. Fraser’s successes abroad, however, were not always matched on the domestic front; the 1946 election was closely contested, with Labour only securing victory thanks to the four Maori seats. As a consequence, Fraser took on the Native Affairs portfolio for the remainder of his Prime Ministership. The heavy workload eventually took its toll on Fraser, with health problems gradually increasing over his last few years as Prime Minister. Grant goes so far as to suggest that “photographs of the time suggest that Fraser may have been more relieved than disappointed by Labour’s crushing loss at the 1949 election”.¹³⁶

As a member of the opposition, Fraser remained politically active both inside and outside of Parliament, asking numerous questions of the newly-elected Government whilst also attending both the Federation of Labour conference in April and the Labour Party conference in May. Thorn details the devastating impact these few months had on Fraser:

¹³⁴ Beaglehole, T. (2012). ‘Peter Fraser: Labourer, Trade Unionist, Journalist, Politician, Prime Minister’. Last accessed 23/06/2013 at <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4f22/fraser-peter>

¹³⁵ Grant, *Public Lives*, p116.

¹³⁶ Ibid, p117

“Before and during the [Parliamentary] session he had seen much of the Labour Government’s accomplishment whittled away and overturned. As he told associates, he felt broken hearted. He left the House for the week-end depressed and anxious. Early on the morning of 2 October, after leaving his bed, he suffered a stroke.”¹³⁷

Though Fraser briefly recovered for a period of weeks, his health declined again just a short time later, and he died on 12 December 1950.

Again, it remains difficult to speculate on what Fraser would have continued to do in his career should his poor health not have ended it. No doubt Fraser would have played an integral role in the 1951 Waterfront Strike, possibly handling the matter in a fashion more acceptable to voters than Walter Nash’s actions. Alternatively, the reputation Fraser earned on the world stage a few years earlier may have led him to become our first leader to look to the international diplomatic stage to continue their career. Fraser was one of the few politicians of his time that had both the foreign affairs credentials and the political skills to catapult himself onto this stage. As Alistair McIntosh, former secretary of external affairs, comments;

“This particular habit [of basing policy on principle] and capacity in a Prime Minister and a politician were to my mind almost unique; but I hasten to add this did not mean that he was not equally capable of following the customary lines of political expediency when needs demanded, and no politician could be more devious, or shrewder or more ruthless in achieving his desired end.”¹³⁸

Peter Fraser was 66 years old when he died in 1950. It will remain a mystery what he may have been able to achieve should he have lived another decade.

Sidney Holland (December 1949 – September 1957)

Despite an eight-year reign in office, Sir Sidney Holland left a fairly unremarkable legacy during his time as Prime Minister. Born to a prominent rural Cantabrian family, Holland’s background is typical of many National

¹³⁷ Thorn, J. (1952). *Peter Fraser: New Zealand’s Wartime Prime Minister*. (Oldhams Pres; London). p 274.

¹³⁸ McIntosh, A, quoted in Grant, *Public Lives*, p116.

Party Members of Parliament for his time: serving in World War I, returning to New Zealand and establishing a successful business and becoming a notable member of the business community. As Grant notes, “intentionally or otherwise, he was establishing his credentials as a solid conservative”.¹³⁹ Holland’s father Henry had held the seat of Christchurch North since 1925, and son Sid become the natural successor to the seat when his father stepped down in 1935.

Holland established himself as a notable, effective member of the opposition, despite the party desperately waning in popularity in the face of the domination exerted by the First Labour Government. His efforts were rewarded in 1940 when Holland took over the leadership of the National Party from an ineffective Adam Hamilton. Holland’s first taste of office came shortly after, when he joined Peter Fraser’s War Cabinet in June 1942. The coalition lasted only three months, with Holland backing out of the arrangement after Labour quashed the convictions of Waihi coalminers who illegally went on strike. Holland’s decision resulted in Coates and Hamilton leaving the party to become independents, though Gustafson notes that “Holland’s leadership of the National Party was strengthened, not weakened, by their defection, and he was now free to attack the Government without reservation”.¹⁴⁰ With Labour maintaining an electoral strong-hold, Holland set about building the National Party’s electoral base, particularly in rural areas. Holland’s move culminated him in buying a farm in North Canterbury, in an attempt to reinvent himself as a farmer-politician. However disingenuous the attempt was, his moves at reviving the core electoral base of the National Party were successful, and Holland swept to victory in 1949.

Holland’s time as Prime Minister coincided with a variety of significant events during 20th century New Zealand history: the 1951 Waterfront Strike, the dissolution of the Legislative Council and the signing of the ANZUS treaty.

¹³⁹ Ibid, p119.

¹⁴⁰ Gustafson, B. (2012). ‘Sidney Holland: Businessman, Politician, Farmer, Prime Minister’. Last accessed 23/06/213 at <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/5h30/holland-sidney-george>

Whilst Holland played a key role in all three events, his political legacy remains otherwise unremarkable. As Oliver notes:

“his importance was not primarily that of a Prime Minister, but that of a party builder. During his eight years of office very little was actually done, either by the Prime Minister or by the government of the day as a whole, apart from the day to day administration of the country as the Labour Party had remade it”.¹⁴¹

Regardless of his legacy, Holland did not escape the strains of office. In 1956, Holland experienced a marked decline in his health, worn out by his time as Prime Minister. Holland was displaying early signs of dementia, and had suffered a mild stroke in October of that year:

“The Prime Minister’s memory was failing and he started to lose track of issues and decisions. Often he would discuss at Cabinet a matter he had dealt with the week before. Those closest to him realised that something was seriously wrong. Holland lost the drive, enthusiasm and blunt eloquence which had contributed so much to the establishment of the National Party, first as a formidable political opposition and then as a credible government.”¹⁴²

Yet Holland was determined to stay on in office. Fearing that his successor Keith Holyoake had not yet built a strong national support base, Holland was reluctant to resign. Holland’s faith with Holyoake’s leadership ability was a sign of the poor relationship between the pair, as Gustafson notes:

“It was certainly hard for Holland to give up the leadership of the party, which on the parliamentary and public levels he had done so much to create and bring to power. The fact that Holland did not always conceal his irritation with Holyoake, particularly in the later years of Holland’s Prime Ministership, exacerbated the somewhat strained relationship. If Holland’s health had been better he might have been chosen to contest one more election or to retire earlier than he did in 1957. But by that time his ability to think matters through logically and to act decisively was impaired. His sense of timing in finally handing over the leadership to Holyoake only weeks before the 1957 election was an appalling error of judgement and placed both Holyoake and the National Party in a very difficult situation. It can be argued that it cost National the election.”¹⁴³

Against doctors’ orders, Holland stayed on in office until August 1957, just four month before the 1957 general election, stepping down only when his state of health made it clear that his position as Prime Minister was untenable. Despite the reprieve from the demands of office, Holland’s health continued to decline, and he died in 1961, aged 67.

¹⁴¹ Oliver, B. (1961). *Comment*, 9(1). p4.

¹⁴² Gustafson, *The First 50 Years*, p70.

¹⁴³ Ibid, pp70-71.

Walter Nash (December 1957 – December 1960)

Walter Nash became the third Labour Prime Minister of New Zealand, following on from the extraordinary legacies laid out by Savage and Fraser. Nash had a remarkably similar background to Peter Fraser, growing up in a working class family in Britain and leaving school at an early age in order to support his family, before leaving for New Zealand in 1909 search of a better life. Driven by his strong Christian background, he found himself naturally drawn to politics, viewing it as a means of achieving social improvement. Nash also was a natural politician, as Sinclair notes:

“Walter Nash was a political being; he lived and thrived in the atmosphere of politics, as for most successful politicians, perhaps most successful people, his interests were his work; his work was his daily bread and nightly dreams.”¹⁴⁴

Nash played a prominent role in the early development of the New Zealand Labour Party, serving as the party secretary from 1922-1932, and becoming MP for the Hutt electorate in 1929 (a seat he would hold until his death in 1968).

It was during his first two decades in New Zealand that Nash was involved in two fundamental experiences that placed him on his long-term political trajectory. The collapse of the relationship with his business partner in New Plymouth led to Nash working tirelessly to secure a livelihood for his family. Not only did the experience give Nash a valuable lesson in finance, but it led Nash to be increasingly cautious and “he found it difficult to trust the people he worked with”.¹⁴⁵ Nash also became greatly invested in the plight of his constituents during the Great Depression. A close friend of Walter Nash’s recalls;

“On Sunday mornings, from across the road, Mary and I would sometimes watch the grim pilgrimage converging on Walter Nash’s home. Unemployed victims of the Depression, discarded by the people

¹⁴⁴ Sinclair, K. (1976). *Walter Nash*. (Auckland University Press; Auckland). p79.

¹⁴⁵ Grant, *Public Lives*, p131.

they could not longer make a profit for – lending their efforts towards what they hoped would be help and relief from their seemingly endless struggle to make both ends meet... All, in despair at finding no solutions to their problems, had come to see if Walter Nash could do anything for them. Urgent cases, and there were many, meant digging into his own pocket. Indeed, Mrs Nash confided to Mary on more than one occasion that they were extremely worried as 'Wal' was handing over more money than their limited means could stretch to."¹⁴⁶

The election of the First Labour Government in 1935 saw Nash propelled into the role of Minister of Finance. It was a post where Nash flourished, and he worked hard to drive the economy away from the depths of the Depression they had just painfully lived through. As Finance Minister, Nash's work ethic rivalled even that of Savage's and Fraser's;

"No Minister in New Zealand history could compete with Nash in the number of hours he spent working. First to arrive at Parliament Buildings in the morning, he was invariably the last away. Night after night, year after year, the light in his big room could be seen burning hours after most Wellingtonians had gone to bed – and when he left he still had to go to his home in Lower Hutt."¹⁴⁷

The leadership succession from Savage to Fraser in 1940 marked little change in the activities of Nash, who continued on in his role in Finance, albeit now with occasional stints as acting Prime Minister. Indeed it seems Nash was content to remain in the niche he had developed for himself within the Government, and had no serious desires to challenge for the leadership following Savage's death. Although a highly respected member of Cabinet, Nash was supportive of Fraser as the natural successor to the role of Prime Minister.

As second-in-command to Fraser, Nash found himself increasingly pushed onto the international diplomatic stage, serving on the Pacific War Council and in the deliberations on GATT. Nash's own professional political development was at odds with his party's, which ambled towards election defeat in 1949. The defeat of the First Labour Government, and the death of Peter Fraser shortly after, suddenly thrust Nash into the role as head of the party in 1950. Nash did not get off to a good start, infamously bungling the handling of the 1951 Waterfront Strike and alienating both sides of the

¹⁴⁶ Mackenzie, C. (1975). *Walter Nash; Pioneer and Prophet*, (Dunmore Press; Palmerston North). pp51-54.

¹⁴⁷ Hobbs, L, quoted in Grant, *Public Lives*, p131.

debate. Though Nash's political recovery was lengthy, his early reputation gained as Finance Minister proved to be the deciding element in the 1957 election, and at the age of 75, Walter Nash became Prime Minister of New Zealand.¹⁴⁸

Nash's time as Prime Minister was short lived, serving just one term from 1957-1960. It is somewhat ironic that the downfall of the Government was driven largely by then Finance Minister Alfred Nordemeyer, and Nash's handling of the 1958 'Black Budget'. Responding to concerns that both Ministers had about the state of the country's finances, the 'Black Budget' included significant tax increases, including on alcohol, cigarettes and petrol. Nash was never able to politically recover from the public fallout from the Budget, and Labour was defeated heavily at the 1960 election.

Nash eventually stepped down as leader of the Labour Party in early 1963, though he remained in Parliament as the MP for Hutt until his death in 1968, aged 86. Whilst enjoying the occasional flourish back on the international stage, through participating with Prime Minister Holyoake in discussion on Britain joining the EEC and in public debate on the Vietnam War, Nash largely enjoyed a quiet political life in his last few years. What makes Nash unique in his post-leadership activities was not how he filled his twilight years, but the fact that he seemed to have largely escaped the burdens of political life that afflicted so many other leaders. Mackenzie notes that "aged 79 and showing no signs of wilting under his self-imposed sixteen-hour day, he covered New Zealand campaigning with a zest and vigour equalled by few of the world's dynamic super-charged figures even in their prime of life".¹⁴⁹ Nash was a late-bloomer in his political career, and was the oldest of our leaders to take office. He was fortunate also in that he enjoyed financial security and domestic harmony since entering politics. Nash's ability to

¹⁴⁸ Nash's experience as Finance Minister was especially critical in an election that centred around the introduction of the PAYE system, though Nash's promise of a \$100 income tax rebate the following year was widely derided as an election bribe.

¹⁴⁹ Mackenzie, *Walter Nash*, p139.

endure the burdens of office were perhaps what allowed him to outlast his peers and lead him to the role of Prime Minister.

Chapter Six – The Modern New Zealand Prime Ministers: 1960 - 2008

This section looks at the Modern New Zealand Prime Ministers. The leaders within this cohort take on the term of 'modern' in reflection of the significant social and technological changes that occurred during this period. The most important change comes through the advent of television as the new medium in New Zealand. Many of the earlier leaders in this section, such as Holyoake and Kirk, struggled to adapt their style to the demands of television. But as our political leaders grasped the importance of this new medium, the nature of political leadership in New Zealand was transformed, with a significant push towards the 'presidentialisation' of the Prime Minister.¹⁵⁰ The availability of international air travel and the growth of international institutions also had a fundamental impact on the situational context in which these leaders operated. Here these Modern New Zealand Prime Ministers had a greater opportunity to explore the international political stage, both during and after their time in office. Significantly, the latter portion of this cohort also largely escaped the impacts of major events in early 20th century New Zealand history, such as World War One and Two and the Great Depression.

Adding to these situational changes were also significant differences in the individual characteristics of these leaders. Compared to their Kiwi Prime Minister counterparts, they were younger, better educated and had a greater range of employment pursuits before entering office. The overwhelming consequence of this has been the likelihood of these leaders leaving office healthier, wealthier and well before an expected age of retirement.

Once again, the choice of leaders analysed is based on:

- The numbers of years lived after leaving office
- The nature of their contribution to leadership in New Zealand

¹⁵⁰ For further discussion see Bolland, K. (2004). 'Among Tall Poppies: Some Notes on Cultural Leadership in New Zealand' in *Political Science*, 56(2). pp91-98.

- The available information on their post-leadership activities and the available primary material
- The uniqueness of the activities they pursued post-leadership

Leaders at a glance:

The Modern New Zealand Prime Ministers have 11 within their sample: Holyoake, Marshall, Kirk, Rowling, Muldoon, Lange, Palmer, Moore, Bolger, Shipley and Clark. This section will look at nine of those leaders in depth, with Marshall and Rowling the exclusions.¹⁵¹

Out of the 11 reviewed:

- **All** leaders were born in New Zealand
- **Five** of those leaders remain alive in 2013
- Those who have died lived to an average age of **68 years** of age
- The mean age at becoming leader was **49 years of age**
- **Seven** leaders had a university education

Sir Keith Holyoake (September 1957 – December 1957 and December 1960 – February 1972)

Keith Holyoake was the first of the Modern New Zealand Prime Ministers. It is a title befitting of the third longest serving Prime Minister, who led through an age that was characterised by the transformational introduction of television in New Zealand. This medium was to have a profound impact on the design of New Zealand politics and, in particular, on the role of Prime Minister.

¹⁵¹ Marshall and Rowling were excluded owing both to their brevity of time in office. Though Moore and Palmer have been included, their post-leadership activities are of enough significance to warrant further analysis.

Coming from a humble, working-class background, Holyoake left school at age 12 to help with running the family farm after his father's health declined. Holyoake settled in to the farming and sporting community, becoming a respected member of each. By the age of 28, he had secured the Reform Party's nomination for the seat of Motueka, going on to become the youngest Member of Parliament following the by-election of 1932. Despite his youth, Holyoake quickly earned the respect of his older peers, with former Prime Minister Gordon Coates telling him: "One day my mantle will fall on your shoulders."¹⁵² A change to electorate boundaries, combined with a wave of popularity for the First Labour Government, however, saw Holyoake lose the seat in 1938.

A move to the safe National seat of Pahiatua saw Holyoake return to Parliament in 1943, in the midst of the Second World War.¹⁵³ By 1949 Holyoake was Minister of Agriculture in the new Holland-led National Government. It was a natural progression for the gifted farmer-cum-politician.

As Brooking notes:

"Once National was back in power, Holyoake was the logical choice for the portfolio of Agriculture which had proven the undoing of many political careers during the inter-war years. Holyoake flourished in the role, however, knowing that his senior position in the party made him relatively safe. He delighted in the job because, as he enthused, 'my roots are very deep in the soil of New Zealand'. He also believed New Zealand farmers to be the 'hardest working in the world' who had learned to apply science and machinery more effectively than farmers elsewhere. Such stroking helped make Holyoake into a popular Minister of Agriculture, especially as farmers realised that he sincerely believed that farmers were, as he put it, 'the source of our stability as a nation'."¹⁵⁴

With Holland's health markedly declining in 1956, attention turned to the next leader of the National Party. It wasn't until 1957 that Holland stepped down,

¹⁵² Coates, G. Quoted in Gustafson, B. (2007). *Kiwi Keith; A Biography of Keith Holyoake*. (Auckland University Press, Auckland). p28.

¹⁵³ Holyoake was desperate to serve his country, and wrote to the army several times to try and encourage a successful application. However, on the discovery of an 'apparent heart abnormality', and given Holyoake's age (39) and four children, the Army declined his services. See Ibid, pp45-46. Gustafson attributes his failure to serve in WWII as one of the reasons for Holyoake's reluctance to enter the Vietnam War.

¹⁵⁴ Brooking, T. (1997). 'Tobacco Road to Pipitea Street: Holyoake and the Farmer Politician Tradition in New Zealand' in Clark, M. (1997) *Sir Keith Holyoake; Towards a Political Biography*. (Dunmore Press, Palmerston North). p120.

primarily out of concern over Holyoake's ability to mobilise the party in the 1957 election. Holyoake enjoyed a two-month stint as Prime Minister before losing to Walter Nash in December 1957. Holyoake's time as Leader of the Opposition was short-lived, however, with the Labour Government's disastrous Black Budget of 1958 sealing their fate long before the 1960 election.

Holyoake enjoyed two strong terms in Government, dominating Parliament from 1960-1966. The third term of his Government was to mark a rapid change in the fortunes of the Prime Minister, who had to deal both with the growth of the new medium of television and the Vietnam War. The latter proved to be painfully divisive for New Zealand, and became the key subject of the 1969 election;

"The Vietnam War was the first occasion in the twentieth century when dissent over a specific diplomatic decision gave rise to a large-scale, institutionalised protest movement. As well as criticising the decision itself, this movement questioned the assumption that foreign and security policies were strictly the province of 'experts' such as politicians, diplomats and generals. As a result, the management of New Zealand diplomacy was permanently transformed."¹⁵⁵

The election campaign was bitter and fraught with protest over the Vietnam War. As the organisation of the movement spread nationally, Holyoake became a specific target of the protests during the 1969 election campaign, with disruptions at several public meetings. Holyoake, in targeting those still undecided about Vietnam, employed damning rhetoric in dismissing the protesters, labelling them "Labour Party supporters, trade union peoples, members of the Communist Party, drug addicts and some well-known criminals".¹⁵⁶ For a politician whose political *modus operandi* was through consensus, the experience was particularly painful for Holyoake.

The issue of who should lead the National Party into the 1972 election became an immediate issue as the party embarked on its fourth-term in Government, with growing agitation for Holyoake to resign. It was widely believed that Holyoake would be unable to win the 1972 election, and that he

¹⁵⁵ Rabel, R. (2005). *New Zealand and the Vietnam War; Politics and Diplomacy*. (Auckland University Press, Auckland). p115.

¹⁵⁶ Gustafson, *Kiwi Keith*, p296.

should step aside for his long-serving deputy, Jack Marshall. At the age of 68, Holyoake finally vacated the role, though remaining a prominent member of the National Party. His retirement was motivated not by health, financial or familial concerns, but rather by the need to rejuvenate the party. Indeed, there is no evidence that, in spite of a near-12 year reign as Prime Minister, Holyoake suffered any long-term physical, emotional or financial impacts from remaining in office for as long as he did.

It was widely anticipated that Holyoake would live out his remaining time in Parliament as the elder statesman of the debating chamber. It came as a shock to the public therefore when newly elected Prime Minister Robert Muldoon announced that Holyoake would become New Zealand's Governor General in 1977. For Holyoake, the appointment was 'the cream on the cake of his career', and Gustafson recalls how "he was delighted, nevertheless, with the appointment and indeed was so emotional that he burst into tears when the Queen signed the warrant in the Executive Council".¹⁵⁷ Holyoake's appointment to the post was limited to three years, both on account of his age and given that he had recently suffered a mild stroke. The role proved extremely demanding on Holyoake, who continued to suffer from mild strokes and a mild heart attack during his tenure as Governor General. Gustafson notes:

"At least one of Holyoake's staff thought that trying to do the job of Governor-General when he was ageing and not well 'killed Sir Keith'. At the end of the day he would be so tired that he 'would almost stagger upstairs' and it was clear that he had 'nothing more to give'. His eldest daughter recalled that the strokes 'did affect his personality and temperament... and really he didn't enjoy the last year or so at all. He was glad to see it come to an end.'"¹⁵⁸

Holyoake's health continued to decline after stepping down from being Governor-General in 1980. After a major stroke in mid-1983 Holyoake was largely incapacitated, and died a few months later in December 1983.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, p368. Holyoake's appointment caused widespread consternation with the Labour Party and some sections of the public, who argued that National had made a political appointment to the role.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p378.

Norman Kirk (December 1972 – August 1974)

In some respects, Norman Kirk still fits the mould of the 'Kiwi Prime Minister': born in Waimate to a working-class family, and having lived through the Great Depression and World War II. Kirk's background is therefore not too dissimilar to that of Fraser or Nash. What distinguishes Kirk was that he was perhaps the first to master the relatively new medium of television in the late 1960s, and quickly understood how mastering this medium could transform his personal standing with voters.

Like many of his predecessors, Kirk left school at a young age. His time working on the railways led to an interest in the New Zealand Labour Party, an organisation that he joined in 1943. Kirk's political interest was not just limited to central government, and in 1953 Kirk stood for the Kaiapoi mayoralty, leading to a surprising victory for the 30-year old candidate. He was not to stay in the role long, with Kirk winning the electorate seat of Lyttleton in 1957. Kirk proved to be a big force in Parliament, helped in part by his 6 ft, 21 stone frame. As Wolfe notes:

"His abilities in the debating chamber marked him as a future Prime Minister, and he rises up through the ranks of the Labour Party, being elected Vice President in 1963 and assuming the presidency a year later. In December 1965, at the age of 42, he beat Arnold Nordemeyer and became both party leader and Leader of the Opposition."¹⁵⁹

Kirk struggled in his first general elections; unfamiliar to the New Zealand public, it was difficult to compete against the well-established Holyoake. Yet with the Vietnam War becoming increasingly unpopular, Kirk had a real opportunity to seize the leadership. But though Kirk excelled in the foreign policy debate, the party was plagued by its approach to major domestic issues, particularly the 1969 seamen's strike. Knowing that Vietnam would only harm the National vote, Holyoake played on the major domestic issues, successfully drawing attention away from Vietnam and on to the strike. Holyoake narrowly took election victory, and Kirk later pinpoints the strike as the main reason for the loss.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Wolfe, *Battlers, Bluffers and Bully-Boys*, p196.

¹⁶⁰ Hayward, M. (1981). *Diary of the Kirk Years*. (Cape Catel/Reed; Wellington). p29

Whilst Kirk was unable secure a victory in 1969, it did fundamentally mark a change in Labour's fortunes after nine years in power by Holyoake. This was particularly due to a re-casting of Kirk's image, and the 'presidentialisation' of their party leader. As Levine and Roberts note:

"Labour's advertising focused on Kirk. He was presented as dynamic, energetic, fit and ready for government- an image engraved on voters' minds by a Labour Party television advertisement showing Kirk striding briskly up the steps of the House of Representatives... This picture of a confident Kirk carried on through the 1970-72 Parliament, leaving Labour in some respected poised to take power at the next election."¹⁶¹

The image was a perfect contrast against an ageing Holyoake, now in his eleventh year in office as 1972 began. When Holyoake finally resigned in February, his replacement Jack Marshall had little time to halt the momentum that Kirk had built up. In the event, Kirk wins the 1972 election convincingly, becoming Prime Minister at the age of 49 years of age.

Kirk was now the youngest Prime Minister for nearly 50 years, and an image of the young, vibrant leader clearly played in Kirk's favour. But belying this image were serious health concerns. These are closely documented in Margaret Hayward's *Diary of the Kirk Years*. During the 1972 election campaign, for example, Hayward (who worked as a personal assistant to Kirk) noted:

"Later Mr K told me it isn't the university engagement that is really concerning him. It's his health. Since returning from the United Kingdom he's been taking pills to stop fluid retention and has had attacks of cramp as a side effect. At the weekend he saw his family GP, Dr David McIlroy, who told him that the fluid was still forming, and that he must lose weight... I've never met anyone who worries so much about his health as Mr K does, or talks about it so confidentially to so many people. Considering his weight problem, though, I suppose it's understandable."¹⁶²

Despite the underlying health concerns, Kirk plunged full force into the Prime Ministership, making international headlines for refusing to grant visas to the 'whites-only' South African rugby team, and after sending out a Navy frigate

¹⁶¹ Levine, S. and Roberts, N. 'Unwanted Heroes? Three Labour Leaders and Seven Campaigns' in Clark, M. (2001) (Ed.). *Three Labour Leaders; Nordemeyer, Kirk and Rowling*. (Dunmore Press, Palmerston North). pp218-219.

¹⁶² Hayward, *Diary of the Kirk Years*, p17.

to Mururoa to protest French nuclear testing. In doing so, Kirk carved out a foreign policy legacy that still ruminates in New Zealand today. Yet as Kirk's leadership progressed, his health continued to deteriorate. In December 1973, whilst on tour in India, Kirk appeared to have a mild stroke. Hayward details:

"I call on the boss to check that it's in order. He is in his sitting room and looks terrible. He is pale and shaking. I want to tell Matron Tamaki who is staying with the Hercules crew at a nearby hotel, but I am not to tell a soul... when I go back to check I find he has struggled all the way through to the bedroom and up on to the bed. The effort has proved too much. Suddenly he goes rigid, opens his mouth to speak to me, but can't make a sound. He seems to be paralysed down one side yet can't stop shaking. I go towards the phone to get help but he sees me and becomes very agitated."¹⁶³

Only a few months later Kirk enters hospital for an operation on his varicose veins, but develops significant blood clots following complications from the surgery. The blood clots descend into pleurisy and pneumonia, and Kirk is unable to recover. On August 31 1974, Norman Kirk died, aged 51.

Kirk's time in office is marked by a clear decline in his health, though it is unfair to attribute his early death to the pressures of office. Regardless, the demands of office and Kirk's extensive travel are likely to have had some causal effect. The death of Kirk was a shocking moment in New Zealand history, and caused an outpouring of grief not seen in New Zealand since the death of Michael Joseph Savage. Kirk's popularity has been enduring, and he continues to rate as one of our best Prime Ministers in rankings of his peers.¹⁶⁴ It's difficult to imagine the trajectory of Kirk's political life were it not for his early death; though he was a skilled debater in the House, it is hard to imagine him being able to withstand consistent attacks from Muldoon for a long-period of time. If we assume therefore that Kirk's government was to only have lasted 2-3 terms, Kirk's would have likely left office before he turned 60. My prediction for Kirk is that he would have remained in the House until the election of the Fourth Labour Government, retiring when he saw the fundamental ideological change that had taken over his Party. Kirk's

¹⁶³ Ibid, p199. Hayward also notes on Kirk's return to New Zealand he is diagnosed with diabetes, and once again encouraged to lose weight.

¹⁶⁴ See Sheppard, 'Ranking New Zealand Prime Ministers', pp72-89 or Johansson and Levine, 'Evaluating Prime Ministerial Performance', pp 291-307.

lack of a formal education, significant other employment history and pragmatic character would have likely limited him from doing anything else.¹⁶⁵

Sir Robert Muldoon (December 1975 - July 1984)

Sir Robert Muldoon precipitated what was probably the most spectacular political downfall in New Zealand political history. Given his remarkable rise to power and his fascinating time in office, Muldoon has become one of the most debated and analysed leaders in New Zealand. He found himself placed in a critical juncture in New Zealand history, and his political record during his time in office continues to divide, even amongst his old party.

Muldoon built his political career off the back of an image cultivated around being a self-made man. He suffered greatly the distress of his father's physical and mental illness, which left his mother a single parent from the time Muldoon was eight. Many academics have drawn off the impact of his father's absence, and the influence of his devoted mother and grandmother as a driver behind his desire to succeed. As former Muldoon Cabinet colleague Hugh Templeton recalls;

"The Muldoon we knew as Prime Minister was a product of many factors. I thought of him as the only son of a widowed mother and felt this shaped his extraordinary drive and ambition. Proud and demanding mothers can have a massive influence on their sons. I wondered to what extent his difficult childhood shaped his attitudes; and whether he may have wanted to deal some of its abrasions back to others or in his belligerence camouflage his unresolved insecurities... Muldoon may have in fact been driven by a deeper need to succeed where his father had failed."¹⁶⁶

After returning from the war Muldoon embarked on a career as a cost accountant, having completed the necessary examinations whilst serving in

¹⁶⁵ I would note here that, whilst Kirk's enduring legacy was his foreign policy achievements, they were celebrated because he went against the international grain. Kirk did not make close connections with international political institutions whilst pursuing these policies, and indeed his noted shyness will likely have limited his ability to form relationships in the international environment that he could turn to at the end of his time in office.

¹⁶⁶ Templeton, *All Honourable Men*, p226.

Italy. However, his growing association, with the Junior Nationals, and the Auckland National Party organisation eventually became an all-consuming obsession. After two unsuccessful attempts in the 1954 and 1957 elections, Muldoon won the seat of Tamaki in 1960, and would remain there until his retirement in 1991.

Muldoon quickly asserted a strong reputation, even as a backbench member of Holyoake's National Government. Labelled as a 'Young Turk' by parliamentary journalists, Muldoon became a firebrand MP within the caucus. Though this at times alienated many of his senior colleagues, it enabled Muldoon to create a public image for himself. By the time Finance Minister Harry Lake died in 1967, Muldoon had successfully positioned himself as his successor. This pushed Muldoon into a pivotal role in the final years of the Holyoake Government, and by the 1969 election, it was clear that Muldoon would eventually take over the National Party leadership.

The retirement of Holyoake, and the death of Kirk, and Muldoon's ease at unseating Holyoake's replacement Jack Marshall, meant an easy election victory in 1975. Muldoon set about trying to create a Government based on his well-formed view of New Zealand. But a series of international economic shocks (such as Britain joining the EEC, and the oil shocks), as well as Muldoon's resistance to change, contributed towards the economy being pushed to breaking point. By the early 1980s, Muldoon was also clearly feeling the effects of the demands of office - strain that was compounded by Muldoon's insistence that he retain the Finance portfolio even as Prime Minister.

"By 1984 Muldoon was clearly a man alone and his isolation was largely of his own making. He had few close friends either inside or outside Parliament. The world around Muldoon, politically and economically, was changing but he did not... Muldoon had always exhibited extraordinary vitality but during late 1983 and 1984 he became physically and mentally deeply tired and that undoubtedly affected his judgement and his temper. Chronic fatigue was worsened by his neither walking nor exercising, by an awful diet, by the onset of diabetes, and by heavy drinking, especially in the evening. A visit to Professor John Scott in Auckland on 10 February 1984 confirmed the

diabetes, raised questions about his heart, and led to a serious warning to lose weight and cut down on alcohol."¹⁶⁷

In 1984 Muldoon found himself governing with just a slim majority, and a run in with maverick MP Marilyn Waring became the catalyst for Muldoon calling a snap election in June 1984. Templeton attributes Muldoon's poor judgement on calling the snap election to the effects of alcohol and his medical condition:

"My own view is he had no intention of calling a snap election. He told the [National] Party that just beforehand and I think it was the argument with Marilyn Waring over the nuclear issue; his diabetes had caught up with him when he was arguing with her and he lost his temper... The best informed comment I can get is that he was a heedless or careless diabetic and to some extent an alcoholic and the two are deadly dangerous."¹⁶⁸

Following National's virtually inevitable loss at the polls a month later, Muldoon found it difficult to accept the loss of office. The day after the election Muldoon met with Party president Sue Wood; "I don't think he'd come to grips with it at all; he was very sad. It was the very gentle Muldoon... He certainly didn't want to hear any reality".¹⁶⁹ Over the course of the next six months, Muldoon was recalcitrant to repeated calls for him to stand down. Muldoon initially assured caucus that he would not stand for the leadership when it was next discussed, scheduled for 1985. However, when the Party eventually debated who would lead the party toward the next election, Muldoon could not resist the temptation to throw his hat in the ring. He advised *The Dominion* that he believed "not one of the candidates is as capable of turning out this Government as I am".¹⁷⁰ This is consistent with Johansson's assessment that Muldoon's primary motivation was not "the pursuit of his own psychological need for power" but instead "the conviction

¹⁶⁷ Gustafson, B. (2000). *His Way: A Biography of Robert Muldoon*. (Auckland University Press, Auckland). p362.

¹⁶⁸ Templeton, H. quoted in Russell, M. (1996) *Revolution*. (Produced by Images Ink). Last accessed 23/06/2013 at <http://www.nzonscreen.com/title/revolution-1-fortress-new-zealand-2009> There are varying accounts of to what extent alcohol played a factor in Muldoon's decision to call the election. Former National Party Secretary General Barrie Leay recalls that Muldoon was 'in very bad shape by 8pm' the evening the election was called. Others, such as Don McKinnon, suggest that 'when he decided to call the snap election he was, despite having had a number of drinks, still quite sober and rational'. Gustafson concludes that 'While the amount Muldoon drank earlier in the evening may have distorted his judgement and made his personality more belligerent, it is more likely that his abnormal behaviour on the night of 14 June was a combination of tiredness, frustrations, alcohol and, not least, diabetes'. See Gustafson, *His Way*, p375.

¹⁶⁹ Wood, S. quoted in Russell, *Revolution*.

¹⁷⁰ Muldoon, R. (18 November 1984), quoted in Gustafson, B. *His Way*. p403.

of the infallibility of his own judgement".¹⁷¹ Muldoon was unable to believe that there was anyone better placed to run either the National Party or the country than himself.

By the time the leadership vote was taken in November 1984, it was clear to the National caucus that change was necessary. Muldoon overwhelmingly lost the leadership vote, polling a distant third to the two main challengers, Jim Bolger and Jim McLay, the latter winning the vote. Muldoon remained eager to remain part of the National front bench and had several discussions with McLay in 1985 in the hope of gaining a key opposition portfolio. However, when Muldoon pre-emptively announced his likely return to the National front bench, McLay publicly declared that he would not be offering a spokesperson role to Muldoon at all. For the first time in his life, Muldoon found himself in the opposition backbenches. Throughout the rest of McLay's short time at the head of the National Party, Muldoon continually undermined his leadership, throwing his weight behind McLay's main challenger, Jim Bolger.

Following the deposal of Jim McLay by Jim Bolger in March 1986, Muldoon was rewarded with the Foreign Affairs opposition portfolio. Though Muldoon enjoyed the opportunity to spar with David Lange, Muldoon had by this stage become a shadow of his former self in the House. Disillusioned by his experiences, he turned his attention to activities outside of Parliament, including appearances in the *Rocky Horror Show* and in his weekly talkback session on Radio Pacific. Muldoon's disillusionment was only further exacerbated with the onset of 'Ruthenasia' as the continuation of the New Right policies by Ruth Richardson after the Bolger-led National Party was elected to office in 1990. Muldoon watched in despair as his own political party continued to dismantle the legacy he'd fought so hard to protect. At odds with the majority of his own party, Muldoon isolated himself in Parliament, and became increasingly absent from the House in 1991.

¹⁷¹ Johansson, J. 'Muldoon and Character' in Clark, M. (2004) (Ed). *Muldoon Revisited*. (Dunmore Press; Palmerston North). pp 291-317.

Muldoon's political decline was mirrored by a decline in his health; in late 1986 Muldoon was diagnosed with bowel cancer. Though an operation was largely successful at removing the cancer, Muldoon continued to be plagued by a raft of medical issues, requiring numerous medications. Though Muldoon managed to battle on for a number of months, the reappearance of cancer spelt the end for him. He died in August 1992, at the age of 70.

David Lange (July 1984 – August 1989)

David Lange was a gifted parliamentarian whose presence in the House was largely unrivalled for the majority of his time there. The leading member of a new generation of politicians who challenged the Muldoon way of government, the promise of Lange collapsed in 1989, along with his Government, when he dramatically resigned as Prime Minister. It was a spectacular downfall for a man who had risen to the top of New Zealand politics in such a remarkable and rapid fashion.

Lange's formative years were to have a distinct impact on his political orientation. Growing up in South Auckland, Lange came face to face with the poor and vulnerable, first through his father's medical practice, and later, after gaining his Masters of Laws, through his legal practice that often saw him take on cases that no one else in the legal fraternity would touch.¹⁷²

Wright notes:

"Although legal aid had been available since 1954, the rate of remuneration was much lower than a lawyer could expect from similar cases in private work. Few lawyers were therefore prepared to take on legal aid work, and those that did were usually very young and inexperienced...Jeffreys always found David Lange the strongest possible support in dealing with these kids. He had an empathy with them that was often lacking in other professions."¹⁷³

¹⁷² Lange was in fact the first Prime Minister to obtain a post-graduate qualification, with Geoffrey Palmer (PhD in Law) and Helen Clark (MA in Politics) the only other two to achieve this feat (excluding of course honorary awards).

¹⁷³ Wright, V. (1984). *David Lange; Prime Minister*. (Unwin, Wellington). p81.

After joining the Labour Party in 1963, Lange grew increasingly interested in politics, with cousin Michael Bassett and friends Roger Douglas and Richard Prebble actively encouraging Lange's involvement. By 1977 Lange is elected to parliament following a by-election in his hometown electorate of Mangere. Lange enjoyed an astounding ride up the Labour Party ranks, assisted by MPs Douglas, Prebble and Bassett, becoming Leader of the Opposition in 1983. Lange believed that he was part of a long-term strategy fostered by this group to take control of the Party;

"I would say from 1979, when I was elected Deputy Leader. I was their hostage in that sense, right from way back. I was their boy. I was their man. I was their candidate. I worked very hard not to be pushed. When you look back now, it's quite obvious that I was calculated to be the flag-carrier for this particularly homicidal attack, but I didn't actually fit there."¹⁷⁴

Lange's rise to the Leader of the Opposition coincides with Muldoon's downfall; when Muldoon called a snap election in June 1984 the election was a foregone conclusion for Lange. At age 43 Lange became the youngest Prime Minister in nearly 100 years.¹⁷⁵

The Fourth Labour Government quickly embarked on an agenda of radical economic reform, though the full plan never sat comfortably with Lange. As Douglas pushed ahead with his reforms, an increasingly powerless Lange began to become an outsider in his own Cabinet. The reforms led to widespread upheaval across the country, with many of Labour's traditional voters feeling the brunt of the changes. Lange recalls;

"We put the knife into a great part of our support base. If you examine what we did we caused a lot of them to be out of a job, to hate us, and the older ones we caused them to hate us. So we actually systematically worked on eliminating our core support."¹⁷⁶

For Lange, the strain took its toll both emotionally and physically, with Lange spending ten days in hospital in 1988 due to heart problems. The collapse of the relationship with Douglas effectively marked the end of the Fourth Labour

¹⁷⁴ Lange, D. quoted in Edwards, B. (2001). *Helen; Portrait of a Prime Minister*. (Exisle Publishing, Auckland). p170

¹⁷⁵ The youngest prior to that was Robert Stout, at 38 years of age. The youngest ever was Stafford, at 37 years of age. Mike Moore broke Lange's record a few months later, beating Lange's record by four months.

¹⁷⁶ Lange, D. quoted in Scott, T. (2004). *Reluctant Revolutionary*. (Documentary). Last accessed 15/06/2013 at <http://www.nzonscreen.com/title/reluctant-revolutionary-2004>

Government, with Caucus voting to return Douglas to Cabinet after he'd been earlier sacked by the Prime Minister. Lange felt he had no other option but to resign, and on 8 August 1989 stepped down as Prime Minister at the age of 47.

Though Lange was clearly disillusioned with Parliament, his options for moving away from it were limited. As wife Margaret Pope details;

"I think he was genuinely uncertain as to how he was going to make a living. He didn't want to go back to the law, he just wasn't sure he could get an income anywhere else. Eventually he realised that he could quite easily but in 1990 he really didn't know what else to do."¹⁷⁷

It was a poor combination for Lange: desperate to be away from politics yet forced by his financial circumstance to remain to watch the collapse of the Fourth Labour Government and the election of Jim Bolger's National Government.

"There was little to like in the politics of the day. Labour eroded public confidence in institutions of government and National came close to destroying it... From 1991 onwards I wrote a few hundred words every fortnight for the *Dominion* and some other papers in the same ownership. I did so at the invitation of the editor, whose interest was engaged by letters I wrote to him pointing out the inaccuracy of his paper's reporting. I enjoyed the writing... By then I liked writing about politics far more than taking part in it, and when I left Parliament in 1996 I felt no sense of loss."¹⁷⁸

Lange eventually retired from Parliament in 1996 and toured as a public speaker. Though Lange openly discussed his time as Prime Minister and also wrote an autobiography during this period, he rarely ventured into discussing current events, thus shying away from taking on an 'elder statesman' role. Lange had clearly been burnt during his time as Prime Minister, and left the role emotionally and physically exhausted. Lange's health continued to decline during his post-leadership years, and he died on 13 August 2005.

¹⁷⁷ Pope, M. (2011). *At The Turning Point; My Political Life with David Lange*. (AM Publishing; Auckland). p293.

¹⁷⁸ Lange, D. (2005). *My Life*. (Penguin; New Zealand). pp 281-283,

Sir Geoffrey Palmer (August 1989 – September 1990)

Born in Nelson in 1942, Geoffrey Palmer grew up in a 'working'-class household, performing well academically throughout his schooling. In 1961 Palmer embarked on a conjoint Law and Political Science degree at Victoria University. Palmer's choice to continue post-graduate studies in law and leave behind political science was one that he would continue to make throughout his career. After completing his doctorate in the United States, Palmer remained within the university environment, continuing on as a law professor, initially in American universities, before returning to his *alma mater* Victoria University in 1974.

Upon his return to New Zealand, Palmer aligned himself to the *Citizens for Rowling* campaign, in doing so, formed a close bond with then Prime Minister Bill Rowling. Though Labour lost the election, Palmer decided to try his hand at politics, eventually winning the Christchurch Central seat in 1979. Palmer's young age and academic background led him to naturally form close associations with other similar MPs, like Lange, Bassett, Douglas and Moore. When Labour is elected in 1984, Palmer finds himself in good company, and is selected as Deputy Prime Minister, Attorney-General and Minister of Justice.

Geoffrey Palmer served as Prime Minister for just one year. It was amidst the cataclysmic destruction of the Fourth Labour Government, and following the resignation of David Lange, that Palmer took on the role of Prime Minister.

"Great job, eh? [*Laughs*]. I thought that what you had to do was try and keep the ship afloat for as long as you could, really. I thought the Government was doomed, actually, and my wife was absolutely of that opinion. I thought I had a duty to do it, to try and get as many of the reforms completed... I was pleased to get out at the end of 1990, but I was [also] quite happy to run through as Prime Minister and take the defeat. But if other people wanted to do it, [then] be my guest."¹⁷⁹

The position as Prime Minister was one that he did not entirely want or actively seek out. In spite of this, Palmer still found himself at the centre of

¹⁷⁹ Russell, *Revolution*.

one of the most dramatic periods of New Zealand's political history. Palmer's resignation was not just from that of Prime Minister, but also from his electorate seat. At just 48 years of age, Palmer left New Zealand politics.

Upon leaving office, Palmer returned to the law, first as Professor at Victoria University, before setting up his own firm, Chen Palmer, in 1994. Palmer has, on occasion, made forays onto the international diplomatic stage, first as New Zealand Commissioner on the International Whaling Commission, and then on a 2010 UN Inquiry Panel. Where Palmer's most important contribution has been, however, is in his ability to serve as a respected voice on domestic issues. For example, Palmer has been an outspoken critic of 2012 reforms to the Resource Management Act, critiquing the Government on relaxing environment protection provisions.¹⁸⁰ Though Palmer was able to draw upon his own political experience, his opinions on issues like reforms to the Resource Management Act were also deeply assisted by his legal knowledge. Therefore, Palmer has not yet taken on the role of elder statesman, at age 71, and with no known health concerns, such a role remains possible.

Mike Moore (September 1990 – November 1990)

Mike Moore has left a legacy as "one of New Zealand's most colourful politicians and one of the few to have ever had more than a brief, walk-on part on the world stage".¹⁸¹ Mike Moore's humble working-class background, including having left school at the age of fifteen, only made his political and diplomatic achievements more remarkable.

Mike Moore entered Parliament in the 1972 election, in an unlikely win in the Auckland seat of Eden. Having not long since moved to Auckland, Moore's victory reflected not a strong relationship with the local electorate, but rather a political nous and work ethic that characterised the rest of his career;

¹⁸⁰ See Rutherford, H. (2013, May 27). 'RMA change naysayers 'scaremongering' in *The Dominion Post*. Last accessed 29/06/2013 at <http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/politics/8720928/RMA-change-naysayers-scaremongering>

¹⁸¹ Grant, *Public Lives*, p171.

“He took a year off work, conducted some of the country’s first political polls, devoured every book he could find on campaigning, and devised a canvassing system that identified critical swinging voters. In the event, the 23 year old Moore astonished friends and opponents by winning the seat.”¹⁸²

Labour’s 1975 election defeat was also to spell the defeat of Moore in the Eden electorate. Moore was not to stay away from Parliament for long, and in 1978 successfully won the Christchurch electorate of Papanui, in another brilliant campaign and unexpected victory. Incredibly, throughout the 1978 election campaign Moore battled cancer, undergoing several rounds of chemotherapy in an attempt to overcome the illness. The cancer proved to be near fatal, and Moore was unable to return to Parliament until September 1979. This was to prove the only major health scare Moore was to face during his time in Parliament.

During his first few years in Parliament, Moore assiduously marked out his political territory within Labour, becoming the Party spokesperson on international trade and tourism. It quickly became Moore’s niche, and following the election of the Fourth Labour Government, Moore found himself with a number of Ministerial portfolios, including Overseas Trade. The election of the Fourth Labour Government also marked both the Labour Party and Moore’s own ideological rebirth; gone was Moore’s unionised, socialist background and in its place was a zealous commitment to laissez-faire economics. It was an irony not lost on Moore, who quipped that if it wasn’t for the welfare state built by the First Labour Government, he would have “been another overweight, unemployed, white-trash freezing worker in the far North”.¹⁸³ Moore’s interest in overseas trade fit naturally into a Government focussed on deregulating and opening up the New Zealand economy to the world. The role saw Moore spending significant portions of the year overseas advancing New Zealand’s trade interests.

¹⁸² Ibid, p172.

¹⁸³ Moore, M. Quoted in Wolfe, *Battlers, Bluffers and Bully-Boys*, p226.

The collapse of the Fourth Labour Government, including the falling out between Prime Minister David Lange and Finance Minister Roger Douglas, saw Mike Moore propelled into a leadership contest with Geoffrey Palmer. Though he initially lost the contest, Moore soon found himself taking over when Geoffrey Palmer resigned just two months before the election when it became clear he could not lead the Labour Party to victory. At the age of 41, Mike Moore became the Prime Minister of New Zealand, a post he was to hold for just 59 days.

In opposition, Moore struggled to get traction against a National Party that was largely continuing the policy momentum created by the Fourth Labour Government. Though Moore did respectably at the 1993 election it was not enough to secure a Labour victory and thus spelt the end of Moore's time as leader of the Party. For Moore, at the age of 44, he had already enjoyed a stellar career. It was a unique position for a former New Zealand Prime Minister; he had scaled the domestic political heights already and was unlikely to further them within the New Zealand Parliament. Moore was still relatively young and had escaped the burdens usually associated with office, plus his service in the international trade portfolio had given him a wealth of international connections. Moore was to become part of an increasingly growing set of former New Zealand Prime Ministers who found themselves in such a position.

Following his removal as Labour Party leader in 1993, Moore spent two years in Parliament without a portfolio, using the opportunity to reflect and plan the next steps in his political career. Moore once again took over the foreign affairs and trade opposition spokesperson role in 1996, this time in order for it to become the launching platform for his bid for the post of Director-General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Backed by a supportive National Government and Labour caucus, and assisted by his international trade connections, Moore was elected to the post in 1999. During his time at the

WTO Moore was credited with reversing the reputation of the organisation and organising the successful Doha trade round in 2001.

Moore's time at the WTO concluded in 2002, at which time he officially went into retirement. Moore has an unusual interpretation on 'retirement'; after leaving the WTO he has taken on a large array of commercial, academic and humanitarian work. The latter included serving as Commissioner for the Global Commission on International Migration and the UN Commission of Legal Empowerment for the Poor. In 2010 Moore was appointed as New Zealand's Ambassador to the United States. At the age of 64 and seemingly unburdened by the demands of New Zealand's political stage, Moore has continued to excel in life after leadership. And in doing so, he has helped to pave the way for those who have followed him.

Jim Bolger (November 1990 – December 1997)

In Johansson and Levine's 2013 ranking of former New Zealand Prime Ministers, Jim Bolger ranks fifth in a sample of 32.¹⁸⁴ Bolger's entry is significant, in that he climbs ten places on his initial position of 15 in Sheppard's 1998 survey of former New Zealand Prime Ministers.¹⁸⁵ Bolger's image has undoubtedly improved over the last decade; Johansson and Levine note Bolger's initial ranking in the survey "arguably suffered from its closeness to events, none of which were favourable to either Bolger or his image. Thirteen years on, a major revision has taken place – the largest shift in judgment from one survey to the next".¹⁸⁶ But also possibly contributing to this rehabilitation may have been Bolger's business and diplomatic post-prime ministerial activities.

Bolger comes from a farming background, growing up in provincial Taranaki and leaving school at the age of 15 to help out on the family farm. In a path similar to that of Massey, Holland and Holyoake, Bolger established himself amongst the farming community, eventually building on that support to launch himself in to Parliament at the age of 37 in 1972. Indeed, Bolger's first

¹⁸⁴ See Johansson and Levine, 'Understanding Prime Ministerial Performance'.

¹⁸⁵ See Sheppard, 'Ranking New Zealand Prime Ministers', pp72-89.

¹⁸⁶ Johansson and Levine, 'Understanding Prime Ministerial Performance', pp291-317.

major association with the party came after Rob Muldoon toured the drought-affected King-Country region. Bolger's relationship with Muldoon was not always an easy one;

"[The first meeting with Muldoon] was to serve me well in the future. I got a feel for a man and learned to respect his many talents, but could never be bluffed by his adversarial style. He'd bully you if he could... Rob Muldoon and I disagreed on many issues; I was always willing to question his ideas and proposals... I wasn't part of Rob's inner circle, but I know he respected my contribution and he certainly gave me some big ministerial jobs to do."¹⁸⁷

With the defeat of Muldoon in 1984, a power vacuum opened up within the National caucus. By this stage Bolger had worked his way up in the party, aligning himself with the younger wing of the caucus. Though Bolger was initially defeated at the first leadership vote, McLay's inability to deal with a recalcitrant Muldoon generated a second challenge, in which Bolger finally proved successful.

The resignation of Prime Minister David Lange in 1989, and the collapse of the Fourth Labour Government shortly after, meant election victory in 1990 was all but guaranteed. At the age of 55 Bolger became Prime Minister of New Zealand, a post which he was to hold for seven years. Levine and Roberts reflect on Bolger's ability to adapt to the role;

"Bolger grew into the role of a Member of Parliament and, when it became time for his colleagues to consider what was to be done about the irksome challenges from its former leader, Muldoon, there was something in Bolger, some qualities, that they discerned (and that the public did not) and that gave them confidence. It was many years, and several elections, before much of the electorate began to glimpse some of those qualities as well. It is high praise of Bolger to say that he confounded expectations by growing into the positions that he held – Member of Parliament; National Party leader; and Prime Minister – no doubt discovering qualities in himself that he perhaps never realised he had."¹⁸⁸

Bolger's time in office, though eventful, arguably paled in comparison to the political drama that had unfolded in the fifteen years prior. Regardless, Bolger's immediate post-leadership image was poor. One possible

¹⁸⁷ Bolger, J. (1998). *A View From The Top; My Seven Years as Prime Minister*. (Viking, Auckland). p79.

¹⁸⁸ Levine, S. and Roberts, N. 'The Bolger years; troubles and transformations' in Clark, M. (2008) (Ed). *The Bolger Years: 1990-1997*. (Dunmore Press, Palmerston North). p215.

explanation of his initial mediocre ranking in Sheppard's 1998 survey was the public's lingering memory of National's failed promise to cut the surcharge on superannuation, and in the continuation, through Finance Minister Ruth Richardson, of the neo-liberal economic reforms first started under the Fourth Labour Government.

Following a leadership coup led by Jenny Shipley, Bolger was deposed as leader in December 1997, and subsequently resigned his seat in Parliament a few months later. Few were surprised when in 1998 Bolger was named as the Ambassador to the United States. It was a post he would serve in for four years, before various stints leading NZ Post, Kiwibank and KiwiRail over the last decade. The post-leadership years of Jim Bolger have been lively, and full of unintended ironies; Bolger's time as the chair of KiwiRail came 15 years after his Government sold New Zealand Rail. In the last few years Bolger also embarked on work as a Crown negotiator for the Waitangi Tribunal, and as Chancellor of Waikato University. Bolger noted the irony in his appointment as Chancellor, declaring he was the "epitome of the Kiwi dream, who left school at 15 and became Prime Minister at 55".¹⁸⁹ Despite Bolger's active post-leadership career, he has steered clear of politics and largely resisted taking on an elder statesman role; "I wasn't going to be one of those former leaders constantly nitpicking on various issues".¹⁹⁰ Bolger, from time to time, has however made valuable contributions to the national debate on issues such as defence, Treaty issues and our constitutional arrangements. In doing so he's highlighted the possibilities of roles our former leaders can play in public life, but yet remains reluctant to take on this mantle in any serious and ongoing manner.

Jenny Shipley (December 1997 – December 1999)

¹⁸⁹ Bolger, J. quoted in Trevett, C. (2007, April 21). 'Jim Bolger: Regrets and Legacies' in *The New Zealand Herald*, accessed last 15/06/2013 at http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10435251

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

Jenny Shipley grew up in rural Southland, initially training to become a school teacher, and going on to work in a number of primary and secondary schools. In her mid-twenties, a number of key events occur in Shipley's life that lead her down the road of a career in politics: Shipley marries local Canterbury farmer Burdon Shipley, who persuades her to join the local National Party; there Shipley befriends the up-and-coming Ruth Richardson, who actively encourages her to stand in an election; and Shipley also participates in the Kellogg's Rural Leadership Programme, giving her the confidence to pursue a new career. By the 1980s, Shipley had firmly turned her attention to politics, initially assisting Richardson's 1981 election campaign for the seat of Selwyn before competing herself for a seat on the local council.

Though Shipley was unsuccessful in her local body elections, just four years later she was selected as the National Party's candidate for the seat of Ashburton in the 1987 election. Though National were unsuccessful in securing victory, she not only retained the safe National seat, but significantly increased the majority of votes. In entering Parliament, Bolger identifies that Shipley has filled a niche that National long struggled to fill: a woman and a mother, but also holding strong rural credentials and an ability to be noticed in the debating chamber. Shipley recalls:

"I was grateful to Jim for being given those chances as a relatively young woman and new to politics. Our working relationship while I was a minister during the 1990s was actually extremely affable. I viewed it as a relationship that was built on respect and trust. He gave me an enormous amount of leeway to be able to handle my portfolio responsibilities in the way that I felt necessary and to some extent I think he felt we both had ethics and values in common in terms of what we were trying to achieve."¹⁹¹

The niche was to prove lucrative, and within just seventeen months Shipley had secured a shadow-cabinet role.

The election of the Jim Bolger-led National Government in 1990 served as yet another catalyst in advancing Shipley's career, with Bolger appointing her

¹⁹¹ Shipley, quoted in Bolger, *A View From the Top*, p160.

as Minister of Social Welfare. The appointment was particularly pivotal, with National advancing significant welfare reforms through Richardson's 'Black Budget' in 1991. Shipley then stepped into another significant Ministerial role in 1993, seeking (somewhat unsuccessful) reforms through the Health portfolio. Yet growing amidst the first two terms of the National Government are underlying factions, with Prime Minister Jim Bolger leading one and Ruth Richardson leading the other. After a narrow election victory in 1993 Bolger moves against Richardson, ousting her as Minister of Finance, leading to her resignation from the party months later. Though Richardson is removed as a point of contention, the faction, now led by Shipley, remains within the party. By 1997 dissent comes to a head, with Shipley successfully ousting Bolger as Prime Minister. In doing so, Shipley becomes the first female Prime Minister of New Zealand. Shipley's time as leader, however, was short. With the collapse of the coalition agreement with Winston Peters, the National Party stumbled to a significant defeat at the 1999 election. Shipley was not to remain in office long afterwards, and resigned from Parliament at the 2002 election, at the age of 50.

Shipley's post-political career has seen her make a foray into the business environment – a particularly unusual direction for Shipley given her lack of a background in this area. It is possible to argue, therefore, that Shipley may have enjoyed success in the business world on the back of the 'former New Zealand Prime Minister' moniker. Over the last decade Shipley has sat on the board (or chaired) of a number of large national and international companies. This will inevitably have proved to be very lucrative. At the age of 61, Shipley has not signalled any forthcoming retirement. Though Shipley suffered a mild heart attack in 2000, she has remained largely without health issues. Shipley therefore still has significant opportunity available to continue her post-political career.

Helen Clark (December 1999 – November 2008)

As our most recent former New Zealand Prime Minister, the leadership of Helen Clark is still fresh in the public's minds. Typically, when looking back on a leader's political record, this 'freshness' limits the ability to understand the true value of their legacy. Yet in the 2013 ranking of New Zealand Prime Ministers Clark comes out fourth.¹⁹² Clark clearly is held in high esteem by many, esteem which is only likely to grow in time – particularly owing to her post-leadership pursuits.

Helen Clark's childhood, to a degree, was a stereotypical National one. Growing up on a farm in rural Waikato, Clark's parents were staunch National Party voters. Upon leaving Epsom Girls Grammar, an academically gifted Clark pursues a political science degree at Auckland University. These years at university were to become her political awakening; coached amongst world events like the Vietnam War and Kirk's dispatch of a Navy frigate to Mururoa, Clark increasingly disassociates herself from her parents' politically conservative background, drifting towards the political left. She recalls the influence of the university environment:

"The overwhelming mood in that department at the time – and it was such a left-wing department – was the horror of Muldoon. He was the focal point for the hatred and distrust of virtually everyone there on a variety of levels. I was very interested in French nuclear testing and his attitude towards that I found despicable. Other people found his attitude to the South African tour despicable, or the Vietnam War, or the trade union movement at the time which was under heavy attack. It went on and on and on."¹⁹³

Clark finds a home within the university environment, completing a Masters degree before staying on to teach first year politics. And though Clark felt content within the environment, the theoretical eventually gave way to the practical; in 1975 Clark stands for the Piako seat in Waikato, though is not successful in reaching Parliament until 1981, in the seat of Mt Albert. Her rise amongst party ranks was swift, finding herself with Cabinet portfolios following the 1987 election. Clark was perhaps one of the few members to do well out of the collapse of the Fourth Labour Government, finding herself promoted to Deputy Prime Minister when Geoffrey Palmer took over from David Lange in 1989. Though there was a disjuncture with the next step of

¹⁹² Johansson and Levine, 'Understanding Prime Ministerial Performance', pp291-317.

¹⁹³ Clark, quoted in Edwards, *Helen*, p92.

becoming Leader of the Opposition, with Mike Moore becoming Labour Party leader in 1990, Clark eventually claims Moore's scalp when the Labour Party fails to win the 1993 election.

After narrowly losing the 1996 election, Clark becomes New Zealand Prime Minister in 1999. The three-term stint of Clark's political leadership is marked by her dominance as leader of her party, and the historic three-term reign of her Government – a feat not achieved by the Labour Party since Savage's 1st Labour Government. Though the Fifth Labour Government passed a number of notable domestic policies (such as Working for Families, Foreshore and Seabed legislation and the 'Cullen Fund'), Clark's legacy is likely to be measured by her foreign policy record:

"She demonstrated her multilateralism most clearly in her differentiation between the United-Nations mandated Afghanistan intervention, to which she contributed troops, and the United States-led 'coalition of the willing' adventure in Iraq, to which she did not even though she knew it would cost her, and New Zealand, in Canberra and in Washington. Her record in foreign policy will rank at least alongside Peter Fraser's and arguably superior to it."¹⁹⁴

After three terms in government, a restless electorate votes the Clark government out of office. Recognising this was the conclusion of her time in New Zealand politics she resigned as leader of the party on election night 2008.

Despite only being out of office for five years, Clark's post-leadership activities have already become some of the most impressive of her former peers. In 2009 Clark became Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, one of the highest ranking jobs in the UN. The role was a major coup for Clark, who undoubtedly built her foreign policy record and international relationships made whilst leader in order to secure the role. *New Zealand Herald* journalist Michelle Hewitson described the natural inclination for Clark to live overseas in an interview with the former Prime Minister in 2012;

¹⁹⁴ James, C. (2008) 'Norman Kirk, Robert Muldoon, David Lange, and Helen Clark – and John Key', in *Political Science*, 60(2). p100.

"It is a Big Job, the sort that is described in Capital Letters, and she says there was no job in NZ she could have done after being PM for so long. I wondered if she thought that was a shame, in any way, and she said: "I think that's reality. I mean, what else could Tony Blair do in Great Britain?" The country, she says, is too small for ex-PMs. "Too small to create a space." She needs a bigger space than most ex-PMs. She is a big character and remains an intriguing one."¹⁹⁵

Clark's international focus has seen her remain out of any domestic policy debate in New Zealand.. At age 63, and without any known health concerns, Clark may possibly have some years to come before retirement. How she chooses to fill those years and does not to appear to be constrained by lack of opportunity.

¹⁹⁵ Hewiston, M. (2012, Nov 17). 'Michelle Hewitson Interview: Helen Clark' in *The New Zealand Herald*. Last accessed 22/06/2013 at: http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10847978

Chapter Seven – Analysis

The former New Zealand Premiers and Prime Ministers have engaged in a range of activities upon leaving office. In the twenty-seven leaders reviewed in this thesis (out of a possible thirty-seven), post-leadership activities have spanned from poetry, mountain-climbing and talkback radio to Director-General of the World Trade Organisation. Six of the New Zealand leaders did not get the opportunity to explore life after leadership, having died in office – at times a telling indictment on the pressures that they faced. The range of post-leadership activities pursued by the Premiers and Prime Ministers has highlighted not just the range of characters, skill-sets and ambition amongst these leaders, but also the opportunities at their disposal and how they have changed over the last 150 years.

This chapter will look to collectively analyse the post-prime ministerial activities of the former leaders to determine collective patterns in the choices made, and how trends have changed as New Zealand has developed as a nation. Building off the post-leadership modelling from Belenky and Theakston, I will attempt to separate the former leaders into distinct categories of post-leadership activities. These categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive as some leaders will naturally fit into more than one category. I have attempted to identify where this is likely the case, but note that the categorisation of former leaders is an arbitrary judgement on the part of the author.

The ability to build these categories was based on the analytical framework identified in chapter three:

Figure 7.1: A post-leadership framework:

A post-leadership framework	
Individual variables	Situational Variables
<p>Psychological factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character, specifically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambition (their post-leadership desires) • Character integrity (how a leader's ideals influence post-leadership activity) • Relatedness (the leader's relations with their peers and connections made during their time in office) • Conditions under which that leader left office, and their reaction to it • The psychological impact of office <p>Socio-demographic and physical factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health (including any impact on health due to leadership) • Age • Wealth • Education • Previous employment history • Familial considerations 	<p>Generally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities available to that individual (owing to the era in which they lived) • Their place in history, particularly if in office during a crisis <p>Specific to New Zealand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of expectations on the New Zealand leader • 'Negalitarianism' • Ability of political leaders to either remain in (or try to) or be recycled in their political system.

My assessment is that New Zealand's former Premiers and Prime Ministers fit into the following five categorisations of post-leadership activity in New Zealand:

1. *Money Matters*
2. *Burned or Buried*
3. *Seekers of Vindication*
4. *The Retired Leader*
5. *Onwards and Upwards*

The three groups of leaders can be conceptualised into the following matrix:

Figure 7.2: Five categories of post-leadership in New Zealand

	The Colonial Premiers	The Kiwi Prime Ministers	The Modern New Zealand Prime Minister
Money matters: Leaders whose post-leadership activities were largely determined by financial considerations	Stafford, Whitaker & Vogel	Coates	Lange & Shipley
Burned or buried: The physical and emotional toll of being in office limited the post-leadership activities of that leader	Hall & Balance	Seddon, Massey, Savage, Fraser & Holland	Kirk, Muldoon & Lange
Seekers of vindication: The post-leadership activities of leaders were influenced by a genuine or perceived need to rectify their political past	Grey	Ward	Muldoon & Lange
Retired leaders: Leaders who, after leaving office, lived a relatively quiet retired life away from the political scene.	Fox & Dommett	Nash	
Onwards and upwards: Leaders who, having built on the political momentum of being in office, continued on successfully in other careers	Weld & Stout		Holyoake, Palmer, Moore, Bolger, Shipley & Clark

The five categories of post-leadership activities are derived from two existing categories identified in chapter two: Belenky's 'Seekers of Vindication' and Theakston's 'Money Matters'.¹⁹⁶ A further three categories were added to account for the unique activities found within New Zealand leaders and the post-leadership milieu. These categories are: 'Burned and Buried', 'Onwards and Upwards', and 'Retired Leaders'. Detailed descriptions of these categories are defined below.

Money matters

In his 2008 article, Theakston used 'Money Matters' as one of the five categories to classify former British Prime Ministers post-leadership activities.¹⁹⁷ Theakston described these former leaders as those who used their position as ex-leader to benefit financially. He notes that "many of today's former leaders... seem only too willing to 'cash in' on their status as an ex-prime minister or ex-president, in addition to enjoying substantial official support and retirement 'perks'".¹⁹⁸ Jenny Shipley in this instance is a natural fit in this category, having built on the moniker of 'former New Zealand Prime Minister' to embark on a lucrative business career. It is arguable as to whether Shipley would have been able to have achieved such success had she not held office as New Zealand Prime Minister.¹⁹⁹ Shipley largely concedes this point herself, as noted by *New Zealand Herald* journalist Karen Scherer:

"Interestingly, it is Shipley herself who points out that her career so far - as a primary school teacher, farmer's wife, Cabinet Minister and Prime Minister - has not been sufficient to meet the membership criteria for the New Zealand Institute of Directors. Yet there are not too many primary school teachers who have been asked to join the board of one of the world's biggest banks. You can't blame her for being just a tiny bit chuffed - and annoyed at how little regard the establishment has for the traditional skills of women."²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ See Belenky, *The Ex-Presidents*, pp150-165 and Theakston, *What Role for Former Leaders?*, pp1-15.

¹⁹⁷ Theakston, *What Role for Former Leaders?*, p7.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, p7.

¹⁹⁹ The assessment is made based on Shipley's career trajectory prior to becoming Prime Minister; Shipley was a primary school teacher who was elected to the Ashburton seat at the age of 35. Through-out Shipley's rise up the national party, she held predominantly social policy portfolios, such as Social Welfare, Health and Woman's Affairs and did not have a strong business background.

²⁰⁰ See interview with Scherer, K, (04 February 2008). 'The Prime of Mrs Jenny Shipley' in *The New Zealand Herald*. Accessed last 07/60/2013 at http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=10489952

Theakston's concept of the 'Money Matters' category, however, focuses only on those leaders who actively choose to attempt to financially benefit from their time in office. Given the particularities of the New Zealand environment, I argue that Theakston's category of 'Money Matters' should be widened to include those leaders who were financially crippled by becoming leader. This was especially true for the earlier leaders, with the Premier or Prime Minister paid only a very moderate salary. Many of these former leaders were limited by their financial position as a result of serving in office, and Vogel, Whitaker and Stafford in particular were forced to dedicate many of their post-leadership years to various means of trying to rebuild their finances. In some instances this also meant that former leaders were required to remain in Parliament, in order to guarantee an income. Both Coates and Lange have detailed that this was a significant factor in their decision to remain in parliament as back-benchers.

Burned or Buried

The 'Burned or Buried' category seeks to account for the leaders whose post-leadership activity (or lack thereof) was severely limited by the physical and psychological strain from their time in office. Though this in effect becomes the default category for those six leaders who have died in office, it is important to note that each one individually showed a causal link between their decline in health and their commitment to remaining as leader. This is shown explicitly with leaders like Savage, who delayed a potentially life-saving operation until after the 1938 election. Seddon, Massey and Holland all ignored doctors' advice to wind back their workloads. Further, both Hall and Fraser felt the need to increase their workload and public visibility in order to quell rumours of their fragility:

"Ballance tried to keep the seriousness of his ailment a secret. He wanted to hold on to the leadership for as long as possible, with the appearance of firmness and confidence... Ballance resolutely struggled to stay out of bed and at work. In part this effort reflected his enormous commitment to his job, his drive and his self-motivation. In part it was an attempt to squash rumours about his uncertain future."²⁰¹

²⁰¹ McIvor, *The Rainmaker*, p232.

For other leaders, such as Muldoon and Lange, it is clear that the exhaustion and frustration of their leadership in New Zealand destroyed any strong desire to move on to new pursuits. Lange's valedictory speech in 1996 illuminated Lange's disillusionment with his time as leader, and the years following his departure from office;

"I want to thank those people whose lives were wrecked by us... And we did them. And people over 60 hate me. And they hate me because I was the symbol of that which caused that assurance of support and growing security to be shattered. And that is something which is always going to be part of my burden; that this was a Government that became over-rational, over-analytical, did not make the human responses and I want to leave as my challenge to those who are here now and those who come to it that you do – you do bring it back into equilibrium. That you do do justice to those people who can't foot it. And then I want to say to Margaret what a wonderful few years it has been. She's the person who has been able to keep me stable and keep [me] in touch with my mates. And when I am depressed, and I've got to tell you I frequently am, because the lights seemed to go out of here a long time ago..."²⁰²

It is difficult to make an explicit link between the strains of office and the deaths or subsequent declines in health of our former leaders. Yet the sheer workload, stress, amount of travel and typical diet and fitness regime necessitated by office is likely to have at least been a significant contributory factor in these leaders emotional and physical decline.

Seekers of Vindication

The 'Seekers of Vindication' category draws upon Belenky's study of former U.S. Presidents. Belenky detailed those Presidents who fell into this category have "suffered shattering setbacks while president. All of them, in different ways and with varying degrees of success, sought to reverse the historical verdicts against them though post-presidential endeavours".²⁰³ Belenky identified a number of former US presidents that fell within this category: Buchanan, Andrew Johnson, Wilson, Bush Snr and Nixon. The latter provides perhaps the most atypical example, with the Watergate scandal and Nixon's subsequent resignation from the U.S. Presidency leading to years of work by Nixon in order to try and salvage

²⁰² Lange, D. (1996). Valedictory Speech. Last accessed 07/06/2013 at <http://www.nzonscreen.com/title/reluctant-revolutionary-2004>

²⁰³ Belenky, *The Ex-Presidents*, p161.

his political legacy. Belenky highlighted the transformational impacts of Nixon's post-leadership activities, in that his pursuit to become elder statesman (particularly in reference to his relations with China) paved the way for many who followed to take on diplomatic roles similar to his, leading to a partial vindication of his legacy.

One leader from each group of former New Zealand Premiers and Prime Ministers reviewed in this thesis fell within this category: Grey, Ward and Muldoon.²⁰⁴ In Grey's case he sought redemption for the perceived failure of his time as Premier; with an illustrious colonial career behind him, Grey surprisingly struggled as Premier, leaving a permanent blight on his political record. Grey, however, remained in the New Zealand Parliament and continued to pursue several political issues in the hope of rebuilding his reputation. Sinclair detailed that Grey "often made extremely emotional speeches, and raising several hobby-horses, such as his demand for elected governors".²⁰⁵

Muldoon's need for vindication also came after a political downfall. However, Muldoon was never able to rehabilitate his legacy, and successive National governments have distanced themselves from his time in office.²⁰⁶ Muldoon's need for vindication lay in his inability to accept that his approach to leadership contributed to economic decline. As Johansson notes, "ultimately Muldoon became a prisoner to his own world view, tapped inside a nostalgic view of New Zealand that was no more".²⁰⁷ Muldoon's unwillingness to move from such a view, combined with the fact he was both Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, placed him in a distinct position. As the economy started to crumble, Muldoon

²⁰⁴ It is possible to argue, according to Belenky's strict categorisation, that Lange would also have fallen into this category, having suffered a major setback during his leadership (the revolt by his Cabinet colleagues) and his penning of his autobiography (as a possible means of airing his side of the story). I judge that whilst Lange technically fulfils these two requirements, he was never ultimately seeking redemption for his time as leader and accepted the role he played in the Rogernomics reforms of the 1980s.

²⁰⁵ Sinclair, 'Sir George Grey'.

²⁰⁶ The recent attack by Green Party co-leader Russel Norman on John Key, where Norman said of the Prime Minister "Mr. Key may not look like Muldoon but he is sure as hell is acting like it" shows just how little Muldoon's reputation has improved over the past few decades. See Davison, I (01 June 2013) 'Norman: Key acting like Muldoon' in *The New Zealand Herald*. Last accessed 08/06/2013 at http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10887813

²⁰⁷ Johansson, 'Muldoon and Character', p296.

could not accept he was wrong. This was best highlighted in the constitutional crisis in 1984 over the devaluation of the New Zealand dollar. David Lange publicly stated at the time:

“This Prime Minister outgoing, beaten, has, in the course of one television interview tried to do more damage to the New Zealand economy than any statement ever made. He has actually alerted the world to a crisis. And like King Canute he stands there and says everyone is wrong but me”.²⁰⁸

Muldoon spent most of his post-leadership years seeking vindication of his world, firstly through the publication of a number of books continuing to espouse his economic theories.²⁰⁹ Secondly, after remaining in Parliament, Muldoon looked to continually undermine the Government (and occasionally his own colleagues) and their economic policies. But in also becoming a ‘Burned or Buried’ leader, Muldoon was no longer the force he had once been, and was never able to gain the vindication he so desperately sought.

Retired leaders

This category captures those leaders who enjoyed a full but relatively quiet life at the conclusion of their time in office. Belenky described this type of activity through her categorisation of some ex-Presidents as ‘Exhausted Volcanoes’. She used this metaphor to capture leaders “who did little or nothing of consequence in their retirement years”.²¹⁰ I have moved away from the ‘Exhausted Volcanoes’ categorisation on the basis that Belenky states that the reason for this inactivity was a result usually of “ill health, personal temperament or individual circumstances”.²¹¹ In New Zealand, the leaders who have limited post-leadership activities as a result of ill health or personal circumstances fall into their own separate categories (‘Money Matters’ and ‘Burned or Buried’). This distinction is necessary because of the different environment that exists between the situational contexts looked at; the United States and New Zealand. The expectation on former U.S. Presidents, particularly in the last century, has meant that few have

²⁰⁸ Lange, D (1984) Russell, *Revolution*.

²⁰⁹ See Muldoon, R (1985). *The New Zealand Economy; A Personal View*, (Endeavour Press, Auckland) and Muldoon, R. (1986). *Number 38*, (Reed Methuen, Auckland).

²¹⁰ Belenky, *The Ex-Presidents*, p158.

²¹¹ Ibid.

had the option of moving quietly into retirement. In contrast, the fact that very little attention is paid to former leaders in New Zealand enables the possibility of a quiet retirement. Interestingly, however, few former New Zealand leaders have fallen into this category. William Fox, following his final stint as Premier, did continue on in minor political activity through the prohibition movement, but mainly focused his attention on retirement. Dommett, briefly became Registrar-General of Lands, though eventually returned to England and turned his attention to writing. Finally Nash, after stepping down as Leader of Opposition, stayed in a quiet back-bencher role until his death in 1968.

Onwards and Upwards

Belenky, Just and Theakston all noted that some leaders would look to use their time as leader as a springboard on to further endeavours.. I have used the categorisation 'Onwards and Upwards' here because it reflects the number of former New Zealand leaders who have moved on to greater roles after their time as Premier or Prime Minister. It is important to note, however, that the skills and good health of the leader are not always a guarantee of this occurring and the ability to move 'Onwards and Upwards' will also be determined by the situational context in which leaders find themselves.

The 'Onwards and Upwards' category is especially unique in that it allows leaders to build upon the skills and connections gained whilst in office. For some, this was never the anticipated outcome; Keith Holyoake for instance, never intended or sought out the role of Governor-General, and the pressure of this role seemingly contributed to a decline in his health. Yet Holyoake regarded the role as the "the cream on the cake of his career" and clearly would not have been able to move into the position had he not have been Prime Minister.²¹² For others, like Weld, Stout and Palmer, this entailed a natural progression back to areas of speciality where they flourished. For some, like Bolger and Shipley, this led to ventures into the business world. Finally, leaders such as Helen Clark and Mike Moore moved

²¹² Gustafson, *Kiwi Keith*, p265.

from the office of Prime Minister into internationally distinguished roles, in this instance as Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme or the head of the World Trade Organisation. The 'Onwards and Upwards' category is particularly interesting in that it allows former leaders to remain politically active if they choose to do so. It is notable that those within this category have, however, chosen to stay out of the domestic political scene, or have pursued this avenue only in an international or diplomatic setting.

What do the categorisations tell us about the three groups of former New Zealand leaders?

Figure 7.3: The Colonial Premiers

Money matters	Burned or Buried	Seekers of vindication	Retired leaders	Onwards and Upwards
Stafford, Whitaker & Vogel	Hall & Ballance	Grey	Fox & Dommett	Weld & Stout

Compared to the two other groupings of former New Zealand leaders, there is a relatively even split across the categorisations of the Colonial Premiers. Of note are the few who fall into the 'Onwards and Upwards' category; Stout managed to do this because of his legal background, and Weld continued serving a number of roles in the British colonies. This largely reflects the limited ability to continue on in careers of significance given the isolation of New Zealand and its relatively primitive political system. Though half of the leaders in this sample died back on English shores, most returned only at the very end of their lives when they were ready to retire.

The presence of three leaders within the 'Money Matters' category is of note also. The limited financial assistance available to parliamentarians in New Zealand during this period almost certainly impacted on the type of men who entered parliament and went on to become Premier. Both Stafford and Whitaker had backgrounds that could have assisted them with pursuing successful legal or

political careers in London. Though Stafford did initially attempt this, he was prevented from making continued efforts to be elected into the British House of Commons because of the need for him to consolidate his family's financial security.

The political turmoil in the absence of a recognisable party system, along with the relatively short tenure of most of the leaders' time in office, has also seemingly spared many from the burdens of office, with only two leaders falling into the 'Burned or Buried' category. Though conditions in the colony were likely to have been difficult, especially for those leaders required to travel significant distances to reach Parliament in Wellington, few seemed to have been overly crippled (either physically or psychologically) by becoming Premier.

Figure 7.4: The Kiwi Prime Ministers

Money matters	Burned or Buried	Seekers of vindication	Retired leaders	Onwards and Upwards
Coates	Seddon, Massey, Savage, Fraser and Holland	Ward	Nash	

There are two distinct features of the categorisations of 'The Kiwi Prime Ministers'. Firstly, five of the eight leaders reviewed during this period fall into the 'Burned or Buried' category, a strong centralisation and a significant trend for this period. All of these leaders died either in, or shortly after, office. But that alone doesn't necessitate the 'Burned or Buried' categorisation. All have significant evidence showing that the stresses of office took significant tolls on each leader, and it is not entirely unfair to suggest that some literally worked themselves to death. There are a number of reasons for this centralisation of 'Burned or Buried' leaders with the 'Kiwi Prime Ministers' group, which spans the period 1893-1960. Firstly, all served during a tumultuous time both domestically and globally. This period captured two World Wars, a Great Depression, and a number of painful industrial disputes within New Zealand. Some of these leaders had strong personal

experiences through these events; Savage, Fraser and Nash all came from working-class backgrounds and had at times lived through periods of tremendous poverty. Of note also is the comparative older age of these leaders when they entered office; the average age of the Kiwi Prime Minister when entering office was 58, compared to an average of 48 for the Colonial Premier and 49 for the Modern New Zealand Prime Minister. This likely meant that they had less physical ability to withstand the demands of office.²¹³

The second issue of note is the lack of any who fall into the ‘Onwards and Upwards’ category. Whilst clearly this is a result of so many dying either in office or shortly afterwards, it may also be a reflection on the relatively low levels of education of this group. Only one completed secondary school, and five of these leaders had just a primary school education. Furthermore, the lack of ‘Onwards and Upwards’ leaders suggests also that the situational context was not favourable in providing the opportunity to move into significant post-leadership roles. My assessment is that the only leader who had both the personal skills and the opportunity to move into a notable post-leadership career was Peter Fraser, given his work in the development of the United Nations. For Fraser, however, who entered office at a relatively late stage in his life, his socio-demographic characteristics (namely his age and health) prevented him from ever exploring this opportunity.

Figure 7.5: The Modern New Zealand Prime Minister

Money matters	Burned or Buried	Seekers of vindication	Retired leaders	Onwards and Upwards
Lange & Shipley	Kirk, Muldoon Lange	Muldoon		Holyoake, Palmer, Moore, Bolger, Shipley & Clark

Of the nine leaders reviewed in the ‘Modern New Zealand Prime Ministers’ grouping, six of them fall within the ‘Onwards and Upwards’ category. These

²¹³ This is somewhat backed up by the fact that the Kiwi Prime Ministers lived on average three years less than their Colonial Premier counterparts (73 years vs. 76 years). I have avoided making such comparison with the Modern New Zealand Prime Ministers given the large portion that remain alive.

leaders have made a clear transition out of office and into significant post-leadership careers. There are a number of contributing factors for this; firstly, the relatively young age of these leaders and the rapid improvements in life expectancy over the last fifty years have given these leaders a greater window of opportunity to explore such activities. Secondly, this group is comparatively better educated than their 'Kiwi Prime Minister' counterparts.²¹⁴ Finally, the situational context has changed markedly over the last fifty years, with the rise of globalisation and the development of strong international institutions broadening the range of available opportunities. Miller, for example, points out that the 21st century political environment in New Zealand has seen:

"the gradual emergence of a more business-orientated political elite. Globalisation, access to higher education, and the information revolution have contributed to an increase in the number of politicians with a background in the professions or in business. In New Zealand, most Members of Parliament now possess a range of management and technical skills barely conceived of a generation ago."²¹⁵

The global interconnectedness and the participation by New Zealand in such institutions has pushed New Zealand leaders onto the world stage and has provided them with strong connections that can be drawn upon post-leadership.

What do the categorisations tell us about the analytical framework?

There are important lessons to be drawn between the architecture of the analytical framework and the final categorisations of post-leadership activities. One lesson has been in the fluidity of the situational context, and how the changing historical and political environment has grossly impacted on the choice of post-leadership activities. Globalisation and the independence of New Zealand (particularly from 1947 onwards) has drastically altered the distribution of post-leadership activities. This has been especially prominent in the rise of 'Onwards and Upwards' leaders over the last few decades, owing to better institutional infrastructure internationally, and our ability to access it.

²¹⁴ Though it is worth noting that Holyoake, Bolger and Moore all left school at a relatively young age.

²¹⁵ Miller, *Political Leadership in New Zealand*, p4.

New Zealand's unique political culture, particularly its 'negalitarianism', has also played a fundamental role in post-leadership activities. Many of the former Premiers and Prime Ministers still had strong ambitions and the physical and psychological health to continue on in their careers. However, absent from these categorisations has been what Belenky categorised as 'First Citizens'.²¹⁶ There have been some minor instances of former leaders taking on elements of an elder statesman role, such as Palmer's contribution to some domestic debates, and Bolger's work on Treaty settlements, but neither of these leaders has been able to step above the parapet to fully embrace this. The main reason for this to date has been our cultural inability, in our negalitarianism, to accommodate this. Therefore, leaders by default have become ostracised and turned to the international stage to advance their ambitions. This also explains the distinct lack of what Theakston referred to as 'political retreads', and the recycling of some leaders within our domestic political setting.²¹⁷

This negalitarianism is also one explanation for the lack of what Owen described as 'Hubris Syndrome'. In some instances in our political history leaders have remained in office when the political and personal reality clearly identified a need for them to leave. Yet these leaders have not remained in office because of hubris. Indeed, the political culture of not elevating leadership has meant that particular elements of Owen's 'Hubris Syndrome' (such as the narcissistic propensity to see leadership as a forum in which they can exercise power and seek gratification, or the belief that they are accountable to god or history, instead of public opinion) cannot exist in New Zealand. In instances where leaders have clung to office (such as Ward, Massey or Holland) it has been due mainly to personality factors or the belief that a successor was not available.

There has been also been a recurring link between the physical and the psychological. This is particularly so in looking at our 'Burned and Buried' leaders, where their decline in health is often matched by a decline in how they view their

²¹⁶ Belenky, *The Ex-Presidents*, p156.

²¹⁷ I would make a small exception here for our Colonial Premiers, many of whom did stay in domestic roles such as Registrar of Lands or Attorney-General. However, our nation, and therefore our political culture, was in its infancy and these leaders were not limited by negalitarianism'.

leadership (such as with Massey, Kirk and Lange). It is not necessarily a causal relationship, where one inevitably results in the other. Instead it is possible here that these leaders begin to realise the ultimate sacrifice that they have made by becoming Prime Minister.

Chapter Eight – Conclusion

This thesis has looked to garner a greater understanding of post-leadership activities in New Zealand. It has traversed the early Colonial Premiers through to the Modern New Zealand Prime Ministers to enable the identification of significant trends, both in the development of political leadership in New Zealand, but also in the changing skills and backgrounds that leaders have both before, and gain whilst in office. These skills are fundamentally unique to Premiers and Prime Ministers, who leave office with a distinct set of skills, namely the ability to manage domestic challenges (particularly crises), the ability to lead in a national context and the understanding of what it is that unifies New Zealand as a nation. New Zealand's most recent leaders have built off these particular skills in a way that their predecessors have been unable to. They have enjoyed the ability to use the office of the Prime Minister as a springboard towards activities more grandiose and illustrious (and, often more lucrative) than political leadership in New Zealand has provided them. This trend begs the questions of what will become of incumbent Prime Minister John Key at the conclusion of his time in office, and whether he will set in stone the trends that his recent forebearers have carved out?

John Key arguably represents the new style of National Party leader; though the tradition of farmer-cum-politician is strong in the Party's history (with leaders like Massey, Holland, Holyoake and Bolger), Key, as a self-made man, represents the core 21st century National values. Key grew up in a state house in Christchurch, raised by a solo-mother following the death of his father when he was six. After completing an accounting degree at the University of Canterbury, Key embarked on a phenomenal business career as a foreign exchange dealer. By 1995 Key had risen to become the global head of foreign exchange at merchant bank Merrill Lynch. Key's remarkable rise in the business world did not go unnoticed, and in 1998 attempts were made by the National Party to recruit Key. They proved successful in 2002, when Key won the Parliamentary seat of Helensville in Auckland. Just two years later Key was promoted from backbencher to the National Party's Finance spokesman role, after Don Brash ousted Bill English as party leader. The demise of Brash following the 2005 election saw Key take over

as Leader of the Opposition, and in 2008 Key became the 38th Prime Minister of New Zealand.

In becoming Prime Minister in 2008, John Key stepped into the role at a time of vast technological change across the world. In doing so, he has become New Zealand's first 'Information Age' Prime Minister. Though television still remains the core news medium in New Zealand, the rise of social media has enabled John Key to have a new means of communicating with his audience. This has been particularly critical for the Generation Y and Generations Z cohorts, who are arguably more politically apathetic and non-ideological than their Generation X and Baby Boomer peers. These new social media tools, and the ability to use them to connect with different audiences, has led John Key to become not just the first 'Information Age' Prime Minister, but also the first 'Celebrity Prime Minister'. Key has been careful to foster a public image as a 'man of the people', in a way that neither Helen Clark nor Jim Bolger were able to. Key's public image has focussed on his ordinariness and on being what Toby Manhire described as "a likeable dork".²¹⁸ This image continues to reap pay-offs for Key, whose preferred Prime Minister polling has remained consistently high.²¹⁹ If Key is able to maintain this celebrity-like status across his remaining time as Prime Minister, he will be in a fundamentally strong position to choose both how and when he leaves office, and what he does next.

The new breed of 'Information Age' Prime Ministers may fundamentally change, once again, our political culture and the role of Prime Minister. John Key's celebrity status will likely lead to even greater presidentialisation of political leadership in New Zealand. This could potentially change the motivations for those seeking out the role, who may increasingly do so out of the personal gains,

²¹⁸ Manhire, T. (2012, December 21). 'There's more to the PM that meets the eye' in *The New Zealand Herald*. Last accessed 23/06/2013 at http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10855433. A collection of Key's social media exploits can also be seen here: Manhire, T. (2013, June 19). 'John Key's six greatest social media photographs' in *The Listener*. Last accessed 23/06/2013 at <http://www.listener.co.nz/commentary/the-internaut/john-keys-six-greatest-social-media-photographs/>.

²¹⁹ As at June 2013, Key's preferred Prime Minister rating was sitting as high as 65%. See Young, A. (2013, June 26). 'Poll shock: Labour, Shearer take dive as Nats roll on' in *The Herald*. Last accessed 28/06/2013 at http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10893025.

rather than economic and societal changes they can make as Prime Minister. A consequence of this is the greater possibility of 'Hubris Syndrome' in New Zealand, whereby the fame and presidentialisation associated with office could fundamentally influence the psyche of the leader.

Of all the Prime Ministers reviewed in this thesis, John Key is perhaps the most well placed to take advantage of his post-leadership opportunities. Assuming Key leaves office in the next five years, he will be at most 57 years of age when he emerges from office. After at least two terms in office, Key would have built up the diplomatic and political skills to complement his business background, and would have made a number of strong international connections that he can call upon at the end of his leadership. With a distinct Prime Ministerial skill-set, a clean bill of health and no signs of Key becoming a 'burned and buried' leader, the opportunities are vast. Key has not yet hinted at any likely post-leadership activity, and had played down speculation that he will retire part-way through his second term.

John Key's celebrity status could potentially recast our political culture in New Zealand in a way that is supportive of a place for 'elder statesmen'. Whilst it has been a positive trend to see the recent 'Onwards and Upwards' Prime Ministers make use of their post-leadership life to take a step onto the business or diplomatic world stage, it has perhaps come at the detriment to New Zealand domestically. There is a clear argument to be made for growing a community of 'elder statesmen and women' out of former New Zealand Prime Ministers. Because of their unique skill-set and place in New Zealand society they become a valuable societal asset, but one that the nation has failed to draw upon. Their role would not necessarily entail involvement in day-to-day political issues, but in areas of serious national interest, either in seeking to build New Zealand's diplomatic and trade relations or through providing a respected and balanced voice in critical national debates (such as on constitutional issues). The development of an elder statesman or woman role could play a critical role in how future leaders deal with the challenges ahead of them. It will be up to the New

Zealand people if they can surpass their history of negalitarianism to accept the role that these former leaders can play in our future.

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