

A number of efforts were made to improve matters in the 1960s, but by the 1970s it was realised they had had little effect in improving the number of qualified maori people.

"The stage was set in the seventies for the acceptance of new strategies," Dr Walker said.

"Attention was drawn to the denial of maori identity as perhaps the most important single factor within the school situation which incapacitates a child's ability to relate himself to school."

He recalled that growing maori assertiveness about their education problems "fortunately" coincided with the appointment of two liberal education ministers in succession — Phil Amos in

1972 and Les Gandar in 1975. The latter "actually took the trouble to learn the maori language".

Dr Walker said the 1970s were marked by rapid reforms in education which substantially reversed the former policies of assimilation. Teachers' colleges set up maori studies courses, and native maori speakers were given one-year teaching courses to train them as maori language teachers.

By 1979, 171 secondary schools were teaching maori to 15,000 pupils, and 250 primary schools offered maori studies to 50,000 children.

The challenge now was to carry that same reforming momentum into other areas of the bureaucracy, Dr Walker said.



Boycott called for

School pupils and teachers around the country have been called on to boycott classes on June 1 to protest the absence of maori values in the education system.

A hui of about 1000 maori people, secondary school teachers and pupils at Huntly's Waahi marae in April decided to call for the day of protest on the initiative of the pupils present.

The hui had been called by the Post-Primary Teachers' Association to discuss maori education issues, notably the high failure rate among maori children, and the absence of taha maori in the education system.

Students' spokesperson Joyce Maipi, a former Huntly College pupil, said the day of protest could take the form of discussion in schools of maori education issues.

She acknowledged that June 1 was chosen because that is the deadline Education Minister Merv Wellington has set for submissions on the proposed secondary core curriculum review. The date has drawn howls of protest from educators who say it does not give enough time for submissions to be prepared.

Pukekohe youth worker Tahuna Minhinnick said "the system can and must include maori values as an integral part of teaching and learning."

He said the protest would be repeated once a month until taha maori was accepted and implemented in the education system.

Mr Minhinnick said the maori values he would like to see taught in schools were those pertaining to kawa, land, whakapapa, taha wairua, tapu, crafts and the maori

language.

He wanted to see the education system using kaumatua to teach maori things, as they were the acknowledged teachers in maori society, and greater use of the marae as a base for learning.

He acknowledged that such moves would involve major timetabling changes, and that the first step was to persuade the education authorities of the need for such changes.

The next step was to look at how they could be achieved, which he admitted would not be easy.

The young people at the hui have asked for the PPTA's support to organise the national day of protest.

PPTA president Tony Steele said the hui accepted that the high failure rate of maori pupils could not be all the pupils' own fault. One school cited at the hui was said to have had 94 per cent of its maori pupils leave without a single formal qualification.

Some participants spoken to by the *Waikato Times* told of maori pupils who had never been disciplined or had behaviour problems at primary schools with a high taha maori component.

But often those same pupils became "problems" when they went to high schools which were run on strictly pakeha lines, and which felt alien to maori children. This would be revealed in behaviour like truancy, inattention, and anti-social behaviour.



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