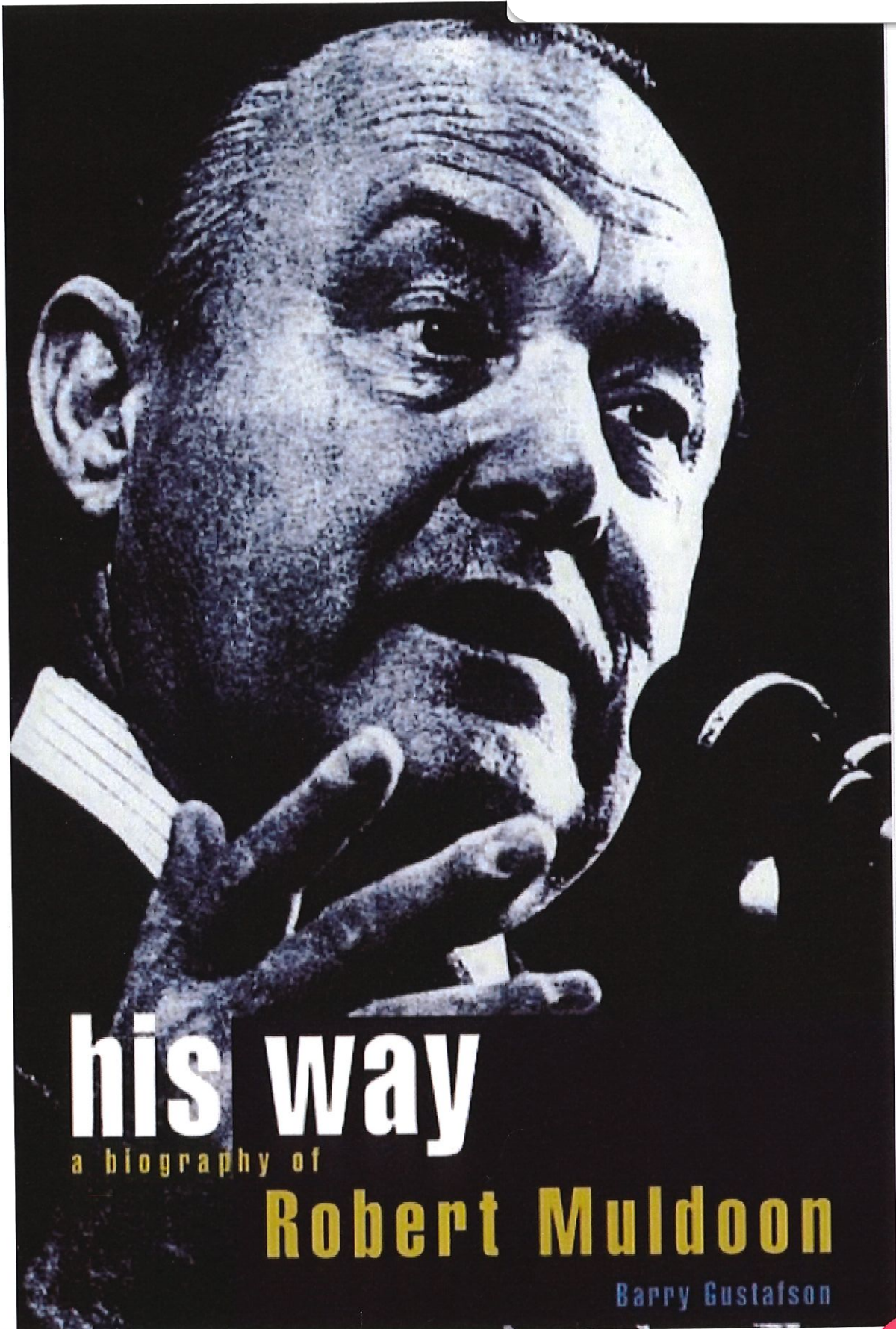


1977

(Gustafson, B., 2000)



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O'Reilly, who visited Britain to study, persuaded Muldoon in 1978 to go to Islington, which was in England. There Muldoon met the radical west Indian, or Afro-Caribbean, theatre group Keskidde. Muldoon helped O'Reilly and others to bring the Rastafarians to New Zealand where they became a model for Maori theatre with a political cause.

Muldoon was less sympathetic towards environmentalists. In 1977, for example, when Venn Young, the Minister for the Environment, supported by Shearer and Waring, proposed bringing together planning and environmental protection in an Environmental Protection Bill, Muldoon observed that such legislation was 'the thing we didn't need'.<sup>67</sup> Supported by Gair and Cooper he went on to argue that New Zealand was 'over-legislated' and that while 'we are all environmentalists, audits and reports are a nuisance' which 'slow down' and 'add to costs'.

In March 1977 Muldoon reshuffled his cabinet. Bolger was promoted from Under-Secretary to Minister of Fisheries. Gair exchanged Housing and Associate Minister of Finance for Energy Resources, Mines, Electricity and National Development, taking the first three from Holland, who received Housing, and the fourth from Talboys, who retained Foreign Affairs and Overseas Trade. Wilkinson exchanged Statistics for Postmaster-General with Templeton, who also became a new Associate Minister of Finance. The catalyst for the reshuffle was the departure of Holyoake from Parliament after nearly forty years as an MP.

On 7 March 1977 the Queen, who was in New Zealand, announced

that New Zealand's next Governor-General would be Holyoake, who would immediately resign from cabinet and from Parliament. Although Muldoon stated that the appointment will 'I am certain, be warmly welcomed throughout New Zealand',<sup>68</sup> it was not. The Labour Party was incensed not only by the choice of Holyoake but also by the fact that Muldoon delayed notifying Rowling until half an hour before the controversial appointment was made public.<sup>69</sup> The Secretary to the Cabinet and Executive Council, Millen, believed that, although by convention at that time the Leader of the Opposition was not consulted but simply informed, on this occasion Rowling should have been given sufficient time to object if he wished. As it was, Rowling's objections could not be made privately but were expressed publicly, causing concern not only to Holyoake and Muldoon but also the Queen.<sup>70</sup>

Muldoon tried to defuse the controversy by issuing a lengthy press statement pointing out that people should be appointed to positions because of their quality and ability, not their political persuasion. He compared Holyoake to John Jeffries, a prominent Labour Party activist and 'Citizen for Rowling' whom Muldoon's Government a year before had appointed to the Supreme Court.<sup>71</sup> Muldoon strongly criticised the news media for the way it had accepted Jeffries without comment on his political allegiance and activities but had criticised the Holyoake appointment. Not only Labour and the press were lacking in enthusiasm for Holyoake's shift from partisan political leader to symbol of constitutional unity. A number of National MPs, including Talboys, who believed 'priests and politicians should not be Governors General',<sup>72</sup> disagreed with the precedent of appointing a politician as Governor-General and, although the appointment of a New Zealander was welcomed, caucus members reported widespread reservations and opposition within the broader National Party membership to the idea of having a former politician as Governor-General.<sup>73</sup>