

resources in schools with large numbers of Maori students. They were, however, a first response to the educational inequalities which had been brought home to the New Zealand public by the Hunn Report (1960) and the Currie Report (1962). They tended to assume that the difficulties faced by Maori students were essentially the same as those faced by pakeha students and would be overcome in the same way. This, as later became apparent, was a mistaken view. Learning takes place in a cultural as well as a social setting, and, during the sixties it became clear that a greater prominence had to be given to maoritanga and Maori language if their educational attainments were to improve.

"The record to date is mixed. The statistics show that gains are being made, but differences between the achievements of Maori and non-Maori students are still considerable. On the positive side are the successes of a quarter of a century of effort, backed by assistance from the Maori Education Foundation and other sources of bursary and scholarship support. Thousands of Maori boys and girls have been encouraged to stay at school longer to improve their educational qualifications and, in increasing numbers, to go on to further study at a technical institute, teachers college, or university. Many are now themselves parents and are better able to guide their own children in the ways of the education system than any previous generation of Maori parents. Many are also taking an active part in the various community organisations that are pressing for more to be done to meet the needs of Maori children for whom the education system is still not doing well enough. . . ."

"To put the matter plainly, we think that passage does not fully or fairly face the problem uncovered at our hearing and is designed to put the best face on something that seems to have gone seriously wrong, namely the education of Maori children. When that passage is read against the fact that 76 out of every 100 Maori children left school in that year without passing even three subjects in School Certificate as compared with only 37 pakeha children out of every 100, it is a classic example of British understatement to say as the report does "The record to date is mixed."

"We think the record to date is quite unmixd. It is a dismal failure and no amount of delicate phrasing can mask that fact.

"We asked ourselves the obvious question. How can it be that the Department's philosophy and practice in educating children accords so closely with the aspirations and desires of the Maori people as described to us, and yet the results of its application be the object of such trenchant and bitter criticism?"

## Conclusions

"We wish to make plain beyond any doubt that we have no criticism whatever to make of Mr Ross, Mr Bryce or Mr Kaa. All three gentlemen were open and candid in their evidence and we do not doubt their sincerity and their dedication to their task as educational administrators. Nor do we criticise in any way the dedication, even the devotion of many teachers at all levels of the education system. There was not the slightest evidence to justify attaching censure or blame to any one part of the educational system.

"Yet, something has gone wrong. Maori children are not being adequately educated. We think that the system is at fault and has been at fault for many years. We suspect that somewhere at some influential level in the Department, there remains an attitude – it may be in planning or in education boards, or at the level of principals or head teachers, we cannot say – a vestige of the attitude expressed by a former Director of Education who wrote in the middle of the first half of this century:

"... The natural abandonment of the native tongue involves no loss on the Maori ... " [See *Maori and Education*, ed, P M Jackson 1931 at p. 193]

"We have no reason to think that such an opinion is held in the topmost levels of the administration in the Education Department today, but whether it does exist at other strategic points in the system is a matter of concern. We say that opinion is wrong and should be rejected.

"If the people of New Zealand want to avoid racial tension and racial violence in the future the place to begin is in the schools. The more pakeha New Zealanders grow up knowing Maori culture and history (for which they must be familiar with the language) the more will adult New Zealanders relate warmly to one another as pakeha and Maori come to show each other mutual respect. The days of looking down on Maori values as being inferior or even worthless must be put behind us if we want peace and harmony. It is possible. It is necessary. It is urgent. And with goodwill from the community and good leadership from the highest levels in the Government and its administration it can be done to the great benefit of us all now and in the years ahead.

"On the state of the evidence before us we do not feel able to make particular recommendations on many of the educational issues that were raised by the claimants. For example the claimants pressed for the rapid establishment of bilingual schools. The Department's response was to endorse that idea and to explain its current procedures to allow such schools to be established. But "these procedures stress that the school staff, the parents and the community must support such a proposal before approaching the Education Board. In turn, the Board must be

satisfied about this support before recommending the proposal to the Department," said Mr Ross.

"It seems to us that this is not leadership by the Department. Rather is the Department following along only where such support already exists. We urge that the Department take more positive steps and go beyond proposing policy to ensuring implementation. We have heard the criticism that Kohanga Reo were established not because of the Department, but in spite of it, and it did appear that that criticism had some foundation. We were referred as well to Maori endeavours to establish alternative (Maori) schools and consider that the Department needs to look at the funding of such schools or to establish special schools in particular areas that can cater more appropriately for Maori children.

"We are not able to recommend positively that bilingual schools should be established immediately up and down the country because important questions of finance, staffing and buildings arise at once, about which we are not informed.

"Similarly there seems force in the claimants' argument that Maori language teachers need not be fully qualified in the sense that they are trained to a standard where they can teach a variety of other subjects as well. The success of kaiako in kohanga reo centres could be expanded upwards into the early years of education in the school system. It seems almost self-evident that the system should build on the movement and exploit the new opportunities it presents. One thing that could be done quickly is to ease the financial burden on parents.

"Mrs Mead also complained at the lack of status of Maori language teachers in the Correspondence School and elsewhere in the system, but we do not have a clear picture of whether this is so and if it is, what should be done about it.

"Our primary task is to interpret the Treaty of Waitangi and identify circumstances where the law or government policy is in conflict with it. We are not sufficiently well informed or experienced in the intricacies of the education system to make specific recommendations on many of the important matters that were raised before us. The extent of importance attached to these issues by the claimants was apparent from the fact that more witnesses gave evidence on this subject of education than in all the other matters health, broadcasting, justice etc. – put together.

"We have therefore decided to recommend to the Minister of Education that there should be an urgent inquiry conducted almost at once into the way Maori language and culture is taught in the schools, (and all matters related to them) so that detailed advice can be offered to him by persons best qualified to give it, and so that the serious com-