

than "departmental watchdog" and assessor of teacher competence. At present primary inspectors spend a predominance of time doing statutory school inspections and teacher gradings, both tasks that contribute little or nothing to the improvement of the quality of teacher. Inspectors need intensive training in the principals of school management professional leadership, change strategies, effective inservice training methods and to be leaders in the whole field of biculturalism. At present there is no training in any of the above and little incentive for inspectors to extend their professional knowledge.

There is an urgent need for the Department of Education to undergo a complete reshuffle and reorganisation from top to bottom. Parents, community groups, professionals and politicians, are becoming increasingly critical of the education system and only a thunderous silence emanates from the "large wooden building". The Department urgently needs to redefine its philosophy and aims and cease the present pragmatic drift that merely results in a sluggish reaction to external prodding and a placeatory flow of "delicate phrases". Its authority needs decentralising and more direct control transferred to regional localities where communities should be given the opportunity to develop education accord-

ing to local or regional needs.

At present the power of head office is enormous and in any view detrimental to the education system and the education of children. The pursuit of power for its own sake results in the kind of feudal dynamics that permeates the department and detracts from sound leadership and healthy change. This coercive authority structure filters down to the very classroom and brings with it a rigidity professional and subservience that is reminiscent of 19th century education. Ad hocing is rife and change is subject to the dilatorism of those holding powerful executive positions. e.g. open plan schools.

Unshackle Maori and Island division

The Maoris and Island Division of head office needs more direct influence and authority in all aspects of curriculum development and education generally. At present their advisory role results in an impotence that generates cynicism from their own people. Head office should give the Maori people a greater share of control over the education of Maori children at all levels and policies established whereby all schools develop the capability of meeting the local needs of Maori children in cooperation with Maori parents.

At present school principals receive

little or no training in professional leadership and a consequence of this is a great number of poorly lead schools. The system is largely to blame for this. I feel strongly that all principals need continuous training in professional leaderships, change strategies, school management and curriculum development and human relationship skills. No potential principal should be promoted to this position unless she/he has clear concepts of the principalships role she/he is to play. Pioneering this role after appointment has many dangers for the principal the staff and the children.

Maori parents should be represented on school committees and school boards at least in proportion to the number of Maori children on the roll if schools are to become more sensitive to Maori culture and adapt more adequately to the needs of Maori students. I have visited many schools with up to 70% Maori children on the roll and an all-pakeha school committee, principals and teachers must become much more sensitive to Maori educational needs and make the changes necessary to eliminate the mass failure that is blighting the lives of so many of our Maori children. Unless we do, our society will become increasingly divisive as Maori people grow in indignation and awareness of the inequalities they suffer.

Aotearoa is what?

Young Pakeha people leaving college with little knowledge about their New Zealand-tanga are on a collision course with their Maori peers. That's the sad conclusion reached by Tu Tangata editor, Philip Whaanga after spending a day in total with sixth form students of Wellington's Onslow College.

He'd been asked to speak in a liberal studies programme called Scope, and had followed speakers from the Intellectually Handicapped Society and Unemployed Workers Union.

Most of the one hundred and twenty students had a real ignorance of the Pakeha and Maori history of New Zealand and seemed to have no sense of belonging to this country. A discussion about what made them distinctive from say, Australian students, turned up nothing. More felt it irrelevant to think of themselves as having a particular New Zealand identity. A few however, who had travelled, realised other countries saw them as having 'Kiwi' identi-

ty, but whatever that was remained a blank.

The students' opinion of Maori people was gleaned mainly from the media, and their own parent's views. A few had picked up bits and pieces from contact at school and Maori friends. Even allowing for the self-centred nature of youth, the depth of their ignorance was shocking.

To the majority, who all expressed themselves in one way or another, Maori people were irrelevant. It did not concern them whatever happened in the past, and the future was not something to think of. Probably familiar themes for those working with young people, but still a recipe for disaster for this country.

Mr Whaanga played them a tape of an interview he'd just done with a young Maori songwriter, Ngahiwi Apanui of the band Aotearoa. On it Apanui told of the purpose of the band, to encourage young Maori to be proud of themselves. And then a song followed,

'Stand up for your people'. With lyrics such as "Don't stay down, don't stay under, stand up tall, we are the stronger," the message was clear.

Apparently too clear for some students.

"How can they say that, that's racist."

O yes the complacency was burst then, as the students reacted to being excluded. This brought from one student the memory of leaving a Maori language class because of bad vibes from the Maori students.

The lively discussion got quite tangled up in the notion of free speech as long as it didn't restrict others.

When confronted with the reality of what some young Maori are only at this stage singing about, the Onslow students got a wee bit indignant.

But not really threatened. As one observant student put it. "That person confirms what we know, that young Maori don't speak Maori and it's dying — that doesn't concern us, that's for the Maoris."