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The New Zealand controversy over the  
Johnson Report: The context of the  
*Report of the Committee on Health and  
Social Education, Growing, Sharing,  
Learning (1977).*

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Education.

at Massey Universtiy, Albany  
New Zealand.

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2005

## ABSTRACT

In 1975 the New Zealand Department of Education established a Committee on Health and Social Education, with the aim of addressing curriculum issues that had remained unresolved since the Thomas Report of 1944. Among these concerns was the issue of sex education. This Committee, also known as the Johnson Committee, was conceived under a liberal Labour government but its recommendations were debated during the terms of office of two subsequent National Ministers of Education.

The work of the Committee on Health and Social Education was undertaken concurrently with the movements known as the Maori Renaissance and second wave feminism and within a climate of social and legislative change which included the Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion Bill of 1977. When the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education, *Growing, Sharing, Learning* (1977), was published there was little controversy over its sixty-nine recommendations on physical health, outdoor education, parent education, or community involvement in curriculum development. Its two recommendations on sex education however provoked a polarised debate lasting more than five years. In the context of this controversy a coalition of groups representing the Religious Right worked concurrently to oppose further liberalisation of the primary school health education syllabus. This lobby was led by the Concerned Parents' Association, the executive of which assumed the role of the "moral entrepreneur" to raise public awareness on issues of sex and moral education.

A range of theory is used to discuss the contextual antecedents of the controversy, the reasons for the controversy and why it became increasingly difficult for the educational policy community to exercise hegemony over the outcomes of the Report. This thesis reveals that the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education encompassed a bicultural dimension, and was the work of a liberal educational community of interest. It examines the underlying causes of the ideological tensions of the controversy and the construct of moral cathexis is introduced, to explain the means by which the Religious Right was able to influence subsequent policy. It is argued that the same ideological tensions are inherent in contemporary attempts to encompass sex education within the state school curriculum.

## Acknowledgments

I wish to express my gratitude to my principal supervisor, Professor Roger Openshaw, for his wisdom, guidance, support and optimism throughout the period of this research. My thanks go also to Professor Gary Hermansson for his supportive feedback and advice.

I am grateful to the people who lived through the events described in this thesis for generously sharing with me their time and reflections. I salute them all for their contributions to the process of democratic debate and I respectfully acknowledge those who have already passed on.

This thesis is dedicated to my own patient and understanding family, to my parents, Mary and Harold Johnson, who began my journey, to my aunt and uncle, Eileen and Garfield Johnson who lived this one, and to my Whanau, past present and future. Garfield Johnson agreed to write a retrospective foreword to this study but because of ill health was unable to do this. I have used instead part of a speech he made to the New Zealand Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, in May 1982.

*If there are parts of the report which you see as valuable, go ahead and implement them without waiting for political action – you might wait a long time. But try to see every part as hanging together. An overall approach is by far the most effective. That's why I see the health and social education programme as only a small part of the answer. To that end take whatever political action you deem most expedient, if you feel strong enough.*

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution made by Garfield Johnson to Hillary College and the Otara community of the 1960s and 1970s as reflected in a retrospective tribute to his “teaching style” by former student Rawiri Paratene, at the time of the award of Johnson’s Honorary Doctorate in Literature by Massey University.

Toia Te Waka Maatauranga!  
Maa wai e to?  
Maaku e to  
Maau e to  
Maa te whakaranga ake e to!

*Who should haul the canoe of learning?  
I should, you should,  
All within calling distance should haul this vessel*



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## ACRONYMS

AAWNZ	Association of Anglican women of New Zealand
CARE	Citizens' Association for Racial Equality
CDU	Curriculum Development Unit
COME	Community Organisation for Moral Education
CPA	Concerned Parents' Association
CSA	Contraception, sterilisation and abortion
DG	Director General [of Education]
DPB	Domestic Purposes Benefit
EDA	Education Development Association
EDC	Educational Development Conference
EPC	Educational Priorities Conference
ERA	Educational Research Associates (America)
FPA	Family Planning Association
FRA	Family Rights Association
FUW	Federation of University Women
HART	Halt All Racist Tours
HSE	Health and social education
MACOS	Man, a Course of Studies
MWWL	Maori Women's Welfare League
NCW	National Council of Women
NDC	National Development Conference
NESC	National English Syllabus Committee
NRR	New Religious Right
NZCER	New Zealand Council for Educational Research
NZAHPER	New Zealand Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation.
NZEI	New Zealand Educational Institute
NZEF	New Zealand Employers Federation
NZGCA	New Zealand Guidance and Counselling Association
NZPTA	New Zealand Parent-Teacher Association
PPTA	Post Primary Teachers' Association
PT	Physical training
SEICUS	Sex Education Information Council of the United States
SPCS	Society for the Protection of Community Standards
SPUC	Society for the Protection of Unborn Children
SSBA	Secondary Schools Boards Association
VTs	Visiting teachers
WEL	Women's Electoral Lobby
WHO	World Health Organisation

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## GLOSSARY OF MAORI LANGUAGE

Aroha	Love, caring, concern for others
Hapu	Smaller family branch of a tribe
Hikoi	The land rights march of 1975
Iwi	Nation, tribe, source of strength
Kaumatua	Older respected man
Koro	Respected Uncle figure
Kuia	Older respected woman
Mana	Repute, prestige, influence
Manāāki	Concern for the wellbeing of others, hospitality
Manāākitanga	Working co-operatively to ensure the wellbeing of others
Marae	Common ground in front of the ancestral tribal house
Mihi	Formal greeting of welcome
Mokopuna	Grandchild, descendent
Nga Tamatoa	Young warriors
Pākehā	Of European ethnicity
Papa-tu-a-nuku	Earth mother in relation to the sky father
Powhiri	A formal process of welcoming visitors
Rangatira	A Chief
Ranginui	The universal sky father
Taha Maori	Aspects of Maori culture
Tanemahuta	Son of Papa-tu-a-nuku and Ranginui – guardian of the forests and its creatures
Tangaroa	Son of Papa –tu-a-nuku and Ranginui – guardian of the sea and its creatures
Tangata Whenua New Zealand	First people of the land of Aotearoa/
Tangi	Funeral – both grieving and acknowledgement of ancestors and continuity of the cycle of life and death
Te Reo	Maori language
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Treaty of Waitangi
Tena Koe	Greetings to you
Te Kaunihere Wahine o Aotearoa	The National Council of Women
Tuakana-Taina/Teina	Support and guidance from older sibling or relative to younger one
Tupuna/Tipuna	Ancestors
Turangawaewae	Tribal homeland, place to stand tall, identity

Utu	An action of return or recompense that equalises
Wairua	The spiritual dimension
Whaikorero	Oratory on the Marae
Whanau	Family in its extended sense
Whanaungatanga	Membership, inclusion and participation in the extended family

The Author accepts responsibility for the above definitions. They were compiled after consulting the dictionaries given in the reference list, to reflect the sense in which each has been used in the context of discussion throughout this thesis.

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the New Zealand controversy over the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education, *Growing, Sharing, Learning*. Also known as the Johnson Report, it was released to the public in July 1977 fuelling debate that began with apprehension expressed by a conservative lobby group over the Committee's purpose. The resulting educational controversy lasted in the public domain until the issues were overtaken by attention to the Core Curriculum Review of 1984.

In the New Zealand Parliament on June 12, 1980, the Minister of Education, the Hon. M. L. Wellington, rose to his feet to reply to a question that had been asked in the House on June 5 by Labour Opposition MP, Russell Marshall: "What action has been taken on implementing the recommendations in the Johnson Report approved by the Government?" The Minister replied that the National Government had approved 14 of the report's 17 recommendations in full and two in part. He announced plans to revise the health syllabuses for primary and secondary schools and acknowledged fifty national organizations with an interest in these revisions. The major impact of his reply however lay in the next paragraph of his statement.

Recommendation 2.23b concerning the place of sex education in primary schools has not been accepted. The revision of the primary school syllabus as it relates to sex education will therefore be undertaken on the assumption that the status quo continues. That is to say, the intent of the present syllabus statement 'that there is no place in the primary school for group or class instruction in sex education' will remain.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Reply to question in Parliament by C.R. Marshall) for written answer. Notice given June 5 1980. Reply by Minister of Education M. L. Wellington, June 12, 1980, as recorded in Hansard.

The recommendations of the Report of the Committee on Health and Education cannot be reduced to the single theme of sex education. They ranged across issues of individual and community health and biculturalism.<sup>2</sup> Curricular issues of health and social education were not simply a product of the 1970s, but threaded throughout earlier discourses. These antecedents will be traced in this thesis but the matter of sex education in the primary school syllabus, and the role of the Johnson Report in relation to this, was to exercise the minds of many citizens between 1975 and 1980 and contribute to the political misfortunes of at least one Member of Parliament. Sex education and its relationship to moral and values education was an issue to which debate on the Report would return again and again.

Although the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education drew a wide range of responses and critiques during the late 1970s there has been previously no significant analysis of the antecedents, social context or and departmental activity in relation to this educational controversy. Such commentary as has been made will be presented subsequently in the context of discussion on the controversy's themes. The only lengthy work on *Growing, Sharing, Learning* is the unpublished Masters thesis of Rex Dalzell (1979). Using discourse analysis as his theoretical tool Dalzell attacked the Report for its failure to provide a "blueprint" for curriculum action. It will be demonstrated in this thesis that discourse analysis is too limiting a method from which to obtain an understanding of the depth and dimensions of either the Johnson Report or the controversy that accompanied it. It will be argued that these events must be understood within their educational, social and historical context.

To date there has not been an examination of the process of the Committee on Health and Social Education in its working phase, nor of

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<sup>2</sup> For a full list of the recommendations of the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education see Appendix 6.



Departmental activity in relation to this. It will be argued throughout this thesis that in order to understand the Johnson Report's rhetoric and its public reception, the wider historical detail of events of this period must be considered. In New Zealand during the 1960s and 1970s a liberal political ethos, reflected in Health, Police, Child Welfare and Education policy initiatives created a climate for the re-examination of the state school curriculum in relation to issues of health, social and emotional well being. The 1945 proscription on sex education at primary level, resulting from discussion on the Thomas Report, however remained an obstacle to curricular change with regard to issues such as contraception and teenage pregnancies.

Concurrent with Educational Development Conference — a nation-wide exercise in public consultation on the aims of education — the Education Department circulated a discussion paper, *Human Development and Relationships across the Curriculum* (1973).<sup>3</sup> This paper provoked sufficient public antagonism to signal the need for caution to the Department of Education. It was within a climate of growing apprehension over the aims of education that the Labour government in late 1975 established the Committee on Health and Social Education, charged with preparing guidelines for curriculum development in this area. Its Report was meant to address a wide range of historic and ongoing social and health concerns relating to the nation's children and young people. In responding to its extraordinarily broad terms of reference the Johnson Report's recommendations would inevitably be unable to satisfy groups focused on more specific issues. The political climate was also changing and although the Report was presented to a liberal-leaning National Minister of Education, decisions on its implementation would lie with a more conservative politician who succeeded him.

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<sup>3</sup> This discussion paper was popularly referred to as the Ross Report. Its focus was the secondary school. Its role in the Johnson Report controversy will be discussed throughout this thesis.

Other earlier commentary on the Johnson Report has focused on specific aspects of the report, such as counselling, (Hermansson and Bernstone 1978), values education, (Codd 1978, Elliot-Hogg, 1978, 1979, Reeves, 1978) physical health (Clyma, 1978) and feminist issues (Robinson, 1978, O'Neill, 1996). Nowhere in this literature is there any discussion of the bicultural dimension inherent in the rhetoric of *Growing, Sharing, Learning*. This study will extrapolate this theme and its contextual antecedents.

In his analysis of the role of the role of the Concerned Parents Association as a protest group Roger Openshaw (1985) opened a window on a significant element of the controversy over the Johnson Report but the process employed by this lobby group also requires further elaboration. In the 1970s Concerned Parents Association was pursuing its objectives within the context of international Western perspectives on curriculum liberalization and it adopted the lobby strategies of the American text book censorship campaign. These events must also be described to increase understanding of the tensions between liberal and conservative ideologies inherent in a democracy that resurface during times of curriculum change.

The issues that underlie the controversy over the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education are historic and enduring ones having to do with the role of the state in the socialization of its children, and in cultural reproduction in this process. That these tensions remain unresolved and are perhaps insoluble is suggested in contemporary dialogue on the same themes. In 2000 the national daily newspaper, *New Zealand Herald*, ran an editorial campaign inviting public participation on the teaching of values in schools. The arguments, tenor, and fervor of the response echoed the controversy of the 1970s explained in this thesis. The historic anxiety expressed is that curriculum change in the area of health and values education will herald an era of moral decline. Examination of

previously unexplored aspects of the 1970s debate therefore remains relevant to contemporary concerns.

This thesis will situate the controversy over *Growing, Sharing, Learning* in its historical and political contexts, examine aspects of the report's content that have not previously been considered, and provide new insights into the nature and dynamics of a national debate that involved thousands of citizens and lasted more than five years. During the course of this discussion three questions will be answered:

- What was the purpose of the Committee on Health and Social Education?
- What happened during the period of the controversy of 1976-1980?
- What is the significance of these events?

It will be argued that in order to address these questions a range of theoretical perspectives must be applied since no single theory is sufficient to explain either the nature of the controversy, or the report's trajectory. Answers to the above questions will be sought within the following structure of the thesis.

Chapter 1 This will outline social and historical events that create a context for understanding the Johnson Report's antecedents. The contributing role of the Health Department during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century will be described.

Chapter 2 Literature and theory relevant to the controversy will be introduced.

Chapter 3 The methods used in the research will be explained.

- Chapter 4 The working mode of the Department of Education and the educational policy community will be examined in relation to curriculum development, the teacher unions and women's lobbies. The Contraception, Sterilization and Abortion Bill of 1977 will be discussed insofar as it relates to the work of the Committee on Health and Social Education.
- Chapter 5 The Committee on Health and Social Education will be introduced. The role of the Chairman will be explained in relation to bicultural issues that impacted upon the experience of the Committee, and subsequently the rhetoric of the report.
- Chapter 6 This chapter will provide insight on the modus operandi of the Committee on Health and Social Education as it went about its business of preparing the Report and will provide a context for understanding the increasing apprehension among conservative sections of the public.
- Chapter 7 The main lobby group to oppose the recommendations of the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education, the Concerned Parent's Association, will be introduced. Their perspectives, strategies, activities and international associations will be explained.
- Chapter 8 The content of the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education and its recommendations will be examined.
- Chapter 9 Following its release, the Minister of Education called for public submissions on the Report. This chapter examines the tenor, and range of these responses.

- Chapter 10 In an attempt to ascertain a clearer public mandate for policy regarding sex education the Minister of Education authorised private consultants to analyse public submissions on the Report. They produced an analysis of submissions known as the Link Report. This chapter discusses these events and also analyses the role of the media in the ongoing controversy.
- Chapter 11 The aftermath of the Minister's policy decisions on the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education is described. In this context the establishment of a Health Education Project Team is discussed in relation to contemporary debate on the same issues at the close of the twentieth century.
- Chapter 12 The events and themes of the controversy are summarised and analysed.

This research begins in Chapter 1 with an examination of background events of New Zealand's educational and social history relevant to the establishment of, and subsequent controversy over, the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education.



## **HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL EDUCATION**

The Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education, released in late 1977, was awaited with interest by many. Those who looked for recommendations regarding a lifespan perspective on exercise, recreation and outdoor pursuits were generally satisfied with the Report's discourse on these themes. Others trying to extract a succinct statement regarding moral education, and the role of the school in spiritual and religious matters, were less satisfied since definitive statements on these themes proved elusive. This was partly because the underlying rationale of the Report's rhetoric made it difficult reading, as will be discussed later. It was also partly because the Committee had wide-ranging and unwieldy terms of reference grounded in historic concerns of the Departments of Education, Police, Health and Child Welfare.

What the Report said will be discussed in Chapter Eight. This chapter will argue that the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education, in Aotearoa/New Zealand must be understood within a multi-layered historical context. The process of contextualisation will begin with an examination of why the issue of sex education becomes critical when reform of the health education curriculum is imminent, and how this focus involves other government departments, such as Police and Health. Emergent bicultural issues of the 1970s are also relevant to an understanding of both how the Committee functioned, and the rhetoric of its Report. These themes will be discussed here against the backdrop of the social and political climate of New Zealand in the 1960s and 1970s and events in Britain, America and Australia that relate to the controversy.

Because health and social education always involves issues of values, and therefore moral education, it has also historically involved tensions between competing ideologies. An understanding of the New Zealand controversy of the 1970s must therefore begin with discussion of these. Therborn (1980) defines ideology as a “social process through which consciousness and meaningfulness operate” (p. 21). The two ideological positions that dominated the controversy were those of Christian fundamentalist conservatism and the progressive liberalism of mid 20th century educationalists. The characteristics of both positions will be developed further in Chapter Two. However in order to begin examining the historical antecedents to the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education, it needs to be noted first that each ideology carries assumptions about the nature of humans that in turn carry implications for the role of the home, the school, and the State, in the business of moral and sex education. Since the matter of sex education dominated the controversy it is necessary to examine the underlying assumptions of both groups.

## **UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS**

### ***The Christian Fundamentalist Conservative right***

The Christian Fundamentalist Right, which in America is often called the New Religious Right, sees humans as biologically predetermined in their predisposition towards instinctual gratification. The Doctrine of Original Sin dictates that an individual must struggle to develop a conscience, and the higher levels of consciousness that lead to ‘moral,’ or ‘right’ behaviour. Since not all are born equal however there will always be a need for some form of social control of those who do not develop ‘morally’ and who exhibit behaviours that threaten to undermine the established mores and order of society. Such reasoning underlined the international eugenics movement of the early to mid 20th century. From this stance socialisation into norms and values requires indoctrination involving ‘character training’ through punishments and



rewards. The family is the primary agency of this process. In accord with this, as the instrument of the State the school's role is to ignore the instinctual, punish the deviant, and teach the ideal of sexual abstinence outside of marriage (Carlson, 1991; Hunter, 1983). Marriage, gender stereotypes, and reproduction by the 'morally fit' are the socially desirable outcomes of character training and within this rubric pre-ordained gender roles celebrate the virtues of male leadership and contented motherhood.

### ***Progressive Liberalism***

Twentieth century Progressive Liberals adopt the developmental and holistic approaches articulated by John Dewey (1959) and Maria Montessori (1967) as an underlying rationale for educational practice. While its roots can be found in the earlier writings of educationalists such as Comenius and Rousseau, progressive liberalism gained impetus from the theories of Charles Darwin (1987). It is a perspective that sees humans as biological, social and cognitive beings, with each domain functioning dynamically in an holistic manner. The physical and social health of the community involves socialisation into the ideals of reciprocity and altruism. The school's role is to educate for healthy lifestyle choices, with the State supporting this objective through a national curriculum that facilitates the giving of information and educating for rational choice. Within this model some flexibility with regard to gender roles is seen as appropriate and human development is a subject for discussion and inquiry.

### ***Antagonistic discourses***

Given the distance between these positions it can be seen that the issue of sex education has the potential to lead to antagonistic discourses. Since it is also an issue relating to religion and the economy, through the distribution of resources and the respective roles of citizens in relation to this, the parameters of debate over the Report of the Committee on

Health and Social Education would be almost unbounded. The controversy would interface with events in America in relation to the work of the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), in Australia with regard to the syllabus, *Man, a Course of Study* (MACOS), and in Britain in relation to the values education research of Peter McPhail (1972). The historical antecedents to the Committee on Health and Social Education must therefore be approached from an understanding of different perspectives on morality and the relationship of these to sex education. The controversy, it will be argued, was inevitable. Furthermore the open-ended and comprehensive terms of reference given the Committee, outlined in Chapter Five, perhaps ensured the impossibility of producing a report that could be easily converted into educational policy.

While Conservative Fundamentalism and Progressive-Liberalism are at opposing ends of an ideological continuum there are always historically other citizens with a range of opinions positioned either right or left of a more centrist conservative stance, and cognisance needs to be taken of this also with regard to the New Zealand controversy.

### ***The Centrist Conservative Perspective***

In general, the centrist conservative perspective also views human predispositions as biologically determined but allows that people have a capacity to learn from their environment. Human behaviour is seen not as inherently evil but as tending towards hedonistic and impulsive, having the potential to work either for or against the ideal of healthy nationhood. Trends and activities with the capacity to undermine societal stability, such as delinquency, venereal disease and abortion, require State intervention through legislation, consciousness raising and public education programmes. The objective is responsible citizenship and the school's role is prophylactic. The concepts of moral and mental hygiene that featured in the early 20th century health curriculum articulate with this perspective (Wilkins, 1921). The remedies for social ills advocated from a centre-conservative position are neither as repressive as those of

fundamentalists nor as permissive as those of liberals. These perspectives will be further elaborated in Chapter Two but it can be seen from this introductory framework that the relationship of values, moral and sex education within the school curriculum has been historically problematic, and within democracies has always involved a range of views on the objectives of education and issues of youth wellbeing. It is therefore appropriate to consider some of the social and political antecedents to the controversy of the 1970s and how New Zealand was situated internationally in relation to the issues involved.

## **EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY CONCERNS**

### ***The Educational Community***

Cavanagh (2001) describes a shift in early 20th century Canadian educational thought from the pre-determinist emphasis on biology as destiny, towards a more environmental perspective of health that gave rise to the phrase mental hygiene. This shift is also noticeable in New Zealand where early 20th century writers on health education were using the terms mental hygiene and character building interchangeably, as in an article in the *Education Gazette* of December 1, 1921, by Dr E. H. Wilkins, Director of the Division of School Hygiene. Wilkins suggested that sex education should go beyond the “mere imparting of physiological facts to cover human relationships” and that it should be “disseminated throughout the curriculum” since “collective class teaching could engender a powerful group code of honour”.

Thus a positive and purposeful ideal is substituted for blunder and misguidance and the foundations of social conscience are laid. Desire for knowledge regarding the origin of life is natural and healthy and deserves commendation. For the purpose of the education of young people the subject of sex is therefore to be understood as comprising the general relationships of the sexes, of man and woman, boy and girl, in everyday life, rather than as a subject concerned specifically with the subject of reproduction. (Wilkins, 1921, p.15)

Wilkins saw the need for “teaching designed to help young people to face the problems of sex with better enlightenment and higher ideals”. Sex education was, he suggested, “a matter of general education – education in outlook and idea, in social worth, in the fundamental principles of life, and character building. Consequently the foundation of a sound scheme of sex education must be established upon broad general principles”.<sup>1</sup> The Editor of the *Education Gazette* however was careful to include a disclaiming footnote to the Wilkins article of 1921 stating, that “no such action should be taken until definite instructions have been issued in the form of regulations, and these are not contemplated in the meantime”.<sup>2</sup>

That these issues had earlier also concerned the primary school teacher union is revealed in a 1912 recommendation of the New Zealand Educational Institute urging the Minister of Education to “provide two special instructors for the purpose of giving the senior scholars of our primary schools a course of instruction in the elements of sexual physiology” (cited in McGeorge, 1977, p. 136). These two instructors were to be practising Christians, a man and a woman, with the right of entry to schools to speak with pupils aged twelve or more. Giving evidence to the Cohen Commission, the Inspector-General of Schools, George Hogben, stated: “Personally I think there is more danger from general lectures than there is likelihood of good, but I know that there are great differences of opinion and it is difficult to be dogmatic” (Cited in McGeorge, 1977, p.129). Although the Cohen Commission recommended the adoption of a formal lecture on physiology and hygiene for both boys and girls in the senior school, McGeorge noted that sex education was omitted in the report to the House made by the parliamentary select committee to which the Commission passed its findings for further consideration.

He compared these early discussions with the “much more public

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<sup>1</sup> Wilkins, 1921, cited in an article by Reporter, Sandra Simpson, printed in the *Whanganui Chronicle*, 1978 (issue unknown). “Sex education ideas unchanged in 50 years.” (author’s files).

<sup>2</sup> The Editor’s footnote to Wilkins article. *Education Gazette*, December 1, 1921, p. 15.

and much more acrimonious” debate over the 1973 discussion document, *Human Development and Relationships across the Curriculum*.

In 1912 the possibility that home and school might not teach the same beliefs and values was hardly an issue – while in the 1970s it was the crux of the matter. This does not mean, however, that the question of sex education was any nearer solution in 1912 than in 1972 ... In the event the practical problem of who was to do the teaching was sufficient to ensure that nothing came of the discussions of 1912. (McGeorge, 1977, p.141)

In her history of the Family Planning Association, Helen Smyth (2000) notes that class instruction was rejected again in 1921 when the Ministers of Health and Education were asked by an MP to consider the issue of teaching regarding moral and social matters.

The reply came: “Does he mean sex education?...Very great consideration has been given to the subject. There has also been discussion in the public press, many parents expressing grave objection to the idea. Class instruction in sex hygiene is considered an undesirable and unsafe proceeding by eminent authorities”. (Cited in Smyth, 2000, p. 163)

It can be seen from these examples that the place of sex education within the health syllabus raised disquiet whenever it surfaced and the following decades brought no resolution. Butchers’ “government-sanctioned” 1932 history of the New Zealand education system reflected a general social unease over current trends in youth conduct and attitudes in relation to the issue of moral education.

The inculcation of religion, in a word, is the Church’s work, and not the State’s. On the other hand, the State has surely failed in its obligation to the children in that the Department has omitted to organise a definite course of instruction in morality, using that term in its widest sense. To leave character- training to be developed ‘incidentally’ alone can scarcely be justified in the face of present conditions. Such methods, admirable enough in themselves, are nevertheless manifestly inadequate, and require to be implemented

by definite instruction in the fundamental principles of right conduct. (Butchers, 1932, p.199)

The Thomas Committee of 1944-1945 also attempted to tackle the issues of health, social education and sex education. Chapter Four will discuss this in more detail and show how the health education syllabus of 1948 forged from reaction to Thomas Report's recommendations, resulted in a proscription on sex education at primary school level. Meanwhile the relationship between religion, values and sex education remained troublesome throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In her overview of the antecedents to moral education in New Zealand prior to 1985 Kama Weir (2001) grounds debate on values teaching in the secular clause of the 1877 Education Act which stated: "The school shall be kept open five days in each week for at least four hours each day...and the teaching shall be entirely of a secular character." In the fifty years that followed this Act there were at least forty-two unsuccessful bills aimed at amending the 1877 Act to allow religious education to take place in state primary schools in what Ivan Snook and Colin McGeorge have described as an ongoing "cycle of proposition followed by defeat" (Snook & McGeorge, 1978, p. 8). These authors suggest that during the first half of the 20th century moral education at both primary and secondary level within the state school system became largely a matter of immersion, with pupils expected to absorb the desirable moral attributes of the dominant Western European culture (p. 35). Debate on moral and values education inevitably involved debate on sex education and during the first half of the century the Health Department had taken the lead in producing education resources for use in schools by doctors and nurses. Since the historic concerns of the Department of Health contributed significantly to the terms of reference given the Committee on Health and Social Education, they must be considered here.

## **THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

In the period before, during and after World War II the Health Department was confronting a range of issues concerning the health of

the nation's children, such as inoculation against viral epidemics, nutrition and nits. But it was the issue of unwanted pregnancies that caused most concern in the mid 1930s. Statistics on septic abortion resulting from back-street terminations accounted for a quarter of all maternal deaths in the five-year period between 1930-1935.<sup>3</sup> Of related concern was the nation's falling birthrate. In discussing this, a meeting of the Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of the New Zealand Branch of the British Medical Association passed a resolution "begging" the Prime Minister "to consider the advisability of setting up a Committee of inquiry to investigate this matter".<sup>4</sup> The Prime Minister, Michael Joseph Savage, responded by appointing Dr D. G. McMillan, a Member of Parliament and architect of New Zealand's then emergent National Health Service, to chair such a committee.

### ***The McMillan Report of 1937***

A political commentator of the times described Dr. McMillan as "a child of his age, daring, incisive, intolerant of old-fogeyism, aggressive without arrogance [whose] whole sympathies are with the underdog ... a socialist to his finger tips" (Carr, 1936, pp.123-124). The resulting *Report Of The Committee Of Inquiry Into The Various Aspects Of The Problem Of Abortion In New Zealand* (1937), also called the McMillan Report, can hardly be seen as being sympathetic to the female "underdog". After hearing submissions from health, church, police, women's and other voluntary groups, the McMillan Committee found the underlying causes of abortion to be linked with economic and domestic hardship, changes in social attitudes, ignorance of contraception, and the "insidious" influence of "certain periodicals" advocating the use of various contraceptives and referring to "restraint" and self-control "in deprecatory terms". "The language of these advertisements can only be described as obscene, and their possible effects on immature and

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<sup>3</sup> D. G. McMillan (Chairman) (1937). *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Various Aspects of the Problem of Abortion in New Zealand*, p. 2. (The McMillan Report)

inexperienced minds can well be imagined” (McMillan Report, p. 17). The Inquiry found that women in all socioeconomic groups were attempting to limit their families through abortion. Ameliorative suggestions included the recruitment of a state-subsidised national domestic service core of young women to assist middle class married women after childbirth. The McMillan Report was a report of paradoxes that perpetuated class divisions, while acknowledging the changing circumstances of women.

For dealing with the problem of the unmarried mother, the committee considers that the attack must be along the lines of more careful education of the young in matters of sex, prohibition of the advertisement and sale of contraceptives to the young, and a more tolerant attitude on the part of society towards these girls and their children. The Committee believes, however, that the most important cause of all is a change in the outlook of women which expresses itself in a demand of the right to limit –or avoid- the family, coupled with a widespread half-knowledge and use of birth-control methods – often ineffective. (McMillan Report, p.38)

The report sidesteps the issue of sex education in schools. In its discussion of the medical ethics and legality of abortion it raises issues that were not legislatively addressed until 1976 by the Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion. When the McMillan Report was published in April 1937 however “many were stunned and outraged that married women of all classes were aborting the cherished babies so needed by the nation” (Smyth, 2000, p. 45). This observation also challenged the notion that abortion and contraception were the domain of a loose minority engaging in illicit sex.

There were however some citizens well aware of the realities many women faced. Among the small number of submissions to the McMillan Inquiry favouring legislation for abortion in “some circumstances” was one from the largest women’s organisation in New Zealand, the National Council of Women, which had been developing its own policies based on nationwide monitoring of women’s health issues

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<sup>4</sup> This resolution was repeated in the introduction to the McMillan Report (1937).



for some years (NCW, 2000). The carefully considered submission of NCW was rebuked in the McMillan Report by the comment that women should be “less selfish and consider the grave physical and moral dangers [and] the dangers of race suicide which are involved” (p. 36).

Smyth (2000) states that the McMillan Report created a “national scandal of huge proportions with newspaper headlines focusing on the selfish motives of women in choosing lifestyle commodities, ‘such as a garage’ over the national good” (p. 47). In this context the Minister of Health, Peter Fraser, dropped his advocacy for the legalisation of abortion, being neither the first, nor the last, Crown minister to place political realities above principles.

### ***Health education resources***

Despite such incidents the Department of Health had long regarded the school as an agency through which community health might be promoted. District medical officers of health had assumed an educative role since the 1920s. With the assistance of its public health nurses the Department prepared health education resources and publications for schools covering a wide variety of social issues such as exercise, cigarette smoking, alcohol and drugs. Clause 85 of the Education Act of 1877 made specific provisions for military drill and physical training for boys, while girls’ fitness was promoted by a ritualised set of exercises and rhythmic gymnastics. During the 1950s fitness and nutrition gained an increasingly wide public airing in the media. Senior Health Officer, Dr Turbott, had a popular Saturday morning radio programme for parents on which he discussed current concerns from school sores to the contents of school lunch boxes. The 1969 curriculum handbook, *Health: Suggestions for Health Education in Primary*, a revision of the 1948 health syllabus that followed the Thomas report, was written jointly by Health and Department of Educational officers. The responsibility for health education thus vacillated between the Departments of Education and Health, with the latter often taking the lead in resource production for teachers such as its booklets on cigarette

smoking (1964), alcohol and health (1965), dental health (1967), and drugs (1972-73), all listed in the *Primary School Syllabus on Health Education* (1969). These resources reflected current concerns such as the increasing consumption of fast foods, access of the young to liquor, and the increase in marijuana smoking and solvent abuse by children. By the 1970s glue sniffing 'street kids' had been added to the list of concerns. A subsequent pamphlet published by the New Zealand Council of Educational Research offered guidelines for schools on a range of solvents from anti-freeze to modelling cement, shoe polish and room deodorants.<sup>5</sup>

During the early 1970s the only policy guidelines in health education were contained in the 1969 health education syllabus for primary schools, an undramatic revision of the 1948 syllabus that had resulted from the Thomas Report. In his submission to the Committee on Health and Social Education, the Director-General of Health, H.J.H Hiddlestone, later outlined his Department's frustration with the restrictions of both the 1945 Education Act's prohibition on sex education in primary schools and the 1954 amendment to the Police Offences Act which restricted both the supply of, and instruction in, contraceptives to those under sixteen.

Within the Curriculum Division of the Department of Education during the early 1970s responsibility for health and physical education lay with Peter Macpherson, who would become a member of the Committee on Health and Social Education. Aware of both the initiatives of the Department of Health and the ongoing restrictions on health education, Macpherson began in 1974 to promote a more holistic definition of health by using the "dual title 'Health and Social Education', in order to broaden the focus, with health being defined as a person's current physical, mental, social and emotional health status" (Macpherson 1975, p. 2). Macpherson and Hiddlestone were in accord in the view that the health education curriculum needed revision.

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<sup>5</sup> Coping with volatile situations: A guide for teachers. A pamphlet published by NZCER, *Set*, No. 2, Item 2, 1982.

It was Hiddlestone's opinion that the 1969 Health Department handbook could be revised to form the basis of a health education course that would cover human development and relationships, including sex education. His department's submission to the Committee on Health and Social Education in 1976, stated this, and revisited some of his department's earlier frustration:

At present we have a fragmented and spasmodic general health education programme, in some cases based on the health handbook and in others not so based. District Health Office staff, such as medical officers and public health nurses act in an advisory role (to schools) and are involved in some programmes at the request of teachers... I have been through the annual reports for 1975 of all the medical officers attached to our district offices and find that almost without exception there is some involvement in health education in post-primary schools...entirely at the discretion of the principal...As for the future the Department's view is that, although parents have a major role in education for adulthood and the establishment of values, the school has a role in personal and social health education programmes particularly to support those parents who find the area difficult to cope with. For the school to do the job properly the whole range of personal and social health must be a regular and progressive part of the curriculum. To become a part of the curriculum would be contrary to the current procedure of people from outside visiting the school on an intermittent basis, however well those people may be qualified. Such a programme must be progressive and suited to the developmental stage of the child.<sup>6</sup>

No change could be made at primary level however without the position being clarified for the adolescent population of the secondary school. That Health and Education had been in dialogue over these issues is revealed in the following Department of Education statement.

There was evidence that some changes in public attitudes towards

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<sup>6</sup> Submission to the Committee on Health and Social Education from the Director-General of Health, October 18, 1976. (author's file)

sex education for primary school children had taken place. Officers of the Department held discussions with representatives of the Department of Health, the New Zealand Educational Institute and Education boards and School committees to see whether an amended syllabus statement would be acceptable. Unfortunately criticisms expressed by the public in 1968 indicated that the time was not an opportune one for the syllabus to be amended.<sup>7</sup>

Given the historic concerns of the Department of Health it was unsurprising that they would be reflected in the terms of reference given to the Committee on Health and Social Education and that the Committee would include representatives of the health sector.

The health bureaucracy was however not alone in its range of concerns. The Department of Police was mobilised periodically to liaise with the Child Welfare Division. over incidents of national interest regarding the care and protection of youth. Police representatives were also involved in inter-departmental discussions when issues of youth deviance interfaced with those of health and education. Such issues included street kids, glue sniffing, and truancy. Earlier incidents of youth delinquency that had attracted media attention are also relevant to the 1970s controversy for what they reveal regarding the manner in which public response to perceptions of moral degeneracy can catalyse powerful political lobbies. The relationship of the Departments of Police and Education is therefore also relevant.

## **THE DEPARTMENT OF POLICE**

The Departments of Police and Education also had congruent concerns. One police task was to return truants to their homes and to prosecute parents when deemed necessary. During the 1960s and 1970s this role involved liaison with the Department of Education's Visiting Teachers (VTs). Their work was backed up by regional Attendance

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<sup>7</sup> Department of Education summary statement: *Human Development and Personal Relationships (Including Sex Education) in the School Curriculum* (undated, pp. 1-2). (author's file)

Officers who could also pursue prosecution in consultation with the police. By the early 1970s the phenomenon of street kids was causing concern. Children who were not at school were vulnerable to being recruited into deviant activities, as had been demonstrated in earlier widely publicised incidents, such as that occurring in Lower Hutt, where, in July 1954 the New Zealand media focused on proceedings in the Magistrate's Court against youths charged with "indecent assault upon" and "carnal knowledge of" girls under 16 years. The newspapers' then current use of terms such as 'sexual delinquency', 'teddy boys', 'bodgies', 'widgies' and 'milk-bar cowboys' evoked images of widespread moral decline. In response to the Lower Hutt prosecutions, a special government committee was appointed under the Chair of Dr Oswald Mazengarb. It produced the *Report Of The Special Committee On Moral Delinquency In Children And Adolescents* (1954), also known as the Mazengarb Report, which had as its terms of reference:

To inquire into and to report upon conditions and influences that tend to undermine standards of sexual morality of children and adolescents in New Zealand, and the extent to which such conditions and influences are operative, and to make recommendations to the Government for positive action by both public and private agencies, or otherwise. (Mazengarb Report, p. 7).

The Mazengarb Committee, which was comprised of church, health, legal and education representatives, acknowledged its difficulty in establishing whether immorality among children and adolescents had increased because there were "not any statistics available either in New Zealand or elsewhere from which reliable guidance may be obtained. Sexual immorality is, by its very nature, a clandestine vice" (p. 2). What concerned the committee were 'trends' they described as the increasing "precocity of girls", the "organisation of immorality", "homosexual practices" and the "changed mental attitude in [sexually] offending children" which manifested in a "lack of shame".

## ***The Mazengarb Report***

The Mazengarb Report devoted two and a half of its sixty-four pages to the matter of sex education, acknowledging that while this should be undertaken by parents, some did not fulfill this role. The Report's suggested remedy was to provide parents with better educational resources, while maintaining the status quo with regard to sex education in schools.

Here it is emphasised that, apart from the biological aspect as a part of nature study in the primary schools, and general science in the post-primary schools, the school in general is not the place for class instruction in sex matters. Incidental features of sex hygiene will arise naturally from physical education and can be adequately treated there. It is felt that the teaching of the fuller aspects of the sex relation between men and women requires an emotional link between the teacher and the taught, and it should not be looked on as a duty of the school to forge this link. (Mazengarb Report, p 27)

In consigning sex education to the physical education teacher the Mazengarb Report can be seen to occupy slippery ground between the conservative right and the conservative-centre. The Committee viewed juvenile delinquency as related to pervasive influences such as radio, cinema, the school leaving age, liquor, gambling, parental absence from the home and marital discord. It considered, but rejected, "public whipping" for misdemeanours, but found corporal punishment within the home to be "justifiable". It advocated stricter film censorship, opposed making contraceptives available to adolescents, and espoused a strengthening of religious values through the work of the New Zealand Council of Christian Education. Among the Mazengarb recommendations was the 1954 *Amendment to the Police Offences Act*, making it an offence to "instruct or persuade" any child under the age of 16 in the use of contraceptives. Rapid legislation followed to ensure this.

In the discourse of the Mazengarb Report can be seen the historic fear of female sexuality as having potential for undermining the structure of society. The equating of sexuality in women of lower socio-economic

status with 'feble-mindedness' and 'loose' morality was a thesis of the eugenics movement that became a further component of the 1977 New Zealand controversy. Janet Soler (1988), who analysed the Mazengarb Inquiry in terms of moral panic theory, concluded that the parliamentary debate that followed release of the Mazengarb Report resulted in hastily conceived legislation "designed to prevent a 'decline in immorality' [and] the 'decay of the centre and core of our national life and culture'", legislation "passed unanimously by the members of both political parties" (p. 263). Soler discussed the particular roles in fanning moral panic played by individual police officers and the media, in contradiction of the expressed opinions of local teachers and principals with knowledge of the youths concerned. She suggested that "the Mazengarb Committee's insistence that the girls were 'precocious' and should therefore be punished indicates that there was a greater stereotyping of female delinquents than male delinquents" (p. 269). Since copies of the Mazengarb Report were delivered to every New Zealand home, the opinions it expressed were bound to have some impact.

In the context of the Mazengarb controversy, youth deviance was defined by vigilante protagonists whose definitions were then upheld by firstly, the Mazengarb Committee and secondly, Parliament. Soler's study illustrates the potential of a localised incident to generate immense public concern, to the point of becoming "misconstrued as a national threat", leading to "restrictive legislation and nationally enforced measures when funding might well be needed in local communities" (Soler, 1988, p 276).

A key feature of moral panics is the role of the media. Theory related to this will be outlined in the next chapter and discussed later in relation to the 1977 controversy. However the Lower Hutt incident was not the only New Zealand episode to have been analysed in these terms. Shuker, Openshaw and Soler (1990) describe another media flurry, known as the Hastings Blossom Festival of 1960, when teenage brawling disrupted the annual spring parade of festival floats through the small town of Hastings. As with the Mazengarb Inquiry, the Hastings incident, its associated injuries and police responses, were represented in the

media as providing confirming evidence of both an epidemic of juvenile delinquency, and the failure of the coeducational state school system. The context of this, and other incidents, is provided by Shuker, Openshaw and Soler who suggest that “by the time of the Hastings affray, concern over both youth and education were running parallel with teaching methods under attack, focusing on ‘playway’ [which] ill prepared children for the realities of harsh, monotonous, mass production work in factories” (p. 39). It was, they conclude, the Press that assumed the key role in “orchestrating and defining public reaction” (p.33).

What is also significant in relation to these incidents is the way in which they illustrate the relationship of conservative right ideology to perceptions of appropriate solutions for sexual deviance, and how such solutions relate to wider educational issues. Both the Mazengarb and Hastings affairs involved necessary liaison among the departments of police, education and child welfare. Both brought scrutiny to bear on the role of the school, the curriculum and teaching methods. Ongoing liaison among Health, Education and Police over social concerns continued through informal inter-departmental committees during the 1960s and early 1970s. This ensured that when the new Committee on Health and Social Education was established in 1975 it would include Police and Health Department representatives each with access to their own departmental data on youth and health issues. Furthermore the terms of reference given to the 1975 committee would reflect the historic and ongoing concerns of both Police and Health Departments as well as those of the education sector, contributing to their unmanageable inclusiveness. Against this background however other developments were occurring throughout New Zealand society that also require consideration in relation to the subsequent controversy.

## **NEW ZEALAND IN THE MID 20th CENTURY**

New Zealand in the mid 20th century was a society on the verge of considerable change. The 1960s brought a stream of British immigrants as well as an influx from the Pacific island nations in search



of work. There was also increasing migration from rural areas to the cities, particularly among Māori. Mobility in search of work was common. The new availability of contraception had released larger numbers of women into the paid work force, with the number of women in work doubling between 1951 and 1971 (Gustafson, cited in Sinclair, 1996). Legislation affecting the economic status of women both reflected the changing social climate and provided impetus for further change through Acts such as the Domestic Purposes Benefit of 1973, (DPB) which provided financial support for sole parenting, and the Matrimonial Property Act of 1976 which allowed for the equal division of family property. As with other social security expenditure, the DPB, which acknowledged the changing nature of the family unit, was accompanied by an increase in government expenditure, serving to fuel public and media speculation over the future stability of society. A lobby in favour of homosexual law reform had begun, and changing attitudes towards sexuality mobilised further debate. Within this context the role of the school as an agent of socialisation was regularly revisited. So too was the school's role in credentialing citizens for new economic roles. The threat to traditional export alliances for New Zealand's vulnerable primary produce market caused particular anxiety at the time of Britain's admission to the European Economic Community in 1972.

In the 1960s protest movements involving citizens from all strata of society contested issues ranging from threats to the environment to racism. Weir (2001) makes the point that this was a decade when "increasing numbers of New Zealanders entered into debates about conservation, feminism, homosexuality, abortion and race relations" (p. 5). With recent access to television New Zealand citizens were becoming more aware of their place in the international political scene, and protest surrounded New Zealand's 1965 contribution of troops to the American war in Vietnam. A concurrent trend was the rise of 'second wave' feminism, accessible through the growing number of American feminist writers such as Betty Friedan (1965), and visible in New Zealand during a contentious speaking tour in 1972 by Germaine Greer, author of *The Female Eunuch* (1970). Feminism was antithetical to the beliefs of

fundamentalist conservatives, and to morals 'watchdogs' such as Patricia Bartlett who spearheaded the New Zealand Society for the Protection of Community Standards (SPCS) which initiated prosecutions against the publishers and importers of what it considered to be 'pornography'. Conservative-right antipathy to feminism was so aroused that when Greer used the word 'bullshit' in an Auckland speech attacking the anti-abortion lobby, she was subsequently arrested and fined. Middleton and May (1997) summarised the social and political climate.

During the 1970s there were influential postcolonial arguments that education was a means to liberate whole peoples and nations from colonial domination. At the same time the urban riots in the United States and the ascendancy of black civil rights movements there, as well as the struggles of South African blacks against apartheid, served to inspire the political struggles of minority ethnic groups elsewhere, including Maori (and their Pakeha supporters) in New Zealand ... Demands for the equal valuing of all languages and cultures within education systems and classrooms introduced terms like multiculturalism and cultural pluralism into New Zealand education policy makers' and teachers' vocabularies and strategies. ( p. 215)

This confluence of concerns provides the matrix within which four successive terms of conservative National government ended in its defeat by Labour in 1972, and within which the controversy over the 1977 Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education must be considered.

The world that New Zealanders were seeing nightly on television tended to be an American one, with American pop music and protest songs dominating the music of the airwaves. It was American news reporting that predominated, and America's middle class lifestyle and teenage culture that was increasingly represented in drama and soap operas. Brinkley (1996) described this period in America.

Into this changing liberal world, a different political language gradually emerged to replace the now-repudiated interest in class and economic power that had dominated the New Deal. It was the language of individual rights – a language the war, and the anti-

totalitarian sentiment the war had produced, greatly strengthened...It led in turn to the mobilisation and empowerment of many other groups whose causes liberals generally embraced, among them racial and ethnic minorities, women, gays and lesbians, and people with disabilities. And it led as well to a growing level of tolerance for unconventional forms of personal behaviour and morality – a cultural relativism that has gradually become one of liberalism's most controversial and politically damaging characteristics. ( p.26)

Cultural relativism is also inherently antithetical to the foundational beliefs of fundamentalist Christians, and its seepage into the school curriculum was cause for vigilance. Against an increasing engagement with American culture however was a growing awareness among New Zealand's indigenous Māori population, and some Europeans, that issues of civil rights were directly applicable at home with the period of the mid 1960s throughout the 1970s becoming what is commonly described as the Māori Renaissance.

### ***Biculturalism in the 1960s and 1970s***

A central aspect of the political, legal and social fabric of New Zealand society in the 1960s and 1970s was its tentative progress towards bicultural nationhood. The Tangata Whenua (first people of the land) looked back to the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi for guidelines, in the context of increasing migration of Maori from traditional homelands to the cities, the decline in the number of Maori language speakers, educational inequities, and a growing sense of injustice over alienation from traditional rights to tribal lands. Orange (1987) described the legal and political aspects of this disaffection that culminated in the Hikoī (land march) of 1975, the Waitangi Act of 1975 and the subsequent establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal. This was a journey shared by Pākehā (Europeans) such as teacher Tom Newnham, who initiated the European protest group, Citizens Association for Racial Equality (CARE) early in the 1960s. Another, Trevor Richards, a campaigner

against South African apartheid, led the protest group Halt All Racist Tours (HART). Both groups provoked a backlash from conservative Pakeha citizens with opposing views.

During the 1960s a cohort of Maori graduates emerged from both Victoria University and the University of Auckland. Their increasing awareness regarding the social inequities in which Māori were enmeshed, led some to activism and subsequently to leadership over Treaty issues. Among them were Tipene O'Regan, Ranginui Walker, teachers Hiwi Tauroa, John Turei, and John Te Rangihau, who worked towards the inclusion of Te Reo (Maori language) in the school curriculum, and Paul Reeves, who would later become Governor-General. Another Māori graduate in political studies, Syd Jackson, described how 1970 was also marked by the first public awareness of gangs.

Groups with such names as the 'Stormtroopers', 'Black Power', 'Black Panther' and the 'Krauts', composed almost exclusively of young Māoris, burst into prominence. Bedecked with swastikas and other Nazi regalia, their names, their uniforms, when coupled with their colour and style, inflamed the fears of middle-class suburban Auckland. There was no recognition of the fact that these young people were seeking to find acceptance and ethnic identity through these groups. Many had been brought up in a cultural vacuum in the city ... often their parents were disoriented by city life and were unable to cope with the stress of urbanisation. Pepper-potted throughout the lower socioeconomic residential areas – which were bereft of community facilities – and forced into mind-blowing jobs to pay off mortgages, they were alienated from both their Marae and family groups. (Jackson, 1977, p. 276)

These problems of urbanisation were among the issues discussed at a Young Māori Leadership Conference held in Auckland in 1970. One outcome of this conference was a young Maori political pressure group, Nga Tamatoa (young warriors). Nga Tamatoa argued for self-determination of Māori institutions and cultural practices, focusing attention on racism.

It rejected the belief that New Zealand's cultures were faced with a Māori problem and talked instead of the Pākehā problem. It

argued that a cold reappraisal of Māori-Pākehā relations was necessary with the emphasis being placed on the aspects of the majority culture and its society as producing the common problems. (Jackson, 1977, p. 277)

With an increasing number of Māori children being reared in cities away from their tribal elders and culture, Nga Tamatoa supported the Wellington based movement of John Rangihau and others to restore Te Reo (Māori language) and jointly authored a booklet aimed at promoting the cause of Māori language and culture in schools (Nga Tamatoa & CARE, 1974). The postcolonial assimilationist policy had required Māori to become Pākehā in language and customs, releasing Pākehā of any obligation to learn either Māori language or to understand Māori culture. Michael King (2003) makes the point that whereas Te Reo was in a “relatively healthy state” in the 1930s, it was in serious danger of extinction by the 1970s “as elderly native speakers died and were not replaced by younger ones” (p. 474).

Even Māori who wanted to pursue Māoriness as part of urban life were in many respects prevented from doing so because Pākehā-oriented institutions – in education, in the health system, in the legal system – could see neither the value nor the necessity of such measures. When Māori in the Public Service, such as John Rangihau, advocated such measures they were quickly dismissed as separatists and potential sources of social divisiveness. (King, 2003, p. 481)

John Rangihau would subsequently become a member of the 1975 Committee on Health and Social Education. King suggested that resentment over such dismissiveness led to the rise of urban protest groups articulating Māori concerns, the first to make an impact being Nga Tamatoa which grew out of the Auckland University Club in the late 1960s and whose membership encompassed young manual workers (p. 482). Among its concerns were the promotion of Te Reo in schools, Māori control of Māori land, legal assistance for Māori offenders and the severing of sporting links with apartheid South Africa. The combined influence of the groups promoting Te Reo, and the more activist groups such as Nga Tamatoa “was to focus media attention on Māori issues in a

way that had never occurred previously, gradually to radicalise ... establishment organisations” (King, 2003, p. 483). The mobilising of young Māori radicals contrasted with the stance of some elders such as John Turei who “believed in peaceful settlement through talk, but was critical of Māori who railed over past injustices and voiced their grievances in English”.<sup>8</sup> Turei, Rangihau, Walker and others became friends of Garfield Johnson, the chairman of the Committee on Health and Social Education. The significance of this association will be discussed in Chapter Five.

New Zealand was not the only country grappling with issues of health, social order and educational inequities. The curriculum reports produced in Britain during the 1960s and the ideological debate regarding curriculum in America provide further threads into the New Zealand debate.

## **BRITAIN – THE SWING FROM LIBERALISM TO CONSERVATISM**

From the early 1940s to 1960s in Britain a succession of government reports articulated awareness of the need to educate the young in values and personal relationships, including sex education. The 1944 Education Act that reorganised the British education system, stated that it should be “the duty of the local education authority...to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community”(Burke, 1974, p. 34). Burke suggested that this statement was widely accepted as including sex education.

In 1943, the Board of Education, later the Ministry, produced a pamphlet drawing the attention of Local Education Authorities to the need for special courses for teachers and youth leaders in the area of sex education with the comment that student teachers “were often in need of

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<sup>8</sup> Sir John Turei was a Tuhoe Rangatira and eloquent orator. He tutored Garfield Johnson in Maori oratory. The above quotation was an editorial comment made in the *New Zealand Herald*, p. B 8, on December 28, 2003, the year Turei died.

personal guidance themselves”.<sup>9</sup> Another Board of Education pamphlet of 1956 stated that there were grounds for believing that a “better understanding of the reproductive processes in man, of the nature of sex and sexual behaviour and basic facts about population may help many people to achieve more rational conduct in their sex lives and in family relations” (cited in Burke, 1974, p. 36). Burke chronicled a series of British reports that appeared from the late 1950s throughout the 1960s suggesting that the educational bureaucracy was at that time at least partly occupied with curriculum issues of health, sex education and morals.

- The 1959 Crowther Report on the 15 to 18 year age group equivocated in acknowledging both the need to preserve the family and to recognise that sexual problems were not confined to marriage. Its solution was to recommend opportunities for senior students to discuss “sexual ethics”, although it did not define what it meant by this term.
- The Newsom Report (1963) concerning students aged 13 to 16 years of average or less than average ability, noted that such pupils comprised over half the school population. It suggested that an overwhelming influence in this age group was “the sexual instinct” and recommended “positive and realistic” guidance for boys and girls including “biological, social, moral and personal aspects” (cited in Burke, p. 43). This acknowledgment of adolescent sexuality was likely to have been influenced by the Freudian psychoanalytic perspective, which then held sway in British psychology. As with the Crowther Report, the Newsom Report acknowledged that religious instruction should provide the basis of sexual morality.
- The Cohen Report (1964), produced by the Central and Scottish Health Services Council, also suggested that health education in schools should aim at giving a child knowledge that will “equip

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<sup>9</sup> British Board of Education (1943). *Sex Education In Schools And Youth Organizations*.

him” to face the “social and health problems he will meet in the future” (cited in Burke, p. 46).

- In 1964 a Schools’ Council was established by the British Government to undertake research and development work on curricula, teaching methods and examinations in schools. Under the joint auspices of the Council and the Nuffield foundation, a more liberal perspective led to the production and dissemination of resources and programmes suitable for education in human relationships, health and sexuality. Three years later the Plowden Report of 1967 stated that sex education was a parental responsibility “often avoided” and suggested that each school should have “a policy on sex education, developed in consultation with parents” (cited in Burke, p. 52).

While these developments indicate an increasingly liberal tenor of British educational thought, there was a similar liberalising of the curriculum in the field of social education in other non-Catholic European countries during this period. Burt & Meeks (1975), Kozakiewicz (1981), and the World Health Organisation (1984) provide examples of the wide range of teaching resources and programmes on human development and relationships developed at this time. It was in this international context that the New Zealand Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) was set up, one of its aims being to introduce some of the teaching methods and content linked to current research on cognitive and affective development, such as that of Jean Piaget, Jerome Bruner and Benjamin Bloom. Such liberalising of the curriculum in Britain was however also meeting resistance there from a lobby led by anti-pornography campaigner, Mary Whitehouse, and a group of conservative educationalists who produced a pessimistic series of *Black Papers* on current educational trends. In 1981 when policy decisions were still being made in New Zealand on the recommendations of the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education, the educational bureaucracy of the conservative Thatcher Government in Britain was encouraging teachers “to situate sex education within the context of a morality of marriage and the family” (Holly, 1989, p. 48). Subsequently the British



1986 Education Act allowed school governors to ban sex education, while the 1988 Local Government Act outlawed the promotion of homosexuality by local authorities. This was a sanction that could obviously be extended and applied generally to sex education programmes in schools. This swing back to conservatism will be shown to be reflected in New Zealand.

To appreciate the intensity of the New Zealand controversy it is also necessary to describe briefly the phenomenon known as the American text book controversy, since the methods of the text book campaigners were adopted by the New Zealand lobby and served to heighten public apprehension regarding curriculum trends. These events will be examined in more detail in Chapter Seven.

## **AMERICA – THE THREAT OF SECULAR HUMANISM**

The trend known as secular humanism was a 20th century movement that affirmed it was possible to behave in altruistic and ‘moral’ ways without having one’s beliefs grounded in religious Biblical foundations. Its growth in the 1960s was influenced by educational theories, such as those of Jean Piaget (1952) and Jerome Bruner (1968) on cognitive development, and Lawrence Kohlberg (1966, 1969) on moral development. While Piaget’s theory that children’s cognitive development proceeded through qualitatively different stages was neither morally repugnant to Christian fundamentalists nor antagonistic to the behaviourism then prevailing in American psychology, the research of Kohlberg was another matter. The suggestion that morality could be situationally specific and defined differently through different cultural processes of socialisation was antithetical to moral absolutism, but inherent to secular humanism. At stake was the school’s role in character formation of the nation’s youth, for which there were already enough corrupting influences evident to alarm those holding fundamentalist beliefs. The sexual revolution of 1960s America had already provided considerable angst, with “flower power” epitomising the rejection of traditional relationships between women and men, while the anti-war

protest movement attacked the legitimacy of the Senate. Participants in a 1966 conference of the Child Study Association of America expressed concern over what they saw as the bureaucratisation of parental functions in relation to sex education. However, it was agreed that families could no longer be seen as the exclusive source of wisdom and guidance for the young because “the socialising functions of organisations such as church, school, and social welfare agencies...had increased the complexity of the young person’s search for guidance” (Eisenberg 1967, pp. 7-20). In America, Britain and New Zealand, Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory was then infiltrating courses of teacher education, and being translated into a range of strategies for use in the classroom within the context of social studies (Porter & Taylor, 1972). Kohlberg’s highest level of moral development, the autonomous individual, was characterised by an ability to make moral judgments and formulate her, or his, own moral principles, rather than conform to the moral judgments of others. Moral reasoning was thus seen as autonomous only if, and when, it did not depend on any external criterion, including the authority of God. In America, antagonism to this hypothesis was being expressed by groups described as the New Religious Right (NRR) as summarised by Modgil and Modgil (1988).

The history of Western philosophy begins with the struggle between the relativist and sceptics on the one hand, and those, who with Plato and Socrates, search for some ground on which unchanging knowledge claims might be based. Unless relativism could be shown to be wrong the very enterprise of philosophy was doomed...Those who viewed Kohlberg as a dangerous liberal argue that his emphasis on moral autonomy is licence, and that his insistence on form, rather than the listing of specified moral rules is but a quieter species of subversion. (p. 9)

These were issues of deep concern to the NRR whose leaders claimed that state schools were now teaching the new religion of secular humanism, and who denounced Kohlberg, as ‘satanic’, and ‘unconstitutional’.

Inasmuch as it has been held unconstitutional for a tax-supported school to promote religious belief, we hold that it is equally unconstitutional to promote religious disbelief. Further, since the denial of supernatural forces is in itself a form of religion, the promotion of agnosticism or nihilism must also be unconstitutional. (Hefley, 1977, p 164)

This viewpoint allowed its protagonists to use the First Amendment to attack schools and teachers and impose their own definition of lawful education claiming that “atheism has become the official doctrine of public education” (LaHaye, 1982, p.91). The agents of such atheism were seen as liberal teachers and the textbooks and novels they used in the context of the state school curriculum.

That ideological tensions surrounding the teaching of teaching of values and morals are inevitable was summarised aptly by John Dewey in stating that “there is no fact which throws light upon the constitution of society, there is no power whose training adds to social resourcefulness that is not moral” (Dewey, 1959, p. 43). Since training, textbooks and the suitability of teachers would become issues in the New Zealand controversy, a detour into related American events is also relevant.

### ***The Controversy Over SIECUS***

The text book controversy centred on the work of the Sex Information Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). An articulate American SIECUS opponent was Dr Rhoda Lorand (1965) whose arguments were used subsequently by the New Zealand Religious Right lobby. The use of ‘experts’, tracts, and newsletters was part of the American campaign to have Senate funding withdrawn from SIECUS. The Doctrine of Original Sin provided a rationale for book censorship on the basis that until individuals are ‘born again’ their natural propensity is towards evil. Thus, if any people in a story act in foolish or disturbing ways, vulnerable and inherently sinful children and teenage readers will seek to emulate them. Books given to students must therefore promote strictly fundamental Biblical values. Such anxieties made the novels of

Judy Blume a target for prosecutions brought by fundamentalist Christians in courts across America. Blume's teenage novels, *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* (Blume 1970) and *Forever – A Novel* (Blume 1975), also used in New Zealand schools, were viewed by the NRR as promoting the work of Satan and proselytising sexual license. The plot of *Forever* was adapted into a comic for use as a sex education resource by the Family Planning Association in Britain. Titled "*Too Great A Risk*" the same comic circulated in America and was republished by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research. As will be explained in Chapter Seven, this comic became the catalyst for the formation of the powerful New Zealand lobby group, the Concerned Parents' Association.

For American fundamentalists there were two battlefields. The first was the fight for censorship of curriculum materials, and the second was the public discrediting of individual teachers seen as using the classroom to promote secular humanism. Battle strategies included encouraging sympathetic teachers to act as watchdogs within their schools, encouraging parents to stand for election on PTAs, public naming of 'unsuitable' teachers in letters to newspapers and parental monitoring of teaching resources. In America, as in New Zealand, such tactics would arouse dismay in more moderate conservative Christian citizens who did in fact see some need for liberalisation of parts of the curriculum. This raised the issue of who might be considered to be Christian. The message that filtered down from American fundamentalist ministers was that the only true Christians were those who professed and practised adherence to a Bible-based ministry having connections with the NRR. This meant that Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, Anglicans, and Roman Catholics were therefore not necessarily true Christians and might even be "perceived as agents of the Antichrist" (Edwards, 1998, pp. 4-5). From this perspective it becomes possible to discredit mainstream Church groups, and non-fundamentalist ministers of religion, as happened in the New Zealand controversy.

## ***Reassertion and redefinition***

Trudell (1993) made another point applicable to New Zealand, that in America during the 1970s teenage pregnancy was still construed as an individualised problem rather than a social one, with responsibility resting with the girl. In tracing the 1970s emergence of American conservative political and religious groups opposing sex education Trudell suggested that a major purpose of this movement was to promote a 'monolithic definition' of the family as people related by blood or adoption, in juxtaposition to the current international trend towards acknowledging relationship groupings that provided alternatives to the traditional nuclear family. In pursuit of its campaign the NRR coordinated the activities of a range of other groups with single issues such as feminism, abortion, gay rights and school sex education. Trudell cites the success of this concerted action as being seen in the American Family Protection Act of 1981, which reinforced a conservatively traditional definition of family. Among the provisions of this Act was a prohibition on federal funding for schools whose curriculum "would tend to denigrate, diminish or deny the role differences between the sexes as they have been historically understood in the United States" (Trudell, 1993, p.17). In the context of these events, Trudell records that responsible sexual behaviour was eventually defined by President Reagan in 1987 as being "based on fidelity, commitment and maturity, placing sexuality within the context of marriage" (p. 24).

Another target of the NRR was a new American social studies curriculum, with a humanist perspective based around the theories of Piaget and Kohlberg - *Man, a Course of Studies* (MACOS). As soon as it appeared, MACOS was challenged, by the NRR (Hottois & Milner, 1975) highlighting another issue that would become enmeshed in the New Zealand controversy. MACOS was a site of contestation in the conservative state of Queensland in Australia at the same time as being trialed in some New Zealand schools (Openshaw, 2001).

## AUSTRALIA – THE FIGHT AGAINST MACOS

The objective of MACOS was to have students explore questions about humanity such as: *What is human about human beings? How did they get that way?* The cultural relativism typical of secular humanism inherent in such questioning was guaranteed to alarm conservative Christians. While being piloted in New Zealand under the auspices of the Department of Education, in 1976-1977, it was concurrently under attack by lobby groups in both Australia and America. Smith and Knight (1978) who analysed the Queensland anti-MACOS lobby found its protagonists to be fundamentalists who rejected other forms of Christianity, humanism, pluralism and socialism and who “valued authority and control” (p. 137). One of these was a fundamentalist Christian minister, and former science teacher, D. C. Shelton, who published a booklet “outlining in detail the extent of sex education overseas – its results and lessons for people in Australia”.<sup>10</sup> Shelton was responding to the “tremendous moral landslide in our community coupled with the barrage of sex being directed at the young.” A teacher, he wrote, did not have “an automatic ‘deed of grant,’ by his virtue of training and position, into the private and moral development of the personal values and sexual behaviour of those entrusted to his care.”<sup>11</sup> In Shelton’s view the “squeeze on the ordinary person for sex education in schools” came from “Communists, Women’s Liberation, Humanists, the Queensland Teachers Union, some doctors, some churches, other Australian states and the Australian Science Education Project”. The last named was a Victorian federal-sponsored curriculum project that had been working on aspects of the Science curriculum and in 1971 piloted a sex education programme in Victorian schools. There is a parallel with the leadership being offered in Shelton’s pamphleteering and that subsequently of the New Zealand resident, Martin Viney, who was prominent in the lobby against the Report of the Committee on Health

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<sup>10</sup> Shelton, D.C. (undated, but post 1972). *Sex Education In Schools*, Covenant Press, Box 8, Nundah, Queensland, 4012. (author’s file).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3

and Social Education. Both Shelton and Viney were science teachers and lay preachers whose writings and proselytising attempted to bring an element of 'scientific authority' to the arguments they marshalled against the teaching of human development and sex education.

Openshaw (2001) describes how MACOS was used as a secondary school social studies course in Queensland since the early 1970s, with its use filtering down to the upper primary school level. "In New Zealand the introduction of MACOS was to follow the typical pattern of centre-periphery innovation, in being initially supported by officers within the Department [which] had been closely monitoring events in Australia" (p. 39). Apprehension regarding the adoption of MACOS into the New Zealand school curriculum was fuelled by contact with Norma Gabler, an American fundamentalist campaigner who, with her husband, had set up a USA watchdog institute to scrutinise school texts for 'improper' content. Gabler visited New Zealand in 1977, addressing parent groups, explaining her group's lobby tactics and urging New Zealanders to undertake similar activities to protect the innocence of children. Her views were widely reported in the newsletters of the Concerned Parents' Association.

In April 1977, the Chairman of the Concerned Parents' Association, Peter Clements, wrote to the Minister of Education, Les Gandar, expressing concern over the Department's MACOS trial in schools. Roger Openshaw (2001) described how Gandar's reply to Clements was sent for comment to anti-MACOS campaigners in the United States, being subsequently used to demonstrate collusion between the Department and teachers sympathetic to the goals of the programme. MACOS was seen by the American NRR as an attack on Judeo-Christian family values, underwritten by the private enterprises that would make money from the sales and promotion of its resource materials. Stirred from the pulpit, American fundamentalist groups had already organised effective anti-MACOS protests to their Senate representatives with the result that in May 1976 the United States Congress voted to stop Federal funding from the National Science Foundation to maintain the

programme. In 1978 the Queensland State Cabinet also withdrew the course.

The effect of the MACOS debate in New Zealand was to give strength to the tide of apprehension that characterised the first wave of the controversy over the work of the Committee on Health and Social Education by contributing to a climate of suspicion over collusion between Department and teachers. In his analysis of these events in New Zealand, Openshaw related how the Minister and Department of Education worked together cautiously over the MACOS programme, both to introduce innovation and to control curriculum controversy. The New Zealand debate on MACOS was eventually subsumed within the controversy over the report of the Committee on Health and Social Education but is significant for its contribution to the apprehension that characterised the lobby of the Concerned Parents' Association.

## **SUMMARY**

This chapter has outlined and explained some historical antecedents to the broad terms of reference that would emerge in 1975 for the Committee on Health and Social Education. Social trends and events in New Zealand significant to the controversy included the rise of feminism, changing gender roles, legislation affecting the traditional definition of the family and a liberalising of the curriculum. The issue of New Zealand as a nation moving towards biculturalism has also been introduced and will be argued later that this trend had a significant impact on both the Report's discourse, and the way it was received by the public.

The ideological divide between conservative and liberal perspectives on sex education can be seen to have influenced the trajectories of related curriculum trends in Britain, America and Australia as well as New Zealand. The examples of the American text book controversy and MACOS in Queensland illustrate how fundamentalist conservative leadership emerged in response to social change to undertake hegemonic activity in pursuit of its own ideological objectives



in relation to the State school curriculum. It has also been shown how definitions of Christianity can further polarise the discourse between extremes of viewpoint. The inherent tensions in such debate are grounded in different views of what constitutes human nature, the role of the school in socialisation and the relationship of these to the stability of society.

This chapter situated the controversy that will be traced subsequently within the context of international events and provides the background from which the terms of reference given to the Committee on Health and Social Education can be better understood. It was stated at the beginning that there were many New Zealanders with an interest in the contents of the Report when it appeared in 1977. They included those whose interest was primarily in either health or issues of youth deviance as these related to the historic concerns of the Departments of Health and Police. The introduction to the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education includes the letter of transmittal from the Chairman to the Minister of Education, suggesting that “many of the matters discussed will be of direct interest to [other] departments ...The committee hopes that you will be able to refer relevant matters to your colleagues [in] Social Welfare, Health and Police in particular” (p.3). In the controversy that followed however it was the historic issue of sex education that dominated public debate rather than recreation, health, gangs or drugs. To understand why this was so, further discussion of conservative and liberal ideology is necessary. This will be undertaken in the next chapter, when theories relevant to understanding the context, events and significance of the controversy will also be introduced.



## **THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE CONTEXT AND CONTROVERSY OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL EDUCATION**

This chapter will introduce theory relevant to the controversy under study. Critical theory concerns itself with the underlying social structure of events, the contexts in which these occur, and with the power relationships among participants in these events. It looks at causation of social phenomena, and of the unintended effects in the dynamics of power relations. In this pursuit it examines ideologies underlying such tensions and the distortions of communication and understanding that can arise within public debate. It is suggested in this chapter that the period of educational history covered here requires an eclectic approach to the analysis of particular events. Silver (1990) argued against using one “grand theory” to explain the significance of historical events because of the potential of this to limit and “oversimplify the complexity of relationships, institutions, communities and societies” (p. 4). Before introducing theoretical perspectives relevant to this study however it is necessary to expand on the definitions of competing ideologies begun in the previous chapter in order to provide a context for the positions of the main protagonists of the controversy

### **DEFINITIONS**

In the introduction it was stated that the issue of sex education dominated the controversy over the 1977 Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education and in Chapter One brief definitions were given of the antagonistic ideologies of the ‘conservative right’ and ‘progressive liberal’ positions. These terms require further elaboration since there are various definitions of both ends of this ideological

continuum with most confusion arising over what is meant by conservative. The following discussion does not cover the radical left or right wing extremes since the focus is on debate over the purposes of public education systems and the role of the State in this.

### ***Conservatism and the Religious Right***

Conservative ideology is variously described as the “extreme right” or “right wing” (Spoonley 1987), “fundamentalist conservatism” (Eisner, 1992), “foundationalism” (Yarborough 1999), “new religious right” (Sears, 1992), “conservative traditionalist” (Carlson 1991) and “rightist” (Apple, 2001). As Apple suggests, “the right is not a unitary movement. It is a coalition of forces with many different emphases” (p. 9). When there is public perception of a moral crisis however the religious right conservative element of society has the capacity to use its words and symbols as a rallying call that recruits the overlapping concerns of other citizens who would normally adhere to a more centrist stance.

Eisner saw fundamentalist conservatism as congruent with “religious orthodoxy” which has as its aim the shaping of the views of others to match those who have already discovered the truth contained in the orthodoxy. He suggested that the fundamental principle of the American New Religious right is a belief in God and the importance of God’s message in defining the content, directions and conditions of educational practice. From this basis any explanation of competing views within the curriculum is an admission that the truths held to be fundamental, are in fact uncertain. Because the expression of religious conviction varies with different views of God the definition of truth must be re-asserted in the context of any crisis that emerges. It is its own particular definition of truth that the Religious Right seeks to have reflected in the state school curriculum. It follows therefore that the cultivation of a critical attitude in students is troublesome for its potential to undermine the structure of authority required to maintain the Religious Right’s particular intellectual hegemony. Thus a Religious Right lobby

aimed at influencing educational policy must seek congruence in the belief systems of politicians or seek to effect such congruence through the persuasion of politicians in ways that lead them to “approximate some of the dogmatic features of religious views regarding the ways in which schools should function and the ends they should seek to attain” (Eisner, p. 308). Within the context of the New Zealand controversy discussed here the term ‘Religious Right’ (RR) will be used to refer specifically to the loose coalition of lobby groups known as the Concerned Parents’ Association, the Society for the Protection of Community Standards, and the other groups described in Chapter Seven under the heading ‘Religious Right’.

### ***Liberal ideology***

In historiography liberal ideology is also called “progressive-liberalism” (Eisner 1992). Both parts of this compound term have as their basic premise a developmental view of human beings that acknowledges the complex interactions of biology, emotions and cognition. The term liberal will be used subsequently to denote this perspective. The roots of 20th century liberalism lie in Darwinian theory, as reflected in the writings of educationalists such as John Dewey (1959), Lev Vygotsky (1978), Jean Piaget (1952) and Maria Montessori (1967). Liberal educators see learning as the result of the child engaging with her, or his, environment and acknowledge the impact of culture on the individual’s cognition. This leads to acknowledging the validity of cultural relativity and towards secular humanism, which is the antithesis of the belief system of the RR. Developmental theorists see growth as holistic and cultural, involving a continuous process of constructive adaptation and transformation in relation to, and within, the context of the socialising environment. At the macrocosm level education is seen as an agency of social change, with the “envelope” of the school providing an holistic educational process for each individual by moving beyond the formal curriculum and providing “in its shared way of life the social conditions that themselves convey to the child the norms of social living”

(Eisner, 1992, p. 313). Liberal educationalists such as Dewey and Montessori sought to develop programmes that would provide for such holistic development, making the envelope an apt metaphor.

## **TENSIONS BETWEEN THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT AND LIBERAL POSITIONS ON HUMAN SEXUALITY AND SEX EDUCATION**

As defined here, Religious Right and liberal ideologies can be seen as inherently antithetical, with the potential for antagonistic discourses. Apple (1991) made the point that “the Right never thinks that anything much needs to be changed: it thinks the country is basically in good shape...It sees the Left’s struggle for social justice as mere trouble making, as utopian foolishness” (p. 8).

Public discourse becomes even more polarised when issues of the State school’s role in socialisation into norms of human sexuality and behaviour surface. Foucault (1980) saw sexuality education as an instrument of sexual and social control. Through examining language Foucault studied the social dynamics of constructing meaning, of how language affects, and frames, our notions of self and identity. From a Foucauldian perspective Sears (1992) suggested that sexual ideology reflects both the hegemonic power of the dominant social group, its power “to control the body politic” and the limits of this power (p. 15). Although Foucault’s work on sexuality provided an analytic window for deconstructing various discourses on sexuality in terms of power relations it has been suggested that it also took for granted much of the existing, prestructured social world (Carlson, 1992, p. 82). Foucault has since acknowledged the necessity of historical context to any understanding of the self.

It is true that I became quite involved with the question of power.

It soon appeared to me that, while the human subject is placed in relations of production and of signification, he is equally placed in power relations that are very complex”. (Foucault, 1982/2001, pp. 326-327)

Foucault's approach to understanding specific cultural phenomena is therefore not seen as being sufficient to an understanding of the controversy under study here which requires an extensive examination of the context in which the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education was both written and received.

### ***Psychosexual theory in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century***

What Foucault called 'Victorian Puritanism' Carlson (1992) refers to as "conservative traditionalist" ideology, having the view of sexual deviance as "sin and sickness that was dominant in the first several decades of the 20th century" (p. 34). This view elevates asceticism and the disciplined renunciation, or sublimation, of bodily pleasures. Delamater (1989) suggested that since Judeo Christian doctrine is concerned with supporting patriarchal authority structures and the socialising institutions of the state it necessarily confines sexual activity to marriage for the purpose of childbearing and must also therefore proscribe non procreative activity such as adultery, abortion and homosexuality.

The challenge of Darwin's research and the early 20th century emergence of psychology as a discipline meant that early sexuality educators began to "legitimate moralistic statements by recourse to scientific theory or data" (Carlson, 1992, p. 36). In this climate Freud's psychological theory was particularly important with its view of repression and sublimation of sexuality as being necessary to the stability of society (Freud, 1923/1974). The theory of Freud, who was influenced by Darwin, could thus be recruited in the cause of the Religious Right. Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory included the proposition that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, suggesting that the development of each individual must proceed through primitive and savage stages towards the civil. From this perspective education could be seen as a process of "civilising little savages much as European colonialism was understood as part of a benign process of civilising 'primate' peoples" (Carlson, 1992, p 37). While the liberals interpreted Darwin's proposition

as supporting the significance of allowing children to assert their instinctual exploratory behaviour in learning from the environment, the RR saw it as essential to repress such instincts in the interests of societal stability.

Freud's interpretation of Darwin's recapitulation theory posited three basic human motivations - – the pleasure-seeking principle of the id, the reality-seeking principle of the ego and the approval seeking internalised conscience of the superego. In Freudian theory the stability of society required the mediating force of the ego to balance primitive urges with cultural values with the well-adjusted adult sublimating and channeling sexuality into socially-sanctioned endeavour. Freud argued that "just as a cautious business man avoids tying up all his capital in one concern... so the well-adjusted individual learns to avoid investing too heavily in the pleasure principle" (Freud, 1973/1938, p 33). Learning to achieve such balance required a journey through five psychosexual developmental stages of exploration and experimentation that had to be monitored and controlled by parents. Of these, the fourth stage of middle childhood, termed latency, was considered by Freud and his followers to be inherently 'asexual'. As in America, Freud's views on the latency stage would be an important part of the RR lobby in the New Zealand controversy. To unleash the id in pursuit of pleasure seeking sexual activity was to threaten the very basis of civilisation through its potential to bring about sickness and moral decay.

Carlson (1992) suggested that during the early 20th century, within the context of the eugenics movement, disease was depicted as "the wages of sin, much as AIDS has been depicted by traditionalists in contemporary American society" (p. 39). Consistent with this perspective the mental hygiene approach to health education that had dominated the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was based on the idea that a strict regimen of bodily and sexual hygiene and avoidance of those who were unclean, diseased or defective, could act as a prophylactic self-inoculation against sexually transmitted and degenerative diseases and thus lead to a healthier society. From this viewpoint sexual deviance, precocity and promiscuity became the individual's problem and sex



education had the potential to exacerbate such deviance. Liberals, on the other hand, saw sexual deviance, as a social issue requiring the state to make a response aimed at the management of such problems, particularly where there were seen to be class-based inequities. Also employing Freudian theory, liberal educators sought a rationale for sexuality and family life education in state schools, “grounded not on repression...but rather upon sublimation and limited expression” (p. 41). Carlson stated that liberals emphasised the social costs of ignorance, claiming that individuals would “find ways of having abortions and using contraceptives regardless of how much church leaders condemned these practices [and] that if contraceptives were more readily available there would be less need for abortions” (p. 43). It was, suggested Carlson, a growing belief among “social workers and students of society [that] in very many cases it is better for both mother and child if the girl does not marry, especially at so early an age” (p. 258). It was similar reasoning that led to New Zealand’s Domestic Purposes Benefit and the 1976 establishment of the Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion.

Somewhere between the liberal - RR positions was a middle-conservative stance that saw the need for some sex education in order to prevent disease, but not to the extent that inappropriate juvenile experimentation was encouraged. Issues such as contraception and abortion catalysed debate between liberal and middle-conservatives about which educational activities and programmes might best serve to help reduce teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted disease, but it was generally agreed that some education was necessary. In the context of the controversy over the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education citizens, whose views ranged to the right and left of a middle conservative position, would align themselves more firmly in either the liberal or Religious Right camp. Figure 1 illustrates each of these positions in relation to underlying assumptions about human nature and the state’s role with regard to sex education and it will be revealed subsequently how these views were expressed in the context of the controversy over the Report of the Committee on Health and Social education.

<b>IDEOLOGY</b>	<b>VIEW OF HUMANS</b>	<b>INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR</b>	<b>SOCIETY'S OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>MEANS OF THE STATE</b>
Conservative fundamentalist	Biological Deterministic Gender roles a fundamental 'given'	Inherently instinctual and sinful versus 'moral'	Maintenance of societal stability through control of grosser instincts	Eugenics Socialization & Indoctrination through training/punishment
Middle conservative	Biological with capacity to learn from experience	Hedonistic motivations  firm guidance necessary	Healthy nationhood through self-responsibility in accord with predominant social values	Prophylactic education & character training aimed at mental hygiene
Liberal – progressive	Holistic – biological, social, emotional and cognitive functioning integrated	Developmental Approach to Learners  Innate need to 'explore' Exploratory behaviour necessary to learning	Social and emotional health of community  Reciprocity – responsibility for self & others  Some flexibility in gender roles appropriate	Socialization into healthy lifestyle choices  Education – for choice & the giving of relevant information

**Figure 1** – Towards defining the role of sex education in society. Assumptions and ideologies underpinning debate in the controversy over the New Zealand *Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education (1977)*.

## **AN ECLECTIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

While the ideologies of the Religious Right and liberalism provide a framework for scrutiny of some aspects of the New Zealand controversy, in order to make sense of the context and outcomes of the debate a range of theory is necessary since the process of historiography “inevitably must involve crossing boundaries of anthropology, sociology, psychology and economics” (Tosh, 2000, p. 34). In this pursuit the psychosexual psychological theory of Sigmund Freud has already been introduced. However there are four other areas of theory relevant to the controversy over the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education. These are:

1. Theory relating to the hegemonic activity of the Department of Education.
2. Theory relating to conservative apprehension in a liberal political context.
3. Theory relating to committee leadership in a particular context of social change.
4. Theory relating to the role of the media in relation to the issue of ‘moral panic’.

As will be shown in subsequent chapters, some of the theories relating to these four themes function well as lenses through which to analyse the events of the controversy, while others offer part explanations. Together however they provide theoretical perspectives that will inform subsequent discussion and analysis and help to make sense of the controversy. Some further explanation of each is therefore necessary.

### **1. HEGEMONY AND THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY COMMUNITY**

Debate over the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education involved a series of hegemonic struggles, the sites of which

shifted throughout the controversy. What began as a battle between the RR and a liberal educational policy group in the aftermath of the “Ross Report” of 1973 had, by 1980, become a struggle between the same policy community and an autocratic Minister of Education. The construct of hegemony outlined by Gramsci (1971) views the State’s exercise of state control and power as being:

... diffused by agencies of ideological control and socialisation into every area of daily life... As all ruling elites seek to perpetuate their power, wealth, and status, they necessarily attempt to popularise their own philosophy, culture, morality, etc, and render them unchallengeable, part of the natural order of things. (Cited in Boggs, 1976, p. 39)

Giroux (1980) defined Gramscian hegemony as a form of ideological control in which dominant beliefs, values, and social practices are produced and distributed throughout a whole range of institutions, such as schools, the family, mass media and trade unions. “As the dominant ideology, hegemony functions to define the meaning and limits of common sense as well as the form and content of discourse in a society... by positing certain ideas and routines as natural and universal” (p. 228). In reviewing the role of the state in New Zealand education, Codd, Harker and Nash (1985) made the point that the term hegemony had come to conceptualise class domination as “organised consent”, maintained by ideological practices and physical controls.

Gramsci’s concept of hegemony is an attempt to capture the non-coercive dimension of domination. It refers to the central and dominant system of meanings, values and actions, which are lived, and which shape the world that we see and the ‘commonsense’ interpretation we make of it. (p. 10)

Scott (1996) applied the construct of hegemony in his analysis of the power dynamics in play during the work of the Currie Commission on Education in New Zealand between 1960 and 1962. He found the Commission to be a fraternity of ‘insiders’ who were able to influence the parameters of the Commission’s deliberations and to encompass public dissatisfactions within the existing bureaucratic frameworks. In analysing the Currie Committee’s bureaucratic techniques for

maintaining the hierarchical status quo, the control of finance, and strategies for marginalising dissent, Scott explained how the committee managed to produce a consensual liberal document in the face of multiple complaints from the wider community and the media. As a site of social reproduction, the Currie Commission demonstrated the process of hegemonic maintenance through its “re-affirming [of] social relations and enhancing existing institutional arrangements”. It was thus “able to set the ideological limits of political debate and social reform” (p. 31). Scott argued that through their networks, and ability to move across and within educational and bureaucratic settings, the membership and secretariat of the Currie Commission represented a “community of interest”. Scott’s thesis is that the Currie Commission was a structural mechanism designed to support the dominant policy community of its time. It will be argued here however that while the membership of the Committee on Health and Social Education represented both a community of interest and a departmental structural mechanism, the exercise of Departmental hegemony had become a more complex and difficult enterprise in the 1970s than it was at the time of the Currie Commission. Public debate over the aims of education begun in the context of the 1973 EDC, as well as changes of government and Ministers of Education, meant that the outcomes of the 1977 report could not be as assured as that of the Currie Report of 1962. Nor could the limits of debate be as easily controlled.

Roger Openshaw (1995) viewed the Currie Commission as a response by the bureaucracy to a crisis in the liberal educational philosophy that had gained ascendancy in the previous two decades. It was, he suggested, concerned with consensus building around “ideological battles over the allocation of state resources” (p. 88). Using the example of the social studies programme, *Man a Course of Studies*, Openshaw (2001) outlined the means by which Departmental networks were able to hoard and control information regarding the implementation of this particular programme in selected New Zealand schools in ways that minimised the impact of controversy and dissent. He has also suggested that government reports, being in-house enterprises executed

by policy communities, may have a private language of their own.<sup>1</sup> This comment is likely to have greatest applicability when committees are comprised mainly of representatives of one governmental sector. It will be argued in Chapters Five and Six that since this was not the case with the Committee on Health and Social Education, it became necessary for an in-house educative process to be undertaken in order to generate a shared language and to produce consensus in the pursuit of hegemonic outcomes. Openshaw points out that policy makers employ the strategy of “informed disinterest” to further hegemonic control of curriculum innovation.

From the mid-1940s until its demise in 1989 the New Zealand Department of Education attempted to counter public criticism of education utilising a strategy best described as ‘informed disinterest’ [which] typically consisted of a measured and authoritative response from senior Departmental officials. This response allowed the bureaucracy to present a public image of reasonableness, directly informed by scientific and liberal educational principles, in which the critics could be portrayed as somewhat shrill impediments to progress. (Openshaw, 2001, p. 33)

By the use of “informed disinterest” Departmental spokesmen were able to parry and delay the impact of protest. As will be later shown, this was a strategy employed repeatedly by the Director-General of Education, W. L. Renwick, in relation to the New Zealand controversy, leading to his being described by the secretary of the Religious Right lobby as “as slippery as they come” (J. Viney, Interview, August 13, 1999):

The Marxist position sees formal schooling as an agent of social control operating to reproduce the prevailing system of social relations. Inequality therefore becomes differential socialisation to meet the demands of hierarchical societies. Thus formal education in capitalist societies is seen as part of the ideological structure through which the ruling class undertakes hegemonic activity to maintain its dominance over the masses. Marxism suggests that since education reflects the dominant political and economic groups and institutions in society, it cannot be a

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<sup>1</sup> Personal communication to author, February 9, 2001.

leading agent of social change. Rather, major educational changes follow changes in the essential nature of the economic political and social order in a society. From a Marxist perspective Shaker (1982) viewed the liberal position of the 1970s New Zealand educational community as both accepting the legitimacy of the given economic order and the need to advocate reform. In educational practice, he suggested, this led to an emphasis on the role of the school as a vehicle of individual enlightenment and opportunity, dissolver of class barriers, and agent of skill developments relevant to economic development. He contrasted this with Marxist revisionist theory that argues that schooling serves the interests of the dominant groups in society leading to the systematic failure of non-dominant subcultures. From this perspective the construct of hegemony concerns the relationship between schooling and economic and cultural reproduction. This links with the next theoretical theme of the events of the controversy, that relating to conservative apprehension in a liberal political context.

## **2. CONSERVATIVE APPREHENSION IN A LIBERAL POLITICAL CONTEXT**

Chapter One described how the early and mid 1970s in New Zealand was a period of rapid legislation affecting families. The apprehension of conservative citizens situated in a period of such social and legislative change is encapsulated in the basic question asked when the subject of values teaching in schools arises, that is, “whose values?” (Viney, 1979). At issue is the question of cultural capital as defined by Bourdieu (1984) who argued that schools reproduce social and cultural inequalities because it is the dominant groups controlling economic, social and political resources whose culture they embody. Bourdieu viewed culture as the total body of knowledge and mode of dealing with the world, acquired from the family of primary socialisation. The individual’s embodiment of this early learning and enculturation he called habitus. In terms of the school’s structure and resources, elements of habitus, such as the symbolic use of language, values, and style of

self-presentation, constitute cultural capital, reinforced through success within that system. Bourdieu argued that just as dominant economic institutions are structured to favour those who already possess economic capital, so does the school take the cultural capital of the dominant group as being the natural order of things.

Hence the cultural capital that the schools take for granted acts as a most effective filter in the reproductive processes of a hierarchical society. Poor achievement for different groups in a society then, is not something inherent in cultural difference *per se*, but is just as much an artefact of the way schools operate as is (economic) success for other groups. (Harker, 1985, p. 65)

From this perspective it can be suggested that apprehension is catalysed when there is a perceived threat to the role of the family as the primary and most significant agent of socialisation, reproducing culture in the form of dispositions, values and expectations. Codd, Harker and Nash have suggested that the dominant classes of contemporary capitalism can ensure the reproduction of their status only through the development of their cultural capital and by its reconversion to credentials giving access to structural positions where real capital is accumulated. In this reconversion process the mediation of the school is all-important. Cultural capital acquired in the home is recognised accurately by the school as an indication of receptivity and confers a virtual right to its academically structured knowledge. Once duly certified as the possessor of this knowledge, an individual is identifiable by class habitus and scholastic habitus as one with both the capacity and right to assume a career in the decision-making divisions of capital and state organisations. Thus symbolic power has become actual power. Once it is recognised that competition for status reproduction by class-located (patriarchal) families is the motor of the educational system, “much of what is problematic about structured educational inequality as it affects working class, non-dominant ethnic groups and women ceases to be mysterious” (Codd, Harker & Nash, 1985, pp. 12- 13).

The threat to the cultural capital embedded in the traditional state academic curriculum was a central aspect of the disaffection of the New



Zealand Religious Right in the context of the process of curriculum change of the early 1970s. The modus operandi of the Curriculum Development Unit, which involved consultation and field trials by liberal teachers in the extended educational community, was viewed by the RR as furthering the objectives of a liberal bureaucracy. The construct of cultural capital in relation to curriculum change thus provides another analytical lens into the controversy over the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education. In a democratic pluralistic society such as New Zealand, the public is always engaged in debate over desirable objectives and processes of schooling. The national exercise in discussion on the aims of education that occurred during the EDC, while opening exciting new horizons to liberal citizens, was guaranteed to arouse apprehension in the RR for whom societal stability lay in maintenance of the status quo. John Codd suggested that the State has a particular hegemonic interest in promoting public discussions of education.

It is widely believed that because everyone has a right to participate in such discussion then everyone is able, at least in principle, to have some control over the effects schooling will have upon their lives. In precisely this way, the role of the state is decided by 'public consent' and the social control necessary to sustain the institution of schooling is legitimated. (Codd, 1985, p. 23)

As Scott suggested in his discussion of the Currie Commission, hegemonic activity can be employed in the interests of change or of maintaining the cultural capital embedded in the status quo of the state curriculum. When cultural capital is threatened conservative apprehension is fuelled, creating the conditions in which a Religious Right lobby can recruit the sympathies of middle conservatism. This is where government committees who are 'outside' the policy community can be a useful hegemonic strategy, providing they can also be controlled. In the choice of an individual to chair such a government committee, leadership congruent with the hegemonic objectives of the community of interest is important. It will be argued subsequently that

while the Chairman of the Committee on Health and Social Education was somewhat unpredictable and could not be totally 'controlled' he was nevertheless representative of the dominant habitus, while the committee, in sum, was representative of the aims of the policy community. This presented the bureaucracy with both a paradox and a dilemma over the management of public debate. To examine this proposition in subsequent discussion of the events of the controversy it is necessary to introduce the third theoretical theme relating to leadership in a particular context of social change.

### **3. LEADERSHIP AND SOCIAL CHANGE**

The selection of an individual to chair a committee charged with the task of preparing guidelines for policy development is carefully considered from hegemonic perspectives aimed at securing departmentally desired outcomes. As will be discussed in Chapter Five, in the selection of the Chair for the Committee on Health and Social Education the recommendation made by the educational bureaucracy was bypassed by the Minister of Education. This may or may not have influenced the trajectory of the subsequent report in relation to sex education, but it will be shown that it undoubtedly influenced the report's rhetoric. As shown in Chapter One, the particular context in which the Committee on Health and Social Education set about its task was one of social change, liberal policy making and the strengthening of Māori activism. Michael King (2003) has described how young Māori leaders emerged in the early 1970s, "the period when many families living in cities ceased to have active links with their iwi and hapu, and lost all live connection with the Māori language, the practice of Māori ritual and the observance of Tikanga Māori" (pp 473-474). In this context of urbanisation "an increasing number of urban based leaders, such as Pita Sharples of Ngati Kahungunu and Ranginui Walker of Whakatohea, accumulated authority based on achievement" (p. 475). Such authority was not however institutional and other routes had to be found for pursuing change. One was protest from "largely urban based dissidents

[who] spoke out for Māori interest more emphatically and more abrasively than their predecessors” (King, 2003, p 478). Another means was the formation of alliances with those having power, or access to the policy makers and this thesis will argue that such an alliance occurred between Maori activists and the Chairman of the Committee on Health and Social Education. As will be shown it was however an alliance in which the Chairman was already pursuing his own congruent liberal objectives. Paulo Freire’s description of the “revolutionary leader” is relevant to subsequent analysis of the controversy to the extent that the Chairman’s leadership impacted on the public’s understanding of the 1977 Report (Freire, 1996). Freire, who visited New Zealand in the late 1960s, had developed a relational philosophy within the general Marxist school. His focus on language as a tool of liberation provided insight into ways in which schooling as an agency of the state’s rhetoric, and guardian of the cultural capital of those with the dominant hegemony, could also act as an agent of oppression. Using the epistemological base of “problematizing” Freire suggested that reality is the relationship of “knowing” humans to their secondary environment, that is, the human-made world, its artefacts, technology, habits, values, language and social order, its culture and history. He posited an ongoing dialectic between humans in both creating their secondary environment and being conditioned by it. Growth in consciousness, which he called “conscientisation”, comprises the ability to understand correlates and causes in cultural and historical terms, and thus the nature of one’s own conditioning. Such growing consciousness leads towards more complete and less oppressed and alienated humanity, a growth, argued Freire, that can be brought about in unempowered groups when educative programmes are developed around their immediate needs and concerns.

The raising of the oppressed to greater consciousness requires the identification of generative words, which then become tools in the process of conscientisation. In problematising a person’s context, or world, is not presented as a given, but as a problem that needs to be understood (i.e. “why these particular conditions for me?”) At Freire’s centre of reality is the “conscious” person. Conscientisation occurs when

people act as “knowing” humans, as subjects, not passive recipients or objects, thus achieving a deeper awareness of the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives. They are then able to act upon and transform their world “and in doing so move toward ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life, individually and collectively” (Freire, 1996, p.14). The individual, he argued, is capable of looking critically at the world in a dialogical encounter with others and can gradually perceive personal and social reality as well as the contradictions to it. But such change requires leadership from those who understand the nature of the oppression. It requires trust from the oppressed and a commitment to promoting conscientisation from the leader. “Only through comradeship with the oppressed can [the leader] understand their characteristic ways of living and behaving, which in divers moments reflect the structure of domination” (Freire, 1996, p. 43 ).

In Freire’s theory conscientisation thus has a communal nature involving action and he used the term ‘praxis’ to describe the transforming dialectic of reflection and action. The process of praxis acknowledges the freedom of each individual and the reciprocal nature of transforming action and is non-manipulative. Education ideally thus becomes a process of visionary and transforming change. Through revolutionary praxis the oppressed are humanised and society is transformed. In the processes of community and individual conscientisation the revolutionary leader, or educator, plays a significant part. Freire made a distinction between the educator who transmits information and the revolutionary leader, or educator, engaged in “a pedagogy of knowing through the process of dialogue” (p. 55). This latter dialogical process involved movement from the concrete context of formerly perceived objective facts that determine the human’s subjective reality, “to the theoretical context where the ‘objective facts’ are analysed, and back to the concrete where men experiment with new forms of praxis” (Freire, 1996, p. 54). The knowing subject thus “reflects upon his life within the very domain of existence and questions his relationship to the world...a domain of work, or history, of culture, of values... in which men experience the dialectic between determination

and freedom” (p. 68). Freire saw education as a synthesis between the educator’s maximally systematised knowing and the learner’s minimally systematised knowing. It was the role of the revolutionary leader-educator to promote such synthesis through dialogue. It will be subsequently argued that the Chairman of the Committee on Health and Social Education was engaged in such a problematising dialogue with the students of his school and the wider community that comprised the South Auckland area of Otara. It will further be suggested that he attempted a similar process of conscientisation within the Committee and that this process influenced both the discourse and the public reception of the report.

Freire (1985) saw revolutionary groups as the “antagonistic contradiction of the right” (p 81) since in his view there could be no conscientisation without the “denunciation of unjust structures, a thing that cannot be expected of the right [which] invents new forms of cultural action only for domination” (p. 85). The “Right”, he stated “makes no denunciation or proclamation except to denounce whoever denounces it, and to proclaim its own myths” (p. 82). In finding channels for such denunciation the role of the media is significant in the portrayal of events perceived as having the capacity to promote change that threatens hegemony and cultural capital. This is the fourth of the theoretical themes through which the controversy will be examined.

## **5. THEORY RELATING TO THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN THE CONTEXT OF ‘MORAL PANICS’**

It was argued previously that the issue of sex education has the capacity to dominate debate when opposing ideological discourses over the objectives and underlying values of the curriculum are catalysed. In considering the role of the media in perpetuating public debates grounded in ideological tensions it is necessary to visit two further constructs, moral panic and conspiracy theory, both of which have some explanatory power concerning the debate over the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education.

## ***Moral panic theory***

The concept of moral panic allows investigation of interactions among groups with opposing values, and the processes that lead to bureaucratic intervention aimed at securing greater social control. Studies of incidents of moral panic have tended to focus on public reactions rather than the events that precede and precipitate the particular incident. From a Marxist perspective, sociologists Cohen (1972) and Hall et al (1978) developed theoretical models of the processes involved in moral panic within specific social and historical contexts of ideological conflict. In these models deviance is defined and pursued through the process of labelling. Cohen stated that moral panic occurs when:

A condition, episode, person or group [becomes] defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylised and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right thinking people...ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges, or deteriorates and becomes more visible. Sometimes the object of the panic is quite novel and at other times it is something which has been in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight. (Cohen, 1972, p. 9)

The term moral panic has some congruence with an earlier description by Becker (1963) of the “moral crusade” which involved entrepreneurs who set out to influence public attitudes towards specific incidents and issues. Ben-Yehuda (1986) suggested that the objective of the moral entrepreneur is to change legislation in order to “deviantize” others. He argued that the ability of moral entrepreneurs to create a moral panic over a particular issue depended on the extent to which those in power supported the issue, the degree to which the public perceived it as a threat, the balance between public awareness of, and support for, the moral entrepreneur’s perspective and the degree of public opposition to these views. In this process the role of the media was seen as crucial.

Cohen's 1972 study of Mods and Rockers in Britain focused on the role of public and media reaction in determining the nature and intensity of the deviancy. Cohen divided public reaction into three consecutive phases – "inventory", "opinion and attitude themes", and "rescue and remedy". In each phase the media was the primary agent in promoting "deviancy amplification". The inventory phase concerned the initial events of the moral panic and the way in which these events were interpreted by the media, in terms of "exaggeration and distortion", "prediction", and "symbolisation" (p. 31). In the second phase the deviancy symbols and images of the first phase became consolidated as themes emerging "with sufficient regularity to justify thinking that they were fairly widespread and would have some effect on public opinion as a whole" (p. 51). By the final phase the public had been so sensitised to the magnitude of the issue by the media, that any peripherally related acts were perceived as further confirming evidence of moral threat, with remedies becoming imperative. During this last phase police, courts and local action groups formed "an exclusive control culture aimed at curbing the potential of deviance to create moral chaos" (p. 85). This thesis will subsequently discuss the extent to which the New Zealand controversy fits Cohen's criteria for a moral panic. Janet Soler has made the point that while Cohen's study provides a model that helps explain "the processes apparent in the magnification of specific incidents into a moral panic, it does not provide an understanding of the reasons for a moral panic to occur in the first place" (Soler, 1988, p 27). It can be hypothesised that a contextual precondition for a moral crisis is the prior emergence of polarised ideological debate in a social climate in which the mores of the youth culture are changing. In this respect the study of youth mugging by Hall et al (1978) linked moral panic to the dominance of conservative over liberal ideologies of crime, with liberal views seen as compensatory and fragile under conditions of social stress. Once traditional and conservative views have been mobilised by moral entrepreneurs, public anxiety results. Moral panics "come into play when this deep structure of anxiety and traditionalism connects with the public definition of crime by the media, and is mobilised" (Hall et al., p.

165). In Hall's study the phenomenon of moral panic was not a brief episode, but attenuated throughout the period of hegemonic crisis, becoming a series of moral panics which "increased in intensity" so that the whole sequence "accelerated to a peak" (p 222). Hall's research however did not attempt to examine the psychological aspects of the deeper "structure of anxiety", the relationship of such anxiety to the issue of sexuality generally and sex education in particular. Such links will however be examined in this thesis.

In her analysis of the Mazengarb Inquiry referred to in Chapter One, Janet Soler examined the Mazengarb Report's recommendations in order "to determine the outcome of this conflict over the nature of the moral delinquency problem" (Soler, 1988, p. 8). In the parliamentary debate that followed the Report she found that the impact of the views of the moral campaigners outweighed all others, with resulting legislation aimed at increased state control of, and therefore tighter definition of, youth deviance. Soler's study took into account the impact of current psychological theories on the moral campaign protagonists who conceptualised immorality as an individual problem. In the Mazengarb episode authoritative experts were used to argue that immorality could be combated by protecting adolescents from indecent influences. Female delinquents were identified as one of these influences, having the power to corrupt young males through their "precocious" and "depraved" activity (p. 267). This is the same historic theme that featured in the European witch-hunts of the 17th century (Trevor-Roper, 1967) and those of Puritan America, and would be echoed in the Freudian perspectives presented by the RR in the controversy over the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education.

Shuker, Openshaw and Soler (1990) also examined the factors involved in moral panics over a range of youth incidents in New Zealand during the 20th century. They suggested that while there is some research utility in the concept of moral panic and the role of media in "defining and orchestrating public reaction" each moral panic "has its own unique features" (p. 105). These authors argued that the concept of moral panic arose from the work of neo-Marxist sociologists and social



historians “who were anxious not only to critique the shortcomings of existing liberal theories of deviant youth behaviour but also to castigate the ‘Right’ ” (p. 106). With regard to this they noted the pitfalls in neglecting the role of “those who interact with the media to promote the targeted behaviour as a public threat. In particular the role of certain ‘catalyst’ groups or individuals” (p 107).

The notion of a ‘boundary crisis’ is central to the concept of a moral panic, referring to a period when established societal norms and values appear under threat from a source that the media plays a role in identifying. Shuker, Openshaw and Soler suggest that throughout the 20th century in New Zealand there was a series of moral panics in the 1920s, 1950s and 1980s with each decade of the century being “seen by one commentator or another as a time of bewildering change” (p. 109). As will be subsequently argued, the concepts of both the moral entrepreneur and boundary crisis have some applicability to the controversy over the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education.

In another research study Watney (1987), who applied moral panic theory in a study of pornography, suggested that the researcher’s task of interpreting the reality of historical events from documentary representations involved an “arbitration of the real”. This meant that moral panic theory was “unable to provide a full theory concerning the operations of ideology within representational systems” (p. 41). As Soler has also suggested, attempting to use moral panic theory as a theoretical tool presents the historical researcher with such a dilemma over the gap between the realities of participants engaged in the actual events and the later representation of these at a subsequent time when the issues do not appear problematic.

The historical reconstruction of a moral panic, which relies upon available resources, must acknowledge that surviving documents provide a limited access to the views and attitudes of the participants. There must also be a recognition of the historian’s inability to adopt an ideologically neutral stance. (Soler, 1988, p. 35)

As will be explained in the next chapter this research has attempted to access the historical realities of participants through interviewing those aligned with both poles of the ideological continuum. On the basis of this and other primary source material it will be later asserted that the role of the media in the New Zealand controversy was not a defining one in terms of moral panic theory. Nevertheless, it was a significant role in relation to the maintenance of debate because of increased access by citizens in the 1970s to television, investigative journalism and the new phenomenon of 'talkback' radio.

The wide airing of a range of public views enabled a climate of apprehension to be maintained that, when combined with hints of 'conspiracy' on the part of the Curriculum Development Unit, succeeded in re-provoking anxiety related to smaller events subsumed within the controversy, such as falling academic standards. Conspiracy theory thus offers another explanatory framework for examining public apprehension in relation to the controversy.

### ***Conspiracy theory***

Paul Spoonley (1987) analysed the growth of the Religious Right and "moral conservatism" in the New Zealand context from the perspective of groups with an underlying racist agenda. He suggested that an important element in the ideology of the "extreme" right is a "conspiracy view of power...linked in a contradictory way with a political fundamentalism that centres on elitist conceptions of government" (p32). Spoonley saw this tradition as combining the individualism of private property ownership with a belief in the rights and exclusivity of certain groups, the most apparent expressions being nationalism, racism and anti-feminism. "To sustain the purity of either nation or 'race' the role of women is to produce suitable offspring and to follow an ordained role [involving] biological reproduction, socialisation and domestic care" (p. 32).

Spoonley presented five characteristics of right wing political sects. The first he termed "epistemological authoritarianism", that is a group's

belief in its unique access to the truth and salvation. The second is “exclusiveness”, the restriction of membership to those committed to the group’s ideology. Third there is a “suspicion” of dominant agencies and their beliefs, coupled with “the use of a conspiracy theory to create disbelief about alternative sources of information and interpretation” (p 43). Spoonley’s final two characteristics were “centralisation of leadership authority” and the use of a symbolic code that “typically utilises its own mystical elements and is derived from specific ideological traditions” (p 43). It will be argued in this thesis that at least four of these criteria were met by the Religious Right lobby in the controversy over the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education. Thus described, conspiracy theory can be seen to link back into the overarching ideological issues with which this chapter began.

An fundamentalist lobby that tailors its campaign to suit the ground swell of public opinion, and to capitalise on existing apprehension, stands to mobilise extensive numbers. The term ‘collective anxiety’ will be used later by the author to describe such generalised public unease. Yarborough (1999) made a significant point that for the RR the drive towards maintaining belief in an ultimate coherence is intense. “The desire to belong to communities pursuing coherence and order is overwhelming, and as members of such communities people are willing to expend enormous energy” (p. 14). Leibman (1983) suggested that such lobbies are nurtured by shifts in the cultural environment which provoke changes in the mood of potential participants and by alterations in the political environment which provide opportunities for collective action. They develop, he suggested, through deliberate efforts to organise participants and accumulate resources to effect programmes of change. They also require a “moral entrepreneur with the ability to create a climate of apprehension regarding possible conspiracy within the legislative bureaucracy” (p. 57). In his examination of the rise of the Moral Majority in America, Leibman (1983) found that most organisations were single-issue Christian pressure groups who “waged campaigns on behalf of issues such as prayer and Bible reading in public schools, a constitutional ban on abortion, and tighter restrictions on

homosexuality” (p. 49). While these lobbies largely escaped national attention there were however other groups that differed in goals and strategy from the majority.

Eschewing single-issues campaigns, they sought to address a wide range of moral, economic and foreign policy issues from a distinctively Christian perspective ... they sought to mobilise large numbers of conservative Americans from a variety of denominations. (Leibman, 1983, p 49)

In this quest the use of conspiracy theory became a deliberate strategy. Heinz (1983) has argued that throughout the 1970s and early 1980s the NRR in America was engaged in the creation of a counter-mythology, in contention with the mythologies of liberal Christianity and secular humanism. Secular humanism, he suggested, was seen by the Religious Right:

to equate with godlessness, moral relativism, and permissiveness, [including] a toleration of pornography, a fostering of an abortion culture, the legitimisation of homosexuality as an appropriate lifestyle, an attempt to delegitimise the traditional family as a normative or even ideal, creeping socialism and welfarism, a disinterest in strong national defence, and an attack on public religion as a key dimension of American culture and society. That is an unwieldy bill of particulars. (Heinz, 1983, p. 134)

So unwieldy that it provides a catchall for a wide range of disaffected citizens of conservative leanings, and the conditions for what will be described throughout this thesis as “collective anxiety”. It thus becomes possible for a right wing group to proselytise in a manner, which parades a range of loosely linked causes under a single rallying banner. It will be argued that it was this potential for mustering support that would make the dominant pressure group, the Concerned Parents’ Association, so effective in the New Zealand controversy. It was the belief of the RR, in New Zealand as in America, that both liberalism and secular humanism sought to eradicate from the State school “all aspects of common beliefs having a religious Christian basis, through the ‘establishment’ of its own

mythology by the government and in the public school system” (Heinz, 1983, p 134).

Openshaw’s 1985 case study of the Concerned Parents’ Association as an influential pressure group underlines the relevance of events in America to the New Zealand controversy in which this lobby set out to attract to its cause disaffected citizens with a wide range of concerns.

The alleged dangers of ‘humanism’ in education may well be a non issue for many New Zealanders, but feminism, public morality and the question of educational policy implementation without adequate prior consultation with interested parties are issues of considerable public unease in a number of countries. CPA therefore, like the New Right in America and STOP/CARE in Queensland, is able to claim with some justification that it has considerable community support. (Openshaw, 1985, p. 242)

In the context of the New Zealand controversy it will be shown how secular humanism was portrayed by the Religious Right as an evil and destabilising influence infiltrating the state school curriculum. Chapter Seven will describe how members of the Concerned Parents Association executive, acting as moral entrepreneurs, set about recruiting support from apprehensive citizens across the nation. In this mission the use of conspiracy theory was employed.

## **SUMMARY**

This chapter has discussed a range of theoretical perspectives that will be used in subsequent analysis of the events and context of the controversy over the 1977 Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education. It is an eclectic framework encompassing sociology in relation to moral panics and conspiracy theory, political theory relating to hegemony and cultural capital, a Marxist perspective on educational leadership in relation to minority cultures and psychological theory relating to human development and sexuality. The relationship between

ideology and sex education has been posited in Figure 1. Such a broad sweep supports the position of both Tosh (2000) and Silver (1990) that historiography is essentially transdisciplinary.

Definitions have been given for the Religious Right and Liberalism, and the suggestion that the ideological tension maintaining these poles helps to explain the intensity of the 1970s controversy will be further developed. It has also been stated that the potential for lobbies to recruit the sympathies, and alarm, of citizens with a more centrist stance is intensified when social and curricular change is perceived as proceeding at too rapid a pace. The manifestation of this potential will subsequently be referred to as collective anxiety and later chapters will analyse the contexts in which this occurred.

The next chapter will describe the research methods used in this study.

## Chapter 3

### RESEARCH METHOD

Although its antecedents lie earlier, the period of controversy over the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education can be situated within the period 1975-1980, from the establishment of the Committee to the policy that resulted from the report's recommendations. These historical parameters mean that it can be regarded as a case study within the qualitative research paradigm. A case study involves a process through which the researcher tries to describe and analyse a social phenomenon in qualitative complex and comprehensive terms as it unfolds over a particular period of time. Merriman (1988) suggests that a community, or a specific policy, can be considered a case while Miles and Huberman (1984) viewed a case study as a phenomenon occurring in a "bounded" context. This context they described as a circle with a heart in the centre. The heart is the focus of the study while the circle defines the edge of the case – what will not be studied. They suggest that one technique for assessing the boundedness of the topic is to ask how finite the data collection could be, that is, whether there is a limited number of people involved, or a finite amount of time for observations of the phenomena under study. If there is no end, actually or theoretically, to the number of people who could be interviewed, or to observations that could be conducted, then the phenomenon is not bounded enough to qualify as a case study. In these terms the controversy over the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education meets the criteria for a bounded case study in that there were a specific number of people involved in the "heart" of the study which is circumscribed by the period of preparation of, and public discussion over, the Report. To confine the study simply to the period of the controversy would however be to omit the historical context that illuminates an understanding of what happened, and why. For this reason Chapters One and Four address historical, social,

educational and political aspects of the events contributing to the controversy while Chapter Twelve describes the aftermath of the debate, following the Minister of Education's policy decisions.

Merriman (1988) stated that qualitative case studies are also characterized as being particularistic, descriptive and heuristic. Being particularistic means to focus on a particular situation, event, programme or phenomenon, as important for what it reveals about the phenomenon, and what that might represent. Particularism involves examining ways in which particular groups of people confront specific problems, while undertaking a wider overview of the situation. This study has attempted such particularism in its scrutiny of the working of a range of groups, including the Curriculum Development Unit of the Department of Education, the Committee on Health and Social Education, the Concerned Parents' Association, and other lobbies such as the National Council of Women.

Merriman's second criterion, that of being descriptive, implies that the end product of the research will be a rich description of the texture of the phenomenon under investigation. Achieving this requires the inclusion of as many relevant dimensions as is necessary to portray the dynamic interactions of participants and events. This has been attempted throughout this study by the recording of historical context, events and participants' actions, interpretations and perceptions.

Finally, Merriman's criterion of being heuristic means that the case study will illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon, bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader's experience, or confirm what is known. Previously unknown relationships and variables can be expected to emerge from qualitative case studies, leading to a rethinking of the phenomenon being studied. This study will attempt to meet this third criterion through a combination of chronology and analysis, by introducing the bicultural elements of the controversy, and revealing activities of both the Department of the Education and the Concerned Parents' Association not previously discussed.



McCulloch & Richardson (2000) suggest that an understanding of the larger context in which an event is examined is necessary to estimate its significance and attach meaning to it. The background overview in Chapter One of the antecedents of the terms of reference given the Committee on Health and Social Education is therefore consistent with the enterprise of hermeneutical inquiry in the field of educational history.

## **CHOICE OF RESEARCH TOPIC AND SUBJECTIVITY**

A comment needs to be made about the researcher's positioning in the period under study. In discussing the role of the researcher Olssen (1984) distinguished between theory and ideology, making the point that a theory comprises a series of postulations, propositions and hypotheses that can be interrogated by the material evidence. An ideology, on the other hand, refers to assumptions embedded in, and integral to, all types of discourse. Assumptions comprise an interdependent series of beliefs having political implications. Such assumptions are derived from the concepts, language and focus selected, or not selected, by the researcher. Olssen suggested that a researcher's orienting philosophy will contain bi-polar dimensions such as materialism versus idealism, structuralism versus psychologism. Olssen stated that in selecting concepts on which to focus, it is not possible not to have an ideology.

Moreover, I think that researchers should not merely be aware of the theoretical assumptions underlying their words but also of their [own] value comments, and rather than simply avoiding these or maintaining a pretence of value neutrality...they should acknowledge these commitments. (Olssen, p. 454)

Accordingly I have chosen to use the first person pronoun in the following section in explaining my own ideological positioning as a researcher. A brief introduction to my background will inform the reader that the choice of my research topic was a confluence of personal and professional interests. In the course of study such as this, the researcher inevitably becomes

enmeshed in making some kind of personal response, both in vivo with interviewees and in selective bias in the choice and use of documentary and interview material. Thus qualitative research is an academic enterprise also undertaken from a personal value stance and therefore to some degree at least, inevitably subjective. I was a teacher in New Zealand State secondary schools throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Like other English language teachers I was kept busy responding to the new National English Syllabus Committee's "expanded definition of the teacher's role" (Collins and Openshaw, 2002, p. 8). I recall the 1970s as a time of long hair, long skirts, the Beatles and 'ban the bomb'. My high school students were reading the novels of Judy Blume that I was unaware had been banned in some American States. Preoccupied with work, study, and raising a family, I was not analytical about international events and only vaguely aware of the American protest movement, though sufficiently roused to join in anti-apartheid protests. I was at that time also grappling with what it meant as a Pakeha to be bicultural. My own liberal philosophy was influenced by my father, Harold Johnson, a teacher from 1933 to 1973. It was one of his younger brothers, James Garfield Johnson, who chaired the Committee on Health and Social Education. My father died the year the report of this committee was published, before I had sufficient wisdom or time to discuss these events with him. I subsequently taught in a College of Education before retraining as an educational psychologist. When I later read the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education I discovered both a personal and professional interest in the issues and in revisiting a period of my own and my nation's past. As a researcher therefore I find myself "positioned inside the social and educational phenomena that are the object of [my] inquiries" (Middleton, 1992, p. 39).

This raises the question of whether or not such subjective involvement eschews the suitability of a research topic. There are alternative responses possible. One is that such subjectivity has the potential to enrich the information selected and revealed. Another is that the

researcher may be guilty of such bias that the thesis cannot be considered to be scholarly endeavour. I do not consider either extreme to be inevitable but did, frequently, find myself walking the fine line between endorsement of my own philosophical stance through selective use of source material and trying so hard to be objective that the cut and thrust of the historic events was dulled. McCulloch and Richardson (2000) find it appropriate that directions for research in educational history “may arise from practical experience in, and understanding of, a contemporary education setting...and a curiosity to explore it in an historical perspective” (p.127). Throughout the duration of this study I kept returning to the issue of whether my own bias was prejudicing honest enquiry. As I engaged in the research I also found myself in reflective appreciation of the necessity for conservative lobby groups within a democracy and I have attempted throughout the thesis to communicate the sincerity of the beliefs of the Concerned Parents’ Association. Through contact with the people interviewed for this study I have reinforced my respect for the genuine commitment of people to their passionately held ideals, both conservative and liberal. Although my research contains some elements of subjectivity I have striven to build in sufficient triangulation and rigor using criteria relating to the validity of enquiry, and to ethical research practice.

## **VALIDITY**

Internal validity refers to the accuracy of the information presented and whether it reflects the reality of the events under consideration. Cresswell (1994) used the terms “trustworthiness” and “authenticity” to distance qualitative research from positivistic paradigms and views the triangulation of data as the best way to approach the validity of the information presented. Accordingly I have used the following four elements of the process of triangulation.

### **1. *Methodological triangulation***

Methodological triangulation refers to the range of data collection activities used to ensure an accurate representation of events of the historical phenomenon under investigation. This study used archival and various library searches, interviews with participants in the events of the time, and the tracking down of a range of primary and secondary documentary sources. A search of the newspaper library of the *New Zealand Herald* was also undertaken. A variety of methods for accessing information were thus used.

### **2. *Data source triangulation***

Sources of data were multiple and included ministerial memorandum, departmental documents, and correspondence and memos among members of the Committee on Health and Social Education. The newsletters of the Concerned Parents' Association and pamphlets produced by citizens such as Elliot-Hogg (1978) also allowed the cross checking of facts. Newspaper reports and articles of the time provided further opportunities for validation of the veracity of the events chronicled here.

### **3. *Supervision***

The research method was submitted to, guided by, and approved by the Massey University Committee on Ethics in Human Research. The process and progress of the research and my early drafts was regularly monitored by my supervisors, Professor Roger Openshaw and Professor Gary Hermansson. Professor Openshaw also greatly assisted my pursuit of primary source material through guidance in the use of Archives New Zealand/ Te Whare Tohu Tuhutuhinga O Aotearoa, Head Office, Wellington, and the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand/ Te Puna Matauranga O Aotearoa.

#### **4. External validity**

External validity and reliability are also issues that must be considered within the qualitative research paradigm. The data collection methods outlined here could, with persistence, have been undertaken by another researcher with a similar result in terms of acquisition of information. It would not however have necessarily resulted in the same interpretations of events because of the differences in ideological stances between different researchers, as suggested by Olssen. Nor would the interviews necessarily have proceeded in the same manner, with the same outcomes. The capacity for replication is a major respect in which qualitative and quantitative research methods differ. I have here examined historical, social and educational phenomena from a contextual-ecological perspective. The sources of data are multiple, the events multi-dimensional. The nature of the researcher's interpersonal engagement with participants is unique. The issue of replication therefore remains as a vexation that may be partly appropriate to the enterprise of qualitative research.

### **ETHICAL ISSUES**

Guidelines for the ethical issues involved in this research were taken from the Massey University *Code of Ethical Conduct for Research and Teaching Involving Human Subjects*. Approval from Massey University's Human Ethics Committee setting out the research protocol was granted at the start of the study and the information sheet and consent form for participants are included in the appendix.

#### ***Informed consent***

The main ethical issue associated with this research was that of informed consent. Participants needed to know the aims of the research, the way in which their comments and recollections would be recorded and

stored and their rights to see transcripts of their quotations. These issues were covered in person by the researcher with each participant. The rights of interviewees are stated on the consent form. Since many of the participants in the period under investigation were elderly, the Human Ethics Committee wanted an option included on the consent form where participants could choose to name another person to check the accuracy of their quoted statements, in the event of their decease. This was a situation that indeed occurred. Two spouses approved transcript material, while a third wanted to read the entire chapter in which her late husband's comments would be situated. However she did not respond to subsequent contact regarding this, and the interviewee's comments have been used on the basis that informed consent had been given. Spouses were sometimes present at interviews, either at their own request or the request of the research participants. They showed a keen interest in the process which was not surprising since their partner's involvement in the protracted controversy had also involved them. However because of the guidance received from the Human Ethics Committee, their stories do not appear in this thesis, with the exception of Alison Crawford, who was a specialist health educator interviewed for her own involvement in the controversy.

### ***Confidentiality***

Confidentiality did not turn out to be a particular issue since it was explained to participants that their names would be used in relation to the historical events recorded, and that they also had the right to withdraw before the completion of the study. These circumstances are covered in points numbered 2 and 3 on the participant's consent form. Without exception all interviewees expressed willingness to participate through spontaneous comments such as:

*"It's a story that needs telling."*

*"This was my history too."*

*“When I read some of today’s news I think that people should be told we’ve been there before, and learn from the lessons of the past.”*

Audiotapes of the interviews are all held in a secure place by the author who listened to each of them many times. Where the interviewee’s comments were of particular significance they were transcribed verbatim, and used in the context of the events under discussion. When a final selection of chapter content and interview positioning was made, these comments were then posted to the participants concerned for verification and comment. This was an illuminating exercise, since it elicited additional information in the form of further letters to the researcher. Any corrections requested by participants were addressed.

## **THE INTERVIEWS**

There was some urgency in interviewing the participants in the controversy, most of whom had been middle-aged during the events under study and were now elderly. Gillham (2000) suggested that interviews are useful in a number of situations such as when: -

... small numbers of people are involved; they are accessible; they are ‘key’, and you can’t afford to lose any; significant questions are mainly ‘open’ and require an extended response with prompts and probes to clarify the answers; the material is sensitive in character so that trust is involved. (p. 62)

In the last instance, stated Gillham, people will disclose things in a face to face interview that they will not disclose in an anonymous questionnaire. The comment about ‘key’ people proved apt since at least five people interviewed for this research have since died. Bell (1999) made the point that a major advantage of the interview is its adaptability in that the interviewer “can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings, which the questionnaire can never do. Questionnaire responses

have to be taken at face value but a response in an interview can be developed and clarified” (Bell, 1999, p 135).

### ***Accessing participants***

The following protocol was followed to access participants for interviews. Former members of the Committee on Health and Social Education were located using telephone directories. A letter was then sent to explain the nature of the project and invite participation. This letter contained another letter with a self-addressed envelope to the author, through which the person contacted could decline to participate. It also explained that if no refusal were received by a certain date, a follow-up phone call would be made to them by the author. It was the intention to avoid any element of coercion, or pressure. In fact no refusals were received. Arrangements for interviews were made by phone calls and confirmed by letter. All interviewing was undertaken solely by the researcher who met with participants in Wellington, Christchurch, Lyttleton, Cambridge, Hamilton, Rotorua and the Auckland region. For reasons of participant health and distance, two interviews were undertaken by telephone calls, one to South Canterbury and one to London. Either prior to or at the interview, the information sheet and the implications of the consent form were discussed before proceeding, and before the participant’s consent was obtained. An individual letter of thanks was sent after interviews to each participant. Twenty-seven interviews were undertaken. Updates on the progress of the research were sent to participants at the end of 2000 and 2002. The names of all those interviewed are recorded in the appendix, with the date of interview. Throughout the discussion in this study the words of interviewees are followed by the participant’s name, with the interview date given on the first reference only, for example, (J. Crawford, Interview August 2, 1999). Subsequent use of interview material is followed by the name of the interviewee only as (Crawford, Int.). This is consistent with the



style given in the 4th edition of the APA manual for personal communications (*APA Manual*, 1998, pp. 173-4).

Interviews lasted between one and two hours, the majority being conducted in interviewee's homes at their invitation. Each interview was recorded on audiotape, with the participant's consent, except once when the equipment failed and notes were taken. Audiotaping allowed full attention to be given to the participant's narrative. I had intended to use a semi-structured interview format containing questions such as: *Why were you selected for the committee? What was your contribution to the report? How many meetings did you attend? What was the agenda?* However I found, during my first two interviews, that this was inappropriate. The participants were in late adulthood, educated and articulate. Most had been teachers. They simply wanted to talk without interruption, to recall, to reminisce, to pause and reiterate on events that had significance for them. One question was all it took to access these narratives. The interviews therefore followed no particular chronological sequence, weaving back and forth in remembered events and feelings. Once begun, an occasional prompt kept the narrative flowing. These stories provided much information against which to check the authenticity of such recall against information from other interviews and to guard against bias which Bell (1999) described as one of the pitfalls of interviewing together. He identified sources of bias that included the possibility of the researcher, "leading" the interviewee and the tendency of the interviewer to seek out answers that supported her preconceived notions. In a positivist model this is sometimes called "the response effect". In relation to qualitative research however Bell made the pertinent point that "it is easier to acknowledge the fact that bias can creep in than to eliminate it altogether" (Bell, 1999, p 139). Collins (2001) addressed similar problems in her interviews of elderly Dominican teaching sisters. Having developed two initial research questions she added a further two, later becoming "more flexible in my interviewing style, using the questions more as a starting point than as a rigid format. Over time the interviews

became more open-ended and produced some surprising stories that might not [otherwise] have emerged” (Collins, 2001, p 52). So it was with the participants in this research study. Having a long personal and professional history also meant that participants engaged in reflective interpretation, as revealed in the following spontaneous comments made during interviews by committee members.

*“I suppose we were idealists.”*

*“You must remember that these were exciting times when it did seem that change was possible.”*

*“Now I know about the Treaty of Waitangi, but then I had never met educated Maori – hardly ever seen one before.”*

*“I guess I was one of the trendy liberals of the time.”*

*“We were all liberals, or humanists, or agnostics – well perhaps with one or two exceptions.”*

*“I know now that there is always a political agenda but then it did seem that things could happen.”*

*“The whole picture from about 1970 on showed this immense interest in all aspects of schooling, including the curriculum, among members of the community as well as those in the professions. It was a very exciting dynamic time for those of us who were engaged in education.”*

The bonus of interviewing those with a long history is that their personal narratives are layered within perceptions and interpretations of past and present social, political and economic events. But this also complicates research in that such retrospective recall is also subjectively biased, making the process of triangulation vital. Yin (1994) warned that all interviews are “verbal reports only [and] as such, they are subject to the common problems of bias, poor recall and poor or inaccurate articulation” (p. 85). Thus it is necessary to validate interview data with information from a range of

sources that allow corroboration of the same phenomenon, from a range of perspectives as has been previously described.

Being elderly, many members of the Johnson Committee had moved into smaller homes and destroyed their papers from the 1970s. Those who had kept folders of relevant material wanted to give them to me as their contribution to the recording of these historical events and their place in them. Thus I began to accumulate a significant file of primary source material, referred to throughout this theses as the 'Author's file'. I had only one interview with Garfield Johnson and two short conversations on the topic of his chairmanship of the committee, before he became terminally ill in 1998. Unfortunately this was still at the beginning of my research. I did not yet know what questions to ask and he did not know what might be relevant to my inquiry. This, I suspect, is a common situation for both researchers and participants in the early stages of a study. He also gave me his collection of newspaper cuttings and documents, which comprise some of the primary source material used in this thesis. Garfield Johnson died early in 1999, shortly after a Massey University ceremony to award him an honorary doctorate in literature. Sadly, this personal loss may have benefited my research adventitiously since I then resolved to seek the meaning and texture of the controversy more comprehensively. Throughout this thesis I have been conscious also of the need to avoid the "hazard of hagiography" (Theobald, 1999, p 24) while at the same time according my uncle's influence on the events described here the weight it merited. It had been his intention eventually to offer his own files to the national archives and this will be done upon the final completion of this study.

### ***Primary sources***

Primary sources are produced by those directly involved in or witness to a particular historical episode or issue. Those used in this research take the form of documentary records and interviews. Secondary sources are written after the event, usually by those who were not party to it.

Primary sources therefore provide the researcher with 'first-hand' accounts (McCulloch & Richardson, 2000, p. 79). Three visits were made to Archives New Zealand and two to the Alexander Turnbull Library in the National Library of New Zealand to search for departmental and archival material from a range of sources. These searches revealed the minutes of a number of organisations and committees, submissions on the Johnson Report, correspondence, departmental memoranda and citizen's letters, as well as newspaper interviews and reports.

Other searches were less successful such as my attempt to obtain radio broadcasts of the many interviews and talkback programmes of the period. A letter to the Chief Sound Archivist of Radio New Zealand elicited the fact that no recorded programmes relating to these events had been retained (Appendix IV). One of the Johnson Committee members had made an audiotape of a 1ZB radio interview in May 1980 and the author was able to make a transcript of this. Massey University College of Education archives also had a videotape of a television programme, *Sunday*, on the topic of the Core Curriculum Review, broadcast on May 13, 1984, in which the Minister of Education was questioned regarding his links with the Concerned Parents' Association.

The *New Zealand Herald* library yielded some newspaper reports of events of the period relevant to this research. The *Auckland Star*, which conducted a lively campaign on the Report, had unfortunately ceased publication before this study began and it proved impossible to locate its records. Some members of the Johnson Committee however had kept *Star* news cuttings and cartoons, and I am grateful for their contribution of these. I am also grateful to my supervisor, Roger Openshaw, for making his collection of the newsletters of the CPA available, supplemented by others in the Massey University library. Unfortunately the main protagonists of the Concerned Parents' Association, Martin and Linda Viney, had destroyed their records of the period shortly before my interview with them. The CPA newsletters were published monthly, and their length varied. Sometimes the

pages were numbered and sometimes not. For this reason they are referenced throughout the text only by the year and month of the issue from which quotations are made.

Despite attempts to locate both the submissions made to the Johnson Committee while it was sitting and submissions made on the Report after its release I have not been successful in finding many. The Committee secretary, Jock Crawford, commented in interview that it was likely they had been destroyed during the physical relocation of files to other premises at the time when the Department had been reorganised as the Ministry. Submissions on the Report had however been handed to the Link Consultancy group, who were commissioned by the Minister to undertake an independent analysis at the height of the controversy. The Link Consultants ceased trading some years ago and I have therefore been constrained to deal with the only submissions available in the Author's file, and to use the text of the Link analysis regarding the rest. Published primary sources, such as government reports, are listed in the bibliography.

Cartoons and other visual material have been reproduced in the context of the discussion. Comics are also considered to be published primary documentary sources (McCulloch & Richardson, 2000, p. 90). Photographs, comics and other pictures have also have been situated in the context of the discussion. The range of visual material used includes headlines and advertisements, each intended to illustrate an aspect of the controversy and thus contribute to analysis of its significance.

## **Secondary sources**

There are many secondary sources in published books and articles that make some reference to the Johnson Report. With the exception of the thesis of Rex Dalzell (1979) most of these form less than two pages of

commentary, and all are of New Zealand authorship. These sources, and other literature on the New Zealand educational and political context, have been used where relevant to the discussion. Examples are the analysis of a conservative pressure group by Roger Openshaw (1985), the autobiography of former Minister of Education, Merv Wellington, (1985) and a number of speeches and articles by the former Director-General of Education, W. L. Renwick. The placement of these secondary sources within the text was determined by decisions made about dividing the controversy into chapters in a sequence that contributed to an understanding of the events and their meaning.

## **STYLE AND REFERENCING**

The referencing style used throughout this thesis is that of the American Psychological Association. (APA). Two editions of the APA manual were consulted, the 4th edition of 1998 and the 5th edition of 2001. APA style was chosen in order to facilitate the fluency of the text for readers and to avoid long footnotes on each page, or having the reader constantly flick through to endnotes. However it has not been possible to avoid using footnotes entirely, particularly when referencing archival material. The APA system does provide some guidelines for footnotes “to supplement or amplify substantive information in the text...or to identify sources” (APA, 1998, p. 163). In referencing archival material such as that from Archives New Zealand, and the Alexander Turnbull library, the guidelines given by those two institutions have been followed. A list of these archival files is also given at the end of the bibliography.

Since there is a bicultural dimension to the Johnson Report it has also been necessary to use Māori vocabulary. This is translated within the text of the discussion within brackets, to aid comprehension for those unfamiliar with the Māori language (Te Reo). The translations are the researcher’s own with recourse to Williams (1915), Ngata (1993), Ryan (1999) and Williams

(2001). A glossary of Māori words and phrases is given at the start of this thesis.

A problem with writing about government committees and organisations generally is the use of acronyms for titles. This study is peppered with acronyms for the sake of brevity. In subsequent chapters when each title first occurs it is given its full name, followed by the acronym in brackets, for example, Parent-Teachers Association (PTA). Thereafter acronyms are mainly used, except where this would create confusion because of proximity of a similar title, or where a quotation is used verbatim. A list of acronyms is also given at the beginning of this report.

The proper name of the report that gave rise to the controversy under study is the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education: *Growing, Sharing, Learning* (1977). However it was generally called the Johnson Report. This was also the term most commonly used in public debate, articles and discussion throughout the controversy. For that reason the term Johnson Report will be used, except where the formal title is more appropriate for historical accuracy. For consistency, the phrase Johnson Committee will also be used, instead of Committee on Health and Social Education. This style is consistent with that used for reports by other educational historians (Lee & Lee, 2003). The same style will be applied to the other reports discussed throughout the thesis such as the Thomas and Currie Reports. Many references are made in this study to a document called the “Ross Report”. This was not a report, but a departmental discussion document with the title *Human development and relationships across the curriculum* (1973). The committee that produced this was chaired by James Ross, then Superintendent of Curriculum Development. Since it was popularly called the “Ross Report” that term will be used here. The quotation marks are to distinguish it from a later departmental publication, *A Review of the Core Curriculum for Schools* (1984), also known as the Ross Report, as referred to by Lee & Lee (2002, p. 38).

When the primary source material quoted in this thesis contained errors of grammar or punctuation it has been presented in its original form with the errors retained in order to preserve its historical authenticity.

The style used for the quotations throughout the thesis follows APA guidelines. Quotations of fewer than 40 words are situated within the text enclosed in quotation marks. Longer passages have been indented from both margins and are set in 11-point type to distinguish them from the 12-point type used for the author's discussion.

The next chapter will describe the working of the Department of Education as it relates to the establishment and terms of reference for the Johnson Committee in the political and social context of debate on the Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion Bill of 1977 and the rise of the Concerned Parents' Association lobby in the aftermath of the "Ross Report". It will be suggested in Chapter Four that the liberal ethos of the educational policy community made the subsequent controversy inevitable



**THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S POSITION  
ON SEX EDUCATION IN A CLIMATE OF SOCIAL  
CHANGE - FROM  
THE THOMAS REPORT TO THE 1970S**

This chapter will show why the exercise of hegemonic activity by the educational bureaucracy became increasingly complex during the early 1970s. To do this the process of contextualisation of the Johnson Report controversy begun in Chapter One must be continued. This will involve examination of previous government reports, the working of the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU), emergent lobbies, and the climate of public consultation on the aims of education engendered by the Education Development Conference (EDC). This scope is necessary to an understanding of the significance of the different threads of the subsequent controversy. In the course of this discussion it will be shown that the groups participating in the controversy were aligned along the fundamentalist–liberal ideological continuum outlined in Figure 1 with regard to moral and sex education. This involved them in varying degrees of dialogue and attempts to dialogue with the educational policy community in order to pursue their objectives. Scott (1996) defined a policy community as “all those who exercise some degree of effective official control or sanction over aspects of change and stability in education” (p. 10). As such the activity of the policy community can be seen as the exercise of hegemony. However this is not always a straightforward business as an examination of the outcomes of the Thomas Report, with regard to sex education, reveals.

*The Post-Primary School Curriculum* (1944), also called the Thomas Report, which became policy in *The Education (Post-Primary) Instruction Regulations* of 1945, can be regarded as the conceptual

predecessor of the Johnson Report. Unfinished business from its translation into policy also contributed to the latter's terms of reference. In order to understand the congruence between the discourse of both reports in matters of health and social education, an examination of the Thomas Report's position will provide a framework from which to understand that its liberal discourse was continued in the Johnson Report.

## **THE THOMAS REPORT**

In his historic annual report of 1939 the new Labour government's Minister of Education, Peter Fraser stated:

The Government's objective, broadly expressed, is that every person, whatever his level of academic ability, whether he be rich or poor, whether he live in town or country, has a right as a citizen to a free education of the kind for which he is best fitted, and to the fullest extent of his powers...Schools that are to cater for the whole population must offer courses that are as rich and varied as are the needs and abilities of the children who enter them. (Fraser, cited in Beeby, 1992, p. 194)

This speech also encapsulated the philosophy of the Assistant Director of Education, Dr Clarence Beeby, who had drafted it to reflect "equality of opportunity...to cater for the needs of the whole population over as long a period of their lives as...possible and desirable" (Beeby, 1992, p.125). In 1940 Fraser became Prime Minister of a Labour government with a slim majority, and Beeby was Director-General of Education. The Minister of Education, H. G. R. Mason, appointed William Thomas to chair a committee to review the post-primary school curriculum and "to consider and report upon the implications for the post-primary school curriculum of the proposed introduction of accrediting for entrance to the University." Explicit throughout the Thomas Report is the assumption that at least a minimal degree of knowledge on human development is

appropriate for adolescents, and that articulating this within the curriculum will not necessarily be easy.

A school that takes the hard road will re-examine its whole theory and practice, make up its mind about the real needs of its pupils and the means by which they can best be met and then act courageously in accordance with its findings.

(Thomas Report, p. 4)

The Thomas Report expressed its intention to ensure that all post primary pupils “receive a generous and well-balanced education” aimed at “full development of the adolescent as a person” and preparation for the citizenship roles of worker and homemaker, since “both personal needs and social needs have all too often been pushed into the background, especially by economic pressures” (p. 5). It suggested matching the core curriculum to the developmental levels of students by taking “full account” of “the interests, experience and relative immaturity of pupils at the early adolescent stage [who] are, indeed reaching out to social realities and becoming aware, sometimes acutely aware, of their problems of social adjustment” (p. 29).

Reflecting the gender roles of its time, the Thomas Report recommended that the core curriculum for girls should include studies and activities related to the home while boys were to be prepared for a male role with a range of technical and horticultural subjects. For both sexes physical education was to include health teaching to emphasize the importance of “moderation” and “self-control”. Topics on human biology were to be introduced in general science, with an emphasis on mental hygiene. “Respect for the body, pride in posture, cleanliness, grace, poise, and hardness of muscle, these are evidences of the habit of healthy living. Of the importance of Physical Education for the hours of leisure there is no need to speak...” (p. 48). In recommending that schools monitor pupils’ physical, as well as academic progress the Thomas Report espoused a form of social accountability and in the same paragraph can be seen the seeds of the school guidance network:

A recording system should be set up which registers all these details. Punishments and extra strains should be noted. Any pupil who is proving a social or an academic problem should be the subject of a staff consultation, at which all those who deal with him pool their knowledge. Once such a system has been instituted a great deal of preventive work can be done. (pp. 51-52)

The importance of congruence in home and school values was also noted. "In health education the school can do very little indeed unless there is some way in which the cooperation of the home can be gained" (p. 53). Given its historical context as exemplified by the language used – "moderation", "self-control", "habits of healthy living" – the Thomas Report was remarkably forthright on the subject of sex education for adolescents.

It is clear to us that many boys and girls (though by no means all) grow up without an adequate knowledge of sex, or without a sufficiently stable sex ethic, or without either of these things. On the most optimistic view some years will pass before it can be assumed that the average home is giving the education that is needed. We consider, therefore that the schools must accept some responsibility for sex education ... We do not think there is any simple solution of the problems related to sex and there are obvious limits to what the school in itself may achieve ... Our recommendations are made in general form as we do not wish to do more than suggest the kind of approach that we think most desirable. (p 53)

The Thomas Report suggested that a syllabus for sex education should cover a continuum of information during childhood.

The natural beginning of sex education is in the first years of childhood, when, often as early as the third or fourth year, the child asks his mother questions about the origin of babies. If such questions are answered as they should be - in a simple and straightforward manner – and if further information is given as required during the primary-school years, children should enter

upon puberty with a sound understanding of the elementary facts of sex. (p. 53)

At post-primary level this knowledge was to include the anatomy and physiology of the human reproductive system. The Committee also stated that teachers should be specifically trained for this aspect of their work since “no-one who is not himself well balanced and possessed of some sensitiveness of feeling should be given any responsibility for sex education” (p. 54). As discussed in Chapter One, the issue of who should teach sex education had concerned both Dr Wilkins and George Hogben in the 1920s and would remain a vexed question in the Johnson Report controversy. Public attitudes and values surrounding sexuality education also occupied the Thomas Committee which devoted a whole page of its report to discussion of some of these intangibles. Within this can also be discerned a concern with what was later to be widely described as ‘school climate’, a major focus of the Johnson Report.

By and large, however, it will be the general atmosphere of the school and the quality of the discipline which results from its day-to-day life which will have the stronger and more enduring effects: the sexual ethic is, after all, but an aspect of general ethics ... With this thought in mind the school might set out more consciously than in the past to strengthen the values and attitudes on which the code of sex ethics depends. (p. 54)

This general statement was followed by a series of more specific teaching topic suggestions such as “personal fastidiousness”, “respect for others” and “the effects of alcohol on self-control”. The Freudian defence mechanism of sublimation was seen as the means by which such self control could be achieved.

Adolescent boys and girls can understand that self-control is necessary to a balanced life, that some redirection of primitive energies is a condition of achievement, not only in sport but also in other activities, and that fitness for marriage and parenthood at a high level must of necessity involve a period of waiting. So too, with respect for others a conscience even

ordinarily sensitive can appreciate the danger of doing harm to another, and the adolescent can be brought to see that a healthy community is one in which normal family life can flourish and to understand the bearing of this truth on his personal attitude to sex. (p. 54)

In stating the need for curriculum change, the Thomas Report also outlined a progressive view of the school's role.

...the educative process has been restricted and distorted as the result of economic pressure...Reform depends in the last analysis on the existence of a public which will think of education less as a means of individual advancement, and more as a means of creating an educated community...Schools thus have the overriding duty of...assisting [pupils]...to build up a democratic society capable both of defending its essential values and of widening and deepening their influence. (pp. 5-6)

Beeby (1992), who referred to the Thomas Committee as "all liberals in education" suggested that, at that time, "the climate in the secondary schools was not conducive to the acceptance of a new ideology from a state department" (p. 170), although Lee & Lee (2003) make the point that the Thomas Report was sufficiently far sighted "to take account of numerous changes appearing on the educational horizon" (p. 5). The Thomas Committee was, they stated, "alert to some of the problems stemming from a re-occupation with schooling and educational outcomes" (p. 6). It did not however follow that it would have an easy passage into policy. Among the groups with an interest in its recommendations on health and sex education was the Roman Catholic Church.

### ***The Roman Catholic lobby over the subsequent health curriculum***

In confronting the need to act upon the Thomas Report's recommendations the Labour government, with a slim majority, was

mindful of the significant Roman Catholic vote. Beeby discusses the issues that arose in relation to the development of the subsequent 1948 Health syllabus:

I wanted to keep the committee [writing the syllabus] as small as possible and yet numerically reflect the sizes of the various groups of institutions. I recommended one representative of the private schools, the principal of a leading Presbyterian girls' college, and I stupidly omitted to propose someone from the Catholic schools.... this resulted in a difficult meeting with the Catholic bishops before the regulations were gazetted. I admitted I was in the wrong and, with Christian charity, they forgave me and accepted the scheme – after I had promised that the section on sex education would be dropped from the proposed syllabus on health education. (Beeby, 1992, p. 171)

Beeby's brief retrospective summary encapsulated what was in fact a protracted and vigorous process, described by Jenny Collins (2003) as resulting in "a willingness to compromise on both sides, to successfully negotiate an acceptable solution" (p.1). These discussions between Beeby and Dr N. H. Gascoigne, Director of Education in Catholic Schools, went beyond sex education. The whole business of moral education within Catholic schools was an hegemonic issue. To allow the secular state to dictate the curriculum was to threaten the independence and authority of the Catholic Church and its jurisdiction over its own parallel educational system. This debate was chronicled by O'Reilly (1976) who suggested that in mid 1944 the Thomas Report's recommendations appeared to the Roman Catholic educational authorities to threaten the autonomy of Catholic schools.

The bishops ... were concerned to protect the existence and autonomy of their schools from the encroachments of secular educational influences and Protestantism implicit in the Thomas Report...[they] feared that under pressure from state school inspectors they would be forced to comply with the new curriculum so that gradually all religious teaching and practice would be excluded from their schools and finally the curricula

of Roman Catholic and state schools would be virtually indistinguishable. (O'Reilly, 1976, p. 123)

These and other historic Catholic issues culminated in the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act of 1975. It is not the place here to pursue these but it must be noted that a dichotomy between the more conservative and more liberal Catholic positions became a feature of Johnson Report controversy.

Whether or not he was aware of the significance of the events to which Beeby alludes, Philip Amos, as Minister of Education, in 1976, did not make the mistake of neglecting to appoint a Roman Catholic on the Johnson Committee. His mistake lay in the choice itself – a liberal priest, regarded by some in the Catholic hierarchy as an *enfant terrible*, who was neither selected by, nor representative of, the national diocese.

### ***The 1948 Health syllabus***

The 1948 Health Education syllabus that followed the Thomas Report as the result of compromise between Beeby and the Catholic lobby makes interesting reading, as much for what it omits as it contains. The introduction to the resulting *Primary School Syllabus on Health Education*, reprinted in 1958, 1969 and 1971, stated that health education must ensure “the formation of healthy habits, the development of the right attitude to health and the acquisition of health knowledge.” Topics were to be factually based and include temperance, science and nature study related to health, nutrition and physical education. Education for mental health was seen as involving the satisfaction of “three basic needs of the child”. The first was the need for a sense of security, to be promoted through a school’s “pleasant atmosphere and routines.” The second need, that of self-expression, is to be met through ability grouping to ensure “success proportionate to effort”. The third basic need was described as “group well being”, but the syllabus was far from explicit as to how this would be achieved, other than through building “a sense of community” within the school



and cooperation with parents. These themes can be seen as stemming from an emerging holistic perspective on development, articulated further in the Thomas Report in general discussion of the relationship of the school climate and educational aims.

In view of the forthright text of the Thomas Report, it might have been expected that the health syllabus arising from it would have included at least a passing reference to the subject of sex education, but it does not. In a short paragraph the right of the parent to respond to the child's spontaneous questions is affirmed. But the final sentence is the unequivocal directive that resulted from the Beeby-Gascoigne compromise: "There is no place in the primary school for group or class instruction in sex education" (*Primary School Syllabus on Health Education*, 1958, p. 2). These extracts from the Thomas Report however establish it as a philosophical parent to the 1977 Johnson Report which acknowledged:

The Thomas Report of 1945 is still as relevant in its vision of the needs of society as it was then, and its vision still unfulfilled...In practice both personal needs and social needs have been all too often pushed into the background, especially by economic pressures...Reform depends in the last analysis on the existence of a public which will think of education less as a means of individual advancement and more as a means of creating an educated community...These views of the Thomas Committee are worth quoting, firstly because of its mana in the history of New Zealand education, secondly, because the directions education took after the Thomas Report (leading to a new formalism dominated by school certificate syllabuses and examination) have often been wrongly blamed on the report itself, and thirdly because it demonstrates that even in those apparently more stable times, which many look back to now nostalgically, the main purposes of education at the secondary level were still seen as socialisation . (Johnson Report, p. 99)

That the liberals within the educational policy community, such as Beeby, continued to endorse the rationale of the Thomas Report is revealed in the 1957 Annual Report of the Department of Education.

We want children to be healthy and physically vigorous, and if possible, happy: to live their lives fully and significantly as children; and to grow up into men and women who are generous, self-disciplined, and emotionally stable, willing to shoulder their responsibilities and equipped to do so able to give and take freely with others (and yet with their own inner resources) attractive and interesting as persons, mentally alert, clear-headed, and with an effective grasp of the tools of learning and some understanding of the natural and social world.<sup>1</sup>

Both O'Reilly and Collins described how the controversy aroused by the Thomas Committee's pronouncements on sex education were able to be worked through and smoothed over through in-house discussion and 'gentlemen's agreements' but such collegial activity, lacking the particular nature of this inter-personal diplomatic liaison, became progressively more difficult during the following decades. By the 1970s public debate, the use of the media to present opinion, and the lobbies of various pressure groups combined to demand of the policy community that its curriculum reform process became more transparent and accountable.

If the tenor of the Thomas Report was liberal however this was not true of the next major government report to grapple, albeit tangentially, with issues of health and social education within the curriculum. This was the 1962 *Report of the Royal Commission on Education*, chaired by Sir George Currie, also known as the Currie Report. The Currie Report is also significant to the Johnson Report controversy since it reinforced the ongoing conservative perspectives

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Education (1957) *Annual Report*, p. 26. (author's file)

on the school's role in relation to economic objectives and cultural reproduction.

## **THE CURRIE REPORT**

The 1962 Report of the Royal Commission on Education, was commissioned by the Minister of Education, Peter Scoglund, in February 1960 to consider primary, post-primary and technical education in relation to the present and future needs of the country, and the issue of State funding for private schools. Most of its deliberations were undertaken in the context of the new Keith Holyoake National government of 1960-1972. During this period the liberal leanings of Clarence Beeby, were harnessed in the service of a largely conservative educational Ministry. David Scott (1996) has described the collegial activity that resulted in the formation of the membership of the Commission on Education. In-house communication, sometimes involving other government departments with allied concerns, was a characteristic method by which departmental committees were established and it would be no different for the Johnson Committee. From Scott's discussion it can be seen that in relation to its hegemonic agenda, the Currie Report was concerned more with the maintenance of European middle class cultural capital than with any educational notions of holistic development. The subject of human development finds only an incidental place in the Currie Report within the section on 'School Discipline and Pupil Government':

At the present moment there appears to be some conflict between a certain traditional authoritarianism in home, school and community and a strong and growing movement towards more democratic, cooperative relationships in all three spheres. In the secondary school this situation is further complicated by the fact that a steadily increasing proportion of the pupils, through longer stay at school, are adolescent, or near adult, and by the strong evidence from physiologists that our young

people today are reaching physical maturity at an earlier and earlier age. (pp. 298-299)

Rather than interpreting students' earlier reproductive maturity as indicating a need to provide a relevant curriculum the Commission saw this trend as presenting a threat to "authority relations within the senior classroom between teacher and taught" (p. 299). They did however concede that factors relating to "social change, technology and increasing urbanisation" meant "the teacher today needs to know much more about young people's behaviour both individually and in groups, and has a more complex task in maintaining discipline than once he had" (p. 301).

### ***Administrative remedies for developmental issues***

The Currie Commission's concern about discipline focused on administrative remedies such as "increasing formal supervision...and changes in the organisation of classes and the programme of studies" (p. 302). This concern translated into a recommendation that the size of secondary school classes be reduced. The Currie Report's emphasis on academic achievement however was unequivocal. "Schools are provided for a particular purpose and there cannot be much doubt that the intellectual development of each pupil to his full capacity is still the primary, even though it is not now the sole, purpose of New Zealand schools" (p. 21).

In its terms of reference the Currie Commission was also asked to inquire into the question of "child welfare and delinquency as far as they have a bearing on the education system" (p 1). Its response was didactic rather than illuminating in finding the school to be the residuary legatee of the inadequacies of "unstable homes and of the evils in society itself" (p. 655). No curricular remedies were suggested, it being assumed that "the sensitive and well trained teacher" would discover those with "early signs of incipient delinquency in them". What was supposed to happen after such

discovery was not explained. Although it referred to “the typical delinquent” no explanation of the “signs” of delinquency were offered. The rhetoric of the Currie Report echoed that of the Mazengarb Report in its construing of delinquency as an individualised, rather than societal problem. It viewed the school as “a controlled and strongly moral environment in which very little actual delinquent behaviour ever takes place” (p. 672).

In discussing the “Work of the Schools” in Chapter Six, the Currie Report touched briefly on factors relating to school climate. These include the recommendations that secondary schools consider introducing school councils “in order to associate pupils with staff in the task of school government”, and that corporal punishment be banned at infant level as well as fifth and sixth forms. This did not however preclude the physical chastisement of children between seven and fifteen.

### ***The Commission’s position on Maori education***

Another issue to be revisited by the Johnson Committee was that of the achievement and education of Māori pupils, with regard to which the Currie Commission was firmly committed to the prevailing monocultural, assimilationist perspective.

The school...is not, nor can it ever be, the prime agency in conserving the Māori cultural heritage; its main task is undoubtedly to provide the Maori pupil with the educational equipment to enable him to play his part in the modern world and to this end the Māori pupil has the same body of learning to master as the non-Māori. But such elements of his Māori background must be included in his schooling as will give him still the sense of belonging to a race of known and respected culture. The Māori pupil will then have a surer basis on which to build the scholastic achievement of which he has such need. (pp. 415-416)

Despite this nod to what became known as Taha Māori (aspects of Māori culture) it was a statement that in no way ensured the inclusion of any aspects of Māori values or culture in the curriculum but rather served to reinforce the current situation of marginalisation. Scott (1996) who interpreted the Currie Report as a hegemonic exercise aimed at consolidation of the philosophy of the educational bureaucracy, found advocacy for Māori education to be “under-represented” at the Currie hearings despite a strong submission from the teachers of Northland College (p. 139). Although twenty-three recommendations on provisions for Maori Education in Chapter 8 of the Currie Report were aimed at academic achievement, the issue of the Maori pupil’s “sense of belonging” would not be tackled until fifteen years later by the Johnson Report which had this to say:

Although it [Currie Report] saw the physical, moral, emotional and intellectual aspects of a student’s life as interdependent and partly the concern of the school it saw the main thrust as being intellectual development. They considered that the main influences on other traits were the family, community services and the community at large. That this stage of affairs has not been good enough is revealed sadly, in our section on Social Concerns. (Johnson Report, p. 100)

The monocultural perspective of the teaching fraternity at that time is reflected in the PPTA’s submission to the Currie Commission on the place of Māori language in the curriculum in which it stated that “other tasks are considered by many of our teachers to be far too urgent to spend much time on a subject that will not assist their integration and the placement of Māori leaders into European working society” (Scott, 1996, p. 185).

Dunstall (1992) suggested that the Currie Report equivocated, expressing neither sympathy with those who wished to narrow schooling to the three Rs, nor support for those who wished to extend the role of the school. “Formation of character may have been an important aim of the primary system in the 1880s and 1890s, but to the

Commission 'the intellectual development of each pupil to his full capacity' was now the primary purpose of schools" (Dunstall, 1992, p. 467). The Currie Report that had been commissioned by the one term Nash-led Labour government, and inherited by National in 1960, was two years in preparation. Scott made the point that during this time it "effectively put Parliamentary debate on educational change on hold" (Scott, 1996, p. 35). Such hegemonic outcomes would not be possible in the more liberal and questioning climate of the early and mid 1970s.

### ***Increasing public interest in policy development***

The leading research officer for the Currie Commission was W. L. Renwick, described by Beeby (1992) as having the same "liberal and idealistic philosophy as himself" (p 298). As Director General, Bill Renwick would subsequently play a significant role in the Johnson Report controversy. The policy community of the 1970s however would be obliged to work in a more transparent mode than either the Thomas Committee, or the Currie Commission, and there were a number of reasons for this. First, tremendous public interest had been aroused during the EDC forum on education from 1972 to 1974. A second factor was the growing awareness of various lobby groups of the changes to the process of curriculum development brought about by the relatively new CDU. This interest generalised to other events with implications for the school curriculum, such as the working of the Committee on Human Development and Relationships across the Curriculum, set up in 1972, as well as that of the Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion initiated in 1975. It is therefore appropriate at this point to examine each of these strands of the Johnson Report controversy.

## THE EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

In 1968-69 a National Development Conference (NDC) led to the establishment of an Advisory Council on Educational Planning, one of a network of councils embracing the major sectors of the economy. This climate for planning was part of an international trend in Western countries whereby "emphasis was shifting from the quantitative aspect of educational growth to its qualitative aspects and the 'quality of life' was becoming a touchstone of social policy" (Renwick & Ingham, 1974, p. ii). In August 1972 the National Government held an Educational Priorities Conference (EPC). The working party that evolved from this, chaired by former leader of the Labour Party, Arnold Nordmeyer, was charged with examining "the organisation and articulation of the education system of New Zealand; to consider its relevance for today and for the future and to consider means by which it may adapt to changing circumstances" (EDC 1974 A, p 2). By the time this working party addressed its task in February 1973, the government had changed to Labour headed by Norman Kirk, with Philip Amos as Minister of Education, and the EPC became the EDC. Renwick, then Assistant Director General of Education, recalled these events:

There had been development conferences going on throughout the late 50s and all through the 60s and education was marginal to that. The Holyoake Government decided to have an EPC, and then it became the EDC, but the interesting thing technically about the EDC was that we built this community aspect to it. All previous conferences had taken place in Parliament. A report would be drafted and they'd come back and sign the report off. The innovation that came with this operation was that we deliberately built in community participation through the University Departments of Extension. We did that, not only because it was important educationally, but we also knew that to run an EDC without that component would simply mean that our educational constituencies would



feel they were being robbed without an opportunity to participate. (Renwick, Interview, October, 2.19.97)

Renwick's comments also reveal a hegemonic strategy aimed at maximising the potential for the Department's desired outcomes to be seen as consensus. The outcomes however could not be guaranteed since the parameters of public discussion on education are elastic. Noeline Alcorn saw the EDC as a departure from the policy of the previous twenty-five years in providing "the first opportunity since the 1944 Ministerial conference, convened by HGR Mason, for a wide cross section of New Zealand interest groups and individuals to come together and discuss educational issues" (Alcorn, 1999, p. 68). Exercises in public consultation however also contain the seeds of paralysis since the nature of any open debate ensures that there will inevitably be tensions between agendas. The times however were full of optimism for liberal educationalists.

It's important to remember that the Kirk-Rowling Government did really come in as a breath of fresh air. Many people who had felt that the previous Holyoake years had been very stultifying, saw the opportunity to do a lot of things. There was also an international climate which favoured de-schooling and a whole lot of things, such as schools without walls – after the Illich<sup>2</sup> thinking which we were very much influenced by at the time.<sup>3</sup> (Renwick, Int.)

These new educational theories were prosyletised by senior departmental officers who had travelled internationally on fellowships, and by academics in the universities and teachers' colleges. Among those who embraced the research was James (Jim) Ross, Superintendent of Curriculum Development between 1971 and 1974.

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<sup>2</sup> Ivan Illich's book, *Deschooling Society*, was published in 1971, becoming influential internationally. He toured New Zealand in 1972, speaking with teachers and academics. In interview, James Ross also recalled a Christchurch seminar conducted by Paulo Freire in 1973.

<sup>3</sup> The alternative schools, Four Avenues in Christchurch and Metropolitan College in Auckland, were established in the political and educational context of the early 1970s.

Following my role as Executive Officer of the Education Training and Research Committee of the National Development Conference, and as a Senior Inspector of Secondary Schools, I had met Lawrence Kohlberg in Harvard and spent some time with him, and [also] formed a very close friendship with Peter McPhail at Cambridge University in England. (Ross, Interview, June 9, 2002)

Jim Ross was also the Chairman of the 1973 committee that produced a discussion document on the place of human development and relationships in the secondary school curriculum. Known popularly as the “Ross Report” it would contribute to the formation of the CPA, and debate on this report became enmeshed with the public discussion forum of the EDC. These events occurred against the backdrop of the ongoing expansion of the CDU, the establishment of which had been recommended in the Currie Report of 1962. From 1965 onwards, national curriculum change was initiated and planned by the subject committees of the CDU.

## **THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT UNIT**

The CDU brought into the bureaucracy a number of experienced teachers with particular expertise in a range of fields, knowledge of contemporary theory and awareness of the relationship between education and social problems. Based on his analysis of the Currie Report, Scott suggested that the education policy community in New Zealand was small and interconnected, having “shared agendas” and “internal cohesion”. There was, he suggested, “a commonality of career purpose and often shared ideological assumptions which enables ‘insiders’ to define their own policy group” (Scott 1996, p. 167). This comment, applicable to both the Thomas and Currie committees, will be shown to apply also to the Johnson Committee. Ross (1976) summarised the changes in curriculum development that occurred since the Thomas Committee, prior to the CDU, as “a top-down type of

curriculum development. An expert committee had been set up but there was very little, if any involvement of practising teachers in its deliberations” (p 84). This changed during the period of 1973 to 1975 with a liberal Labour government sandwiched between two National governments, allowing a window of opportunity during which the CDU was able to pursue a progressive educational philosophy.

The Department, through its curriculum officers and inspectors, helps to assess national needs, sets up and evaluates pilot projects and provides resources of various kinds in an effort to assist schools to build their own curriculum within the broad framework of national syllabuses...Committees involving teachers, curriculum officers and inspectors...teachers college lecturers and university lecturers are often used to stimulate developments by producing new materials or advocating new methods which are then tried out in schools. (Ross, 1976, p. 85)

Ross noted that these developments were viewed with apprehension by some, including teachers who “feel threatened by the prospect of change” (p. 85). This was hardly surprising since at stake were the preservation of cultural capital and the embodiment of habitus in the form of socially valued skills and expectations as disseminated through the curriculum. University lecturers espousing progressive theory were particularly suspect. Between 1971 and 1976 the policy community, through an increase in CDU staffing, both grew larger and became more permeable.

What was happening at that time was that Phil Amos himself was of a persuasion that there should be more going on for young people to encourage them to stay in schools, more than just intellectual development. And he wanted to see schools where young people wanted to be there – not to be told what to think – and so the whole process of the 1970s has to be seen as part of that. Take for example the CDU. I had immense support from Phil Amos and from Bill Renwick. We started off with about 15 staff and ended up with about 60 or 70 because

we took in as well the National Advisory Service and we took in libraries, AV media, music, art and craft, PE and outdoor recreation. We had a very varied group of people who were all engaged in strong programmes which had to be relayed out to the periphery from the centre. And the whole enterprise was only successful insofar as the centre was well resourced and there were good communication lines out into the school systems and people working in the field and also there was good feedback to the system. So you get a system of management and diffusion of information and growth... rather than having people competing against each other we had a group of people working together. So you had half a dozen different subject people putting their heads down. Certainly different to what it was a decade before. (Ross, Int.)

As Superintendent of Curriculum Ross was concerned that resources should cease to be “teacher proof,” by which he meant a fixed content prescription that did not encourage teacher supplementation, interpretation or student inquiry.

I think really looking back on it was part of a very big concern where there was this shift going on between what you might call content studies and subjects in the curriculum and, to use the jargon, looking more at processes in learning. And the emphasis was shifting. The biggest single event of the early 1970s was the realisation that learning didn't necessarily take place as the result of teaching per se. And so the shift was from content and knowledge and recall towards process in learning. Now as a result of that questions were then being asked, “what can schools do to solve the ills of society?” And we have all of these requests coming, from consumer education, education about drugs, traffic education, religious education, ethical education, moral education, and all of these sorts of subjects came across my desk as Superintendent and required answers. What it was demonstrating to us was that the community was looking for more from the school system than was being provided and was in the existing syllabuses. And so there was

this enormous, almost renaissance going on in the system. And the outcome of that was the EDC and a whole community starting to think “what are schools for” and “what is education about?” We were moving away from single subjects to a process oriented approach. (Ross, Int.)

Such questioning however represented a threat to the views of the RR who saw a tightly prescribed and monitored “teacher proof” curriculum as the only guarantee of continuity of middle-class cultural capital. Furthermore, the centre-periphery trialing of classroom resources was hazardous, both in its experimental nature as it engaged with malleable young minds and in its potential for trial resources to become a *fait accompli* in infiltrating the curriculum surreptitiously. As will be discussed in Chapter Seven, by 1974 pressure groups such as Society for the Protection of Community Standards and the CPA had begun to scrutinise the curriculum changes going on in schools.

### ***The trialing of curriculum resources***

Ross recalled New Zealand’s process of curriculum development as being part of an international trend, concerned also with the evaluation of education standards. At a 1971 meeting in Paris of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, Ross recalled participants, including Benjamin Bloom and Torsten Husen, expressing interest in the process of curriculum development then evolving in New Zealand.

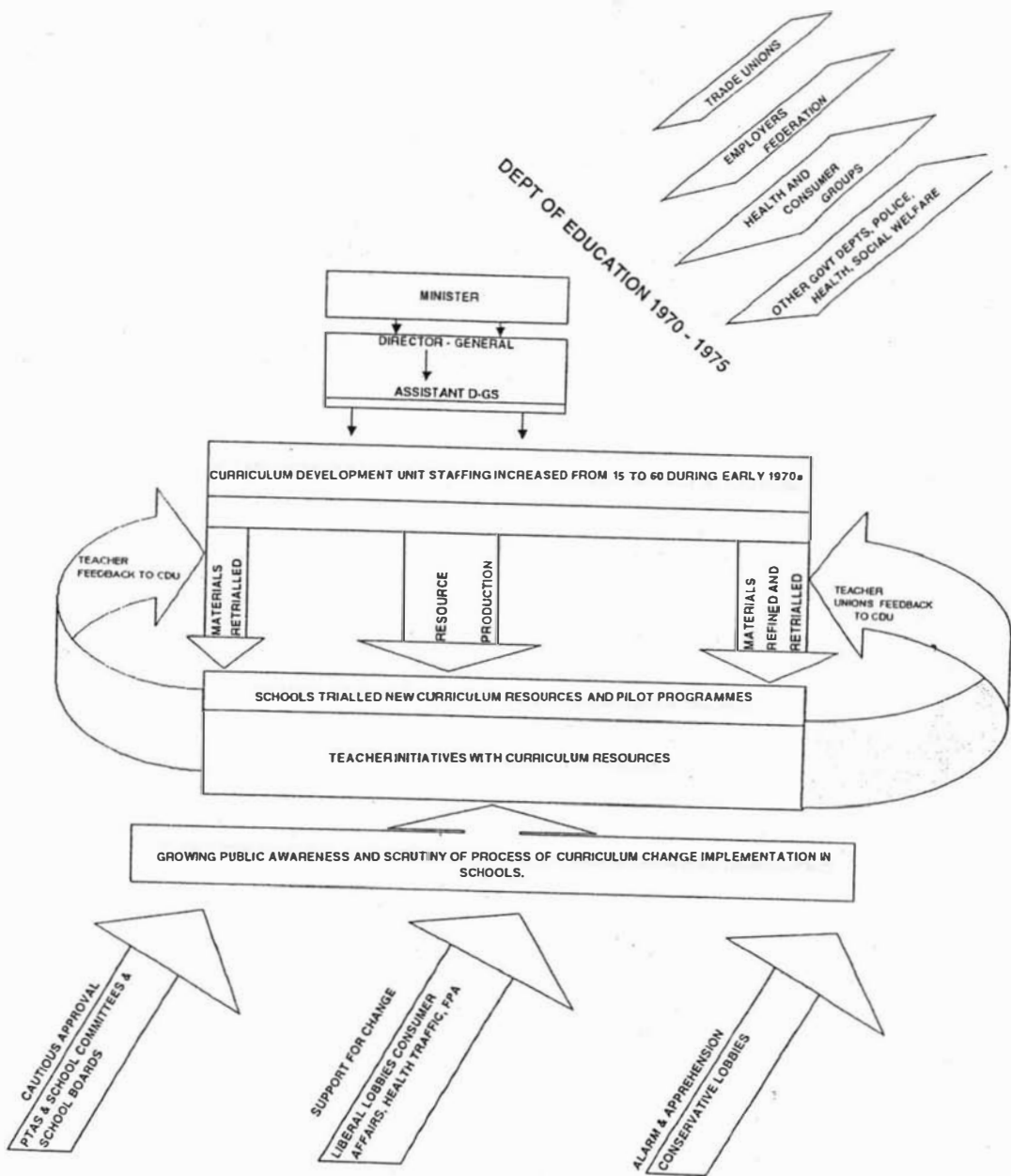
We had established this process whereby the developments taking place were tried out in the school system as pilot and other schemes. We had feedback from the teachers. Materials were refined and tried out again...a continuous process, a dynamic time where teachers engaged in the process reported that they gained professional satisfaction and knowledge. The notion was that you didn’t have a top down kind of development in curriculum which was what we felt had come out from the Thomas Committee and also the Commission on

Education...where the syllabuses were developed centrally and disseminated and teachers were told to get on with it. On this occasion, for the first time, in the early 1970s, teachers were seriously involved in the whole process of the development ...We helped the Police, DSIR, Department of Health and others develop some of their education programmes...the trade unions and employers, looking beyond the school at work exploration schemes. These were introduced in the early 1970s. The Health Department were extremely strong supporters of sex education. Social workers Police, traffic, they were interested in this whole question of personal responsibility and consequences of actions. We motivated a lot of meetings on social issues. (Ross, Int.)

Helen Shaw, who became New Zealand's first full-time curriculum officer for health in the aftermath of the Johnson Report, recalls the educational ethos of the early 1970s:

It wasn't only New Zealand. It wasn't that we were out on a limb here. It was the whole international perspective that was changing. The American books of the time were based on values teaching and values clarification. There were also some very good writings in liberal studies, on linking home and school. They were largely out of the UK because the home and school movement was England based. Peter McPhail's ideas were influential. (Shaw, Interview, 2.10.97)

McPhail's writings on the teaching of values and values clarification strategies were influential internationally during the 1970s. The *Lifeline* resources that emerged from the British Schools Council project led by McPhail were based on an inductive approach and acknowledged the importance of conflict. The aim was not to teach a set of prescriptions but to ensure that children learned how to cope with moral dilemmas. teaching methods that influenced curriculum development in New Zealand. Figure 2 illustrates what Ross described as the centre-periphery model of the CDU of the mid 1970s, indicating its permeability by practising teachers.



**Figure 2.** The author's visualization of the centre-periphery-centre model of curriculum development in New Zealand during the 1970s. The top right hand corner indicates the range of lobbies directed at the Minister and Department of Education. The body of the diagram depicts the process of curriculum development, classroom trialing and refining, while groups with an interest in this process are shown in the arrows at the base of the figure.

It is perhaps better described as a centre-periphery-centre model because of the feedback loop from classroom teachers having the capacity to influence curriculum outcomes. For this reason it was also a process with the capacity to contribute to the apprehension of the RR. Concurrently, the Department in New Zealand was also cautiously promoting local input into the role of the schools in values teaching.

We also contracted with a professor at Massey University [Ivan Snook] to do a book on morals and values. because we wanted again to get some clarification from someone who had a good philosophical background...a Catholic background, and in some ways conservative.<sup>4</sup> (Renwick, Int.)

*More Than Talk: Moral Education in New Zealand.* (Snook & McGeorge, 1978) provoked its own controversy and these events are described by Weir (2001) in her analysis of developments in moral education in New Zealand between 1979-1985. *More Than Talk* also evoked a conservative response in the form of an audio-visual teaching resource, *What Do You Think?* Grounded in Judeo Christian values, it was produced by a retired secondary school inspector, David Elliot-Hogg, as a challenge to secular humanism. Elliot-Hogg formed a conservative group called the Community Organisation for Moral Education (COME) which subsequently aligned itself with the Concerned Parents' Association.

Of course there were also members of the public who were threatened by all this questioning. And the outcome of that were the various lobbies that were established to try and prevent any change from occurring. And they were vocal and political. The Committee on Moral Education was one. It didn't have many members but it was very influential with the politicians and the media...chaired by Elliot-Hogg, a former secondary school inspector. And then you have Patricia

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<sup>4</sup> Ivan Snook was at this time at Canterbury University. He later became a Professor at Massey University. Kama Weir (2001) has described the controversy that followed publication of the book *More ThanTalk*, to which Renwick refers.



Bartlett of the Society for the Protection of Community Standards who took exception to our work on moral education because it was seen as undermining the value systems that they adhered to. (Ross, Int.).

Weir (2001) outlines the antagonistic stances associated with proponents of each of *More than Talk* and *What Do You Think?*, both of which had the “potential to be contentious, and through their association with the Department, become politically embarrassing” (p. 144). As will be later described, both Snook and Elliot-Hogg became participants in the Johnson Report controversy.

### ***The teacher unions and the permeability of the CDU***

Within the policy community the networking that had always been characteristic of government departments was a means of recruiting teachers for curriculum development on the basis of their like-mindedness. Some were appointed to Head Office and others were seconded for periods of time for specific projects. The Johnson Committee would contain departmental representatives of both categories. It is likely also that the teacher unions had some input with regard to these secondments since the new educational research emerging from America and England was also being disseminated in in-service courses. *Education In Change* (1969), chaired by Rae Munro, reflected the policy of the New Zealand Post-Primary Teachers Association (PPTA) at this time. Since the Currie Report, the PPTA had revised its policy over the issue of underachievement of Maori pupils. The committee that produced *Education In Change* included Garfield Johnson, Helen Ryburn, also a member of the Ross Committee, and Peter Boag, later Assistant Director General. *Education In Change* exhorted schools to address moral and social concerns and to develop supportive school climates. Its introduction traced changes in family, economics, mass media, urban migration and the changing ethnic composition of the population. It suggested that many parents were

“struggling to revalue our changing society and offer their children positive guidance” and thus schools could contribute to the “development of desirable values in young people” (p. 5). The current emphasis on achievement ranking and competitiveness was rebuked (p. 13), with education’s basic aim seen as the “development of maturity” involving acceptance of “the intrinsic worth of all human beings to respect their right to hold their own opinions and make their own decisions and to feel responsible for one’s own actions and those of others” (p. 10). In its report the Munro Committee was referring to schooling, especially post-primary schooling, rather than education in a wider sense.

### ***Education In Change***

*Education In Change* clearly positions the PPTA in the mid 1960s and 1970s the liberal, humanist camp. It suggested that McPhail’s values clarification pedagogy should be part of the curriculum (p. 99) and spelled out three overarching learning objectives for students that subsequently became a catch-cry for liberal educators. These were the fostering of “the urge to enquire”, “a concern for others” and “the desire for self respect” (p. 31). Another PPTA working party produced *Guidance In Secondary Schools* (1971) presenting a view of guidance as a network of formal and informal services that collectively both contributed to, and reflected, a school’s awareness of its responsibilities to its pupils as individuals. The Department’s *Secondary Education Review* of 1972 was accompanied by a range of in-service courses and discussion papers such as *Guidance in a Changing Context; Some Issues and Prospects in Secondary Education*, and *The Challenge is Change*. These publications reflected initiatives of both the teacher unions and the Department aimed partly at addressing issues of social education.

New curriculum developments were also disseminated through teacher training colleges, as Middleton and May (1997) illustrate through the words of one of the teachers interviewed in their research.

Ray [Rae] Munro was a very important person from Auckland Teachers College. He did a lot of reading and sowing the seeds of ideas, and promoting discussion. PPTA was a very important influence..... And it was a young, vibrant profession. There were a lot of very good people around with ideas, and you'd go to a PPTA meeting, and you'd just soak it all up.. (p. 221)

The RR lobby, which had by 1975 now become well organised, began to focus on the activity of the CDU and its permeability by the liberal educational community. Russell Marshall, who became Minister of Education in 1984, recalled that during the mid 1970s this resulted in an "increasing 'mantra' that people who were practising should be excluded from policy [making]" (Marshall, Int.). What the Religious Right lobby feared and expressed publicly in its newsletters was that the Department of Education would find a way to introduce sex education into the curriculum as a *fait accompli*. Groups such as the Society for the Protection of Community Standards (SPCS) and the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) were becoming increasingly vocal through the media. In this climate the policy community remained mindful of the need for caution although the exact nature and potential strength of opposition to a change with regard to the law on sex education remained difficult to gauge. Renwick recalled both the dilemma and the bureaucracy's response. Concurrent with the EDC "a departmental foray into these murky waters followed" (Renwick Int.).

### **THE "ROSS REPORT" – A DEPARTMENTAL 'FORAY'**

This foray took the form of a committee chaired by Jim Ross, which produced a discussion booklet, *Human Development and Relationships Across the Curriculum* (1973), referred to here as the "Ross Report. The Ross Committee held its first meeting in March 1973. Its terms of reference were to produce a study paper on health and social education, for students aged eleven plus, that would contain

“background information for teachers in primary, intermediate and secondary schools including suggested teaching programmes dealing with human reproduction and its personal and social implications”(“Ross Report”, p. 5). The committee was comprised of nine educators, two health officers and the president of the NCW. Ross was then the CDU Superintendent and “much influenced by the ideas” of both Peter McPhail and Lawrence Kohlberg.

We shouldn't over-emphasise Kohlberg's influence on us but it did fit into the general pattern at that time of the belief that schools were simply more than places where you acquired knowledge....if you were put in dilemma situations *a la* McPhail, you were then invited to use your thinking in a way where you might develop an attitude or a series of values or such, that were in fact going to be to your benefit and the benefit of society as a whole. (Ross Int.)

The “Ross Report” stated that “a limited and specific body of factual knowledge” had not necessarily “helped students to understand themselves and their relationships with others” (p. 5). This comment was an indirect reference to Sweden's sex education curriculum which had been examined by Ross during his travels. Ironically, the policy community and the Concerned Parents' Association were in accord on the issue of the Swedish curriculum.

Because I'd been to Sweden and studied the education system I'd become typecast as a purveyor of very immoral behaviour. I saw sex education there and it was completely outside the context of moral education and social educational. It was simply an autocratic kind of biological training programme. And so any suggestion that they have any responsibility for their behaviour later was not even discussed as far as I could see. (Ross Int.)

Aware of the contentious nature of its task, the Ross Committee reiterated the need for consultation with parents and the school community with an introduction possibly intended to forestall opposition to its recommendations.

The relative responsibilities of the home and the school for the personal and social development of young people, and the contributions they each make, are matters of concern to many people. There are indications that New Zealand schools are being asked to accept a greater share of the responsibility in this regard. The purpose of this paper is to provide a basis for an expression of opinion on the role of the school in the broad fields of human development and family and personal relationships, including sex education. ("Ross Report", p. 5)

There is some naïveté in this statement, in that it precedes the suggestion that the secondary school health curriculum should include specific topics guaranteed to arouse parent alarm. These included; "the development of the sexual urge", "petting and masturbation", "human reproduction and human sexuality at an advanced level" and "transition period between dependence on parent and family to dependence upon peer groups and other adults, and finally to greater self dependence" (p. 25).

The "Ross Report" was read "with horror" by Martin and Jean Viney, Christchurch residents who had recently arrived from England and the founders of the Concerned Parents' Association (J. Viney, Interview, August 13, 1999). From this point onwards the activity of the Vineys would prove pivotal to outcomes of the Johnson Report's recommendations. Jim Ross however saw the purpose of his committee as being "to test the field of public opinion to see whether or not this exercise which was in moral education should continue through to the curriculum...lay groups, particularly school committees, were in fact advocating, not sex education per se but moral education" (Ross Int.). Helen Ryburn, then Principal of Westlake Girls' High School and President of the PPTA, recalled her participation as a member of the Ross Committee:

We sat around in rooms for about a year and just talked it through. We were mostly teachers. I saw it as the start of a process which would enable the schools to tackle some of the social problems that were besetting them. And I think all along

we realised that that was going to involve health and sex education. In my teaching years sex problems were much more important than, say drug problems, or crime or truancy... we realised that we were tentatively approaching that problem. but I think there was also a feeling that schools weren't doing enough. I think we weren't doing anything much to help people resolve problems. The PPTA booklet, *Education In Change*, in which I was involved, had the same background. (Ryburn, Interview, September 22, 1997)

### ***The "Ross Report's" recommendations***

Since the "Ross Report" was an in-house exercise aimed at producing a document for further discussion, public submissions had not been called for, but public response was not long in coming. As a secondary school teacher, Martin Viney was already aware of the liberalising influence on the curriculum of CDU activity. To the Vineys the "Ross Report" was perceived as indicating what had already become practice in some schools where principals were trying to find local solutions for the problems of their students. *Human development and Relationships Across the Curriculum* (1973) stated that the developmental needs of all children were not being fully met by existing school programmes. It suggested deleting the specific statement in the Education Act that forbade sex education in the primary school. It recommended revision of the primary school health education syllabus, the creation of secondary school programmes on human development, relationships in all schools for pupils at all levels and relevant training and resources for teachers. In the two years that followed the release of the "Ross Report" the CPA repeatedly lobbied the Minister of Education to release all the submissions that had been made to the committee, without success. This was partly because of the Department's ongoing efforts to determine the outcomes of the debate

and partly because, as an in-house committee, the public had not been consulted widely nor solicited for submissions.

The "Ross Report" was discussed extensively at seminars and study groups organised in the context of the EDC where it often became the main focus of discussion. From an original printing of 20,000 in December 1973, such was the demand that a further 30,000 copies had been printed by the end of 1974. What the Department of Education still needed however was a clearer indication of where the strongest opposition to further liberalising of the curriculum might come from. The mobilisation of the RR lobby was already underway, as recalled by the then Minister of Education, Phil Amos.

I remember being at a meeting in Invercargill where the [Ross] Report was discussed. While the majority of people at that time were in favour of some form of sex education, this meeting of 250 or so was stacked with people who were opposed to sex education who literally howled the others down. But it was a valuable starting point and it raised a whole range of issues. After its failure there was considerable concern among the Department, teachers, myself and my advisors that there ought to be some publication for further public discussion in order to arouse people's concern about what was a growing problem in our society - lack of a coherent and comprehensive social education programme, including to some extent, sex education. (Amos, Interview, September 11, 1997)

The same meeting was recalled vividly by Jim Ross, who had attended with his Minister.

Ministerial Private secretary, Paul Plummer, Phil Amos and I went to Invercargill and when we arrived at the meeting place, which was one of the intermediate school halls, we saw all these buses lined up outside. They contained people who had come down from Gore and all around the south to hear these terrible things that the terrible Ross Report and Minister Amos had promulgated. The television from Christchurch were

doing a special feature on it...At the end of the meeting people came up to me and said "well I didn't realize it was quite like that." They had regarded what we had presented in our discussion document as a *fait accompli*. What in fact we were doing of course was testing the water. It was a discussion paper to invite public opinion. In the end I had to take over his [Amos'] role. Because the meeting had suddenly become highly political I responded to comments and questions. (Ross, Int.)

The media was already alert to the news possibilities of such events and issues and Ross recalled also the alacrity with which the Wellington newspaper, the *Dominion*, seized the opportunity for a headline.

It [the "Ross Report"] was soon picked up by some of the lobbies like Patricia Bartlett and others who'd given it the status of a report on its own, in that it was part of the government's policy to implement this forthwith. So it was ...taken up by the newspapers and when I stepped out of the train on the Wellington platform one morning an enormous billboard was there – "THE ROSS REPORT ADVOCATES COMPULSORY SEX EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS". (Ross Int)

If the Department had wanted to test the waters of public opinion, it had succeeded. Such response led it to prepare a summary in which it concluded that further public consultation was necessary.

There are indications that some members of the public who have not studied the [Ross] booklet are reacting to interpretations that have been placed on it by a few individuals in the community who are very active at the present time. The Department expects to receive comments from some of the national social welfare and educational organisations once there has been sufficient time for their members to study the issues carefully. Early indications show that the organisations



want change but are seeking ways of protecting the interests and responsibilities of parents and teachers.<sup>5</sup>

It had seemed to Renwick, as to others, that the advent of the Kirk Labour Government had offered a window of opportunity for liberalisation of the curriculum. “There was a view at the time among progressives, and I certainly include myself among them, that reasonable positions would prevail” (Renwick Int.). However it was now becoming clearer that the activities of the policy community were being closely scrutinised. In this climate the Department’s hegemonic activity in regard to curriculum development became a more difficult enterprise and the permeability that had had been a strength of the CDU now became a weakness in that it could be seen as being ‘stacked’ with liberals. Balancing the uncertainties of trying to gauge the strength of opposition to change however was the Department’s knowledge that there would be support for liberalising the curriculum from the educational community of interest.

### ***The educational community’s response to the “Ross Report”***

There were clear indications from teacher groups of support for the “Ross Report.” At the May 1975 annual conference of the primary teachers’ union (NZEI) the following resolution was passed:

That the Institute support a re-writing of the Health syllabus to reflect current teaching practice and that in the re-write the sentence on page 2 of the present primary school syllabus on Health education – ‘there is no place in the primary school for group or class instruction in sex education’ be deleted. Further that the Department, in conjunction with the Institute, produce a set of guidelines based on the established Institute policy for

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<sup>5</sup> *Human Development and Personal Relationships (Including Sex Education) in the School Curriculum*. Department of Education summary paper. Undated. (author’s file)

curriculum change, the content guidelines suggested by the Ross Committee report.<sup>6</sup>

NZEI policy in relation to sex education fell within the theme of 'education for equality' as spelled out in its constitution.

The Institute believes that sex education is vitally necessary but that out of psychological context it is of little value. Our schools must convey a concept of human relationships deeper and broader than one based simply on sex education. The Institute believes that there needs to be emphasis on social awareness and sensitivity. No child should leave primary school without knowing that both sexes should develop sensitivity towards people and responsiveness to social problems as well as a measure of social leadership. (NZEI, 1978, p 26)

This is a liberal interpretation of health education in the context of increasing concern over "problems of classroom control and teachers' mental health caused by the increasing incidence of juvenile crime and truancy" (NZEI, 1978, p 26). David Kerr, of the NZEI executive committee at this time also became a member of the Johnson Committee. The secondary teacher union, the New Zealand Post Primary Teacher's Association (PPTA) also wanted to see the recommendations of the "Ross Report" implemented. Its 1975 annual conference resolved that "the Departmental booklet *Human Development and Relationships Across the School Curriculum* be approved as providing a sensible and balanced guideline to the aims and content of the sex education aspects of programmes in human development and relationships in secondary schools".<sup>7</sup> Given the small population of New Zealand it was inevitable that there would be some congruence between the unions' policies and that of the Department. From the perspectives of both the Concerned Parents' Association and the Society for the Promotion of Community Standards however such

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<sup>6</sup> Memorandum to the Committee on HSE from CDU officer, Peter Macpherson, dated March 30, 1976. p. 2 (author's file)

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, p. 3

congruence was viewed as further evidence of collusion between the Department and liberal teachers.

### ***The “Ross Report” in the context of the EDC***

In late 1974 the Department set up a working party to prepare a further discussion paper based on the “Ross Report”. Its task was to outline a possible teaching programme and to consider various methods of possible implementation for introducing family life education programmes in schools. This paper was expected to provide a stimulus “for teachers, parents, and the community generally to formulate their views and make them known to the Department of Education so that further steps, if any, might be taken in the light of this knowledge of public opinion.”<sup>8</sup> In the climate of public debate the work of this committee lay fallow since such initiatives were now under the critical gaze of the CPA and the Department’s hope that the “Ross Report” would lead to a clearer public mandate for curriculum revision had not been realised. Nor had such guidelines emerged from the EDC. Three main EDC working parties had been established - Organisation and Administration of Education; Improving Teaching and Learning; and Educational Aims and Objectives. In November 1974 the Advisory Council on Educational Planning presented to the Minister, the Hon. Philip Amos, its final report on the Conference (EDC, 1974a). It provided no directions for curriculum change relating to the thorny issues of social, moral and sex education. Throughout the EDC period of public consultation the “Ross Report” had been a hot potato, often overshadowing other educational discussion, as revealed in an extract from a regional summary report on EDC activities.

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<sup>8</sup> Rationale statement by the Department of Education for setting up a committee to produce a discussion paper on the issues involved in implementing family life education (including sex education) programmes, particularly in primary schools. Undated. (author’s file)

At many public meetings people were very critical of the booklet. A great many of these people later admitted that they had never seen the booklet – in some instances, without knowing its contents, people were adamantly against its use... Originally 4000 primary school parents [in Taranaki] were polled on the simple question of approval, or not, of sex education in schools. This led to demands for better information on the proposed curriculum. As a result an EDC forum held at Stratford included this subject in its programme. Debate was led by Miss Patricia Bartlett of the Society for Promotion of Community Standards, and Mr. Bob Halliburton, National President of the Post Primary Teachers' Association. A representative panel, including students, commented on the debate and a floor discussion ensued among the 750 persons present. When time allocated to the subject ran out, there was a majority refusal to come to a definitive decision at that stage.<sup>9</sup>

According to one editorialist, the Department continued to receive opinions on the "Ross Report" from "... people who had not read the booklet but were reacting to interpretations placed upon it – for example, despite its title, the booklet has been referred to as 'the Sex Education Report'."<sup>10</sup> The EDC forum had provided a context for a range of proselytising from various perspectives, and for groups to position themselves on the issue of moral, values and sex education. The result was a more public and definitive aligning of such groups with either the liberal, the conservative middle or the RR perspective.

### ***Polarisation continues***

The Association of Primary School Headmasters in Auckland devoted its 1974 annual series of extension course lectures to the topic

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<sup>9</sup> *Educational Development Conference*: Massey University Department of Extension Report 1973-74. pp. 24-25.

<sup>10</sup> Editorial in *Education* 1974. Undated, p 2. (author's file)

of sex education which it was agreed should be permitted in schools (Sanders, 1974). At a seminar on “social and moral education in the secondary school” held by the Education faculty at Massey University during October 1976 lecturer, John Codd, argued for inclusion of teaching practices derived from the theories of Piaget and Kohlberg, in relation to contemporary issues.

Public attitudes to the recent rugby tour of South Africa have shown that most New Zealanders form their views on the basis of a conventional form of morality. Very few arrive at a moral judgment on the basis of principles to which they are committed. .. If schools are to produce citizens who are morally educated they must provide opportunities for pupils to engage in moral reasoning which may be critical of the prevailing social values.<sup>11</sup>

### ***The CDU under scrutiny***

The Concerned Parents’ Association had begun to use the media to represent its views on the curriculum. There was a growing awareness of the power of television to promulgate opinion and SPCS leader, Patricia Bartlett, frequently took the opportunity to comment when approached by journalists. The CPA registered its Newsletter with the General Post Office as a magazine and began to release it to newspapers. These newsletters exhorted its network of supporters to monitor public seminars to detect which teachers might be using the curriculum to implement elements of situational ethics and comparative values that could threaten the home’s authority through questioning the Biblical basis of moral absolutism. The CPA assumed a watchdog role as the Department continued to explore possibilities for curriculum change in the area of health and social development. In April 1975 a *Joint National Course in Health Studies* took place at

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<sup>11</sup> J. A. Codd, cited in an editorial: “Moral reasoning” in *Education News* November 1976, (2) 10, .1.

Hogben House in Christchurch, followed by the setting up of district working parties in each of the Education Board areas to review the primary health education syllabus. These working parties were directed in particular to study Module 3 of the Primary Health Education Handbook which dealt with “family and social living” and their summaries were passed on to the CDU which continued to trial resources in preparation for future policy. In 1976, another report, *Towards Partnership*, was presented to the Minister of Education by the McCombs Committee on Secondary Education. As its title suggests, The McCombs Report recommended parent-school-community partnership as a mechanism for consultation over curriculum matters. This was also the theme of an earlier report, *Parent-School Communication* (1973) which will be discussed in the next chapter. The Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education subsequently acknowledged the importance of the McCombs recommendations as “inherent in the very nature of all we are saying” (p. 101).

### ***Ongoing inter-departmental liaison***

The history of shared concern over social problems among police, health and educational bureaucrats meant those drugs, truancy and teenage pregnancies remained at the forefront of the agenda. “It was my opinion that the Health Department was pushing us” (Renwick, Int.) Youth crime and its relationship to absenteeism, concerned the police bureaucracy, members of which regularly attended a Police and Education Department inter-departmental committee on Young Offenders. A 1977 Department of Education Memorandum to this committee stated that there was “evidence to

suggest that ...the true incidence [of absences] could be greater than principals and staff are aware of or prepared to admit.”<sup>12</sup>

Children who gain little or nothing from the education system can become permanent denigrators of education and the opportunities education provides. In consequence, the community as a whole suffers from some degree of unnecessary and damaging “anti-educationism” which is self-perpetuating and damaging to society.<sup>13</sup>

Although the “Ross Report” had not brought the Department any nearer to resolution over the issue of sex education it was its departmental predecessor in terms of hegemonic activity of the bureaucracy. This is spelled out in an address given by the Director General Renwick to a conference of the New Zealand Parent Teachers’ Associations in 1976:

... the Ross Committee, important though it was, was very much in the nature of an exploratory probe. It started out with the presenting issue of sex education and provided a context of human relationships and development within which sex education could be understood and interpreted. But the field of human relationships and development is broader even than that. Quite apart from the public concern about sex education there was also a growing awareness that the health syllabuses for both primary and secondary students were in need of revision. Health in this country has traditionally been seen as an adjunct of physical education.. In recent years however we have come to look upon health not simply in relation to the absence of disease or ill health but in the more positive sense of the successful negotiation of all of the hazards of the changing physical and social environment in which we all live. Thus there is considerable concern at the present time about

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<sup>12</sup> Department of Education Memorandum 30/3/2/1 to Members of the Joint Committee on Young Offenders, dated April 7, 1977. ABEP W4262, 17/3/30, Pt 3, Box 855. Archives New Zealand.

<sup>13</sup> Discussion paper prepared for the Joint Committee on Young Offenders (p. 9) forwarded by Graeme Dallow to the Chairman of the Committee on Health and Social Education on July 21, 1977. (author’s file).

drug education, safety education, survival skills, and the use of the outdoors. Many of these concerns have given rise to ad hoc programmes in the schools. It seemed to us in the Department that the time had come to bring these various concerns together into a coherent set of syllabuses that would cover the field of health and social education. (Renwick, 1976, p. 10)

Renwick's speech heralded the breadth of what would become the Johnson Committee's brief. It was Renwick's opinion that people who doubted the wisdom of the Ross Committee's recommendations had focused on "the intrusion of the school into the field of parental responsibility", believing that this "would inevitably result in conflict between the values underlying the teaching programmes in the schools and the values that the individual parents themselves might have for the upbringing of their children" (Renwick, 1976, pp. 7-8). It was not, suggested Renwick, satisfactory simply to answer that because sex education was a concern only of a minority of parents it could be dismissed. Nor was it entirely satisfactory to state that parents who disapproved of a teaching programme could withdraw their child. The dilemma over sex education and the variety of social problems, such as drugs, remained unresolved. What had been revealed was the need to base any future curriculum changes on sufficient consultation and persuasion about the reasonableness of change. The only hegemonic strategy available was to set up another committee with sufficient expertise and authority to tackle this challenge. What could not be foreseen was that this Labour government initiative would however proceed in a political climate that was to become progressively less liberal.

## **A NEW COMMITTEE IS NEEDED**

During 1975 Renwick and the educational bureaucracy continued to dialogue with the Departments of Health and Police as



they debated how best to further the revision of the health education syllabus. It appeared that another committee was needed, but one that was set up with such a brief that the issue of sex education would be just one social concern among others and would perhaps appear peripheral, rather than central, to its task. The establishment of the membership of the Johnson Committee, described in the next chapter, reveals the policy community at work and the networking characteristic of the wider educational community of interest. In a statement in the *Education News* in August 1975 Minister of Education, Amos, referred to the likelihood of the government setting up a further committee to look at the question of health and social education programmes, of which drug education, a more recent cause for concern, would be a part.<sup>14</sup> In November 1975 a formal proposal for the establishment of a health and social education committee was sent to the Minister. This included suggested terms of reference together with suggestions for committee members (Macpherson, 1978, p.77). At the 1976 conference of the NZPPTA Renwick described the background to the new committee and articulated the Department's position as having during the previous five years "undertaken over the last five years a number of initiatives which have been intended to discern public opinion on the controversial issues that fall under the heading of human relationships and development". The Department's official line was that the recommendations of the Ross Committee had been "largely supported in public discussion" and provided a good basis for policy development. Renwick informed this conference that:

A committee on health and social education has been set up with the specific purpose of producing syllabus guidelines that could then be used as a basis for public discussion. We have reported all this to the Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion and we await any recommendations

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<sup>14</sup> *Education News*, August 1975, p. 2.

that Commission might wish to make. Only then will we make any recommendations to the Minister and only then would he feel that he was in a position to authorise any change in the present official syllabus.<sup>15</sup>

In November 1975 New Zealand held another general election. The government changed hands from Labour to National, and Phil Amos lost his parliamentary seat. One of his final acts was to authorise the establishment of the Committee on Health and Social Education under the Chair of James Garfield Johnson. The task of this new committee however was complicated by the fact that it worked congruently with the Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion (CSA). Just as debate on the "Ross Report" had become entangled with the EDC, so too would the Johnson Report's recommendations would be affected by the CSA Bill. A brief account of the Department's involvement in these events is also relevant to the ensuing controversy.

## **THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON CONTRACEPTION, STERILISATION AND ABORTION.**

In the context of a growing pro-abortion lobby the government established the 1976 Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion (CSA) to address some of the issues that had remained dormant since the McMillan Inquiry of 1937.<sup>16</sup> During the 1960s the Department of Education was persistently lobbied by two organizations, the NCW and the Family Planning Association [FPA], over the issue of teenage pregnancy that had concerned the Ross Committee. At that time pregnant students were required to leave school with no further expectation of formal education. Sympathetic principals and inspectors attempted to find alternative ways for these girls to continue with their

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<sup>15</sup> Renwick in a keynote address to the NZPTA in Hamilton on August 22, 1976 pp. 12-13. (author's file)

<sup>16</sup> The McMillan Inquiry is discussed in Chapter One.

schooling, such as enrolment with the Correspondence School. The Department of Education had also appointed a teacher to the Salvation Army Bethany Home for unmarried mothers in Auckland. The “Ross Report” had considered these issues and espoused the view that programmes on sex and reproductive education would help to alleviate the problem of ex-nuptial births. The FPA however was seeking a more institutional response from the departments of both Health and Education.

### ***The Family Planning Association***

Bill Renwick recalled that the FPA “had been lobbying both the Departments of both Health and Education “for years, saying ‘you’ve got to do something more constructive in your syllabuses’ ” (Renwick, Int.). FPA President, Dr Alice Bush, had welcomed the recommendations of the “Ross Report” with the comment, “this publication is the most hopeful sign that has yet appeared to indicate that educators truly appreciate the great privilege and responsibility of their profession” (Bush, 1974, p. 5). During the early 1970s FPA doctors such as Bush were speakers during ‘mother-daughter’ and ‘father-son’ evenings at intermediate and secondary schools. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the FPA position had been that birth control advice should not be given to unmarried women. However the advent of the contraceptive pill in the 1960s meant that young women were turning to their GPs for contraception which was becoming more available on request. FPA was facing its own moral dilemma over whether or not to supply contraceptives to unmarried women, articulated in an article in its magazine, *Choice*.

Moral concepts of past generations were often maintained by fears of ostracism, pregnancy or disease... These fears do not loom very large in this age of freedom, contraception and improved medical treatment of disease. Our dilemma is to find what will take their place. (Cited in Smyth, 2000, p. 106)

Between 1965 and the early 1970s the FPA was delicately positioning itself between the feminist call for abortion reform and the conservative value of sex only in the context of marriage, in the hope of receiving government funding. This involved the FPA in regularly re-examining its conscience over contraception for unmarried women, with the result that “there was no official change in policy, but rather a slow, informal shift”. (Smyth, 2000, p. 107). In December 1971 Cabinet approved an annual grant for FPA, a response, suggests Smyth, made “when concerns over abortion gained momentum”. On learning of this the CPA was “incensed at taxpayer money going to FPA for what it viewed as the purpose of undermining families” (L. Viney, Int.). Clarity was being sought by both the liberals and the RR over the status of sex education in schools.

### ***The status of sex education in 1976***

At the time the Johnson Committee was formed, the official status of sex education in primary schools remained as stated in the 1948 health syllabus. This did not preclude teachers from answering children’s individual questions or from suggesting suitable resources for parents. The Department of Education had produced a handbook for teachers, offering suggestions for handling such questions, and listing books and films that teachers could recommend to parents and parent-teacher organisations for sex education programmes to be held out of school hours. Even this level of teacher involvement however would come to a sudden halt, under teacher union instructions, in the aftermath of the Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion Bill.

In secondary schools there had historically been no impediment to including sex education in the curriculum. This meant that some had social and sex education programmes and others did not. By the late 1960s sex education was often included as part of hygiene, physical education, science, or health programmes, while social and moral aspects were considered in liberal studies, health or social education

courses. In 1968 the Department had issued a bulletin offering guidelines to schools wishing to introduce social education courses, but the person who decided what form such courses might take was the principal. The need to clarify and revise what had become muddled, ambiguous, and outdated policy, was as obvious to the policy community as it was to principals and teachers. The social and emotional problems of students were being responded to through a variety of idiosyncratic school practices. The emergence of guidance and counselling structure in schools was embryonic (Hermansson 1999). What was clear to many teachers within the state school system in the early 1970s was the need for a liberalising of the curriculum, to allow developmental issues to be addressed.

The Departmental position on sex education was carefully articulated in a paper, parts of which were included in its submission to the Royal Commission on CSA. In this submission Renwick possibly hoped to defuse the issue of 'authority' regarding the state's role in socialisation which had become a CPA focus in the context of its opposition to the recommendations of the "Ross Report":

It is the inter-relationships between schooling and socialisation that interests me...inter-relationships full of possibility and potential conflict. There has never been any doubt that, in New Zealand society, the family – whether the nuclear family or the extended family – is the social institution with the essential responsibility for the primary socialisation of the young. By comparison, schools have traditionally been seen as institutions of secondary socialisation...On matters of value and social attitude they either reflected and confirmed the conventional wisdom of the larger community or they kept out of the firing line. The conventional wisdom was tethered to a collection of personal and public attitudes easily recognised as falling within the Protestant ethic... On the assumption that, through their codes of conduct, forms of discipline, and the example of their teachers, they would uphold the community's best opinion of its own mores, the schools were expected to concern themselves with

instrumental learning...Taken as a whole, these assumptions defined the working relationship between home and school, a relationship, I suggest, in which the home was regarded as the institution of primary socialisation and schools as institutions of secondary socialisation. The assumptions that gave rise to this social compact are now all in question...If I am right in thinking that there was once enough common ground between parents and teachers on matters of attitude and expectation for home and school to see each other as complementary institutions, then those days are over. At present, for example, there is much public discussion of the responsibility of schools on a number of issues that are at the heart of primary socialisation...Human relationships, including sex education; health and social education including the use of alcohol and drugs; and moral education, including the place, if any, of religious education: these are some of the most discussed issues in education now...There is an expectation that if families, churches and other institutions traditionally engaged in the primary socialisation of the young are no longer able to inculcate the "right" attitudes and codes of conduct then the schools must somehow get more deeply involved. The more the schools are expected to share in the primary socialisation of the young, the less the agreement within the New Zealand community on the desired objectives of primary socialisation.<sup>17</sup>

As Renwick prepared the text of the Department's submission to the Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion, the CPA was also making its position clear. Its Auckland branch sent a telegram containing the signatures of more than one thousand citizens opposing sex education in primary schools to Prime Minister, Rob Muldoon and Education Minister, Les Gandar. Twelve hundred people also attended a CPA rally outside Parliament, proclaiming with placards that they wished to "keep sex out of primary classrooms" (Clements, 1978, p.

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<sup>17</sup> Dept of Education submission to Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion. April, 5, 1976. (author's file) ABEP W4262 17/3/30, Pt 4, Box 855. Archives New Zealand.

24). The Department of Education began its submission to the Royal Commission on CSA by summarising the context in which the Johnson Committee had been set up.

The current primary school syllabus in Health Education, introduced in 1954, is a reflection of the then prevailing attitude of seeing health education as an aspect of physical education. As, however, the range of issues affecting healthy living has increased, this linkage of health with physical education has become less adequate to meet present needs. The prohibition on instruction in sex education became very much a controversial issue, and on a number of occasions during the 1960s the question became one for public comment and debate, without any clear indication of consensus being achieved. In the 1970s there have been signs of the emergence of a different public outlook. During the 60s and early 70s the Department of Education was associated with the Department of Health in a number of publishing activities concerned with aspects of healthy living. The Department of Health, responding to changes in birth rates and the increase in ex-nuptial births, particularly amongst teenagers, increased its efforts in the fields of family planning and sex education. It was in such a context that the Department of Education set up, in 1973, the working committee that produced the discussion booklet 'Human Development and Relationships Across the School Curriculum' under the Chairmanship of Mr. J. A. Ross, who was then Superintendent of Curriculum Development in the Department.<sup>18</sup>

Referring to the "Ross Report" the Department's submission acknowledged the diversity of opinions "made known to the Department ...on the issues raised in the booklet", and assured the Commission of its intention to seek a "middle course" in its expression of policy with respect to "the differences of opinion present in the

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<sup>18</sup> Dept of Education submission to Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion. April, 5, 1976. (author's file) ABEP W4262 17/3/30, Pt 4, Box 855. Archives New Zealand.

community on the moral assumptions that should inform studies and activities in human relationships and development.”

The Department accepted the obligation to continue to listen to these views and to find ways of implementing them that respect the wishes of both majority and minority groups. In the wake of the [Ross] report and the Public discussion that followed, it stated, the Department now considers itself in a position to advise the government on policy for education in human development and relationships.<sup>19</sup>

The Department advised the Commission that it was also considering changes of policy that might have a bearing “on matters of concern to the Commission relating to the current position in syllabuses of sex education”, and the law regarding instruction relating to the use of contraception. It informed the Commission that a recently established Committee on Health and Social Education had been set up in the context of developing a policy in schools, and that the same concerns that had given rise to the Ross Committee had been broadened to include issues of drugs, safety, survival skills, the use of the outdoors, and the various other elements that need to be combined into a coherent health programme in schools. Somewhat optimistically the Departmental submission concluded that “when the report of the Committee on HSE is received at the end of 1976 or early in 1977 the Department will be in a good position to tidy up a part of the school programme in primary and secondary schools that has given us all a good deal of concern for many years.”<sup>20</sup> Renwick acknowledged that the main departmental agenda for the Johnson Committee was the issue of sex education. “Apart from drugs, this really was our official perspective, the ‘nub’ of the Report of the Committee on Health and

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<sup>19</sup> Dept of Education submission to Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion. April, 5, 1976. (author’s file) ABEP W4262 17/3/30, Pt 4, Box 855. Archives New Zealand. p. 7

<sup>20</sup> Dept of Education submission to Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion. April, 5, 1976. (author’s file) ABEP W4262 17/3/30, Pt 4, Box 855. Archives New Zealand. p. 9



Social Education, human development and relationships” (Renwick, Int.).

## **THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON CONTRACEPTION, STERILISATION AND ABORTION**

The Royal Commission’s recommendations relating to the Education Act were set out in Chapter 3 of its Report. It supported “in principle” the implementation of sex education programmes at all levels of schooling and provided the catalyst for further debate in recommending that courses in human development and relationships be provided in all schools.

...such courses [should] aim at inculcating a sense of responsibility towards both the individual and the community, recognising the family as an essential feature of a stable community. That sex education form a logical part of a carefully integrated program on human relationships and not be treated as an isolated topic. That basic programmes be prepared by the Department of Education in full consultation with Teachers’ Colleges, teachers and parents whose representatives should come from outside the ranks of the education services.<sup>21</sup>

The issue for the educational bureaucracy now became how to steer these recommendations into policy. At a meeting on April 26, 1977, Cabinet directed government ministers to seek their own reports on the Royal Commission’s recommendations and the effect of these on the law and administration of their departments. The Education Act with its prohibition on sex education would need to be amended if the Royal Commission’s recommendations were to be implemented. At this time there were still two sets of regulations covering primary schools, the 1929 Syllabus of Instruction for Public Schools Regulations and the 1963 Organisation and Inspection of State Primary Schools

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<sup>21</sup> Cited by Minister Gandar in circular 4789/D –77PT, 1977. National ABEP W4262, 17/3/30, Pt 4, Box 855, Archives New Zealand.

Regulations. If the Department were to support the Royal Commission's recommendations an urgent redrafting of both sets of regulations needed to be undertaken. Briefed by Renwick, the Minister of Education duly reported back to the Attorney-General.

The Royal Commission's... Recommendations are essentially in line with proposals that have already been widely discussed, notably following the publication of the booklet "Human Development and Relationships Across the School Curriculum" and as part of the educational development conference. The tenor of the recommendations is that courses in human development and relationships be provided in all schools, taking into account special needs of individuals and the community, and that in order to develop such courses as an integral part of the school programme steps should be taken to ensure that such courses are not treated as an isolated topic. The Commission's recommendations envisage that the Department prepare basic programmes in consultation with educational authorities, teachers and parents and that qualified personnel be trained in the teaching of these courses. An examination has been made of the Education Act and Regulations to determine the extent to which legislative changes may be necessary in order to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission...I propose to introduce amendments to the Education Act of 1964 in order to provide specifically for the conduct of courses in human relations and development. The relevant sections of the Act are Section 75: Organisation and conduct of state primary schools and intermediate departments of secondary schools and Section 84: Courses of study in secondary schools.<sup>22</sup>

In the Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion Bill framed out of the Royal Commission's recommendations, those relating to schools became Clause 56 which stated that every school "shall include in its programme of instruction, in the manner and to the extent prescribed by

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<sup>22</sup> Memorandum to the Attorney General from the Minister of Education. Undated. (author's file)

regulations made under this Act, such courses and studies in human development and relationships as may be so prescribed.<sup>23</sup>

### ***Clause 56 of the CSA Bill***

Members of Parliament, attuned to their electoral lobbies, were signalling intentions to propose additional amendments and Renwick was kept busy responding to the Minister with the legal implications of these. Bert Walker, a CPA supporter, proposed an amendment intended to limit the parts of a school programme where information about or instructions in the use of contraceptives could be given. A memorandum to the Minister of Education from his Director General gives the texture of these dilemmas:

The legal difficulty with Mr. Walker's amendment is that it would put into the Act the phrase "human development and relationships" and there are at present no regulations specifying what hours in human development and relationships would be. If, therefore, his amendment were to be passed with the last four words included it would be necessary for you to promulgate regulations for the teaching of human development and relationships.<sup>24</sup>

When the CSA Bill came up for debate in Parliament on October 13, 1977, the Minister of Education had been given notice of four proposed amendments to Clause 56. These covered the rights of parents and guardians to be pre-informed each year about the content and nature of courses, the right to withdraw their children from such courses, provisions for school-parent communities to choose whether or not to hold courses and for any teacher to be able to indicate that she or he did not wish to teach such courses. As recalled by Renwick the CSA Bill with its contentious Clause 56 became a conscience vote.

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<sup>23</sup> Clause 56 of the draft CSA Bill, 1977 ABEP W4262, 17/3/30, Pt 4, Box 855, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>24</sup> Memorandum to the Minister of Education from the Director-General p. 2. Undated. National ABEP W4262, 17/3/30, Pt 4, Box 855, Archives New Zealand.

I was in the House when our parts [education] of the Bill were taken and it was astonishing. You had, I think, about four people in the House who were acting as Whips for their particular constituencies and as I said to Les Gandar, he and Russell Marshall were like two beleaguered liberals in the House, holding hands behind each other's back, and that's exactly what they did. They were part of a group who were trying, given the opinion of the day, to get as much as they could into law to enable the school system to do something. (Renwick, Int.)

The outcome of this debate was Parliament's deferral of decisions regarding sex education. Clause 56 was dropped, and it was agreed that any law covering courses in human development and relationships would become part of the Education Act only after a considerable period of further public discussion and public hearing before a select committee. In a circular summarising these events Minister Gandar commented wryly on the CPA's subsequently expressed intention to enter schools arbitrarily for the purpose of monitoring curriculum content:

There were other proposals which would have gone beyond mine and would have had the effect of enlarging considerably the rights of parents or persons named by parents to enter schools while they were in session and to monitor their implications far beyond the question of teaching human development and relationships. It seemed likely to me that Parliament, with all Members voting according to conscience, would have difficulty in finding its way through the complex and conflicting issues. There was a distinct danger that a good and workable piece of legislation would not result. With the agreement of all Members of Parliament, Clause 56 was deleted from the Bill.<sup>25</sup>

The Minister withdrew his own amendments, with the Family Planning Association expressing its disappointment and disapproval of his actions (Renwick Int.). Gandar was indeed assailed from all sides. But, although he inherited from Labour both the CSA Bill and the Johnson

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<sup>25</sup> Ministerial circular 4789/D-77PT 1977, p. 3. (author's file)

Report, he would not have to deal with further political dilemmas relating to either. In a 1978 by-election involving a change of boundaries in the Rangitikei electorate, and amidst a CPA leaflet campaign to prevent his re-election<sup>26</sup> Gandar lost his parliamentary seat to the Social Credit Party and a new National Minister of Education, Mr. Merv Wellington now entered Cabinet.

The problems that had beset Gandar as Minister of Education were grounded in the ideological debate between conservative and liberal positions, involving issues that ranged beyond sex education to educational standards, teaching methods and vocational preparation for social roles. These issues were summarised in the cartoon commentary of Illustration 1, published in the tabloid weekly newspaper, *Truth*. It is a cartoon that encapsulates the social and educational climate in which the Johnson Committee tackled its task, and in which the CPA would capture the sympathies of a wide range of citizens. The tabloid newspaper, *Truth*, used the occasion of Gandar's subsequent departure for London as New Zealand's High Commissioner to berate him for being "among the worst" as a Minister of Education.

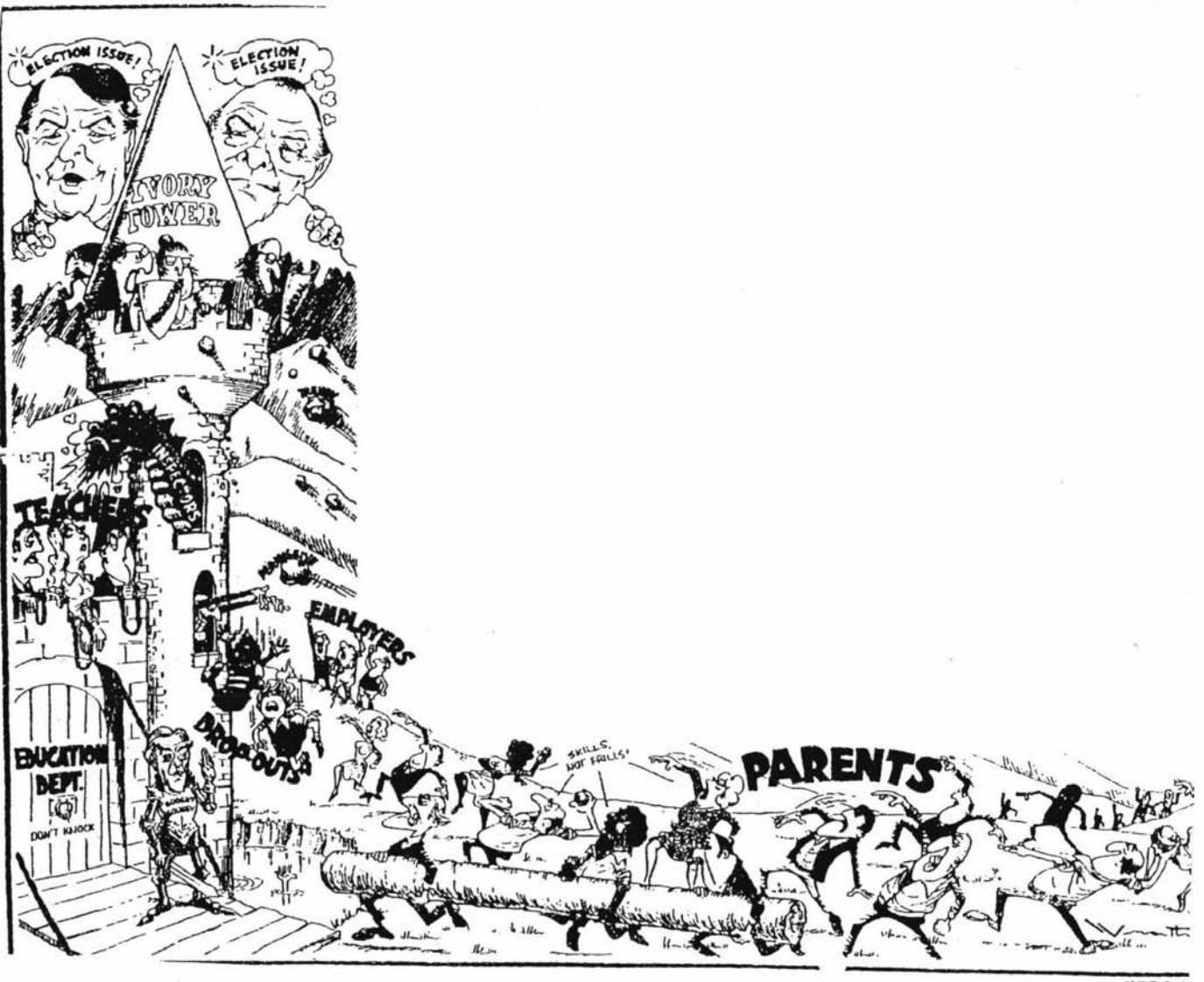
The whole question of human development and relationship courses in schools was one that required the widest public discussion, Mr. Gandar said. Alas for Les, "the widest public discussion" are four words that are returning to haunt him. Parents up and down the land have been bamboozled on this one, notably by the notorious Johnson Report. He should be back from London in time to catch the aftermath.<sup>27</sup>

This last sentence was to prove prophetic in relation to the length of the controversy.

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<sup>26</sup> Eight of the people interviewed for this thesis spoke of this leaflet. None was able to provide a copy however and the author has been unable to locate it.

<sup>27</sup> *N.Z. Truth*, January 5, 1979, p 4. (clipping in author's files).



**Illustration 1.** This cartoon, published in the *New Zealand Truth* on July 18, 1978, shows the Minister of Education, Les Gandar, as a knight (Goosey Gandar) trying to protect an educational policy community under siege. The concerned parents' cry of "frills, not skills" is ranged with a bettering ram against the hapless Minister on the drawbridge. Inside the castle an Inspectorate breathes humanist teaching propaganda over captive teachers, watched by ivory tower academics. Outside this immediate sphere of activity the Employers' Federation, the Prime Minister, Rob Muldoon and the Opposition leader, Wallace (Bill) Rowling, evaluate the political possibilities of the situation.

Renwick retrospectively considered Gandar's defeat to be a combination of the electoral boundary changes and the liberal proclivities of the scholarly Gandar who "suffered at the hands of people who would normally have voted national because he was perceived to be permissive on social and educational standards."<sup>28</sup>

One of the reasons why Les [Gandar] went out was that there were many people who would normally have voted National who clearly didn't want to be associated with his view of National. It was our view in the Department that if Gandar had come back at the end of 1978 that he would not have been Minister of Education, that Muldoon would have filled that slot with someone who was beaming a harder-nosed view to their supporters. (Renwick, Int.)

Gandar's successor, Merv Wellington, was such a man, with strong fundamentalist Christian beliefs and what would be revealed as an autocratic style of leadership. One of his early decisions was to extend the period of public consultation on the Johnson Report that had by now been presented by the Chairman to Gandar.

## **SUMMARY**

This chapter has further illuminated the political context of the Johnson Report controversy by describing the activity of the Department of Education and its policy community at the time the Committee on Health and Social Education was established. It has discussed the Thomas and "Ross" Reports as they contributed to the Johnson Committee's terms of reference. The Thomas Report has been identified as the conceptual predecessor to the Johnson Report, while the ongoing tensions between liberal and conservative-right positions can be discerned in the discourse of the Currie Report. While the two

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<sup>28</sup> Letter from W.L. Renwick to author, 18 August, 2002.

years preparation of the Currie Report had put debate on hold, a subsequent hegemonic attempt to use the "Ross Report" as a mechanism for discerning possible opposition to changing the sex education regulations floundered in the context of the CSA Bill and the mobilisation of the lobby by the Religious Right.

It has been argued here that the exercise of hegemony through the work of the CDU became increasingly more complex for the Department of Education in the aftermath of the EDC. The Department of Education's submission to the Royal Commission on CSA also made its intentions more transparent to the public. Transparency was similarly an issue affecting the potential for ongoing permeability of the CDU in a climate of increasing scrutiny. Although the controversy aroused by the Thomas Committee's pronouncements on sex education were able to some extent to be 'smoothed over' through a 'gentleman's agreement' between Beeby and Gascoigne as representatives respectively of the Department of Education and the Roman Catholic Church, such non-transparent activity was no longer possible in the 1970s. The mobilising of various pressure groups led to calls for greater departmental accountability. The more conservative stance of the Currie Commission in relation to the role of the school in preparing students for economic roles highlighted what was already important to the Religious Right, and these were issues always ready to re-surface.

Within the liberal ethos of the 1970s television and newspapers began to air the social and political opinions of protest movements and those engaged in public forums such as the EDC. In this context members of the liberal policy became aware that government committees working in a strictly in-house hegemonic manner to control debate were no longer appropriate or viable. Greater public consultation had to be undertaken but its outcomes were less under control than previously, partly because of the media, as exemplified in the railway station billboard that had greeted Jim Ross. The contiguity between the report of the Royal Commission on CSA and the Johnson Report was a compounding factor. For the RR the irritant of the feminist lobby and



the CSA Bill made it imperative to mobilise a concerted lobby against such trends that struck at the foundations of society. It was in this context that the Johnson Committee was formed and undertook its task, as will be described in the next two chapters. Such a lengthy introduction has been necessary to an understanding of subsequent events.



## **THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL EDUCATION AND THE CHOICE OF CHAIRMAN**

In this chapter it will be shown how members of the Committee on Health and Social Education were selected not only for their knowledge of health and social issues but also for their representativeness of a range of community interests and, more significantly, for their philosophical congruence with the liberal ethos of the educational policy community of that time. Although the Committee was conceived during the Kirk-Rowling Labour Government its work was undertaken during two consecutive National governments, making the outcomes of its recommendations on sex education uncertain. The Johnson Committee differed from previous curriculum committees in including representatives of the public and private health sector, police, the Māori and Pacific communities, parent-teacher groups, and a range of Departmental representatives of curriculum areas relevant to health and social education.

In this chapter it is also necessary to examine the educational practice and philosophy of the Chairman, Garfield Johnson, since his influence on the proceedings of the Committee and its subsequent Report was significant. It will be argued here that Johnson was engaged in a Freirean style of leadership with regard to bicultural issues within South Auckland. Elements of this would be reflected in his interactions with Committee members and the subsequent Report's discourse, contributing to the tensions inherent in the controversy. Chapters One and Four introduced the Committee's historical antecedents and the range of social concerns that had occupied the Departments of Education, Health and Police.

Following the lessons of the "Ross Report" it was intended by the Department that the new committee would be seen as inclusive of the wider community. The Department was aware of the RR's antagonism to the "Ross Report" and the difficulties facing the then sitting Royal Commission on CSA in relation to the status of contraceptive advice as spelled out in the Police

Offences Act. The Ross Committee, being an in-house discussion group had not sought submissions widely from the public but this was not a mistake to be made again. The new Committee on Health and Social Education would provide a mechanism for the hearing of public views, and through this means the Department of Education hoped to elicit more precisely what policy could be framed to lift the 1945 proscription on sex education. This particular agenda was not however specified in the terms of reference, being subsumed in the phrase "...the conditions under which healthy growth and development may be fostered in school" (Johnson Report, p. 4).

## **THE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee on Health and Social Education had the following terms of reference:

- (a) To identify the conditions under which healthy growth and development may be fostered in schools
- (b) To make recommendations on the studies and activities that should constitute school programmes, organisation and relationships.

It was also charged with considering the role of the school in such matters as:

- the physical fitness of children and adults;
- the use and misuse of drugs including alcohol and tobacco;
- the development of outdoor pursuits;
- the growth of desirable attitudes to safety in the water, the bush and the mountains;
- the place of team and individual sports in healthy growth;
- the staffing and other support services needed in implementing programmes, including the development of staff leadership (Johnson Report, p. 4)

This was an unwieldy list that encompassed the range of social concerns that had evolved during the previous decades. From the Department's hegemonic perspective such broad terms of reference were intended to allow the Committee an holistic exploration of the meaning of healthy growth and development, and to avoid public perceptions of a narrowing of focus onto sex education. From the outset however it could be queried whether a committee

facing such a mammoth task could be expected to produce a report that would satisfy everyone, or indeed anyone.

## THE MINISTER CHOOSES A CHAIRMAN

In late 1975 the Director-General and the educational policy community compiled a list of people it considered suitable for the committee but Renwick recalled that the choice of chairman was the Minister's alone.

In close consultation with the Minister we had constructed the membership of this committee. On the Friday afternoon the committee list, which he took to Cabinet had as chairman, Murray Print's name. When the Minister came back on Monday morning and we were talking, he said; 'And by the way Bill, I've had a thought about the chairmanship and I want Garfield Johnson as chairman'. (Renwick, Int.)

There was some initial Departmental surprise at the Minister's speed and autonomy in this matter.<sup>1</sup> Murray Print was known to the Department as a man with political acumen who had been influential in the successful lobby for guidance counsellors in secondary schools. He could be relied upon by the bureaucracy to produce a diplomatic document with the potential to be translated into policy, since he had worked closely with Renwick over the development of policy regarding the introduction of the guidance counsellor system. However, Amos was mindful of issues such as the Treaty of Waitangi and Māori activism. He knew of the work of Johnson in Otara in South Auckland, and knew also that Johnson had the ability to provide leadership to achieve the kind of cohesion necessary to a large committee. In this respect the Minister was influenced by personal factors since his first wife, Jill, was the Guidance Counsellor at Johnson's school, Hillary College, which had during the 1960s established a reputation for innovative programmes and school organisation. Amos wanted the new committee to share what he described as Johnson's 'vision'.

My former wife, Jill, used to keep me in touch... I am bound to say that as a 'hands on' Minister I had some influence in the selection of the Committee. I was insistent that Garfield Johnson be the

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from W.L. Renwick to author dated August 8, 2002

chairperson. Garfield had already served me exceedingly well on a previous committee set up to investigate the possible involvement of a secondary school in racial discrimination and had done a very good job there. He had a wonderful concept of New Zealand society as a whole. I always admired Garfield Johnson as one of those individuals who had kept in perspective a larger vision of education. (Amos, Int.)

Both Johnson and Print were considered by the Department to be “excellent principals with very high mana (prestige) in the profession and in the public”.<sup>2</sup> Another reason for Amos’ choice was his satisfaction with the “previous committee” to which he referred. Chaired by Johnson, it had produced a report called *Parent-School Communication* (1973). To understand both the bicultural dimension of the Johnson Report and the chairman’s influence on events it is necessary to continue the process of contextualisation of the controversy through a detour into the professional and personal history of the chairman and the earlier committee to which Amos referred.

### ***Garfield Johnson and Hillary College***

As stated in Chapter One, the 1960s have been described as the years of Māori Renaissance (Walker, 1984, 1987). Māori academics were emerging through the European university system and taking on roles of public office, while questioning how best to reconcile the demands of two cultures. The doctoral thesis of Ranginui Walker (1970) on the social adjustment of Māori to urban living in Auckland articulated some the issues that both Garfield Johnson and Murray Print were grappling with in trying to meet the needs of their students at Hillary College and Penrose High School respectively. Garfield Johnson came from a teaching family. His father, Joseph Benjamin Johnson, had trained under the New Zealand pupil-teacher system as had two aunts, Minnie and Elsie Johnson. Garfield’s siblings were also teachers and in this family, the ideas of John Dewey were discussed and progressive liberal views on education were shared.<sup>3</sup> As a young man he saw active service in World War II and subsequently taught in two Native Schools. Following a

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<sup>2</sup> Letter from W.L.Renwick to author dated August 8, 2002

<sup>3</sup> Personal knowledge. One of his brothers was the author’s father, Joseph Harold Johnson.

teaching post at Kaiataia College in the Far North, with a significant Māori student population, he became principal at Inglewood High School in the affluent rural area of Taranaki. In 1966 Johnson was principal of a new high school in Otara in South Auckland, a new housing area with few community facilities. As a newly developed dormitory suburb in Auckland it was to this increasingly industrial area that rural Māori, and a growing number of immigrants from the Pacific cultures of Samoa, Tonga, Niue, and the Cook Islands, were migrating.

Johnson saw the need for the curriculum to encompass the cultures of his students and community. He also made the decision early that there would be no corporal punishment, and no expulsions (Personal communication, October 10, 1997) and began working with the Kaumatua and Kuia (elders) of the community to establish the first urban Marae, Te Puke O Tara, which became the heart of the school's culture. The CDU model allowed latitude for Johnson and his teaching staff to introduce both Māori and Pacific cultures within the timetable, and the school was organised into Whanau groupings (family-style, vertical age groups). He began a mentoring programme for his senior students in order to encourage them to achieve academically within the Pākehā system. Arnold Manaaki Wilson, who developed an art curriculum encompassing Māori values and culture, recalled these innovations.

Johnson wanted his students to maintain their traditional cultures while equipping themselves for life in an urban situation and a technological society. In the 1960s and 70s, in response to the urban migration of Māori, leaders in the education system, prodded by Māori activism, recognised that schools must include Māori language and culture. In New Zealand, rather than the school students sharing their new knowledge with their community, what was needed was for the community to share their old knowledge with the school...Garfield was one of the few secondary school principals who had grasped the nettle. After consulting Māori academics, such as Dr Ranginui Walker, and Sir Paul Reeves, Garfield joined the local marae committee, introduced Māori

language for all third formers, and welcomed the community into the school.<sup>4</sup>

This reveals elements of Johnson's engagement in the process of 'conscientisation' with his community whereby "only through comradeship with the oppressed can [leaders] understand their characteristic ways of living and behaving, which in diverse moments reflect the structure of domination" (Freire, 1996, p. 43). During the 1960s newspapers began describing Otara as Auckland's 'gangland' and Johnson made the decision to rename the school Hillary College, after Sir Edmund Hillary (see illustration 2), as a "tangible symbol to inspire the students" and to distance the school from the bad Press of South Auckland's social problems.



**Illustration 2.** Sir Edmund and Lady Louise Hillary with Garfield Johnson during a visit to Hillary College in the 1960s. (Photograph in Author's file)

<sup>4</sup> *Te Mauri Pakeaka: the cross-cultural community involvement arts programme.* An interview with Arnold Manaaki Wilson, conducted by Sue Tetley, and Warren Lindberg on 10.02.99. Loaned to author.



“Sir Edmund Hillary was a New Zealander who had surmounted great obstacles to reach his goal, in co-operation with Sherpa Norgay Tensing. Two people of different races working together embodied the kind of spirit we wanted in the School” (Johnson, Int.).

Upon his appointment to Otara, Garfield Johnson began a study of Te Reo (Māori language) by attending night classes. His wife, Eileen, recalled that although “he found this difficult some of the Kaumatua, Sonny Wilson, John Rangihau, Arnold Wilson, John Turei, Turoa Royal and others, told him that he needed to know the Rangitira (chiefly) words and phrases.” They tutored and mentored him in this until he became proficient (Personal communication August 19, 1999). Arnold Wilson recalled Johnson as an orator on various Marae.

After a while Koro [Johnson] would start to speak. He had a way about him of just walking into a place that spoke heaps. Whaikorero from a secondary school principal is still rare. Garfield would listen very carefully, bide his time and then begin to address the people in a way that communicated directly to them. (Wilson, Interview, November 29, 2000)

Mentoring in leadership is a Māori cultural practice (O'Regan 1975, Rangihau 1975). Also known as tuakana-teina, it was a practice used by Johnson with his Hillary College students, some of whom would go on to university because of this. It was a process repeated in Johnson's interactions with the members of the Committee on Health and Social Education. The mentoring programme at Hillary College linked members of the Auckland Māori Graduates Association with the senior students at Hillary. Reuben Riki, a student between 1971 and 1975, recalled how Johnson's philosophy translated into practical terms.

Garfield Johnson was known affectionately to his senior students as 'the Old Man'. He had a clear understanding of the new urban Maori phenomenon and was concerned about those of us who were displaced culturally so he used to create a lot of situations for that to be corrected. Some of them were trips to the rural areas of some of the students' Turangawaewae [homeland] and that became part of the Hillary College history of learning about ourselves. I thought that was significant at the time. The 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> formers of the day would spend the third week of each August holidays on Motutapu Island. The idea behind that was for us as

students to develop study habits and set into place the routines which would hopefully carry on towards our end-of-year examinations...and he and his wife participated as well. I remember him talking to us about the importance of our customs such as Tangi [grieving for the deceased] – and how he said the Pakeha had different customs and experiences and I remember being surprised. When someone died the whole school went into Tangi mode and he led the way. (Riki Interview, 20.02.98).

Riki's comments further indicate that Johnson was involved in a Freirean style of leadership. Such dialogue exemplifies the use of language for "problematizing" — the process leading to "conscientisation". This is supported by the recall of another student, actor Rawiri Paratene, who attended Hillary College from 1967-1971.

He [Johnson] took a personal interest in all of our progress. But there were smaller groups that he kept having meetings with to discuss all sorts. He kept telling us all that we were the future leaders in whatever field we might pursue, and to the Māori pupils, that we were the future leaders of our people. It seemed pretty far-fetched at the time but a look through the past roll bears out this prediction...Mr. Johnson decided that there needed to be some changes. He went to our parents' homes and got to know them. Won their trust, nay their admiration. He sought their advice, ate and laughed with them, prayed with them. I remember him talking at length with my Grandfather...We had a powerful Maori club, which was given school time to work in. I think we were the first school in New Zealand to abolish corporal punishment...We were aware even then of the investment that was being made in our education.<sup>5</sup>

Deborah Adams was a Pākehā student enrolled at Hillary College in 1968 in order to learn Te Reo. Adams recalled the school as the place "where I began the journey of biculturalism and began to understand what the Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi) meant within the context of being born in

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<sup>5</sup> Letter from Rawiri Paratene (Programme Manager, NZ Drama School) to Professor L. Meyer, Pro Vice-chancellor of Massey University on February 18, 1999. Loaned by Eileen Johnson to author.

Aotearoa (New Zealand).”<sup>6</sup> Maria Rogers, a member of the Hillary College PTA in 1969, recalled that Johnson “walked the pavements side by side with the people of the Otara community, showing his concerns of their well being for Māori and Polynesian people.”<sup>7</sup> Their reflections support the argument that Johnson’s educational practice was consistent with Freire’s style of the revolutionary leader engaged in a problematising dialogue with the oppressed.

The “dialogical man” is critical and knows that although it is within the power of man to create and transform, in a concrete situation of alienation man may be impaired in the use of that power....true dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking...which perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity – thinking which does not separate itself from action....the important thing is the continuing transformation of reality, in behalf of the continuing humanization of men. (Freire, 1996, pp. 72-73)

The outcome of such dialogue is “praxis”, the transformation of humans’ realities through the twin processes of action and reflection. The retrospective recall of former students supports the argument that Johnson was engaged in such a problematising dialogue.

He talked about empowering communities to participate in making decisions ... He’d noticed that with the more successful students there was a certain family dynamic of support and he wanted to explore that. He thought it was important in terms of the dynamics of the community for us to learn to appreciate each other since our cultures meant so much to us. (Riki. Int.)

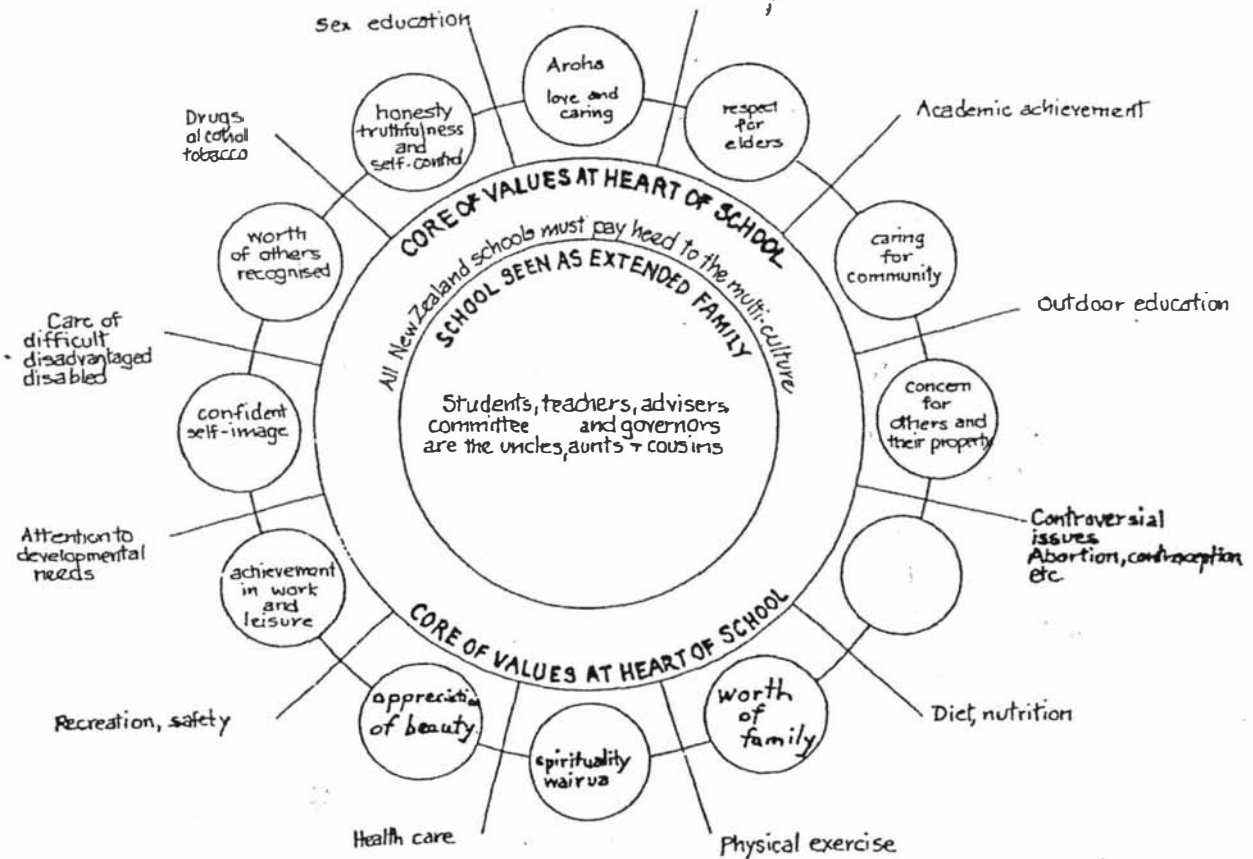
### ***A model of the community-responsive school***

With his staff at Hillary College, Johnson developed a model of a community-responsive school which was to become the underlying rationale for much of the rhetoric of the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education. It is shown here as Figure 3. The central circle of this model reads: “School seen as extended family. Students, teachers, advisers,

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<sup>6</sup> Letter from Deborah Amos to Professor L. Meyer, Pro Vice-chancellor of Massey University, February 14, 1999. Loaned by Eileen Johnson to Author.

committee men and governors are the uncles, aunts and cousins". The outer ring of smaller circles suggests guiding principles for school organisational practice and curriculum development. The top centre circle contains the word Aroha (love, caring). The bottom centre circle contains the word Wairua (spirituality).



**Figure 3.** This bicultural model of school values was implemented at Hillary College in the 1960s and published in 1978 in *Delta*, 22, pp. 3-5, in an article written by Johnson to “express the ethos of the report, *Growing, sharing, learning*”. Aroha (top centre circle), Wairua (bottom centre circle) and Whanau (centre) are seen as basic to the school’s ‘core values’.

It was Johnson’s interpretation of the word Wairua that would obscure the public’s understanding of the subsequent Report’s discourse on values and

<sup>7</sup> Letter from Maria Rogers to Professor L. Meyer, Pro Vice-chancellor of Massey University,.

the spiritual dimension in relation to a curriculum on social education. Without an understanding of both Māori language and culture, the term spirituality in the text of the Johnson Report would be attributed various meanings by the public in relation to the teaching of Christian values in schools. Beneath this diagram, in the *Delta* article Johnson wrote: “If the school takes the role of extended family it would naturally concern itself with matters on the periphery.” It must be noted that the peripheral matters include sex education. That Johnson understood the relevance of the issue of sex education to his students is shown in Riki’s recall of his years at Hillary College.

We remained quite a conservative community — the church influences on our families, our parenting world — very very conservative. There were clearly defined roles for the mother, the homemaker, and the father, the breadwinner, and that wasn’t easy because there were many times when the women were more employable. As industries changed from labour intensive heavy lifting, freezing-work stuff, to the sewing industry, the mother became the breadwinner. That always didn’t settle well. Amongst that conservatism was the unfortunate situation where many of our young women and girls, 6th and 7th formers, were getting pregnant. So just the whole sex education thing, Garfield felt we weren’t getting access to. There were a lot of stereotypes about raising children and of course at that time our parents never discussed that with us at all. And so you modelled your relationships on what you saw of your parents, depending on how that was — positive or negative. The Old Man raised that concern with us and he said in other schools and communities they were very comfortable with being able to discuss such issues as sex education. Because he noticed how we just clammed up — really really shy, really embarrassed. It was not done within the context of the school to name someone, which might embarrass someone else’s sister, or someone’s daughter. And so he recognised that perhaps there needed to be separate sessions so he got the PE Department to teach health and sexuality and all that sort of thing. (Riki, Int.)

Johnson saw the issue of sex education within the model of Figure 3 in terms of individual, family and community empowerment. It was a matter for the

Whanau (family) and, when the family failed to take responsibility for this, the school, as family, needed to make a culturally appropriate response.

### ***Media perceptions of Otara***

Johnson was called upon frequently by the media to comment on the social problems of South Auckland. His usual response was that “the truly educated New Zealander” would be both bicultural and multicultural with Otara “the face of the future”. This citizen, he suggested, “is able to move freely between one end [of the culture] and the other.”<sup>8</sup> In seeking to change public perceptions of Otara Johnson approached the *Auckland Star*, suggesting to its Editor that there were positive things happening in South Auckland that would make good news and offering to be available personally for comment. An outcome of this liaison was that during the 1970s the *Star*’s editorial comment was regularly supportive of both Hillary College and of the Johnson Report. Outside Auckland however public perceptions of the “problems” of South Auckland however remained stereotyped, with a 1976 article in the *New Zealand Listener* describing Otara as “a ghetto in Godzone”.<sup>9</sup> On his retirement, Johnson expressed the opinion that Auckland “did not deserve its friendly gentle Polynesians” who had been subjected to a “rash of racist hysteria”.

We have tried to bring our [Hillary College] children up with the view of New Zealand as a multicultural society in which everyone works in the spirit of love...Now a new element has come into society of abrasiveness and polarisation. It makes me and the children sad.<sup>10</sup>

In recalling Johnson’s commitment to biculturalism, former DG, Bill Renwick, suggested the former’s belief that what was possible at Hillary College would also be possible in other schools may have been optimistic.

While Garfield was keyed into the spiritual concept of *Wairua* the rest of the nation hadn’t met it yet. It was before its time. Garfield at Hillary was obviously responding to Māori values and for him it

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<sup>8</sup> Johnson speaking to students on the Whaiora Marae, Otara in 1980, as recalled by Arnold Manaaki Wilson, in interview with Sue Tetley and Warren Lindberg, February 10, 1999. Text loaned to Author.

<sup>9</sup> Cited in the *South Auckland Courier* December 22, 1976, p. 4. (Clipping in author’s file).

was natural to think of spirituality as *Wairua*, but even now the country is still trying to come to terms with it. (Renwick, Int.)

Ranginui Walker, prominent Māori activist, and Emeritus Professor at the University of Auckland, undertook his doctoral fieldwork in Otara in 1967 where he established a collegial relationship with Johnson.

Although it now seems a lifetime away, they were halcyon days when we believed anything was possible and we set out to make it happen. You took Hillary College to the leading edge of multi-cultural education in New Zealand and you make the school a vibrant place by bringing in the community that the media had written off as a hopeless cot-case. Rangi Kiro, Dick Kake, Marice Te Whitu, Miro Stevens, Pita and Aggie Theodore all helped to make Otara a better place. You in your own quiet and unassuming way were the catalyst at the centre of it all.<sup>11</sup>

One outcome of Johnson's liaison with Māori colleagues was his involvement in their promotion of the cause of Te Reo. The means for this came about in the context of Māori activism in the form of a Departmental report, *Parent – School Communication (1973)* the committee of which was also chaired by Johnson. It was an experience that would also influence the discourse of the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education and a detour into this aspect of the Chairman's background is also necessary.

### ***Protests over racist school practices***

In 1973 the activist group, Nga Tamatoa, protested at the expulsion of a number of Māori students from Kelston Girls' High School in West Auckland, accusing the Board of Governors of racism. Other schools accused of racism were also picketed. The parents of the suspended Kelston pupils attempted to have their grievances heard by the Minister of Māori Affairs, Matt Rata, the Minister of Education, Phil Amos, and the Ombudsman, Sir Guy Powells. Amos' response was to call for a report on the issues "as they related generally to the education system" (Amos, Int.). For this committee he chose Garfield

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<sup>10</sup> Article under heading "Place does not deserve friendly Polynesians". *New Zealand Herald*, 1976 (day and month unknown). (Author's file.)

Johnson as Chairman. The 1973 Committee on Communication between Schools and Parents had as its terms of reference “to study ways of improving communication between schools and parents, particularly those whose children are having difficulty in adjusting to the school system, with special reference to Māori and Polynesian children”. The Committee was composed of Johnson, Pita Sharples, of the Race Relations Office in Auckland, Mira Szasy, president of the Māori Women’s Welfare League, Alan Smith, Officer for Māori and Island Education, and Dave Thurlough, Regional Assistant Superintendent of Education in Auckland (*Parent-School Communication, 1973*).

The Minister of Education of the time, Phil Amos, who wanted to do something about Maori education, saw the opportunity, I think, to get some change. Phil Amos knew about some of the things we were doing in Otago to consult with our community, and with Nga Tamatoa, and formed a committee. We quickly decided we weren’t going to have anything to do with the kerfuffle about Kelston Girls High but were going to make some sweeping suggestions about Māori education. We recommended that Māori language ought to be widely taught and to allow this to happen there should be Māori teacher recruitment. (Johnson, Int.)

This committee spent three days together debating the issues in-house. That they were engaged in a political enterprise to further the causes of Te Reo and Māori under achievement is revealed by the following extract from an audiotape of these deliberations.

*Dave Thurlough -*

What I’m pushing for is somebody to head the team of advisers and coordinate the activities between primary and secondary teachers in schools groups, Māori groups. We really need someone at least with inspector level heading up this team and I’m really coming back to Rangi Walker’s view that you need an officer for Māori Education, Auckland, to link with the schools and community. This is the sort of professional lead that needs to be given.

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<sup>11</sup> Letter from Ranginui Walker to Garfield Johnson, March 24, 1999. on the occasion of his honorary doctorate presentation ceremony at Massey University. Loaned to the author by



*Pita Sharples* –

We have two national Māori organisations who at the grassroots are trying to help their people... such a person could use these organisations along the lines of Johnny Waititi to sell education to the Māori people. We've got Rangi Walker and co. on one side telling how short the education system is for our people. Fine but we need it on the other side too telling it as it is ... "if you want a decent job you've got to get qualifications." Nobody can get to our people better than ourselves but wouldn't it be terrific if we had guidelines from the powers that be.<sup>12</sup>

*Parent-School Communication* recommended procedures regarding suspension and expulsion, and the role of the guidance network in these. Most of its recommendations, including those relating to suspension procedures, subsequently became policy. The audiotapes held by the author of this week-long in-house committee discussion reveal an agenda of promoting Māori language within the school curriculum. To this end the committee suggested revision of the current criteria then used for selection of Māori and Pacific applicants for teachers colleges, aimed at increasing the number eligible to train as teachers.<sup>13</sup> *Parent-School Communication* also recommended that each school in the country "examine its own curriculum and within the wide freedoms provided by the present national syllabus, provide for attainable goals and feelings of success for all its pupils" (p. 7). This theme would be echoed in the Johnson Report four years later.

### ***Smith's circus***

*Parent-School Communication* also contained the recommendation that Pakeha principals and inspectors should have opportunities for experiencing Māori culture. The mechanism for this became "Smith's Circus", named after Allan Smith, the Officer for Māori and Island Education. The committee recognised that many Pākehā principals and teachers in senior positions would

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Eileen Johnson.

<sup>12</sup> Transcription made by author of discussion recorded on audiotape made by members of the committee that produced *Parent School Communication* (1973). Author's file.

<sup>13</sup> The first Maori language teachers course at the Auckland Secondary Teachers College began on March 4, 1974 with fifteen people endorsed by their Iwi. News item in *N.Z. Herald* on that day. (Clipping in Author's file).

not have much experience of Māori culture and without an immersion into the culture they would lack insight into the need to advance the cause of Te Reo in the state curriculum.

The core membership of this group was comprised of Smith, myself, Sonny Wilson, John Rangihau, Turoa Royal, Vern Penfold, Hiwi Tauroa and others from time to time. We went from Marae to Marae up and down the country, holding courses for school principals, inspectors and senior teachers for several years. On these courses we spread the message about inclusion of Māori values and language, just educating people into what it meant to be a Māori. The local people on each Marae were of course major contributors. I have no doubt that the turn-around in attitude of teachers and schools to things Māori came from 'Smith's circus'. (Johnson, Int.)

This immersion into Māori culture was an experience Johnson also insisted upon for members of the Committee on Health and Social Education. That the educational bureaucracy was sensitive to the issues raised by the confrontations between Auckland schools and Nga Tamatoa and to the underachievement of Māori pupils is revealed in a 1976 address by Renwick to a conference on educational administration in Christchurch:

Pakeha New Zealanders are now coming to understand that much of the knowledge we have passed on about Māori New Zealanders is knowledge of externals and has somehow failed to reveal the meanings that Māori traditions and cultural influences have for Māori New Zealanders. We are now attempting to broaden our understanding... by learning something of the meaning not that Pakeha but that Maori New Zealanders give to it.<sup>14</sup>

The claims of the Tangata Whenua for Te Reo within the state curriculum have their own historical antecedents, and it is not within the scope of this thesis to pursue them here. These issues however were a thread to the controversy over the Johnson Report, as they relate to the influence of the Chairman over the discourse of the report. Perhaps the Department also saw the possibility for the new Johnson Committee to tackle concurrently some of the ongoing issues relating to the underachievement of Māori students. The programme in Johnson's school, Hillary College, was at that time unique. The centre-

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<sup>14</sup> Renwick, cited in the *Report of the Ministerial Working Party on Second Language Learning (1976)*. Wellington: Government Printer, p. 41.

periphery-centre model of the CDU allowed flexibility for teachers and schools to introduce new topics and experiment with teaching approaches.

Johnson's leadership style would ensure that the Committee on Health and Social Education would produce a report with a strong bicultural dimension. In the subsequent controversy however this dimension would be incomprehensible to most of the public, leading to the situation of Committee members and RR lobbyists "talking past each other" (Metge & Kinlock, 1978). Illustration 4 shows Garfield Johnson at the time of his retirement.



**Illustration 3.** James Garfield Johnson at the time of his retirement as Principal of Hillary College. This picture and caption was published in the *South Auckland Courier* on 22.12.76. The text of the accompanying article states: "He wears around his neck a manaia, called by its carver, Haare Williams, 'marino' meaning, in Maori, 'calm sea'. Presented to him at the College's tenth anniversary, it expressed the temperament of the man and his influence on the school he has guided in its growth over 11 years from a roll of 137 to 1260."

In the opinion of Ranginui Walker “Johnson was a pioneer in recognising ethnicity as a qualification in its own right, along with academic qualifications.”<sup>15</sup> In his Māori colleagues he found mentors. In him, they found an ally to the cause of Te Reo and the dissemination of Māori values in both school organisation and curriculum. This collegial relationship would find further expression in the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education.

This detour into the chairman’s history has been necessary to continue the process of contextualising the controversy over the Johnson Report. It will next be shown that the committee membership predominantly reflected the policy community’s liberal leanings, and this meant that they were also receptive to the chairman’s influence. What happened to those who were not will be discussed in Chapter Six.

## **THE NEW COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL EDUCATION**

When asked in 1975 to chair the new Committee on Health and Social Education, Johnson was unaware that the Department’s first choice of chairman had been Murray Print.

I was approached by Phil Amos, the Minister of Education, in mid 1975 to Chair the committee. When the Labour Government was defeated in the general election of that year I then approached the new Minister of Education, Les Gandar, and asked him if he wanted the Committee to continue its brief. Mr. Gandar gave his unconditional approval to continue with the Report, the Committee membership and the current Chair. (Johnson, Int.)

It was Johnson’s perception that the Committee on Health and Social Education had been created because of:

Growing concern for the mental physical and social wellbeing, the breakdown of the family unit, an increase in teenage pregnancy, venereal disease, wife and baby-bashing, coronary and venereal disease, youth suicide, street vandalism, absenteeism, criminal

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<sup>15</sup> Article in *NZ Listener* written by Dr Ranginui Walker, Professor Emeritus of the University of Auckland (undated). Author’s files.

offending and mental health problems and that's what we set out to solve.<sup>16</sup>

He was however also aware that the issue of sex education was central to the task ahead (Johnson, Int.). It took from November 1975 to April 1976 to finalise the committee which meant a delay in getting down to the task. Of the twenty-three members only six were women, and of these only three participated until the Committee dissolved, three having resigned in the first few months, giving work-related or family reasons. This level of female representation was typical of the period when there were fewer, if any, women than men in senior government positions and on government committees. Those who resigned in the Committee's formative stage were psychiatrist, Anne Hall and house surgeon Dayll Jensen, who both cited pressures of work. Erolini Alailima-Eteuati, an Auckland City Council community worker, also resigned before the full committee was convened. The choice of Alailima-Eteuati as a representative of the Pacific people seems unusual for the 1970s, since most traditional Pacific cultures were and are male dominated and hierarchical. This suggests that she may have been selected for her personal qualities and therefore perhaps lacked the necessary support of her community to sustain the task. One committee member recalled in interview that family commitments curtailed Erolini's participation, thus it is possible that gender issues were finding an indirect expression. In subsequent membership changes no replacement representative for Pacific people was made. It seems likely that it was considered, at least from a Pakehā perspective, that Johnson carried sufficient mana within the Pacific community, or at least within South Auckland which had the greatest population.

At the start of this study Ruth Cowell was the only surviving woman member who had participated throughout the duration. Tangata Whenua [the indigenous people of the land] were represented by teacher Horowai Maniopoto and Neil Watene, Vice President of the New Zealand Māori Council, a trade unionist, and former teacher. For reasons of ill health, Watene was succeeded six months into the Committee's work by academic John Te Rangihau. Gren Alabaster also resigned from the committee before discussions began, having left teaching.

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<sup>16</sup> Audiotape of address by Johnson to postgraduate education students at Massey University,

Members were asked by Johnson to write a statement of self-introduction for each other, and these have been used here to supplement other sources of information. With the exception of Murray Print, the original candidate for Chairman, the Committee members who contributed significantly to the preparation of the Report are next introduced in alphabetical order. The photographs that accompany their names were used in the Johnson Report (pp. 118-119). These introductions will reveal the enthusiasm with which committee members applied themselves to the task ahead, and the fact that they shared a liberal perspective on educational issues. Participating Committee members are shown in the illustrations 4 to 20 on the following pages.

### ***Murray Print***

(Illustration 4)



Murray Print had taught first at Mt Albert Grammar School and then Northcote College. Between 1962 and 1968 he was principal at Freyberg High School in Palmerston North. During this period the student roll doubled and he established an innovative guidance network assisted by staff member Ted Wadsworth who also became a member of the Johnson Committee.

Print was a man of considerable standing within the educational community, ending his teaching career as Principal of the Auckland Secondary Teachers College. In the early 1970s Print was principal of Auckland's Penrose High School in a semi-industrial urban area with a growing multicultural population, where, like Johnson, he faced the challenge of providing a curriculum relevant to his students' needs. A devout Anglican, Print contributed to many working groups and committees throughout the 1960s and early 70s. In 1973 he chaired a teachers refresher course on guidance and counselling in secondary schools at which the keynote address was given by Renwick. The government's policy on guidance in secondary schools was announced a few days later and it is likely that Print had considerable input into this, having been

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Albany, on October 8, 1995. (Author's files).

a member of the 1973-74 EDC working party on guidance. At Penrose High School Print's response to his students' needs had been to strengthen the pastoral roles of his staff, establishing a guidance network throughout the school. Wadsworth recalled Print's "vision of having courses in personal development at every level of the school" (Wadsworth, Interview, March 1, 1998). Print was articulate and diplomatic in his advocacy of educational causes.<sup>17</sup> It is likely that he had been led to understand that he would chair the new national Committee on Health and Social Education but his self introduction to the Johnson Committee gave no hint of this:

My fifteen years' principalship has in retrospect been mainly concerned with the growth of the 'guidance network' system, with getting off the ground courses on social education, career education, and with trying to extend the positive side of counselling and guidance throughout the secondary school environment...I seem to have spent most of the past twelve years attending Departmental courses, commuting on 737s and talking to people and others interested in guidance and social education...This time we've landed a good chairman, some fine members and surely this is going to be more than 'just another committee'. Let's make it so.<sup>18</sup>

### ***Patricia Barnes***

(Illustration 5)



Patricia Barnes was Senior Teacher at Shirley Intermediate School in Christchurch and member of the National Council of Women's (NCW) Standing Committee on Education. The NCW had been a political lobby group since the 1930s when it had been chastised in the McMillan Report over the problem of abortion. It had continued to lobby the Minister of Education over issues of women's and girls' health, the significance of which will be discussed in the next chapter. Barnes was a channel to the NCW regarding the

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<sup>17</sup> Personal knowledge. As a pupil, the author was taught by Print at Northcote College and later lectured at Auckland Secondary Teachers College during his term as Principal there.

Department's intentions for curricular reform. When the Johnson Committee split into North Island and South Island working groups Barnes chaired the South Island one. She described the antecedents of her interest in the issues and revealed a liberal predisposition towards the Committee's task.

While teaching at intermediate schools I have been involved in the compiling and implementing of school schemes in Health and Education. During this involvement and while counselling girls of this age I have become increasingly aware of the children's interest in this subject area, and also with growing concern I have become aware of the appalling ignorance of human development of girls who have reached puberty. It is the unconcerned parents who concern me! <sup>19</sup>

### **Barry Buckton**

(Illustration 6)



Barry Buckton was a specialist teacher with the Department of Education and formerly Head of Department of Physical Education at Waimea College. In a peripheral role in relation to the CDU at that time, he would have been aware of the policy community's concerns over the issue of sex education. As Convenor for the PPTA Curriculum Panel for Physical Education Buckton conducted national in-service courses on health education curriculum development. His comments also reveal what has been referred to previously as the permeability of the policy community.

Once you become a Departmental person you project different views. We really were looking at aspects of social, moral and health education, so we were being channeled to a certain extent to see how we could come up with directions and possible solutions to these aspects of education. (Buckton, Interview, December 6, 1997)

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<sup>18</sup> Print's statement of self introduction written for the committee (undated). (Author's files).

<sup>19</sup> Cowell's statement of self introduction to the committee (undated). (Author's files)



## **Bill Buxton**

(Illustration 7)



Bill Buxton was another member of the policy community on national curriculum development committees on social studies and moral education. As a member of the national executive of the Marriage Guidance Council he had been involved in teacher and social work training, and was also on the recently formed National Council for Recreation and Sport. “There were a lot of separate threads coming together. The Churches were becoming interested in moral and social education and the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church at the time had set up a national education committee and wanted me to be on it” (Buxton Interview, December 10, 1997). Buxton had begun a career in theology, subsequently experiencing a “crisis of faith”. He described himself as being at that time “an atheist with mainly humanistic beliefs”.

I believed in Lloyd Geering’s definition of religion, and in Tillich’s, which is really a search for answers to the questions: ‘Who am I? Why am I here and where am I going?’ In these terms I would describe myself as quite a strongly religious person...the environment at that time was very much one where people believed that parents generally were not giving a set of guidelines generally, or at least encouraging children to think about these things. We [the Johnson Committee] felt that every part of the curriculum should encourage them [children] to think about the values behind the things they were doing. Ted Wadsworth and I were both really atheists. Tom Ryder was the other extreme. Garfield had a very humanist viewpoint. John Rangihau had very strong Maori spiritual values, and of course that was what made it so lively. (Buxton, Int.)

## **Dr Max Collins**

(Illustration 8)



As Assistant Director of Public Health, Dr Max Collins represented the public health sector on the Committee. He had extensive medical practice in Britain and New Zealand, and in the early 1970s was a member of the government's interdepartmental committee on social issues where the range of his involvement in social issues included:

Sex education, venereal disease and liberal studies programmes covering a wide field – alcohol, drugs, inter-personal relations, preparation for marriage. seemed useful at the time but [I am] not satisfied with these isolated programmes and see the real need for coordinated integrated programme in personal and social health.<sup>20</sup>

A letter from Minister of Education Amos, inviting Max Collins to join the Johnson Committee advised him that this was to be “a widely representative group, members being chosen for the unique contributions which they can make and the insights which they can bring to the committee”.<sup>21</sup> Collins' work in the public health sector involved him in “a pretty extensive experience in liberal studies programming in urban, rural, single sex and co-educational secondary schools”.<sup>22</sup> In Collins' view the Johnson Committee's task was to write a report that encompassed a comprehensive view of health and social education, “with the intention of being implemented in a reasonable time”.

I'd had a good deal of activity involving the Department of Education, so I was naturally asked to do it. At the change of Government [to National] Air Commodore Gill became the new Minister of Health. He was a little suspicious of what this 'secret' committee had been doing and insisted that he have the right of input into who should represent the Department of Health. I eventually received an official letter appointing me. (Collins, Interview, December 11, 1997)

It is likely that the conservative Minister of Health had been sympathetic to suggestions by the RR lobby of a conspiracy by the Department of Education to introduce the “Ross Report's” recommendations into schools. Collins, who described himself as having “a fairly conservative background”, subsequently became President of the Baptist Union of New Zealand. One of the less liberal of the committee members he nevertheless had an understanding of the broader

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<sup>20</sup> Collins' statement of self-introduction to committee (undated). (Author's files).

<sup>21</sup> Letter from Minister, Phil Amos, to Dr Max Collins. 05.12.75. (Shown to Author by Dr. Collins).

<sup>22</sup> Letter from Collins to Author, 12.05.02

role of education in matters of health. In his public role he was aligned with the position of Hiddlestone, the D-G of Health and described himself as an “enthusiastic” participant in the community of interest that comprised the Johnson Committee.

### **Ruth Cowell**

(Illustration 9)



As Vice President of the Federation of New Zealand School Committees, Ruth Cowell chaired its standing committee on Curriculum Development. She was also a member of the Canterbury Education Board, the Boards of Governors of Papanui High School and Christchurch Girls' High, and served on the school committee of Waimairi School. Her self-introduction explained that this made her “well-placed to represent a wide range of community concerns regarding education”. Cowell was the D-G's choice from nominations by the PTA, the Secondary Schools Boards Association, the Education Boards Association, and the School Committees Federation.<sup>23</sup> Although she described herself as “having a strong religious conviction”, Cowell's position on sex education was “middle of the road but not to the exclusion of other points of view. When parents have good rapport with their children if sex or religion are discussed at school it offers another opportunity to discuss and reinforce family values” (Cowell, Interview, March 6, 1998). This is a more liberal than conservative position. In interview Cowell who joined the Committee after Gandar had inherited it, stated that at the time they began to consider the terms of reference they weren't told what the specific political agenda was, but that she had “a sense of it”.

I think you can tell by the people who were appointed to the Committee that there was an agenda. I remember thinking ‘I'm a very small voice here but what are the parents going to think about all these professional people deciding what should happen to our children?’ I feel that in some ways these things are set up with an agenda and

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<sup>23</sup> Memo in Departmental files (undated). Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Part 5, Box 855.

you're expected to come down with what they are wanting in terms of certain recommendations. During the Johnson report time we were working throughout a period of change. Phil Amos had been keen to get something going but Les Gandar took a bit of persuading (Cowell, Int.)<sup>24</sup>

As will be seen, any misgivings that Gandar may have had about this particular Committee would prove to be well founded.

### **Jock Crawford**

(Illustration 10).



Jock Crawford was District Adviser on Physical Education in the Canterbury area. Like Johnson and Macpherson, he had also seen active service in World War II. Crawford was assigned the task of Committee secretary which proved to be a major commitment for the next three years. He recalled that the Johnson Report represented “a true consensus” of committee members’ discussions. “With three sub-committees in Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland, I had to attend all of them and I’d take notes in longhand of whatever was said and discussed and I would send that out to every member of the committee” (Crawford, Interview, August 13, 1999). Committee members would check these meeting notes to ensure they were an accurate representation of the discussion, and then read the next submissions. Without modern technology Crawford’s task, which included distributing submissions, was enormous. “I spent hours and hours at the duplicating machine”.

It had been intended that Ted Wadsworth, then guidance counsellor at Queen Elizabeth College, would be the joint secretary, based in the North Island. However, having spent a term on secondment to the Department the previous year, and a further period overseas in 1976, Wadsworth’s Principal was understandably reluctant to release him for further extended periods. Thus Crawford, with some Departmental release time, assumed the major task of

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<sup>24</sup> In 1989 Ruth Cowell was awarded an MBE for her voluntary service to education.

letter writing, administration, organising meetings and watching the budget. Jock Crawford played a key administrative role in the preparation phase of the Johnson Report and again later, in summarising submissions after the Report was released. His concerns over health education were “wide-ranging – outdoor pursuits, health issues and, of course, the unfinished business of sex education” (Crawford, Int.).

***Graeme Dallow***

(Illustration 11)



***Don Hamilton***

(Illustration 12)



It was shown in Chapter One that the Department of Police had its own history of concern over social issues. Truancy was a particular concern and in the early 1970s Senior Inspector Graeme Dallow, who described himself to the writer as “just a cop”, convened an inter-Departmental working party on school absenteeism which encompassed the Departments of Social Welfare, Police and Education.

I was appointed to the [Johnson] committee by the Minister of Education, Mr. Amos, who rang me one day and asked me if I'd go on it. It was unusual for a minister, other than the Police Minister, to ask ... I did have a rather high profile at the time having appeared before various ministerial committees and got known to the politicians. I think I had rather 'a liberal bent' at that time and Mr Amos got a bit worried that drugs had just started to come on the scene. That's why he thought that there should be some sort of police connection. There was another reason why I was on, in that there was some sense that the Committee was a bit too academic. There was a lot of educational people on it and medical people, so I was to be, not a watchdog but a sort of independent voice so they didn't get too introverted. (Dallow Interview, December 10, 1997)

Dallow's comments suggest that his differences may have been not so much a matter of philosophy but rather of personal style. Halfway through the Committee's task he had a change of responsibilities, being replaced by Inspector Don Hamilton, at that time in charge of the Youth Aid Section. While Hamilton was industrious during his six months as a committee member

Dallow was reluctant to 'let go' and returned as the Police Department's representative.

I wanted to keep on, having been there from the beginning ...The brief was a bit vague-ish, but to give pupils some sort of direction, or correction ... to introduce a new theme. There was a sense that the children were missing out on something and an impression that something had to be done to instill some of these things ...a bit sort of 'airy-fairy' but that's not said to denigrate it at all. It was to be a reform, but not too 'pushy' a reform. We were looking for healthier children ... not just the education part, but the medical and physical education part. The breadth of it was tremendous - the whole bloody lot was there. (Dallow Int.)

Here Dallow commented on the comprehensiveness of the terms of reference. What he called his "liberal bent" was reflected within the police sector at that time.<sup>25</sup>

### **David Kerr**

(Illustration 13)



David Kerr was Principal of Te Papa School and a member of the National Executive of the primary teachers' union NZEI that had developed a policy over many years in relation to the place of sex education within a health education syllabus.

Sex education was an area where we all agreed something had to be done. It was really a matter of coming to an agreement of just what it was. We [the Johnson Committee] all agreed we had a major problem in society, that the schools and parents each had to play a part, and the time we spent was in coming to a solution as to just how we'd marry all that together. We got presented early in the piece with ample evidence that there were a significant number of children who

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<sup>25</sup> Unisex dressing was then in fashion and the Secretary of the Police Association, Dr Bob Moodie, had created a minor media sensation by appearing publicly in a kaftan, espousing the feminisation of male dress for the purpose of comfort.

were not receiving any information at all and in reality a lot of the results came about through ignorance. All of the teachers on the committee, because of what they had come face to face with in the school situation, had already done a lot of background thinking and reading about that area. There was a lot of information within the group. (Kerr, Interview, November 12, 1997)

These comments clearly situate Kerr in the liberal camp and indicate the alliance between the policy community and the wider educational community of interest.

### ***Horowai Maniopoto***

(Illustration 14)



In 1976 Horowai Maniopoto was senior mistress at Tongariro High School in Turangi, having taught at both primary and secondary school level. She had been national secretary of the Māori Women's Welfare League and a member of the Māori Language Advisory Committee. Her participation was recalled by Johnson as:

...ongoing and valuable, but perhaps not as apparent to others as it was to me. Horowai and I were fellow-members of numerous Departmental courses aimed at raising awareness of Māori concerns. We were good friends and saw things in much the same way. Horowai and John Te Rangihau gave constant input on the Maori view of all matters we discussed.<sup>26</sup>

Maniopoto and Rangihau provided Johnson with the collegial support necessary to his pursuit of biculturalism within the new Committee. Their inclusion also indicates the Department's awareness of issues relating to Maori.

### ***Peter Macpherson***

(Illustration 15)



Peter Macpherson was a member of the policy community within the CDU from 1973. Formerly a physical education adviser in Otago, the King Country, and Northland, he had also been involved in teacher training in Fiji, Australia and New Zealand. As a member of the CDU specialising in health and outdoor education he was involved in the discussions over the outcomes of the “Ross Report” that contributed to the setting up of the Johnson Committee. Macpherson articulated the Department’s underlying agenda on to sex education, revealing its growing awareness of the power of the conservative lobby.

The Director General of Education had an in-house committee on the Ross Report. The discussion on this saw the ‘getting together’ of community groups that were opposed to the very thought that there could be any sex education in schools, even if the parents were unable to do it. I remember having a discussion with Peter Boag [then Deputy D-G] on how we could best be constructive. He’d go and talk it over with Bill Renwick and others. It was decided within the Department that perhaps a Ministerial committee would be the best way to handle it. The senior people in the Department had weekly briefings with the Minister and the idea must have been on the agenda for one of those meetings.

(Macpherson, Interview, October 30, 1997)

Macpherson’s statements provide insight into the hegemonic activity of the Department in establishing the Johnson Committee as well as the liberal stance characteristic of the educational policy community of that time.

The personal and social development of all its students are a proper task of the school as well as the home. The school itself (as a social system) is a powerful tool for learning. The long regarded “frills of education” (cultural, social and physical areas) were rightly placed at the core by the Thomas Committee.<sup>27</sup>

Macpherson recalled a retrospective conversation with Phil Amos that also revealed the operation of hegemony in the setting up of this Committee.

I asked him [Amos] ‘what do you recall about it?’ [The Johnson Report]. He said: ‘Well it wasn’t my idea to have the ministerial committee. That came to me from others but I talked about it with colleagues and we thought it wouldn’t be a bad idea.’ To try and involve the community in the thing, that was the concept. In the Curriculum Development Unit we were

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<sup>26</sup> Undated letter from Garfield Johnson to Author in May 1998.



change agents. Change has to involve people and take them along with you so that it becomes part of them, because they're the people who will follow it through. That was the sort of concept put to Phil [Amos]. Murray Print was originally to be the Chair, but then Peter Boag, I think, suggested Garfield. He had a reputation for concern for things outside the pure academic and had demonstrated that pretty effectively at Hillary College. (Macpherson, Int.)

### **Peter McIntosh**

(Illustration 16)



Peter McIntosh was the newly appointed Professor and Director of Physical Education at Otago University. A recent arrival from Britain, former chair of a UNESCO committee on sport, the Sports Council of Great Britain, and previously Senior Inspector of Physical Education for London, he introduced himself to the committee as “the product of an ‘expensive British Public School education’ and a recreational reader of Latin, Greek, philosophy and history”.

I believe that the school has a vital part to play in health, social and moral education, that a very large number of parents in Britain have not the skill, the will or the courage to tackle this education and that it is obscurantist to place the primary responsibility for it upon them...My short acquaintance with New Zealand leads me to think that the school is just as important here as in Britain and that teachers must be given the fullest training and responsibility for health and social education.<sup>28</sup>

McIntosh, who was remembered by other members as being highly articulate on the subject of education, was involved in the early stages of the Committee's discussion, but not in the report's drafting, having resigned by May 1977. He later returned to England. McIntosh appeared not to have been entirely comfortable with Johnson's style of leadership. He also had strong

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<sup>27</sup> Statement of position written by Peter Macpherson for the Johnson Committee's Chairman in 1976 (undated). (Author's file).

<sup>28</sup> McIntosh's statement of self-introduction to committee (undated). (Author's file).

views on the funding of the committee, and wrote to the Minister directly on this matter. As will be seen in the next chapter, McIntosh's activity raised the issue of what happens within a committee selected to satisfy a particular hegemonic agenda, when a member does not fit in with the prevailing ethos. Resignation is one solution, and the author heard nuances in the comments of interviewees that led to the hypothesis that this may have been the case. McIntosh was unfamiliar with New Zealand society and the significance of the Treaty of Waitangi Act. His inclusion as the representative of the school of Physical Education at the University of Otago did not automatically secure his commitment to the objectives and ideology of the policy community. Thus, it is argued, the option of self-exclusion served to maintain the probability of consensus within such a committee. Events presented in the next chapter will support this speculation.

### ***John Te Rangi Rangihau***

(Illustration 17)



A former teacher, conservationist, and Rotorua District Maori Welfare Officer, John Rangihau was Research Fellow at the new Centre for Māori Studies of the University of Waikato. For some years he had pursued the cause of Te Reo in the curriculum, dismissed by some as a “separatist and potential source of social divisiveness” (King, 2003, p. 481). One of the mid twentieth century Māori renaissance leaders, Rangihau wrote extensively on Māori issues and taught in the School of Social Science at Victoria University in Wellington. In this latter role, he had jointly undertaken a research survey with the people of Ruatahuna, funded by the Carnegie Social Science Research Committee (McCreary & Te Rangihau, 1958), the objective of which was to give each Ruatahuna parent, or prospective parent, a chance to discuss “what hopes or plans he may have for his children.” In his advocacy for Te Reo he found an ally in Johnson who stated in interview that his own bicultural philosophy was significantly influenced by John Rangihau. Within the Johnson Committee John Rangihau was “someone to whom everyone related pretty well” (Wadsworth, Int.). Like most Kaunatua, and as with Horowai Maniopoto,

Rangihau had multiple responsibilities to his Tuhoe Iwi (family tribal group), his profession, and his public service roles.

### ***Dr Ralph Riseley***

(Illustration 18)



A GP in Lower Hutt, Ralph Riseley, had previously worked in Canada and Nepal. Being self-employed, his participation on the Johnson Committee was at the expense of his own salary.

I came into the Committee as a replacement for Dr Anne Hall, and possibly Dayll Jensen, whom I never met. Why they thought of me I haven't an idea... I had no experience in any of the formal structures of education, I started by admitting that I didn't know anything about education, that what I was concerned with was the health of teachers at that time ... I was concerned about the pressures on teachers and the medical profession in general. In a way I was saying: 'I've seen a lot of life and if teachers were under strain then the children they taught would be under stress too.' The important thing was the climate in schools. I felt that I was taking the role of devil's advocate as a concerned parent. (Riseley, Interview, December 6, 1997)

Riseley, who described himself as "a pessimist from way back" felt that the Committee's terms of reference were too broad, but he understood the political nature of the task.

As you know terms of reference are usually framed to control what the report's going to be about. In this case I felt the terms weren't strict enough. We had this huge range to cover in a relatively short time. I think when any government has a problem and doesn't know what to do it tends to call on a high-powered committee of some kind to delay a decision and also to give a semblance of democracy by getting a selected group of people together to come back with recommendations. You must remember the culture of the time was still against sex education in schools. That was one of our major problems. The Ross Committee previously had made

recommendations about sex education in schools and had been rubbished, with an outcry from the Concerned Parents Association. (Riseley, Int.)

Pessimist or not, the equally liberal Riseley undertook the task with both enthusiasm and commitment that lasted throughout the process.

Maybe we were picked because we were idealistic. Having said I was cynical, at the same time we all cherish fond hopes that there's going to be a better world and maybe this is our one chance to have some impact on it, and I felt very pleased that I had been chosen. It wasn't easy to get away from the practice. (Riseley, Int.)

In Riseley's comment can be seen the optimism and idealism characteristic of the times which he shared with other committee members.

### ***Father Tom Ryder***

(Illustration 19)



In the choice of Father Ryder the Minister of Education exercised his autonomy for the second time. Ryder was a Catholic Priest in South Auckland's Parish of Papakura who had been a hospital, prison and boys' school chaplain. He had spent some years in rural parishes and had developed his own programme of moral education. Ryder was not on the Department's original list of committee members, and his inclusion subsequently contributed to antagonism from the RR lobby. Ryder's memoirs recall his reputation as something of a rebel within the Catholic Church.

I spent one year at St Michael's Remuera under Monsignor Bradley. [who] saw dangers everywhere with young people and the terrible things they were likely to be doing. I used to caricature this in my homilies ... The Bishop had written to me saying that I needed some experience of pastoral work and invited me to come along to talk to him about a new job. He said he understood I'd been saying some rather indiscreet things and that he felt I was better to be away from the centre of the Diocese. (Ryder, 1997, p. 73)

Transferred to Kawerau, Father Ryder immersed himself in the community of this new forestry district, becoming involved with the local Māori community and conducting classes in values education at Te Teko Māori School. In the centre-periphery climate of the CDU at this time he was asked by other principals to explore with pupils topics related to values, religion and “what it meant to be human”.

I was invited into Kawerau College by the Dean of English Literature. The sixth and seventh form students had been studying a play by Camus called *the Plague* which gave them a sense of being in a dark world with no meaning and it was suggested that they find somebody to present an alternative view...I was then invited into Edgecumbe college ... Later when I moved back to Auckland I was able to hold discussion forums in Papakura High School, Rosehill College and Northcote College. (Ryder, 1997, pp. 90-91)

Ryder had been an enthusiastic participant in EDC community discussions in the context of which he inadvertently propounded his views to the Minister of Education on the place of spiritual values in a secular society

There was a meeting held at Papakura High School one Sunday afternoon and Phil Amos and his wife were in the front seats. I gave the main talk. I told the audience what I had been doing and proclaimed that it was possible and practical to work outside the Catholic structure and to “form” children in what would still be a deeply Christian way. (Ryder, Interview, September 18, 1997)

After this meeting the Minister approached Ryder for further discussion, and he learned subsequently that his name had been put forward for membership of the Johnson Committee. Ryder recalled that Amos wanted “someone who’s not belonging to the system but has clear ideas about the subject”. The Minister’s choice of Ryder who, in his memoirs, acknowledged “the contrast between my kind of spirituality and popular piety” (Ryder, 1997, p. 64), would contribute to the liberal tenor of the Report’s discussion on spiritual matters. There is no evidence to suggest that Father Ryder was the official nominee of the Catholic Church of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Given that there were different doctrinal stances represented in the 1960s and 1970s in the two Catholic newspapers, *Zealandia* in the North Island and *The Tablet* in the South Island, it seems unlikely that he would have been chosen to represent the National

Diocese. *Zealandia* was generally sympathetic to Ryder's views throughout the controversy, whereas the Editor of *The Tablet*, John Kennedy, would write editorials attacking both Ryder and the Johnson Report.

What Philip Amos, wanted I think, was to accept the fact that this [sex education] was not just a matter of techniques to be studied in the classroom but that the real issue was about values...I had to accept the fact that some of them [the Committee] would be totally different from me, but that we had to share with each other and learn from each other, and I found it a learning experience myself. (Ryder, Int.)

### **Ted Wadsworth**

(Illustration 20)



A lecturer at the University of Waikato, Ted Wadsworth had been the Guidance Counsellor at Freyberg High School during Murray Print's term as Principal, followed by terms at Pakuranga College and Queen Elizabeth College. A key figure in the history of counselling in New Zealand, Wadsworth was enlisted by the Department of Education in the late 1960s to help in counsellor training before university based courses were established. In 1974 he initiated the New Zealand Counsellors and Guidance Association. (Hermansson, 1999). In association with Print, Wadsworth represented guidance issues in the Committee's deliberations, reflected in the section of the Johnson Report dealing with school climate.

We thought that there would be curriculum outcomes. We thought that the curriculum would be loosened up and that education could be very personal in terms of personal development. And also later in the phase they [Johnson and Ryder] began to introduce the idea of a spiritual element and I thought they'd never had a dog show of getting anywhere with that, but it came out, and it was defined, too. I think the definition was what the Māori people understand... Wairua, but nothing denominational. (Wadsworth, Interview, March 1. 1998)

Wadsworth recalled Committee discussion as being informal where “you could chip in and say anything you wanted” and he realised the enormity of the task.

I thought that they'd never do the job, never have a show, and even if they did write anything it would never be accepted, because the idea of the whole thing was totally liberal right from the word go. The cops wanted a liberal attitude taken, the secondary people wanted a liberal curriculum. The NZEI wanted the same and so did the Education Board people. The doctors were all keen, and more preventative than, you know. There wasn't really much to sort of argue about. (Wadsworth, Int.).

It can be seen from these introductions to the Committee members that the policy community had made its recommendations and selections from the perspective of its hegemonic agenda for a liberalising of the curriculum in the area of health, with the tacit agenda of sex education. This meant that they would generally be receptive to the leadership style of Garfield Johnson who had already demonstrated a commitment to mentoring other Pakeha into Maori culture and protocol through ‘Smith’s circus’. He did not hurry his committee into decision-making but began the process in a leisurely and consultative manner.

They were a very interesting group, the Assistant Commissioner of Police who was a great strength, doctors, teachers ... and a Catholic clergyman who was an absolute live-wire. They were a handful because they were all opinionated. We spent the first few months just talking and getting to know each other because I've learned that you've got to let people talk until they let down their barriers.<sup>29</sup>

Getting to know each other's position is consistent with the korero (discussion style) of decision making on a Marae, but it will be shown that this style did not suit everyone. Perhaps it also contributed to the early withdrawal of others, although this is speculation. In interview each participant recalled her, or his, sense of commitment to the task ahead. There was general agreement that issues of health and life-style choices for the young needed to be addressed and that this was the right historical moment for change.

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<sup>29</sup> Transcript of audiotape address by Johnson to postgraduate education students at Massey University, Albany on October 8, 1995. (Author's file).

## SUMMARY

Given the backgrounds and views of Johnson Committee members, as presented in this chapter, it was perhaps inevitable that the predominating liberal ideology would lead to the Report's subsequent recommendation on removing the proscription on sex education at primary school level. The selection of such a committee was hegemonic activity aimed at furthering the policy community's agenda in the aftermath of both the "Ross Report" and the EDC. As can be seen from their comments, the Johnson Committee members' engagement with their task was characterised by optimism and enthusiasm. The work of the committee however would take place against a background of lobbying that had intensified in the context of the government's setting up of the Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion in 1976.

Given Johnson's commitment to promoting biculturalism within the curriculum, and his relationships with Committee members Rangihau and Maniopoto, it was also inevitable that Māori issues would be part of the Chairman's agenda. Others, such as Ryder and Buxton hoped to resolve some of the issues relating to values education. In relation to this it will be shown how the Chairman's influence would also contribute to the ambiguity of the report's discourse, and thus to the public's confusion.

The historical potential for controversy over any report touching on issues of sex education was intensified with the selection of this particular Committee. Despite the Minister's subsequent reassurances that Committee members had been selected on the basis of their individual expertise they can be seen here to have represented a range of national organisations, each with an historic interest in the issue of sex education, in the context of a health syllabus. It can therefore be claimed that the Johnson Committee represented a community of interest with links to the policy community.

With the formation of the Committee, and the ongoing interest of the Religious Right in what might be happening regarding the recommendations of both the "Ross Report" and the Royal Commission on CSA, the conditions for controversy were established. Chapter Six will provide insight into the working of the Committee and present further evidence that it represented a community of interest having aims congruent with those of the policy community of the Department of Education.



## THE COMMITTEE AT WORK

Following a general election and change of government to National in November 1975, the new Minister of Education, the Hon. L. W. (Les) Gandar, authorised the continuance of the Committee on Health and Social Education, membership of which was still being finalised. As the Committee began sitting the apprehension of the Religious Right lobby that had formed in the aftermath of the “Ross Report” began to manifest in a questioning of this new Committee’s role and membership. The congruence between the ideology of the Johnson Committee and that of the policy community has been explained and it will be argued here that, despite the bureaucracy’s insistence that Committee members were appointed as individuals, hegemonic intent is revealed in their representation of a range of national organisations already requesting curriculum change in the area of health. As will be shown, a range of opposing views within the wider community began to surface in the form of constituents’ questions to their MPs and the questions of MPs themselves.

Its terms of reference required the Committee to revisit issues investigated by the Mazengarb Inquiry such as truancy, alcohol, the issue of unwanted pregnancies that occupied the 1937 McMillan Inquiry and other historical concerns of the Departments of Police and Health outlined in Chapter One. On inheriting the Committee it is likely that Les Gandar realised there would be difficulties ahead, including the potential for the polarisation of views among his own parliamentary colleagues. The controversial Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion Bill was likely to become a conscience vote and the contiguity of this with the Johnson Committee confirmed for the RR lobby a need for watchfulness.

### THE COMMITTEE MEETS

At the inaugural meeting of the Johnson Committee at Futuna House in Wellington on March 18, 1976, Gandar confirmed Amos’ original brief, setting it in the context of his Party’s policy.

The task set you is complex and wide ranging ... I refer you to our [National Party] aim of promoting sound family relationships, effective work, responsible citizenship, cultural enjoyment and adaptability to change. So you can see that had you not existed, I would have found it necessary, on becoming Minister, to invent you.<sup>1</sup>

This session which brought Committee members together for the first time was not without diplomatic difficulties for secretary Jock Crawford, as he outlined in a letter to Johnson:

I'm including with this one or two copies of letters already sent. The rather strange one to the D. G. takes into account, I hope, this bloody protocol business. Apparently it's unusual for a Minister and his permanent head to address the same meeting at the same time.<sup>2</sup>

This meeting was also addressed by Ivan Snook, then Lecturer in Education at the University of Canterbury at the D-G's invitation, to provide some framework for discussion. Snook had, at the Department's request,<sup>3</sup> worked on resources for teachers on values and moral education, and coauthored a book on these issues (Snook & McGeorge, 1978). Snook's address however met with mixed reactions from Committee members keen to address their terms of reference.

The only speaker was Ivan Snook ... It was dull and abstract. He stressed the duty of a teacher to remain neutral. He told us of the dangers of indoctrination such as he received in Catholic schools ... I came away feeling I was wasting my time. The membership seemed loaded on the side of physical education and health education. I was about to resign, but held on. (Ryder, 1997, pp. 149-150)

In the context of the subsequent controversy Snook would change his mind about academic neutrality. The Committee met together again for a week at Lopdell House in Auckland at which Johnson asked members to present statements of self-introduction and to share their backgrounds and perspectives on the task ahead. Information gathering tasks were delegated on the basis of areas of interest. Ryder was to summarise material on values and religion. Print's special area was school climate. Wadsworth and Print were jointly to present school guidance issues and Collins, Riseley and Macpherson were to tackle health topics. Dallow,

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<sup>1</sup> Minister's address to the inaugural meeting of the Johnson Committee on March 18, 1976. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30. Part 5, Box 855.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Crawford to Johnson, February 23, 1976. (Author's file)

<sup>3</sup> This comment was made by Renwick during interview.

and later Hamilton, handled drugs and youth issues and Buxton, Buckton and McIntosh were delegated recreational and outdoor pursuits.

The Committee began by discussing the Thomas, Currie and "Ross" reports and what they had achieved, or failed to achieve (Johnson Report, pp. 99-101). Submissions, which were called for through the *Education Gazette*, the teacher union journals and advertisements in the national newspapers, were slow to arrive. This was unsurprising because the breadth of the terms of reference meant that responses from national bodies such as the Church groups and NCW would require a period of regional membership consultation. As soon as they were received by Crawford submissions were circulated, to be read and discussed at the next meeting. They went first to Johnson, and on some he wrote evaluative comments such as that on the submission by the Association of Anglican Women of New Zealand, "a balanced view – an important document", thus exercising his leadership. Between meetings members collated and summarised national and international statistics and reports on a range of issues relating to health and social education (Johnson Report, pp. 110-112). Topics considered included venereal disease, alcoholism and coronary heart disease. Ex-nuptial births were also discussed (pp. 102-107).

During this phase letters to various Ministers on topics relating peripherally to the terms of reference were channeled to the Committee. One of these, sent to the Minister of Education from W. Keay on behalf of the Dunedin Secondary Schools Principals Association, expressed opposition to the current proposal to lower the drinking age to 18 years on the grounds that this would make it "easier for secondary school students to obtain liquor."<sup>4</sup> Letters such as this were listed in the Report as submissions.

Throughout the Committee's work, there were five meetings of the full group with the rest of their work done in subCommittees, an Auckland group chaired by Murray Print, a Wellington based group chaired by Bill Buxton, and one in Christchurch chaired by Patricia Barnes.

An agenda for a three day national meeting between December 15 and 17, 1976, at Rossmore House in Wellington typifies the programme for meetings of the whole Committee. On this occasion they were addressed by Miss Patricia

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<sup>4</sup> Letter from Keay to Minister on March 3m 1976. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Part 5. Box 855.

Bartlett (SPCS), Mr. Basil Kings (Superintendent of teacher training), Dr. S. Mirams on drugs and drug education, and Mr. K. B. Burnside (Commissioner of Police). Because submissions were slow in arriving they had to be solicited through a letter writing campaign by Secretary Jock Crawford.

## **MĀORI PROTOCOL AND ISSUES ON THE AGENDA**

Johnson had decided that no “meaningful discussion” could take place until members of the Committee felt “comfortable with each other” and “let down their barriers” (Johnson, Int.). Mentoring members into Māori culture and protocol was on the Chairman’s agenda but the Karakia, Mihi (prayer and welcome) and discussion style of reaching consensus was a process some found irksome.

Myself and one or two others set out to educate the Committee in Māori protocol for meetings and that sort of thing and it went on and on, talking informally about all kinds of things, until finally one of them came to me and said: ‘well it’s very nice now but don’t you think it’s time we got on with the job’, which was about six months after we started. We spent the first several months getting to know each other, sharing viewpoints and just generally exchanging views. This process was helped by a weeklong residential stay at Lopdell House in Titirangi where we were able to establish a sense of common purpose. It was some time before we actually got down to the task of writing the report. (Johnson, Int.)

The Chairman’s style of leadership met with mixed reactions, as Jock Crawford recalled: “He was really into it – a bit too much. If Garfield had had his way we would all have had to learn Maori” (Crawford, Int.). Ruth Cowell commented that coming from the South Island, she had “hardly ever seen a Maori, let alone spoken with one and here we were sitting around a table together and such educated people” (Cowell, Int.). As will be shown, Peter McIntosh, who had recently arrived from England, was reluctant to give the necessary time to both the Marae visits and to the lengthy Māori protocol of the meetings. That Johnson promoted biculturalism within the Committee is evidenced in his memos, an example being the following one sent to the subcommittees regarding a task set for the meeting of September 23, 1976. It stated, “... thus aroha (concern for

others) is manifested by manaaki (hospitality). Schools can take steps to practice aroha and manaakitanga and some aspects of whanaungatana (though kinship ties on which this is based do not exist within the school).”<sup>5</sup> Crawford recalled a need “to calm him [Johnson] down a wee bit. I assured him that the people in Invercargill and Southland... wouldn’t have a bar of it. We [in the South Island] didn’t have a Maori problem. There wasn’t the population” (Crawford, Int.).

### ***A Marae visit and Police Department business***

As with ‘Smith’s circus’, Marae visits were planned by Johnson to provide Committee members with an immersion experience in Māori culture. A meeting of the full Committee took place at the Tuhoe Uwhiarai Marae in Ruatahuna on the weekend of May 27, 1977, organised through John Rangihau and John Turei. Ruth Cowell recalled the Marae visits as a significant personal learning experience: “...it was all a bit of an eye-opener” (Cowell, Int.). This occasion may also have offered an opportunity for the Minister of Police to heal what some may have perceived as old wounds of colonisation through the presence of Deputy Assistant Police Commissioner, Graeme Dallow. That the Ruatahuna Marae visit also had a political agenda is suggested by the fact that costs of this Committee meeting were paid for from the Police budget.<sup>6</sup> Dallow was apprehensive about the visit, having been given the task of making the formal speech of reply to the official challenge that would greet the Committee at the opening Powhiri. His letter to Johnson discussing this is recorded here for its historic significance, and because it reflects the position of many Pākehā of the time.

19 May 1977

Dear Garfield,

I received your assignment with considerable shock because I cannot speak Māori except for the odd word like aroha, utu, and of course, tena koe ... However I accept your challenge albeit with some trepidation. The thing is that I had always intended to learn some

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<sup>5</sup> Memo to Johnson Committee from Chairman. (author’s files)

<sup>6</sup> Address by Johnson to postgraduate education students at Massey University, Albany, on October 8, 1995.

Maori and never had the time but this has made me get off my chuff and it is amazing the progress already.

Another reason for accepting this challenge is that according to a Tuhoe expert I consulted, I would be expected to say something officially because of the previous bad history. As you may know not long after the turn of the century the prophet, Rua, was captured at Ruatahuna by a police party sent down from Auckland. My speech and presence will cleanse the whole affair. I would be the first official police guest since that incident, not that there would have been any official guests before the incident.

I have worked on your notes but the Tuhoe expert subsequently told me that what you had given me would be more appreciated by the Waikato tribes. With respect to your suggestions, I have followed his advice to do a Tuhoe chant and tell a Tuhoe proverb ... Apparently the Tuhoe would be the most traditional of all the Maori tribes and in particular the Ruatahuna Marae would be the most traditional marae. One could say it is like calling at the Vatican. I trust you will advise the Committee that I was assigned this task and did not solicit it.

Regards Graeme<sup>7</sup>

## **LOOMING PROBLEMS – THE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP UNDER SCRUTINY**

As the Committee proceeded, members of the public began to question its objectives and relationship to the policy community. The change of government to National meant that new members of parliament had to be informed about sitting Committees. The Minister of Health, Frank Gill, had learned of Dr Max Collins' membership from his CPA constituents and a radio news report.<sup>8</sup> There followed a flurry of interdepartmental memos, the first from Gill to Gandar in which he

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<sup>7</sup> Letter from Dallow to Johnson (author's files)

<sup>8</sup> Note in Departmental file referring to a letter of June 11, 1976 from the Minister of Health to the Minister of Education. Archives New Zealand, AEPB, W4262. 17/3/30, Part 5, Box 855.

expressed “concern that the Committee on Health and Social Education has been set up without direct representation from the Department of Health”.<sup>9</sup>

Gandar acknowledged this breach of protocol, stating “It is now clear that our sounding of Dr Collins should have been formalised in a request to the Director General of Health.”<sup>10</sup> Minister Gandar was aware that he was dealing with a political hot potato, even in his dealings with his own Party colleagues. That the conservative Gill regarded the Johnson Committee with some suspicion is evidenced by his reference to a “secret Committee”<sup>11</sup>, and a further exchange of memos culminated in another response from Gandar to Gill.

When my predecessor was considering the establishment of this Committee it was decided that all members should serve in a personal capacity and that their personal background and breadth of experience should adequately reflect the range of Departmental and community interest...I would like to bring to your attention the meetings of the Inter-Departmental Committee on health education – a forum convened by the Assistant Director General of Education [which] provides an opportunity for very senior officers in the three Departments of Health, Education and Social Welfare to discuss matters of shared concern.<sup>12</sup>

Gandar’s reply did not however conceal the paradox regarding liberal allegiances of Committee members. On the one hand Members were chosen in a “personal capacity” as individuals with expertise in their fields, while on the other hand they were to represent the “range of [liberal] Departmental and community interest”. Thus any intention the policy community may have had to assure the RR lobby that the latter’s views would have significant influence could be construed as naive. Dr. Collins’ membership was confirmed, but as a representative of the Department of Health which made him more accountable to his own Minister. The same issue does not appear to have been raised by the Minister of Police regarding the membership of Dallow and Hamilton, suggesting that Minister of Health, Frank Gill, may have been more sympathetic to his constituents’ hints of conspiracy. This was a small victory for the CPA.

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<sup>9</sup> Note in Departmental file referring to a letter of June 11, 1976 from the Minister of Health to the Minister of Education. Archives New Zealand, AEPB, W4262. 17/3/30, Part 5, Box 855.

<sup>10</sup> Letter from the Minister of Education to the Minister of Health, June 13, 1976. Archives New Zealand, AEPB, W4262. 17/3/30, Part 5, Box 855.

<sup>11</sup> Statement made by Dr. Collins in interview.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from the Minister of Education, to the Minister of Health, June 25, 1976. Archives New Zealand, AEPB, W4262. 17/3/30, Part 5, Box 855.

Six months into the Johnson Committee's work Crawford responded with the same line to a query from the Auckland Federation of Parent Teacher Associations regarding the apparent lack of a parent representative on the Committee. "The point you make about parent representation on the Committee is noted. However it is my understanding that all Committee members were appointed as individuals rather than representatives of groups or organisations."<sup>13</sup> Conservative Catholics also found Father Tom Ryder's inclusion vexing, with Ryder's comments reported in the Catholic *Tablet*, on December 5, 1976, under the headline "Sex education favoured by priest". In interview Ryder recalled "a persistent lobby from a few Catholics, including Patricia Bartlett" to have him removed from the Johnson Committee. The vigilance of the CPA is shown in a letter from its chairman, Peter Clements (shown below in illustration 21), who wrote to Gandar in December 1976, requesting Ryder's removal on the grounds of statements he was reported as having made "in which he made it quite evident that he has already decided in favour of sex education," and because of "his ready acceptance of humanist teaching about these topics". In Clements' letter the removal of Peter Macpherson was also sought following an item in the *Education Gazette* naming him as the coordinator of in-service courses on human development on the basis that the Department was already beginning the introduction of such course into schools. "We would appreciate it if you could explain how this can be reconciled with the idea that your Department is maintaining strict neutrality in this matter?"<sup>14</sup>

**Illustration 21 - Photograph of Peter Clements, Chairman of the Concerned Parents' Association  
*Auckland Star*, September 16, 1978.**



**Mr Peter Clements  
... many speaking  
tours.**

<sup>13</sup> Letter from Crawford, Secretary for the Committee on Health and Social Education, to A.D. Dyer, President Auckland Federation of PTAs, September 14, 1976. (Author's file)

<sup>14</sup> Letter from Clements to Gandar, December 12, 1976. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30/ Part 5. Box 855.



Apprehension over the 'secret' work of the Johnson Committee, and its humanistic leanings, continued to be expressed throughout the first half of 1977. A letter to Prime Minister Rob Muldoon from Mr. E.G. Clark, coordinating secretary of the Associated Pentecostal Churches of New Zealand, on the subject of the Johnson Committee, expressed "increasing concern that many of those appointed to serve on Committees and commissions of various kinds have tended to exhibit a particularly liberal attitude on social and moral issues."<sup>15</sup> A memorandum from the D-G at this time provided the Minister of Education with guidelines for briefing the Prime Minister regarding queries about the membership of the Johnson Committee.

Criteria are not laid down for selecting members of Committees, as [they] are usually set up for special purposes. For each Committee different grounds for determining selection are used so that, as a whole, it has the experience and expertise within its membership that will enable it to carry out its assigned functions and responsibilities...When the membership of the Committee for Health and Social Education was being considered it was thought important that it should be composed of people who were expert in physical and mental health, in child development and child psychology, in social problems, in the management and teaching of school children, and in curriculum development. It was considered also that, without being spokesmen, members should be able to represent the views of parents, teachers, religious groups, health and social welfare groups and some of the larger cultural groups. The fact that a person might hold so called liberal or conservative views was not a factor that influenced selection. While it may seem desirable that every sectional interest is represented on a Committee of this kind, clearly on the basis the Committee would be so large that it would not be able to function, an attempt is always made however to bring onto these Committees people who have many abilities and are able to represent the interests of more than one group.<sup>16</sup>

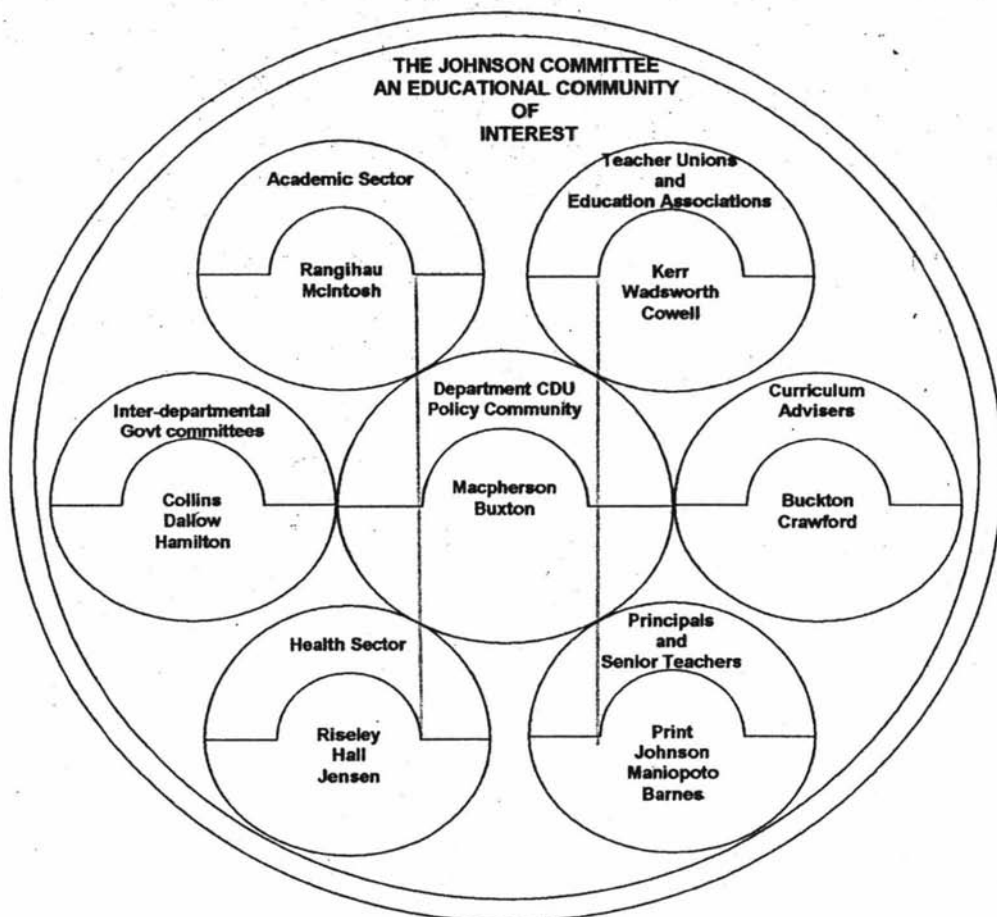
This statement reveals the D-G's use of the strategy of informed disinterest in pursuit of the policy community's agenda of curriculum change and how

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<sup>15</sup> Letter from Clark to the Minister of Education, June 2, 1977. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Pt 5, Box 855

<sup>16</sup> Memorandum from Director-General to the Minister of Education, dated June 23, 1977. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Part 5, Box 855.

neutrality, as a tenet of public service, can serve hegemonic goals. Renwick's diplomatic statement offered little reassurance to citizens who feared, with good reason, that ideological compatibility with the Department's agenda for curriculum reform under the Labour government had indeed been a criterion for Committee membership. Furthermore, the 'individuals' on the Johnson Committee also represented national organisations with policies that positioned them on the centre-left ideological side of curriculum change on the issue of sex education. Figure 4 shows the community of interest that comprised the Johnson Committee. Links among the policy community, with the teacher unions and with other national organisations having an interest in curriculum reform, are indicated.



**Figure 4. - The author's visualisation of the educational community of interest that comprised the Johnson Committee. This diagram shows how the Committee's membership represented various educational sectors. Links with the Curriculum Development Unit and the policy community are shown.**

The networks that were encompassed within the membership of the Johnson Committee however extended beyond the educational sector. It is necessary now to detour into other groups which also undertook significant lobbies in the ensuing controversy.

## **OTHER LOBBIES**

In the 1970s climate of second-wave feminism, women's lobbies throughout New Zealand had become mobilised, having an interest in the outcomes of the 1976 Royal Commission on CSA. As stated in Chapter One, following international trends, New Zealand had seen a rapid sequence of political and social events relating to the role of women. From the Domestic Proceedings Act of 1968, legislation and lobbies relating to the rights of women proceeded with a speed that scarcely allowed a bemused male population to grasp their implications. These events included the 1971 formation of Abortion Law Reform Association, the Equal Pay Act of 1972, the Domestic Purposes Benefit of 1973, the first national lesbian conference at Victoria University in 1974, the 1975 formation of the Women's Electoral Lobby of New Zealand, The Matrimonial Property Act (1976), and, in 1977, the Human Rights Commission Act which legislated against, and provided remedies for, discrimination against women. Dunstall (1992) summarised the concerns of this second-wave feminism.

The small, often informal, groups of women that proliferated reflected the variety of concerns that recruited growing numbers into the ranks of feminists: Rape Crisis, Women's Refuge, Working Women's Alliance, Sister Overseas Service (abortion referral)...In so far as 'abortion on demand' was a leading plank of women's liberation, the continuing strength of the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child reflected a measure of anti-feminism in the community. So did the Save our Homes Campaign in 1977. (p. 479)

### ***The National Council of Women***

Among the organisations with a history of policy development regarding issues of health, social and sex education was the National Council of Women, the

organisation that had been rebuked in the 1937 McMillan Report for “women’s selfishness”. Founded in 1896, the National Council of Women, Te Kaunihere Wahine o Aotearoa, represented the views of thousands of New Zealanders. Its 1976 affiliates included the Maori Women’s Welfare League (MWWL), Women’s Divisions of Federated Farmers (WDFE), the Federation of University Women (FUW) and a range of religious denominations, including Catholic and Anglican women’s groups. Membership ranged from conservative-right to liberal, and its policies were the result of consensus. Arising in the context of the women’s suffrage and temperance movements, the NCW had, by the 1970s, expanded its objectives:

... to promote the spiritual, moral, civil and social welfare of the community; to work for such conditions as will assure to all the opportunity for full and free development [and] to work for the social, legal and economic advancement of women.<sup>17</sup>

Over a period of time NCW had developed policy relating to issues in the Johnson Committee’s terms of reference, resulting in a series of resolutions, ratified at national conferences such as that of 1968 when the following resolution was passed:

That the NCW, recognising the many difficulties associated with the introduction of courses in Human Relationships throughout the school system, supports in principle the aim of the Education Department to select and train teachers to conduct, as an integral part of the school curriculum, courses in Human Relationships [and] in the meantime commends the Departments of Justice and Health for the work they are doing in schools in this field.<sup>18</sup>

In 1971 the same matters were on the agenda, with a new resolution requesting “the Minister of Education to institute in primary, intermediate and secondary schools suitable and adequate education in current social relations and values.”<sup>19</sup> Another resolution that year sought the cooperation of PPTA in incorporating education in social relations and values in the proposed interdisciplinary studies of

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<sup>17</sup> The National Council of Women – Te Kaunihere Wahine O Aotearoa - 1896-1996 - 100 Years of Resolution (2000), (foreword).

<sup>18</sup> The National Council of Women – Te Kaunihere Wahine O Aotearoa - 1896-1996 - 100 Years of Resolution (2000), p. 36.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid* The National Council of Women – Te Kaunihere Wahine O Aotearoa - 1896-1996 - 100 Years of Resolution (2000), p.37.

their curriculum revision plan.<sup>20</sup> At the 1975 national conference there was a repeat of this theme in a further resolution requesting “the Government to encourage a full programme of Human Relationships and Development into the curriculum of all schools and teachers’ colleges, both private and state.”<sup>21</sup> Following the “Ross Report’s” release executive member Ruth Wylie wrote to Minister Amos, informing him of NCW policy.

Courses in human relationships and family responsibilities should be provided for both boys and girls and we endorse the general principles in the Education Department’s booklet “Human Development and Relationships in the School Curriculum.” Although you will be familiar with our long-held (and frequently expressed!) views on the importance of social education for our young people we felt we would like to advise you in greater detail of this most recent recommendation ... Response was strong and we received replies from both local branches, groups affiliated to, or involved with various branches (largely Church and Educational Development Conference), members of our standing Committees, and interested individuals. Results of the national survey revealed that in general, the suggested course was approved, with possibly less enthusiasm at the primary school level. To many the crux of the matter is the role of teachers ... while there was no disagreement whatever with the Committee’s conclusion that parents should be their children’s first source of knowledge and understanding, it was clear that the greater the awareness of present social realities, the greater the willingness expressed for the schools to share in this social education, so that the children of those parents who had abdicated responsibility in this vital area should have their basic rights met. Not only individuals, but also society as a whole, suffered the penalties of higher rates of venereal disease, abortion, illegitimacy and unwanted parenthood and these things were largely the result of ignorance and a lack of awareness of responsibilities towards others. Replies from the Church groups all laid stress on the moral and spiritual values implied in the latter.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>The National Council of Women – Te Kaunihere Wahine O Aotearoa - 1896-1996 - 100 Years of Resolution (2000), p. 37.

<sup>21</sup>The National Council of Women – Te Kaunihere Wahine O Aotearoa - 1896-1996 - 100 Years of Resolution . No 5.3.3.5, p 37.

<sup>22</sup>Letter from Mrs. .M. Wylie, for the Board of Management, National Council of Women of N.Z. to the Minister of Education. (1974). Archives of N.C.W.

Upon learning of the establishment of the Johnson Committee NCW began consulting its membership yet again in order to prepare a consensual submission. NCW membership was extensive and nationwide, with an articulate executive versed in the political know-how of lobbying.

### ***The D-G advises the Committee over the Report of the Select Committee on Women's Rights***

While the mode of submission preparation by NCW was consultative and therefore a lengthy business, other feminists found a more direct route to the ear of the Director-General. At this time the predominantly male policy community was aware of the demand for more women in senior positions in education. The International Women's Year of 1975 had provoked a great deal of discussion in New Zealand, culminating in the *Report of a Select Committee on Women's Rights* (1975) which stated that since responsibility for perpetuating traditional stereotypes of men and women lay with education, it followed "that the education system could be used with effect to break down these stereotypes and encourage a more enlightened view of the roles both sexes are capable of fulfilling" (p. 72).

In November 1975 a conference on women and education was sponsored jointly by the International Women's Year Committee and the Department of Education, and co-convened by Bill Renwick. Participants included Judith Aitken and Maris O'Rourke — who would each subsequently join the educational bureaucracy — and educators Jane Ritchie, Geraldine McDonald, Charmaine Pountney and Mere Penfold of the MWWL. Its report, *Education and Equality of the Sexes* (1976), made the following recommendations:

- (a) In 1976 Government should decide on a policy for human development and relationships in primary schools and pilot programmes should begin in those schools where staff and community wish to see them introduced. As soon as a policy decision is made, planning and action should begin to provide necessary resources and support for teachers involved.
  - (b) That a change should be made to that part of the primary school health education syllabus which states that there is no place in the primary school for group or class instruction in sex education.
- (p.23)

This report also urges the D-G to “give priority” to human development programmes. Renwick, who had been privy to the deliberations of this group, followed the release of the report with an explicit letter to Garfield Johnson.

I am writing to you on behalf of the Committee on Women and Education, of which I am co-convener. The Committee has asked me to advise you that a number of recommendations in the “Education and the Equality of the Sexes” report are relevant to your Committee on Health and Social Education. I would be grateful if your Committee would take note of these recommendations during its deliberations, if you have not already done so, and to bear them in mind when the report is being prepared.<sup>23</sup>

Despite this directive however the Johnson Report would offer neither clarity nor an unequivocal stance on feminist or gender issues.

Another submission to the Johnson Committee came from the Women’s Electoral Lobby of New Zealand (WEL), formed in 1975. This National Party initiative was a conservative response to the more active feminism of the times. Calling itself a non-party organisation — formed to encourage women to enter political life and “to act as a united force in promoting women’s issues in the political arena”<sup>24</sup> — WEL had a number of branches across the country but disappeared during the 1980s.

### ***The New Zealand Counselling and Guidance Association***

A group that did not make a submission to the Johnson Committee was the New Zealand Counselling and Guidance Association (NZCGA), formalized in 1974. Perhaps this was because of the presence on the Committee of Print and Wadsworth, both of whom had worked with Renwick on the development of a guidance and counselling policy, with Wadsworth becoming the first president of the NZCGA. At the time of the “Ross Report” the emergent NZCGA was mainly concerned with the establishment of the counsellors’ professional body, and with Departmental policy relating to recruitment and training. (Hermansson, 1999). Gary Hermansson chronicled the history of the Association, which later became

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<sup>23</sup> Letter from Renwick to Johnson June 1, 1976. (Author’s file)

<sup>24</sup> Women’s Electoral Lobby submission to the Johnson Committee, p. 1 (undated). (Author’s file)

the New Zealand Association of Counsellors, noting its interest in the ongoing work of the Johnson Committee.

The October 1977 Newsletter gave attention to the vexed issue of human relationships becoming a part of the school curriculum. This was in the lead-up period to the 'Report of the Committee on HSE' being released, and even at that stage opponents were vigorously trying to undermine its work by drawing the controversial dimension of sex education into the debate. The Newsletter stated that the then Minister of Education (Gandar) had made the issue of human relationships in schools one in which polarization was rapidly occurring. "Concerned parents on the one hand demanding its complete withdrawal and equally concerned parents on the other pleading for the schools to accept the challenge and meet the need for basic information in the area of human relationships". (Hermansson, 1999, p. 36)

As with some other groups who did not make formal submissions to the Johnson Committee, the NZCGA would enter the controversy after the Report's release.

Because the concerns of a range of citizens and groups were channelled to the Johnson Committee for consideration, an awareness of the enormity of its terms of reference began to be expressed both publicly and in-house.

## **REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

As previously stated, the Committee on Health and Social Education faced an unwieldy package in its terms of reference and one that also confused Committee members. The attenuated process of forming the Committee meant they had not able to meet frequently enough in the early stages to address these confusions. That the setting up of meetings was also difficult is revealed in a letter from the Secretary.

The meeting in April (29 and 30) has been canceled. This is partly for financial reasons; partly because a meeting with the Director General of Education is not possible until late in May. The meeting at the Marae in May will be delayed until later in the year. Our next meeting will be held at Rossmore House, Wellington, on 26, 27 and 28 May...The agenda for this meeting has not yet been finalised, but all members who undertook to



present papers at the April meeting will be called upon at some time during the three days.<sup>25</sup>

It was important that Renwick address this meeting to clarify the terms of reference. Ryder had already asked Johnson “as to whether we are on about moral education or health and physical fitness.” This request the Chairman repeated in a letter to Crawford, adding “It is pretty clear what the Minister wants us to do and I am sure the Director-General will make it even clearer.”<sup>26</sup> It was not at all clear to Ryder however, nor to members of the public, as a letter from the Auckland Federation of Parent Teachers’ Associations reveals.

At the October meeting of the Executive of the Auckland Federation of Parent Teacher Associations, your letter in reply to our letter of 8<sup>th</sup> September was tabled and discussed. By resolution this meeting decided that the terms of reference appeared to be nebulous and too wide for specific submissions.<sup>27</sup>

Peter McIntosh was becoming increasingly irked at the slow process of Committee deliberations and wrote to the Secretary regarding both the cancellation of the April meeting and the setting up of the regional working parties, revealing his frustration over progress and an attempt to assert some leadership.

I am concerned that the government should set up a Committee to report and advise without adequate funding. I agree that regional meetings are a way of making some progress but I do not see that even this way forward is open until our terms of reference have been more precisely determined...The May meeting of the Committee ought to have tackled its own terms of reference. This cannot be done by regional sub-groups. It seems to me therefore that the next step is for Garfield and yourself to meet the Director General and the Minister and thrash out the terms of reference so that they may be presented to the Committee in a workable form. At the moment they resemble a plateful of political hot potatoes rather than a work plan for a Committee.<sup>28</sup>

When his suggestions were not adopted McIntosh’s frustration increased. He was unlikely to be aware of the political antecedents of the Committee’s wide-ranging

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<sup>25</sup> Letter from Crawford to Johnson Committee members on March 31, 1976. (Author’s file)

<sup>26</sup> Letter from Johnson to Crawford on April 6, 1976. (Author’s file)

<sup>27</sup> Letter from Jan Gow, Secretary AFPTA to Secretary of Committee on HSE. 30.10.76 (Author’s files).

brief and wanted to proceed with the task. Bypassing Secretary, Chairman, and therefore protocol, McIntosh next wrote directly to the Minister of Education.

I have been disturbed to learn this week that our next meeting has had to be cancelled for lack of funds ... We are prepared to give our services without remuneration, and I for my part do so without any abatement of my normal work. Could not the government for its part make provision for the expenses essential for the Committee to proceed?<sup>29</sup>

The Minister's response was to thank McIntosh for his concern and advise him of the "need for financial restraint", the financial estimate for the Committee's activities having been made "last year on the basis of five two day meetings during the 1976-77 financial year...it is now proposed that the Committee undertake some of its deliberations as smaller regional working parties."<sup>30</sup> In May 1977 McIntosh offered his resignation to the Minister with the following words:

When you invited me to serve on this Committee I was most happy to accept. However, in so far as I had a contribution to make I feel that I made it at early meetings of the Committee when we were going over the ground for the first and second times. I do not feel that I have any further contribution to make.<sup>31</sup>

This statement also contains an indirect reference to Johnson's consultative leadership style and insistence on Māori protocol. Crawford recalled in interview that McIntosh left the Committee "in high dudgeon", providing an example of what can happen when a member of a Committee does not share its prevailing ethos. The decision of a dissenter to withdraw provides a solution in that it allows the Committee to maintain and reinforce its in-house ideology in the interests of hegemonic activity.

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<sup>28</sup> Letter from McIntosh to Crawford April 20, 1976. (author's files)

<sup>29</sup> Letter from McIntosh to Gandar, May 2, 1977. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Part 5, Box 855.

<sup>30</sup> Text of reply to McIntosh in a memorandum to the Minister from the Director General, June 11, 1976 Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Part 5, Box 855.

### ***More delay — Changes in Committee membership***

Submissions remained slow in arriving. A soliciting letter had been sent by Crawford in August 1976 “to the PPTA; the Secondary School Boards Associations; Federation of Parent Teacher Associations; New Zealand Educational Institute, Maori Women’s Welfare League, Pacific Island Council; Auckland University Students Association, the Religious Education Committee, and the National Executive of Teacher’s College Lecturers Association.”<sup>32</sup>

The regional working groups were required to recruit information and opinion, summarise and evaluate this in relation to the terms of reference and bring it back to the full Committee for further discussion. To this end they also sought oral submissions and addresses from invited speakers. These included SPCS and CPA and a range of education and health representatives (Johnson Report, pp. 113-114), among them Dr S. Mirams, Director of the Mental Health Division of the Department of Health, who wryly observed “ a note from Dr Collins reinforcing your secretary’s invitation to speak included information that your group has had ‘no trouble with sex’. It is probably unique for a psychiatrist to find himself confronting such a group!”<sup>33</sup> Extracting public opinion from submissions however was not always easy, as expressed by Crawford.

Gosh, but trying to process these submissions is a slow business. A few list their recommendations, but most imply them. I am now considering a full scale reshuffle, and will attempt a collation under such headings as: Phys Ed; Outdoor Ed; Sex Ed; Human Relationships; Social Ed; Drug Ed.

<sup>34</sup>

Towards the end of 1976 new members were appointed, and Crawford’s workload increased with each change. In January 1977 he wrote to Johnson:

In the last month (November-December 1976) the Minister has apparently appointed three new members – Ruth Cowell, John Te Rangihau and Dr Riseley. That he has done so (and when he did) suggests that he does not expect the Committee report by his original date, the end of the year... I think he would expect his new appointees to share in the Committee’s

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<sup>31</sup> Letter from McIntosh to Gandar. May 30, 1977. (Author’s file)

<sup>32</sup> Letter from Crawford to B. Webster, General Secretary, NZPPTA. August 25, 1976. (Author’s file)

<sup>33</sup> Address to Committee on HSE by S. Mirams on December 15, 1976. (author’s file)

<sup>34</sup> Letter from Crawford to Johnson, April 21, 1997. (Author’s file)

report and to be seen sharing in this thing... Would you consider calling a meeting? My other suggestion concerns the deadline you have set in relation to the amount of work still to be done. When we consider that the Committee couldn't really get down to the nitty-gritty until after we had met the director-general on 11 June [1976], we haven't done badly at all.

But we certainly won't have spent a year on our deliberations.<sup>35</sup>

Membership changes meant further delays since Johnson insisted that new members be familiarised with the discussions that had gone before. His aim was consensus and this meant going over previous ground. That a consensual report was produced by July 1977 was a considerable achievement, due not only to the facilitation of Secretary and Chairman and those chairing the three regional Committees, but also the commitment of all Committee members. Another letter from Crawford to Johnson, regarding the replacement of Alabaster, provides a further instance of the networking, of the policy community and its ongoing concern that the Committee should be seen to be nationally representative:

...could I offer the following suggestions? (a) A South Islander would help to keep the sub-Committees in balance numerically. (b) A Christchurch based person would help our grant to go further. Suggestions to meet (a) and (b)

1. Miss R. E. Heinz, Principal, Hagley High School. (This from Peter Macpherson. But Roz Heinz may be a bit committed with her new job, although her experience on the McCombs Committee would be valuable.)
2. Miss N. D. Clark, Burnside High School (this, too, from Peter Mac). Miss Clark had wide experience of running liberal studies programmes.
3. Mr. I. A. Todd, Secondary Teachers College. (He, as a teacher (PE) at Linwood High School, ran one of the first liberal studies programmes to my knowledge). Mind you, all this is a bit hypothetical anyway. Perhaps it will be for the Minister to decide.<sup>36</sup>

In the involvement of these potential members in liberal studies programmes it can be seen how well founded was the fear of the RR that the curriculum was already in the hands of 'secular humanists'. Roz Heinz was known as a strong

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<sup>35</sup> Letter from Crawford to Johnson., January 10, 1977. (Author's file)

<sup>36</sup> Letter from Crawford to Johnson, July 20, 1976 . (Author's file)

supporter of equality of opportunity for women<sup>37</sup>, and the other nominees had associations with the community of interest that comprised the liberal educational sector. It was however the more moderate Ruth Cowell who replaced Alabaster, and Crawford continued to duplicate and circulate all material, making sure that new members were informed of what had gone before. Early in 1977 Dallow returned from other commitments, replacing Don Hamilton who had worked conscientiously on his allotted tasks as revealed by his comment “I am currently working on Public Consensus of Concern for the Future [a submission]. I will get thru it OK but I must have been mad to select that one”.<sup>38</sup> A two-day meeting at Wellington on March 8 and 9, 1977, introduced the new members and considered submissions to date. As the Committee continued with its task however, the RR continued its vigilance.

## THE CPA LOBBIES POLITICIANS

In December 1976 Peter Macpherson, from within the CDU, signalled to Johnson that a lobby to the Minister had begun from the Religious Right in relation to the Johnson Committee.

Garfield – A quick note to tell you the ‘flack’ has commenced. The Concerned Parents Association has written to the Minister about the ‘lack of impartiality’ of the Committee on HSE as exemplified by Tom Ryder’s ‘humanist’ comments in Tablet and Zealandia and my name appearing in Ed Gazette as director of courses on (1) Health and Social education and (2) Human development and relationships next year!! They say the Committee is a whitewash – and the Dept. are already committed! Cheers, Peter.<sup>39</sup>

Politicians who were sympathetic to the Religious Right lobby included Trevor Young, also the President of SPCS, and the Minister of Social Welfare, Bert Walker, a regular guest speaker at meetings involving the CPA.<sup>40</sup> Another was the Minister of Housing, George Gair, who sent a memorandum to the Ministers

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<sup>37</sup> Heinz is listed in the Johnson Report as one of its visiting speakers.

<sup>38</sup> Letter to Crawford from Don Hamilton, January 19, 1977. (Author’s file)

<sup>39</sup> Note from Macpherson to Johnson December 24, 1976. (Author’s file)

<sup>40</sup> Information shared with the author by Martin and J. Viney during interview.

of Police and Education expressing his concern over a possible link between teachers espousing marijuana use, and their students' use of drugs.

A constituent of mine is convinced that there is a strong correlation between drug addiction by young people and the attitude amongst teachers in the schools they formally attended. I have no firm evidence of this nor has the constituent but he did set in train a line of thinking which I believe should be referred to my colleagues most directly concerned and if they think appropriate, for investigation. Perhaps there is a link between the instance of drug use and the attitude of the addictee's former teachers who have denigrated anti drug laws or the efforts by the Authorities to enforce them. If a survey or a study should show there is some correlation between addiction and the attitude of the addictee's former teachers, then it would give useful strength to those arguments calling for greater responsibility and leadership amongst teachers on such issues.<sup>41</sup>

The response from the Ministers of Housing and Police was to pass this letter on to the Minister of Education, who referred it to the D-G and on to Crawford, who sent it out to Johnson Committee members with other submissions. As with the Currie Report (Scott, 1996) but to a lesser degree, the Johnson Committee thus provided a structural mechanism for delaying a Departmental response to lobby groups, although, unlike the Currie Report, it did not put debate "on hold". Another example of such delaying strategy was the Minister's reply to a letter from the Family Life Education Council, the text of which Minister of Social Welfare, Bert Walker, had contributed to.

I have studied your recommendations with interest, noted the wide representative nature of your membership and the laudable aims of your Council. As you are doubtless aware I have set up a Committee on Health and Social Education...to advise me in this area...and will ensure that your recommendations are made known to this Committee.<sup>42</sup>

Such soothing assurances however continued to be regarded with suspicion by the CPA as it prepared its submissions to both the Royal Commission on CSA and the Johnson Committee. As will be shown in the next chapter, the CPA was trying to discover what influence the Department of Education might be exerting on the

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<sup>41</sup> Memo from George Gair to Ministers of Police and Education, February 27, 1976. (Author's file)

<sup>42</sup> Letter from the Minister of Education, to Miss G. McMillan, Chairperson, Family Life Education Council, July 15, 1977. (Author's file)

Royal Commission's recommendations. Since Minister Gandar was not revealing his Department's intentions it became more imperative for the CPA to seek allies among other politicians. This is a strategy used by the 'moral entrepreneur' that will be pursued further in Chapter Seven.

## **SUBMISSIONS IN MANY FORMATS**

All lobbying letters, from both proponents and opponents of curriculum reform, continued to be siphoned off to the Johnson Committee from the MPs to whom they were sent. One from the Minister of Health's recently formed Advisory Committee on Smoking and Health requested inclusion of factors related to smoking in the Committee's brief.<sup>43</sup> Other working parties sent summaries of their proceedings and recommendations. Letters directed to the Johnson Committee from other government Departments were treated as submissions. If the terms of reference had been a widely cast net, the same could be said of the sources from which information flowed into the Committee. The proportion of formally written and clearly stated submissions was less than the oral addresses and handwritten letters that covered a range of ideological positions.

### ***Submissions — The divergence of received views***

It is not possible to extract a succinct analysis of the views expressed in submissions from a reading of the Johnson Report. Some were made orally. The written ones varied in length, some taking only one page. From the total of 122 oral and written submissions listed on pages 108-109 of the Report, the researcher has been able to locate seventy-three, sixty-nine of which could be categorised into four themes relating to the terms of reference and the issue of sex education.

1. Those addressing the major part of their content to issues of physical health, nutrition, and/or fitness and related activities.
2. Those addressing the major part of their content to moral and values education, in relation to opposition to sex education.

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<sup>43</sup> Letter from Secretary of Advisory Committee on Smoking and Health. 29.06.77. (Author's files).

3. Those supporting, in principle, the teaching of human development and relationships, including sex education.
4. Those offering tentative support to the teaching of human development but requesting specific guidelines and conditions, such as appropriate teacher training and the parent's right to withdraw the child.

### **Theme one — Physical health and well being**

Of the sixty-nine submissions examined, the greatest number (27, 39%) were on the theme of physical health and well being. The Department of Health submission was long and detailed, with supporting statistics, compiled by Committee member Max Collins. As with other submissions on health issues, it ranged across the topics of drugs, cancer, suicide, heart disease, obesity, nutrition, dental care, dietary issues, and back and skeletal care. Nine submissions, including one from physical education teachers and another from students at the University of Otago's School of Physical Education, focussed on the role of physical education, stressing the benefits of a curriculum that included exercise and a range of outdoor recreational pursuits.

Of the submissions focussing on drug abuse most saw this as involving 'hard' addictive drugs such as heroin. A repeated fear was that drug education could lead to experimentation and increased use. Opinions on the use of cannabis however were divided in an era when its recreational use was increasing. Only one submission focused on alcohol abuse, although some made passing reference to its 'effects', and 'social consequences'. (Johnson Report, p. 7). As a result, no doubt of the Health Department's concerns, the Johnson Committee gave this issue some consideration.

It was apparent that many people saw the need for education about the effects of misuse of liquor... but not about liquor itself. Perhaps it is symptomatic of our society that the effect should be identified as a matter requiring education attention while the cause is disregarded. (Johnson Report, p. 9)



### ***Theme two — A need for moral and values education, with opposition to sex education***

There were nineteen submissions in this category examined by the researcher (27%). These included five group submissions and fourteen from individuals, each of the latter group reflecting the lobby of the Religious Right. Most of these were one-to-two-page handwritten letters, some expressing the fear that views of parents about what their children should be taught would not be given due weight. Others stated that health and social programmes were unnecessary since the primary function of school was to promote academic achievement. The main theme of this group was the responsibilities and rights of parents in the business of 'primary socialisation' of children and adolescents. Twelve submissions contained paragraphs identical in content to those that had appeared in CPA newsletters and writings. Typical of this pro forma material was the following passage.

The Primary School Syllabus Health Education statement that there is no place in the primary school for group or class instruction in sex education, was based upon sound psychological principles which are as valid now as they were in 1945.<sup>44</sup>

These letters also used phrases from the writings of Lorand (1965, 1970) on the "dangers of explicit materials" in sex education which had also been published in the *CPA Newsletter*. As will be discussed in Chapter Seven, the submission of the CPA to the Johnson Committee was almost identical to the one it had made to the Royal Commission on CSA.

### ***Theme three — Support for the teaching of human development, including sex education***

Submissions in this category totalled sixteen (23%) of the sixty-nine categorised. Most were from national organisations including the FPA, NZEI, PPTA, the New Zealand Federation of School Committees, and the Federation of PTAs. This group of submissions was unequivocally supportive of the principle that human development and relationships, including sex education, be included

in the state school curriculum. The Johnson Report summarized the tensions between submissions in themes two and three.

Finally, there emerged from nearly all the submissions concern about education for family life. The general consensus was that inadequate attention was being given by schools to education on all the facets of family life... Education about marriage, parenthood, child rearing, home economics and the changing role of women were identified by many as being vital for all children... Sex education provoked the greatest number of detailed submissions. Views were polarized... those who opposed sex education were very firm in their beliefs... they also feared that teachers could impose their own values on children, and that some might present abnormal and deviant behaviour as normal, or practices such as abortion and contraception as desirable, contrary to the wishes and beliefs of parents... On the other hand, the majority view was for compulsory education on matters of sex and related subjects to be properly the matter for the school. However the point was strongly made that such education must form part of a carefully prepared social education programme based on cultural and moral values and taught by specially selected and trained teachers. The support for this view was very wide and included church, parent, medical and teaching groups. (Johnson Report, p. 10)

#### ***Theme four — Support, with reservation, for the principle of teaching human development in schools***

Seven of the available submissions (10%) fell in this category, but they represented the opinions of thousands of citizens. Four were from women's organisations with contributing subcommittees, and consultative strategies for ascertaining membership opinion, the biggest being the NCW. Copies of NCW's draft submission to the Johnson Committee had circulated throughout its national network of affiliated groups.<sup>45</sup> NCW supported the move towards outdoor education, the value of education that promoted physical fitness throughout life, and programmes for students on the effects of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. These matters of physical health were dealt with in two pages, the remaining three being

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<sup>44</sup> This sentence featured in fifteen of the submissions examined by the author, and is also used in the 1976 CPA publication, written by Martin Viney, *Home and School: Cooperation or Conflict?* (p. 6).

<sup>45</sup> NCW Circular No. 194 (September 1976)

given to the topic of social education in which NCW recommended that programmes allowing aspects of sex education approved by the school community be extended to the primary school level.

It is essential that social education in its widest sense be provided within school as it allows for and promotes healthy and frank discussions, which may not be possible at home. Ideally social education should be part of the total on-going learning situation not assigned to a special time/place/person. Programmes on social education, developed to suit the particular community's needs, but based on a broad national pattern, should commence in primary schools.<sup>46</sup>

The NCW stressed the importance of consulting parents in preparing programmes and recommended pre-service teacher education for the task of social and sex education. The NCW affiliated groups also made their own submissions such as that of the MWWL supporting sex education in primary schools "in consultation with the school community", and another expressing similar views from the NZFUW.

The N.Z. Federation of University Women (with a membership of more than 2000) believes that schools should support and supplement the teaching of the parents in subjects loosely termed "social education" (of which we consider sex education to be one small part) but should not take over this role. However when parents fail in this aspect of their children's education, schools must take over by default.<sup>47</sup>

A more conservative statement came from the Women's Electoral Lobby which found the Johnson Committee's terms of reference "not traditionally the province of our education system".<sup>48</sup> The WEL submission makes interesting reading for both its circumlocution and equivocation. It was an attempt by a conservative women's group wanting to appear liberal in the climate of the 1970s, but aware of the political realities under the new National Government.

The points for this Committee to consider are delicate. They are not what are traditionally taught in schools. They are recognition of society's concern that its young are not coping with the problems of twentieth

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<sup>46</sup> Submission by the NCW to the Committee on Health and Social Education, November 29, 1976. (Author's file)

<sup>47</sup> Submission to the Committee on Social and Health Education from the New Zealand Federation of University Women, p 1 (undated). (Author's file)

<sup>48</sup> Submission to the Committee on Social and Health Education from the Women's Electoral Lobby (Taranaki branch) p. 1 (undated). (Author's file).

century living. These areas – drugs, alcohol, tobacco, social education for example are not absolutely agreed upon by society. The conclusion can be drawn that a substantial majority of parents see no need for change. The Liberal Christian tradition promotes tolerance as a virtue...the point is that any national programme could weaken the support between school and home, which is the principle of any educational system as evinced by the survival of PTA's and School Committees in the 1970s when the comfort of one's television set has to be sacrificed to attend meetings. We strongly urge decentralization as a solution...Let schools work out their own programmes with their own Committees [because] (a) Anarchy will not result (b) Schools are accountable to their community (c) Healthy growth is flexibility to meet challenges, to resolve new problems. Auckland's adolescent drug, alcohol problem is quite different to Ohura District High School's and the methods should reflect these different needs.<sup>49</sup>

Another group expressing cautious support for human development programmes in schools was the Association of Anglican Women of New Zealand. AAWNZ had 17,000 members, its main objective being "to promote and safeguard Christian Family Life". Each of the seven Anglican Dioceses had a Social Problems Committee whose submissions were collated and sent to the Johnson Committee. The AAWNZ submission repeated the substance of its previous submission to the Royal Commission on CSA.

The booklet *Human Development and Relationships in the School Curriculum* ["Ross Report"] is to be commended as a concise and masterly report, providing a sound basis for discussion, and with specific amendments, for its eventual implementation. Our members throughout the country voice a unanimous and overwhelming concern that those who teach human relationships...must have certain qualities as well as special qualifications. They must be carefully selected and adequately trained. A high percentage of our groups requested the education of parents as part of the whole scheme. The scheme should be an integral part of the syllabus and of the normal educational process. It is apparent that there is a dearth of school counsellors. The A.A.W. has strongly supported the implementation of the proposed human relationships and development course in the school curriculum. To the specific question as to whether

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<sup>49</sup> *ibid* Submission to the Committee on Social and Health Education from the Women's Electoral Lobby (Taranaki branch) pp. 6-8 (undated). (Author's file).

counselling on the use of contraceptives should be available to young teenagers, 755 [members polled] said 'yes' and 56 said 'no'.<sup>50</sup>

This AAWNZ request for parent education was subsequently reflected in the recommendations of the Johnson Report (see Appendix). This group of submissions represented an expression of second-wave feminism, made to a predominantly male Committee whose members were likely also to be struggling with issues raised by feminism. This is illustrated by a retrospective comment made by Johnson, regarding his attendance at a meeting of the Executive of the NCW relation to their submission.

It was an eye opening experience. I had never before been in the company of a group of such highly articulate, politically aware, educated women, talking about teenage pregnancy, venereal disease and rape, in such a matter of fact manner. (Johnson, Int.)

A feature of the submissions from women's organisations was the emphasis placed on the need for education for parenthood.

### ***Other issues***

The remaining four of the seventy-three available submissions were from individuals addressing single concerns such as traffic and driver education, the need for law and legal issues within the curriculum, and consumer education because of the "cynical, exploitive nature of advertising directed towards the young".<sup>51</sup> The Johnson Committee's mode of analysis of submissions was to read each submission "with great care" (Johnson Report, p. 9) and to summarise the main points for discussion within the topic working parties. There was no statistical analysis of submission content, in the final report.

## **DRAFTING THE REPORT**

Mindful of the fact that time was running out Garfield Johnson directed the topic subgroups to begin summarising the Committee's consensus on each issue as soon as it was reached, and the drafting of recommendations became part

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<sup>50</sup> Submission to the Committee on Health and Social Education by the Association of Anglican Women of New Zealand (undated). (Author's file)

of the agenda of national and regional meetings. Crawford recalled that these were then drawn together in a summary draft rewritten by the Chairman.

Garfield Johnson virtually wrote the whole of Part 1. We discussed it and most were given to us from various sources, but he did the actual writing. I did much of Part 2... this was the PE and the outdoor Ed. and those sort of topics...although the sex education bit...well [pause] it was a real [long pause] everyone made contributions. (Crawford, Int.)

These drafts, along with copies of submissions were sent to the D-G. By February 1977 drafts on guidance networks, social education, moral and religious education, and physical education had been passed on to the Minister for his approval.<sup>52</sup> Further writing was done at a Departmental in-service course, "Human Development and Relationships", held at Hogben House in Christchurch during February 21-25, 1977, which members of the Committee attended, indicating again the close links between the CDU policy community and the Johnson Committee. The Department had anticipated that the Committee would operate for a 12-month period. However a six-month extension until August 1977 was granted by the Minister. There were four reasons why this was necessary. First, changes in Committee membership had delayed the process. Second, submissions were still trickling in although the deadline had past. Third, the ongoing CPA lobby, which was targeting sympathetic MPs and the Prime Minister, meant that the Minister of Education had to ensure that all public representations reached the Committee. Finally, the presentation in the House of the CSA Bill, scheduled for early 1977, had been delayed and it was hoped that the Johnson Committee would be able to consider these outcomes before finalising its own report. In mid-January 1977 Johnson contacted the D-G requesting an extension. A letter from Crawford to D. J. Francis, Acting Superintendent of the CDU and official liaison person for the Committee, discussed this and budget concerns.

I understand that Mr. Renwick considered an extension until August 1977 a reasonable one, and he will raise this matter with the Minister. Unfortunately Garfield did not mention finance to the Director-General, and it is partly in this regard that I write. If the extension of time is granted, and if the new members are to be actively involved, a grant to

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<sup>51</sup> M. K. Reddy, submission to the Johnson Committee (undated). (Author's files)

cover the cost of some meetings in the new financial year will be needed. In June (1976) the director-general offered to finance additional money for travel and accommodation, but by careful husbanding the Committee has not had to ask for this assistance. I hope that this fact will strengthen our hand in this application.<sup>53</sup>

The Minister approved the extension, the additional grant was forthcoming, and Crawford continued to husband and account for the budget. Both Johnson and Print, who had a particular interest in art,<sup>54</sup> wanted the final report to be presented in an attractive format, so they jointly chose a painting by contemporary New Zealand artist, Milan Mrkusich, for the cover and peppered the report with pictures of children at different age levels in a variety of educational settings because “we didn’t want it to look like a government report” (Johnson, Int.). A collage of these is shown in Illustration 22.

As a guide to how schools might translate the report’s recommendations into practice, a sample programme of integrated curriculum topics, covering the major themes of the Report’s recommendations was produced as a foldout supplement to the report (see Appendix). This *Planner’s Guide* was a separate insert but bore no text to indicate its relationship to the Johnson Report. Its fate therefore was to be taken out of context, lost, and generally overlooked throughout the controversy that followed.

By the end of their task Johnson Committee members had considered 122 written submissions, heard from 47 invited speakers, including the CPA and SPCS and “had read scores of books, papers, brochures, reports and extracts” (Johnson Int.). Committee members had met in regional sub-Committees, lived together as a group for several days at Wellington, Christchurch and Auckland, and for three days on a Marae. Such doses of physical proximity probably served to reinforce the influence of the Chairman, providing the conditions necessary to incubate a consensus. Meanwhile the RR lobby was gaining in organisation and in apprehension of what the Johnson Report might contain.

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<sup>52</sup> Letter from Crawford to Renwick, February 9, 1977. (Author’s file)

<sup>53</sup> Letter from Crawford to Francis, January 19, 1977. (Author’s file)

<sup>54</sup> As Principal of Penrose High Murray Print hung the school corridors with original paintings to expose his students to art, a practice he continued as Principal of Auckland Secondary Teacher’s College.

# Growing, Sharing, Learning.

THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE  
ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL EDUCATION

Department of Education 1977

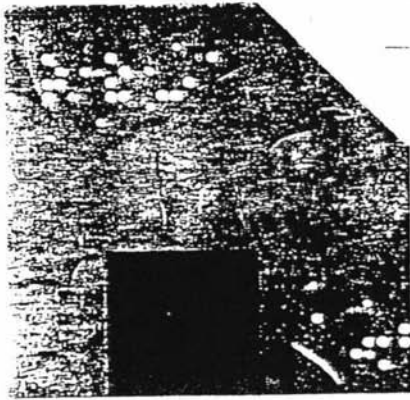


Illustration 22 - A selection of the photographs used in the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education, *Growing, Sharing, Learning* (1977). These indicate the life-span perspective taken by the Committee and the range of community activities discussed in the Report.



As the deadline approached Peter Macpherson's role was to supervise the Report's production. In a note to the chairman he gives advice that provides insight into the preparation of governmental reports.

The McCombs [Report] was sent back for a pruning – was pruned to about 190 pages and prints out – with photographs and extras to 112 pages. To my mind this is more than enough. I would really hope that our effort is a slimmer report. Appendices are minimal in any recent reports... The rationale is that they are for the Committee. However one ploy that has been used (by EDC) is to spawn some additional slim extras (e.g. Current Issues in Education)...You could suggest to the Minister in your letter of transmittal that some very good material could be made available in this way.<sup>55</sup>

As he did with *Parent-School Communication* (1973), Johnson exercised firm editorial control. The underlying cohesion in the report's discourse was to be the values based school model developed at Hillary College (see Figure 3). The structure of the Report, being a patchwork of issues reflecting its wide terms of reference, had given the Committee some thought. During the process of final drafting, Macpherson expressed some of his concerns over structuring the text for reader clarity.

Garfield, after a week, which gave me time to cogitate and think of details, I have some major worries about the report as in drafts. E.g. 1. Recommendations should arise naturally from text 2. We should either stick to major principles in recommendations or spell it out – we mix both at the moment it seems. 3. the “equality of opportunity” bit – where does it fit? Good stuff but what way do we use it? Do we make recommendations from it? 4. Should major chapters like “moral, spiritual and values education” have a lead in overview by way of introduction, and then get into the discussion, and how much discussion? 5. There seems to be different approaches in each section. This is understandable because we have handled them in different ways at different times.<sup>56</sup>

The dilemma over the “equality of opportunity bit” is subsequently reflected in the Report's ambiguous statements on gender issues, despite the D-G's directive to the Committee to consider carefully the implications of *Education and the*

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<sup>55</sup> Note from Macpherson to Johnson, July 22, 1977. (Author's file)

<sup>56</sup> Note from Macpherson to Johnson (undated). (Author's file)

*Equality of the Sexes*. In another note to the chairman Macpherson referred to the lift-out *Planner's Guide*.

I believe that we should substitute, as necessary, words, phrases etc that are in body of report for equivalent idea on this chart. This 'planner's guide' can then be a more specific summary. If you agree please indicate and I'll try and do this as your writing comes off press.<sup>57</sup>

Such presentation dilemmas reflect the magnitude of the task. There was still opportunity for comment and input at this stage by all Committee members, to whom these final draft chapters were submitted, with the comment "Garfield asks that any big blues be pointed out soonest. Transmittal day draws near".<sup>58</sup> The pressure of the approaching deadline may also have contributed to the desire of Committee members not to present challenges to the text of the report.

The Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education was handed formally to the Minister of Education, Les Gandar, on August 17, 1977, ending the first phase of the controversy that had been characterised by commitment and industry on the part of the Committee, apprehension and lobbying by the Religious Right, and submissions from the public representing a range of agendas and views.

## SUMMARY

It has been shown in this chapter how the policy community used the Johnson Committee as a mechanism to pursue its hegemonic agenda of curriculum change. However the widening range of social issues and legislative response that occupied citizens in the 1970s meant it was no longer possible to constrain the parameters of debate. Nor was it possible to ensure that submissions reached the Committee through just one carefully controlled channel, as with previous Committees. Whereas the proactive feminist lobby had succeeded in penetrating the policy community, the lobby of the NCW used its historic process of national consultation. In contrast, the CPA vigorously lobbied sympathetic members of parliament, using interdepartmental routes to the Minister of

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<sup>57</sup> Note from Macpherson to Johnson, July 26, 1977. (Author's file)

<sup>58</sup> Letter to all Committee on HSE members from Crawford on July 27, 1977.

Education as the contiguous CSA Bill shaped up as a conscience vote in the House.

Despite Gandar's assurances to his conservative parliamentary colleagues, Frank Gill and Bert Walker, that the Johnson Committee members had been appointed as individuals, it was obvious to all who cared to examine their backgrounds that they also represented some powerful liberal lobby groups, as shown in Figure 4.

The RR lobby, still angry that the deliberations of the 1973 Ross Committee had been 'in-house', was determined to have the Johnson Committee held more accountable. To this end SPCS and the CPA had begun to hint at conspiracy regarding the relationship between the criteria for selection of Committee members and the potential for departmentally predetermined outcomes. This contributed to the climate of apprehension, intensified by the Johnson Committee's contiguity with the CSA Bill.

While Chairman Johnson pursued his own bicultural agenda in his mentoring of Committee members into Māori culture, this style of leadership style did not suit everyone, as shown in the departure of McIntosh. Those who remained on the Committee represented a liberal-minded community of interest and their Report was the consensus of an educated middle-class group. Given the breadth of the terms of reference and the historic social tensions surrounding the issues of sex and values education, it was inevitable that the Johnson Report would catalyse further debate. As has been shown the number of citizens represented by groups such as NCW who favoured of sex education was considerable, but the vigorous and direct lobbying of the RR meant that the latter would have more constituency impact.

This chapter has provided some insight into the workings of an unwieldy Department of Education committee, and its positioning within the policy community and the political structure of the times. The next chapter will examine the concurrent activity, objectives and political positioning of the Concerned Parents' Association, the main RR lobby group antagonistic to the Johnson Report in the ensuing controversy.



## THE LOBBY OF THE CONCERNED PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

The most significant and influential lobby group throughout the controversy over the Johnson Report was the Concerned Parents' Association (CPA). There were other conservative lobbies but the concerns of the CPA were sufficiently wide-ranging to recruit support from citizens already disaffected by changes in the education system. Although the apprehension that mobilised the CPA and others was grounded in Judeo-Christian beliefs, a concern with preserving the family's right to teach values occurs across most cultures. The ideology of the Religious Right, as defined in Chapter Two, however lays claims to its Biblical foundational truths having supremacy over all others. It is argued here that the CPA must be aligned with the Religious Right, on the basis of its activities throughout the 1970s and its statements and policy as published in its monthly *Newsletter*.<sup>1</sup> The Department of Education's centre-periphery model of curriculum development had created a process that allowed the CDU to challenge the cultural capital of monocultural middle-class values. It was a challenge encompassing issues of socialisation, values teaching and thus inevitably the issue of sex education.

This chapter will show how the lobby of the CPA in the New Zealand controversy was a pivotal one in relation to the outcomes of the Johnson Report's recommendations. After a brief description of the range of conservative-right lobby groups in New Zealand in the 1970s, the formation of the CPA will be outlined. The American sex education controversy will next be revisited, as it relates to the methods and arguments of the CPA in its attempts to curb the hegemonic activity of the Department of Education. Finally, the concurrent activities of the CPA over the Contraception, Sterilization and Abortion Bill and the Johnson Report will be examined. In relation to theory on moral panic it will

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<sup>1</sup> The Concerned Parents' Association *Newsletter* was published on a monthly and sometimes two-monthly basis, ranging from four to ten pages. It was registered at the Post Office Headquarters in Wellington as a magazine, printed by Outreach Press, and available for 10 cents a copy or by yearly subscription. It was published from 1973 into the mid- 1980s. A collection is held in the Massey University library.

be shown how key members of the CPA executive assumed some of the characteristics of the 'moral entrepreneur' and used their newsletter as a means of creating a 'boundary crisis'.

## **CONSERVATIVE LOBBIES OF THE 1970S**

Within New Zealand in the 1970s there were a number of groups lobbying for the retention of traditional Christian values as espoused by churches having a Bible-based ministry. Some lobbies had a specific focus such as abortion and pornography. Others had a raft of concerns. All were interested in the role of the state school as a secondary agent of socialisation, and this inevitably involved some focus on the place of values teaching. They included the Society for the Protection of Community Standards (SPCS), the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC), the Family Rights Association (FRA), the Educational Development Association (EDA) and the Otago/Southland Federation of Catholic Home and School Associations. Abortion, violence and sex on television programmes, suggestive media advertising, neglect of the 3 R's in the school curriculum, the ex-nuptial birthrate and marijuana were among the issues that evoked public comment from the leaders of these groups, and letters to newspapers from their supporters. A brief description of the main groups provides further background for their subsequent contribution to the controversy.

### ***The Society for the Promotion of Community Standards***

SPCS, which claimed a membership of 22,000 by 1978, was led by Patricia Bartlett, a former Catholic nun, pictured in Illustration 23 below, who left her teaching order to become a morals campaigner. From the Freudian paradigm Bartlett argued that pornography and obscenity served "to provoke a kind of sexual regression. Pleasure derived from pornography is neurotic and infantile... a masturbatory exercise of the imagination."<sup>2</sup> Bartlett was an indefatigable campaigner for stricter censorship, regularly interviewed on radio and television. Members of SPCS were often also involved in the anti-abortion protests of

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<sup>2</sup> Bartlett quoted in "No bed of roses for porn fighter". Obituary for Patricia Bartlett in the *Sunday Star Times*, November 12, 2000, p. C7.

SPUC. That the SPCS was also a political lobby is shown by the fact that its President was the Labour Member of Parliament for Hutt, Trevor Young. In interview, Jean Viney, the CPA Secretary, stated that it was Bartlett who alerted her to “offensive books” in New Zealand such as *Down Among The Plum Trees* (Taylor, 1976), against which SPCS had laid charges of pornography with the Indecent Publications Tribunal. Jean Viney recalled that at the time of its formation CPA rejected a suggestion from Patricia Bartlett that it become the Christchurch branch of the SPCS, “because she was a single lady and this was a parental issue” (J. Viney Int., August 8, 1999). This was probably a wise decision since Bartlett, had become a target of newspaper cartoonists and therefore easily ridiculed by those with opposing views. However the decision not to team with SPCS was likely also to have been influenced by the CPA’s wish not to be too closely identified by the public as allied with either the conservative-right Catholic lobby or one single cause.



Patricia Bartlett . . . crusader.

**Illustration 23 – Patricia Bartlett, founder of the Society for the Promotion of Community Standards. This picture of Miss Bartlett during the 1970s was published with her obituary in the *New Zealand Herald* on November 11, 2000.**

***The Family Rights Association, the Community Organisation for Moral Education, and the Education Development Association***

The Family Rights Association was formed in 1973 in the aftermath of the “Ross Report”. Its spokesman was Dr. H. P. Dunn, a papal knight and co-founder of SPUC. Within New Zealand’s small population it was predictable that those with strong conservative-right convictions would support more than one group having the same ideological objectives. At the 1976 conference of the

FRA, Dunn's address explained the "precipitating" reason for founding the movement as being the National Government's 1972 budget which "cut out tax deductions for dependent children and doubled the family benefit". The effect of this, he stated, was societal pressure to avoid childbearing, as well as "family suffering through a current diabolical drive to destroy [children's] characters through the medium of drink, drugs and sex" (cited in Bonasich, 1979, p 44). This recital of social ills indicates the overlapping concerns of conservative citizens. Both SPCS and FRA endorsed the line of reasoning promulgated by a former inspector of secondary schools, David Elliot-Hogg who had written and published pamphlets on moral education and promoted his own Christian values education programme since the 1960s. (Elliot-Hogg, 1978a, 1978b). Weir (2001) described his debate with the Department of Education over the content and form of a moral curriculum appropriate to state schools. Elliot-Hogg drew together the core of a federation of groups known as the Community Organisation for Moral Education (COME) which directed a cohesive lobby against the Education Department's liberalising of the curriculum. SPCS and the FRA allied with COME, as did the small but vocal Southland based EDA — one of the groups that had heckled Phil Amos at the Invercargill meeting on the "Ross Report". These groups also affiliated with the CPA which gradually surpassed them in membership and organisational capacity.

## **THE CONCERNED PARENTS' ASSOCIATION**

The CPA began with the initiative of an English couple, Jean and Martin Viney, who settled in Christchurch, one of New Zealand's more conservative and mono cultural cities, not long before the publication of the "Ross Report". A former RAF pilot, Martin Viney taught science at Christchurch Boys' High School and he and his wife began to note with alarm that state education trends in New Zealand had some parallels with events in Britain of which they had not approved.

We had not long been in New Zealand and we could see the start here of all the things that had been proved not to have worked in Britain and Europe — radical feminists and the pro-abortion lobby. They were trying to destroy marriages and the traditional family. (J.Viney, Int.)



The immediate catalyst for the formation of the CPA was a comic, *Too Great a Risk*, published as a sex education resource by the British FPA, and based loosely on the plot of the Judy Blume teenage novel, *Forever*. Circulated also in America, it was reprinted by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) and distributed throughout New Zealand secondary schools. *Too Great a Risk*, reproduced here as Illustration 24, is significant to the controversy for the fact that it was copied and circulated to members of parliament by the CPA to alert them to the 'conspiracy' that existed between the Family Planning Association and the Department of Education. By 1974, a year after it began, the CPA had branches in Auckland, Rotorua, Christchurch and Dunedin. By the time the Johnson Report was published in 1977 it had added groups in Hamilton, Wellington, Tauranga, Wairarapa, Palmerston North, Hawkes Bay and Browns Bay. Its channel of communication was its *Newsletter*, each edition of which stated "CPA is run by parents, for parents: we seek to encourage parents to take their own informed action to further the interests of their own and the nation's children". It was the *Newsletter* that would provide the basis for such "informed action".

**Illustration 24 (see over) — The comic that provided the catalyst for the formation of the CPA which circulated it to 3000 school Committees and Boards of Governors in 1974. *Too Great a Risk* was first published by the British FPA and reprinted by SIECUS and NZCER.**

# TOO GREAT A RISK!

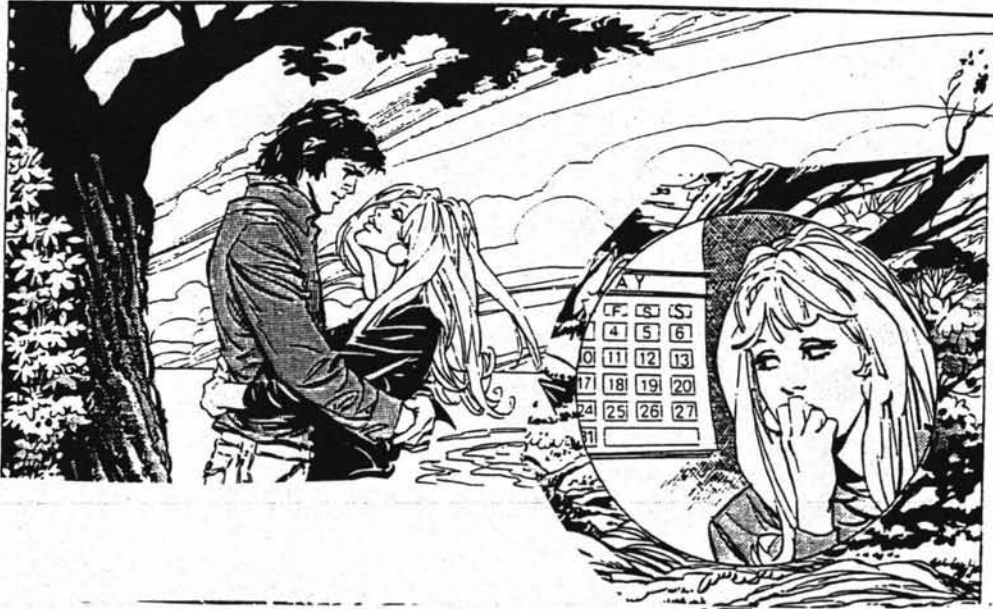


Illustration 23 - The comic that provided the catalyst for the formation of the CPA which circulated it to 3000 school committees and Boards of Governors in 1974. *Too great a risk* was first published by the British FPA and by SIECUS, reprinted in NZCER Set. 74.



Referring to the “Ross Report” Jean Viney commented:

We realized that the whole thrust of the effort was to remove the restrictions on [sex education] class instruction in primary schools. They wanted to get sex education in so they could get contraceptive advice in. The same thing had been happening in Britain with the Planned Parenthood Federation. There were financial incentives from the rubber and pharmaceutical industries to introduce contraceptive advice. (J. Viney, Int.)

The CPA regularly stated in its *Newsletter* that its aims were grounded in Articles 16 (3) and 26(3) of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which “asserted the family as the fundamental unit of society, entitled to protection by the state, and the rights of parents to chose the kinds of education received by their children”. It was, it asserted, formed:-

1. To affirm parents’ rights (and if necessary to press for legislation to establish these rights) to determine what is taught to their children and to enable parents to be actively involved in educational matters directly affecting their children:.
2. To resist the introduction into schools kindergartens and playcentres of all questionable teaching materials, or discussions in connection with human development, sex, personal relationships, morals, religion, the family unity and social change.
3. To inform parents of important educational developments and current trends in education.
4. To help parents to protect their children from the permissive influences in society, particularly when these are reflected in the school curriculum.

It can be seen from this that its aims were from the outset both political and all-encompassing. By April 1975 the CPA *Newsletter* was asking members for donations towards the \$500 it needed for an advertising campaign against the “Ross Report”. Martin Viney had been “much influenced by a book by Roland Huntford on the ‘new totalitarians’, which saw liberal trends as evidence of subversive activity aimed at mind control of the population” (M. Viney, Int. September 13, 1999).<sup>3</sup> It followed that New Zealand, being a small country and vulnerable to such trends, “needed a wake-up call”. To the CPA executive the

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<sup>3</sup> Dr. Viney was unable to locate this book but Huntford was quoted in the CPA *Newsletter* of July/August, 1979 as having written: “Education is one of the most important agents for changing society ... The new curriculum has departed from imparting fundamental knowledge. Its purpose is to create desirable social attitudes”.



enemy was the secular humanism emergent in current curriculum trends and papers such as the PPTA's *Education in Change* (1969). Its more immediate face was the FPA.

As we looked into it we became interested in critiquing the moral education aspects of the [Ross] report. Underpinning the philosophy was secular humanism — diametrically opposed to the Christian philosophy. The humanists said the battle for the minds of tomorrow goes on in the classroom. The humanists, the Family Planning Association, the feminists, all wanted to get into the schools and proselytise. Teachers were not trained to be social engineers to mop up problems. Why assume they were going to be suitable mentors for the social and sexual development of children? (M. Viney, Int.)

The Vineys began to compile documentation to support their position. They formed a local network that included Peter Clements who became the CPA president, and established links with the leaders of the text book censorship campaign in America. Since they would subsequently adopt some of the strategies of these campaigns a further detour into the American scene is necessary here.

## **AMERICAN STRATEGIES AND EXPERTS**

The tensions in America have been described by Hottois and Milner (1975) whose book focuses on two specific sex-education controversies, one in Anaheim County, California, the other in the Midwest's Statetown. Both are relevant to the role of the CPA.

In California the issue of sex education simmered from 1962 with complaints over the screening of a film in schools, and flared during 1968 over the topic of masturbation in the County's sex education programme.

Action was begun against the programme's director and the district superintendent of education. The County's media took a strong antisex education editorial position supported by leadership from within the California Citizens Committee. Hottois and Milner describe this Committee, formed to promote Barry Goldwater's presidential candidacy, as a "rigidly ideological group that took stands not only on sex education and school policy but issues in other areas" (p.

90). It also targeted the basis of schools' decision-making authority, and succeeded in replacing liberal school boards and education authorities with ones that "revolved around fundamentalist conservative ideology" (p 75). In this outcome, Hottois and Milner suggest, Anaheim's "schoolmen contributed significantly to their own defeat by neglecting bureaucratic methods of conflict resolution in favour of the public arena" (p. 90). As with the Anaheim lobby the New Zealand CPA campaign had the three key elements of a political lobby — policy, objectives and leadership.

Another controversy arose in 1967 in the Midwest American city of Statetown when a teacher asked his seventh grade students to submit questions about sex and family life "to elicit topics for discussion" (Hottois & Milner, p. 80). The teacher subsequently typed up the students' questions using the peer group's vocabulary and distributed them to parents for discussion, with an outcome that might have been predicted.

All hell broke loose. For several days a standard greeting in Statetown was 'Have you seen the sex questions?' Discussion... was especially intense within the Tuesday Morning Club, a group of women with mostly conservative leanings who gathered weekly at each other's homes to talk about the schools. If there was leadership in the anti sex-education forces, it emerged from this group. (p. 80)

As with the CPA this leadership came from concerned parents whose subsequent lobbying strategies included public meetings, petitioning to have the programme discontinued, and legal action taken against the teacher, the School and State Superintendents and the Board of Education, to force termination of schools' existing programmes. Hottois & Milner contrast the Statetown events with the controversy in Anaheim, concluding that whereas Statetown "involved questions of authority" the Anaheim conflict involved "questions of ideology which came to involve basic questions of authority" (p. 87). Within the New Zealand controversy ideology and authority would come together in the person of the Minister of Education whose job it was to make the final decisions on sex education.

In America the main target of the conservative fundamentalists was the school resourcing work of SIECUS. Among its most vocal opponents were a Texan couple, Mel and Norma Gabler, prominent anti-sex education campaigners

of the 1960s who formed an organization called Educational Research Associates (ERA). One objective of ERA was to supply the Religious Right lobbies with statistics and 'expert' information that could be used to counter the theory being promulgated by liberal teachers. The Gablers stated that public schools were on a crusade to censor from texts the Judeo-Christian virtues of family affection, respect, work and achievement, and that "because schools teach children that there are no moral absolutes the result is rising sexual promiscuity, vandalism, drug abuse, thefts, assaults, drunken driving and suicides" (Gabler & Gabler, 1985, p. 99). During 1977 Norma Gabler made a speaking tour of New Zealand explaining the lobby methods used by ERA to CPA members and urging New Zealanders to undertake similar activities. Gabler fuelled the CPA's allegations of Departmental conspiracy in her talks which included intimations of a moral boundary crisis, as in one address reported in the *CPA Newsletter* of August 1977.

Mrs. Gabler gave lurid details of the books and films used in "Man: a course of study" [MACOS] a social studies course that has been widely rejected by American parents and that is being introduced here with the approval of the Department of Education ... Not only do children study the Netsilik (Eskimo) customs, which include wife-swapping and other permissive sexual practices, cannibalism and infanticide, but they receive a more thorough grounding in the primitive worship and religious beliefs of the Eskimos than many of them will have had in the study of the religion of our own culture.

For three decades the Gablers' organisation attacked textbooks, teachers, and public education, where these were seen to espouse nonfundamentalist values. In an analysis of censorship in the public schools, Edwards (1998) suggests that the Gablers maintained significant influence on what current publishers include, and reject, in school text books. Throughout the 1970s they continued to supply information to the CPA, much of which was reprinted in the *Newsletter*.

Another articulate SIECUS opponent was Dr Rhoda Lorand, whose statements were also quoted in the *CPA Newsletter* (Lorand, 1965). The use of experts, tracts, public meetings, and pamphlets that were part of the American campaign to have Senate funding withdrawn from SIECUS became the strategies of the RR in New Zealand. One American tract, *A Warning to the Nation: Peril*

*in the Schoolroom*, was circulated among CPA supporters in New Zealand. Its author, L. N. Johnson, named the staff of SIECUS and its supporters, hinting at Communist affiliations. They will, he suggested, bring about the same social consequences that “drowned Greece, Rome and other civilizations in their own moral filth”. Citing success to date for the campaign against SIECUS Johnson urged vigilance against these “Corrupters of Youth”.

Cities across the country have been forced to postpone or scuttle completely their plans for sex education. And in some instances, as Utah, it has been rejected on the state level as well. Still other communities have thrown it out after it had been installed. What has been done is sufficient to show that victory is possible when enough concerned parents unite their efforts in opposition ... Revelation 21:8 has this final word: “But the fearful and unbelieving and the abominable and murderers and whoremongers ... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.”<sup>4</sup>

The American campaigners used hints of conspiracy effectively to link sex education, liberal curriculum reform and communism in ways that also linked education authorities with the potential for sinister, destabilising outcomes. How, asked L. N. Johnson,, does SIECUS manage to install sex education programmes in schools in the face of growing opposition?

Dr Lester Kirkendall, SIECUS executive and a *Sexology* editor, shows how: ‘Just sneak it in ... go to your PTA and get support. That’s where the power lies.’ He details how a sex programme can be integrated into the school curriculum...This diffused type of programme parents find almost impossible to monitor or supervise.<sup>5</sup>

*Sexology* was circulated in New Zealand, as *Forum, An International Journal Of Human Relations*. It was advertised in the *PPTA Journal* and referred by the CPA to the Indecent Publications. Shown below as Illustration 25, it is easy to see how the inclusion of such a graphic advertisement in a teachers professional journal would have aroused the apprehension of many parents about what was going on in high schools. Through circulating such material it was not difficult to promote the idea that a conspiracy existed within the policy community to

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<sup>4</sup> L. N. Johnson (undated). *A Warning to the Nation: Peril in the Schoolroom..* This publication was circulated in New Zealand by Mr. Spencer of the Bible Truth Society, R.D. Oratia, Auckland N.Z. (Author’s file)



implement human development and sex education into the curriculum as a *fait accompli*. Within the theory of moral panic (Cohen, 1972; Hall et al., 1978) deviance is defined and pursued through the twin process of identification and labelling. Identification requires vigilance and therefore leadership, while labelling requires an organ of communication. Leadership had already emerged with the Vineys and Peter Clements and the *Newsletter* provided the means of communicating matters to be regarded with suspicion. The naming of teachers with 'questionable' practice and beliefs; having members elected to school Committees and PTAs; circulating 'questionable' material to politicians and concerned citizens; pamphleteering; scrutiny of teaching resources; these were the strategies recommended in the American textbook campaign and adopted in the CPA campaign.<sup>6</sup> CPA also realised the importance of direct contact with politicians. Those already sympathetic to their stance came from both major political parties. They included MP H. J. (Bert) Walker, Minister of Social Welfare in 1976, Labour MP Trevor Young, and National's Norman Jones, later reported as stating that "getting young people interested in sex was one means used by communists to subvert the population".<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> L. N. Johnson (undated). *A Warning to the Nation: Peril in the Schoolroom*. This publication was circulated in New Zealand by Mr. Spencer of the Bible Truth Society, R.D. Oratia, Auckland N.Z. (Author's file)

<sup>6</sup> The use of the word 'questionable' in parenthesis, or underlined, was frequent in CPA newsletters and submissions.

<sup>7</sup> MP Norman Jones, quoted in an article titled "The 'Red sexual peril'". NZPA Report in the *Manawatu Evening Standard*, August 20, 1982.

Dear Sir,

..... This Association would draw the Tribunal's attention to the fact that in the July 1974 edition of the Post-Primary Teachers' Association Journal there appeared a large advertisement for "Forum", a copy of which is enclosed for the Tribunal's information. The rationale for this advertisement to teachers was apparently that teachers could be called upon to educate in matters of human relationships, and would, presumably, find "Forum" helpful.

This Association is keenly interested in any materials proposed for use as resource material in schools. We would not consider the majority of the subject matter, or method of treatment, found in "Forum" to be acceptable in the school situation. Accordingly, we would request that the Tribunal bear this possibility in mind when considering the advisability of allowing "Forum" to be generally available to teachers.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) J. E. Viney  
Secretary

## FORUM... THE LIVING TEXTBOOK OF SEXOLOGY



So you haven't been trained in the varied aspects of psychosexuality... you are still called upon to answer questions, advise and assist people with problems in this vital area of human relationships. Don't you owe them more than outmoded knowledge and embarrassment? The fact that there is a great need for men and women to discuss all aspects of sexuality points to the unnecessary guilt, shame and anxiety which surrounds a perfectly natural phenomenon. Forum breaks through the taboo on intelligent discussion of the sexual - by providing serious,

authoritative articles written by recognised specialists. To its lay readers, Forum also offers the opportunity to seek authoritative, non-moralistic advice. What does it offer the professional? An on-going textbook on the many-sidedness of love. Every subject that touches upon the physical, emotional or psychological aspects of human relationships comes under Forum's sympathetic and intelligent scrutiny. Topics range from the commonplace to the bizarre, the specifically sexual to the broadly emotional.

*FORUM - an international journal of human relations published in eight countries.*

Enquiries to The Editor, P.O. Box 1431, Wellington. Available monthly at booksellers or on subscription.

5940

**Illustration 25 — The advertisement for *Forum* magazine, printed in the *PPTA Journal* in July 1974 which the CPA referred to the Indecent Publications Tribunal, suggesting that information contained in *Forum* would already be in use by teachers in classrooms.**

The CPA Executive was also alert to which news reporters might be recruited to their cause. Jean Viney's informant in the following matter was a "sympathetic" journalist, an incident that also shows how rumours can be used by the moral entrepreneur in the creation of a climate of suspicion.

We were told that the caucus was meeting on a certain Thursday and the "Ross Report" was going to be approved within the next 24 hours. It could be made to happen simply by a change of regulation. By then we'd been going a year and decided we'd do what we could. We had a ring around and said to everyone 'get telegrams in'. What happened was that [Prime Minister] Norman Kirk then made a press statement to the effect that he had ordered Phil Amos to allow another full year of consultation of the "Ross Report". He [Kirk] was pro-family. (J. Viney, Int.)

That Jean and Martin Viney had begun jointly to assume the role of the 'moral entrepreneur' is evident in their continued vigilance. In 1976, Jean, as CPA Secretary wrote again to MPs to protest the appointment of Pat Opdyke as youth education officer for the FPA. Opdyke had been editor of *Forum*, (see Illustration 25) and her teaching programme included a film for teenagers, "About Sex" which may have been the film that sparked the Anaheim controversy. The maker of this film, Sol Gordon, Professor of Child and Family Studies at Syracuse University, was already under attack from fundamentalist groups in the USA for his support of SIECUS. SPCS and CPA both protested Opdyke's appointment to Bert Walker, then Chair of the Cabinet Committee on Family Affairs, expressing concern "about the qualifications of the particular appointee and her entry into schools to teach the [FPA] sex education syllabus."<sup>8</sup> In this complaint Patricia Bartlett pointed out that four previous issues of *Forum* were currently before the Indecent Publications Tribunal, a member of which was Lauris Edmond, also Editor of the *PPTA Journal*. Within a small nation such as New Zealand it was common for professionals with particular interests to hold dual or multiple roles. The furore over this episode has been discussed by Smyth (2000) in her history of the New Zealand FPA, but it was not surprising that such links were viewed by the Religious Right as further confirmation of conspiracy. CPA regularly attacked the reported \$60,000 yearly government grant to the FPA in its *Newsletter*. What CPA sought was to have all classroom activities related to sex education in schools made crimes, through an Act of Parliament — Section 2 (1)(b) of the Police Offences Amendment Act of 1954 — that prohibited giving contraceptive information to anyone under sixteen. Through the *Newsletter* CPA educated its membership on the nature of this Act which was the same Act that Clause 56 of the CSA bill sought to address. An objective of the moral crusade is to change legislation and the effectiveness of the moral entrepreneur is related to the degree to which they she or he achieves success in elevating the 'cause' and deviantising its opponents. It therefore becomes vital that both those within the institutional power structure and a wide cross section of the public support the moral entrepreneur's perception of threat (Ben-Yehuda, 1968). The

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<sup>8</sup> Letter to Bert Walker from Patricia Bartlett dated October 4, 1976. (Author's file)

extent to which this occurred in the New Zealand controversy will be examined in later chapters.

## FURTHER SUSPICION OVER TEACHING TRENDS

Throughout 1974 and 1975 the CPA was alert to continuing threat from the hydra of secular humanism, which it saw as having spawned a range of curriculum-infiltrating dangerous teaching practices. Behaviourism at that time dominated university psychology courses and was being implemented in varying degrees in classroom practice by some teachers. The CPA saw 'behaviour modification' as another weapon used to influence vulnerable young minds, and the NZEI was attacked in the *Newsletter* for producing a teacher resource on behavioural techniques for classrooms (NZEI, 1975). The NZEI executive was further confirmed as subversive in its invitation to Sol Gordon to address their annual conference in August 1975. At that time Gordon's *Zing* sex education comics were being circulated by the CPA as examples of pornography, about which, ironically, the Chairman of the Johnson Committee was equally concerned. "We were flooded by pornographic material from the CPA and Patricia Bartlett's group. I had never seen such disgusting material and wouldn't have known where to look for it" (Johnson, Int.).

A CPA letter to the Ombudsman in May 1975 circulated to 26 members of parliament, recommending that the Ombudsman be given power "to investigate any matter relating to unprofessional conduct by teachers: also the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, who circulated the contraceptive comic *Too Great a Risk*." <sup>9</sup> CPA was almost as incensed over the autonomy and government funding of the NZCER as it was over the funding of the FPA. NZCER had also published articles on the progressive, liberal, secular and humanist theories of McPhail and Kohlberg. New educational methods such as behaviour modification, (Glaser, 1971), role-play, sensitivity training, reality therapy and transactional analysis (Berne 1975) were also viewed as potentially dangerous, mind-altering practices. Martin Viney produced a tract for CPA members, media and politicians on the dangers of such methods and their inclusion in courses on human relationships.

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<sup>9</sup> Open letter from CPA to the Ombudsman in May, 1975, circulated to 26 MPs. (Author's file)



I am not referring to the traditional methods used for maintaining a smoothly run school and acceptable standards of personal behaviour by pupils. I am referring to classroom activities involving such relatively recent innovations as values clarification, consciousness-raising techniques, role-playing, simulation games, trust exercises, encounter group type activities, and the various manifestations of sensitivity training.<sup>10</sup>

Further evidence of the destabilising influence on society of such educational trends could be seen in the adoption of consciousness-raising group strategies by feminists, communal living and gay-rights proponents. The teaching methods to which Martin Viney objected were also in the classroom strategies promoted in the FPA resource materials. To the CPA's dismay these were the same teaching methods gaining support from the Department of Education within the new National English Syllabus Committee, (NESC) and the new social studies curriculum replacing history and geography in Forms 1 to 4. It appeared to the CPA Executive that subject content and teaching method were had become blended in an amalgam of brainwashing potential. Commenting on a teachers in-service Social Studies course at Hogben House, the 1976 August CPA *Newsletter* stated:

The course stressed that in the new syllabus the theme was that the teacher provides an environment where pupils can examine different value systems and their consequences, and by this evaluate their own in the light of respect for human dignity, a respect for and an acceptance of the idea of difference and an upholding of social justice. This could almost serve as a definition of Secular Humanism, and when considered together with the eulogistic coverage given to Mao's China and his Red Guards in a unit about China, it makes one wonder what goes on in Social Studies lessons.

More evidence of diminishing moral responsibility in society was the growth of experiments in communal living, of which Auckland's Centrepoint was an example. The leader of this commune openly preached the value of sexual experimentation for all, including children, and Centrepoint held consciousness-raising weekends for the public that were attended by some teachers.<sup>11</sup> To the moral entrepreneurs of the Religious Right, manifestations of the dangerous

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<sup>10</sup> Dr. M Viney (undated). *Why Schools Should Not Run Human Development And Relationships Courses*. (Author's file)

<sup>11</sup> Centrepoint's leader, Bert Potter, was subsequently convicted of sexual abuse of children.

subversion of secular humanism were abundant, and cause for considerable alarm. Examination of some of the CPA's writing between the publication of the "Ross" and Johnson Reports reveals the extent of this alarm, typified by an item in the *CPA Newsletter* of June 1975.

N.Z. Family Planning Association at a one-day workshop entitled "Population policy for New Zealand" made submissions to Government for the free provision of contraceptives for all and for the introduction of a full, compulsory programme of Human Relations and Development into all schools. The N.Z. Social Worker's Association (Waikato) has called for human relations courses embracing such topics as morals, contraception, parental relations and abortion. Primary school teachers at the recent NZEI conference, called for removal of the restriction on the giving of group sex education in primary schools.

Sex education was not the only means by which the CPA feared that children would be corrupted. While changes from traditional teaching methods, and organisational changes such as open-plan classrooms, were seen as working against pupils' potential for academic achievement, there was also an alarming move towards internal assessment, of which Martin Viney, as a secondary school teacher, was well aware. The *CPA Newsletter* of October 1975 stated:

Internal assessment is being widely implemented as a Pilot study in School Certificate Mathematics right now. State school parents were NOT consulted – they were informed – and those parents objecting have been curtly dismissed, with no choice having been offered to their children.

The danger from internal assessment lay in its potential to lower academic standards to the point where it would be impossible to distinguish the true worth of a school leaver's qualifications. Merit based on achievement was a cornerstone of the Protestant ethic. It was a concept vital to the cultural capital of the prevailing European culture and equally vital to the maintenance of capitalism. In December 1975 the *CPA Newsletter* informed members that under the aegis of the NESC, School Certificate English would soon also be internally assessed. This was a particular worry since the fiction used in the English curriculum was allegedly subversive, such as the novels of Judy Blume, Salinger (1957) and Steinbeck (1953, 1969), prosecuted in the American textbook censorship

campaign. SPCS had prosecuted the New Zealand book, *Down Among The Plum Trees* (Taylor, 1976), and the *CPA Newsletter* of April 1977 noted that the teachers who defended this book at the Tribunal hearing included “ Robin Duff, an English teacher at Burnside High School who was 1975/76 coordinator for the campaign for homosexual equality, Michael Hull, a secondary school teacher and Jack Shallcrass, Lecturer in education at Victoria University”. Such educators involved in ‘morally questionable’ teaching, suggested CPA, were acting subversively to undermine the stability of both family and State, and could therefore expect reprisals.

### **CPA NEWSLETTERS, POLICY, PERSUAISION AND DEMANDS**

Against the backdrop of the deliberations of the Royal Commission on CSA the CPA reiterated its policy in its *Newsletter*. The edition of October 1975 printed “An open letter to the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition” from Chairman, Peter Clements, on behalf of the CPA Executive Committee.

There have been many calls for the introduction of education in sexuality, contraception and human relationships (or Family Life education) into schools. The dangers inherent in such Courses have been demonstrated by this Association and others, and are illustrated by the untimely invitation to this country of Dr Sol Gordon, samples of whose sex comics you have seen. In order to avoid serious parent school conflicts that could arise from the inclusion of such programmes into the school curriculum, would your Party be prepared to actively support the expansion of Family-Life education as an out of school activity to be conducted in the evenings, as an alternative for Intermediate and Secondary Schools, meanwhile retaining the present regulation prohibiting classroom sex education in primary schools?

Clements exhorted the Minister of Education to mandate that written consent from parents be obtained before any discussion on any area of human development be undertaken in any classroom despite earlier reassurance on this

point from Amos.<sup>12</sup> Its watchful membership reported incidents to the CPA executive that provided further confirmatory evidence of subversive teacher activity and attempts at liberalising of the curriculum: "One startled member informs us that 'vasectomy' was included in topics about South East Asia. It really doesn't seem to make much difference what is said about 'sex education'. It is already in the schools under many different guises" (CPA *Newsletter*, April 1975). The *Newsletter* of June the same year informed members that during a physical education class "the pros and cons of pre-marital sex were discussed. NO PARENTAL CONSULTATION took place beforehand and the first parents knew about this important moral discussion on sexual behaviour was after it had occurred. What else is taking place?" What indeed? Vigilance and leadership were necessary and apprehension was such that more than an assurance from the liberal Labour Minister Phil Amos was needed to protect parental and children's rights. The issue of lack of parental consultation remained an irritant. In 1974 St Dominic's College and Primary School Home and School Association had protested at the absence on the Ross Committee of any official representative of the Catholic school system, on the basis that there were some 64,000 New Zealand children receiving a Catholic education each year.

This disenfranchising of the Catholic schools system bodes ill for the future and for the kind of consultation what will apply if integration proposals now under consideration are proceeded with. If this attitude is persisted in, and if courses such as this are to be forced on parents then our Catholic schools will cease to exist as Catholic schools."<sup>13</sup>

In this discourse can be seen the historic undercurrents of the perceived lack of consultation over the earlier Thomas Report. Since ministerial assurances regarding parental consultation remained suspect, and since elections meant changes of ministers, legislation was vital to protect youth from the current confluence of multiple corrupting influences, and the Catholic School system from erosion. The editorial in the CPA *Newsletter* of June 1975 demanded "that

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<sup>12</sup> Mr. Amos gave this assurance in his address to the NZEI annual conference in May 1975.



any form of instruction given or discussion allowed, which is contrary to the normal and acceptable standards of behaviour in society, be made an offence under the Police Offences Act”.

### ***Parental vigilance is urged***

Between 1975 and 1978 the CPA *Newsletter* clarified the law for its readers regarding religious instruction in schools and urged parental vigilance and action. “We believe that all concerned parents should immediately take steps to clarify their rights and to exert influence upon those who are responsible for what is being taught in our schools.”<sup>14</sup> Mainstream churches not aligned with a fundamentalist ministry came under attack as failing in what was seen as their duty to safeguard against the possibility of comparative religion entering the curriculum. The bastion against the work of the CDU therefore had to be parents and CPA members were urged to engage more directly with their local schools, in the pursuit of vigilance over dangerous liberal infiltrating practices. The CPA *Newsletter* of April 1975 contained action guidelines for this:

Have a Concerned Parent checking each class in each school and ensuring that PTA and Principal know what is being taught – often they don’t! Have a bookcase in each school where all textbooks in current use are displayed for inspection by Concerned Parents – this is community involvement. Organize a coffee morning of Concerned Parents and invite your Member of Parliament along to learn firsthand what you think. Have a Concerned Parent on your School Committee (elections 21<sup>st</sup> April – just in time), on your PTA Committee, and as delegates to the Federation where so many decisions are taken.

Getting CPA members on school Committees offered opportunities for monitoring what was going on in classrooms as satirized in a cartoon in an

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<sup>13</sup> St Dominic’s College and Primary School Home and School Association. (1974). *Human development and relationships in the school curriculum: An expression of parents’ concern*. Information Services Library. Ministry of Education.

<sup>14</sup> Letter from Christchurch branch of CPA, published in a *CPA Newsletter*. Alexander Turnbull Library, Ref. No. 97-035-12/3 (Restricted file).

Auckland community paper (Illustration 26) where parents are advised to “lurk outside the classroom”, withdraw children being exposed to sex education as the lesson reaches its climax, and spray the room with “anti-mate”.



Illustration 26 — A cartoon that appeared in the *Gulf News* (date unknown). It caricatured the advice given by CPA to parents to monitor classroom teaching content and withdraw their children when this was seen as contravening current law on sex education.

**CPA ACCUSATIONS AND A DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE**

While the RR sought to have the Police Offences act upheld, the Department was cautiously proceeding with teacher in-service education in anticipation of legislative change. An example of the tensions and vigilance characteristic of the climate of suspicion that prevailed throughout the preparation phase of the

Johnson Report is the inquiry initiated early in 1977 by the CPA into the activity of Alison Crawford, wife of the Johnson Committee’s Secretary, Jock

Crawford. Alison Crawford, as an Advisor on Health Education in Christchurch had held an in-service course at Heaton Intermediate School during the course of which she mentioned the Committee on Health and Social Education and speculated on its possible outcomes. "Among the group there must have been someone with CPA contacts because I suddenly found myself being investigated by the Department" (A. Crawford, Int. August 13, 1999). This investigation had been sparked by a letter from CPA chairman Peter Clements to Minister, Gandar.

It has been brought to this Association's notice that a one-day training course in "Health" education was recently held for all members of staff at Heaton Intermediate School, Christchurch. It was conducted by Mrs. Alison Crawford, wife of the Secretary to the Johnson Report. We are informed that Mrs. Crawford stated that she had read most of the submissions to the Committee, and singled out this Association's submission for special attention. She spent some time criticizing it, and ridiculing what it contained. She also spent a considerable time on the giving of sex education to primary school children, which we understand is still prohibited by your Department's regulations. We consider this is an utterly inexcusable state of affairs...The Committee's findings have not yet been made public, and it appears highly unethical for Mrs. Crawford to have criticized our submission at a teacher-training course. For the wife of the Secretary to the Johnson Report to be running training courses on Human Development and Relationships and to have access to the submissions is most surprising and gives cause to question the impartiality of this Committee, as have the actions and statement of Fr. Ryder and Mr. P. McPherson ... Gratuitous attacks by teachers on the considered views of a responsible body of parents are likely to worsen parent/teacher relationships. I would mention that this Association has teachers and headmasters amongst its members and even whole schools are joining. We would be obliged if you would make a thorough investigation of this matter and state who authorized Mrs. Crawford to give this course? Why were all teachers at the school given this course, with no screening as to their suitability? Who else has been given access to the submissions of the Johnson Report, and for what purpose? Is the Johnson Report just a pretty window-dressing to cover up what the Department is already doing? <sup>15</sup>

Alison Crawford recalled feelings of "shock" at being the subject of anonymous allegations, and learning that someone who had attended her course had acted as

an 'informant' instead of discussing the issues directly with her. The Minister's responded to the CPA through the D-G who dispatched CDU member, Peter Macpherson, to interview Alison Crawford and ask "what prior knowledge I had about the Johnson Report's recommendations. I was able to say honestly that I didn't know anything. Jock never discussed its business. But being investigated was frightening and I felt really intimidated" (A. Crawford, Int.). It was an ironic situation, Renwick dispatching Johnson Committee member Macpherson to question his colleague's wife, in order to ensure that proper procedures for the handling of such complaints were both followed and seen to be followed. Only thus could the Department convey a proper air of neutrality and informed disinterest during this delicate stage. Gandar's reply to the CPA took less than a week.

Officers of my Department have had an opportunity to enquire into the allegations made in your letter ... The programme for the course, entitled "Living with Others" dealt with aspects of the official Health Syllabus and topics discussed in the official Handbook of Suggestions for Teaching Health in Schools. It was submitted to the District Senior Inspector of Schools for Canterbury...During the course of her introductory address Mrs. Crawford made reference to some statement made on pages 18-19 of the booklet "Home and School Co-operation or Conflict"<sup>16</sup> and to some comments on these statements in a paper by Mr. Rex Dalzell ... Both of these are public documents. I understand that Mrs. Crawford has not read or heard about the contents of any of the submissions presented in confidence to the Johnson Report on Health and Social Education so it follows that she would not have been able to discuss them at the above course ... Health Education, as described by the official syllabus of 1958, and the accompanying handbook, is a compulsory subject in the primary school curriculum and all teachers are required to teach it. It is Government policy to provide opportunities for the in-service education of teachers in all aspects of the curriculum ... There is no official syllabus in Human Development and Relationships, nor does Heaton Intermediate School have such a programme. Yours sincerely, L. W. Gandar, Minister of Education

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<sup>15</sup> Letter to the Minister from P. Clements, CPA Chairman, April 18, 1977. (Author's file)

<sup>16</sup> *Home -School Cooperation* was written by Martin Viney of CPA,

<sup>17</sup> Letter to P. Clements, CPA President, from the Minister of Education dated April 23, 1977. (Author's file)

This incident is reported in detail since it provides a number of strands relevant to the positioning of both lobbyists and bureaucracy. Second hand reports such as this were used by the CPA to confirm allegations of Departmental conspiracy. The strategy of naming a deviant teacher was typical of the American NRR campaign and an essential part of the activity of the moral entrepreneur. The Departmental response can be seen as hegemonic activity aimed at maintaining control of the debate, and thus the policy objectives being pursued. It also further illustrates the dimensions and complexity of the policy community network. In the exercise of departmental hegemony, the strategy of informed disinterest was a useful one. Far from allaying fears however, to the CPA such incidents and such Ministerial responses were further evidence of Department's intent to effect curriculum change subversively. Letters both from, and to, the CPA executive, such as Gandar's response in this instance, were printed in the *CPA Newsletter*, along with editorial comment hinting at collusion and conspiracy. The *Newsletter* was also sent to the editors of the national newspapers who selectively followed up on items from time to time. The New Zealand media in general were not involved in the primary role of promoting the "deviancy amplification" characteristic of a moral panic (Cohen, 1972). One media supporter of the CPA cause, *The Tablet's* Editor John Kennedy however began to use his weekly television programme to promote the CPA cause. The new phenomenon of talkback radio also allowed the public to express a range of opinions on the CSA Bill, and sex education generally. The contiguity of the CSA Bill and the Johnson Committee had created an eggshell environment for the Department of Education and further legal ambiguity for classroom teachers. Within this climate the CPA Executive acted concertedly in the role of moral entrepreneur.

## **THE CPA EXECUTIVE AND GENDER ISSUES**

The CPA President, Peter Clements, also a pilot, was the formal spokesperson while Martin Viney supplied the educational perspectives of the group's lobby. The core membership of the CPA was located in Christchurch. Throughout the controversy Jean Viney was a driving force. As Secretary, records keeper and *Newsletter* contributor she was an energetic presence, with the ability to network. While her husband wrote and spoke eloquently of the perils of

secular humanism it was Mrs. Viney who collated and managed incoming information. In keeping with the RR views on gender relations her role was nominally subservient to those of the male office-holders but much of the strength and vigour of the CPA lobby lay in Mrs. Viney's vigilance and organizational skills. It was she who cross-examined the Minister of Education on the Department's submission on the CSA Bill. Jock Crawford of the Johnson Committee recalled a particular meeting attended by the Vineys following publication of the Johnson Report.

He [Martin] did the questioning and speaking but she [Jean] was there beside him with a big box full of folders and material. She knew exactly which one to pull out and she was handing them to him and prompting him. She had it all organized. (Crawford, Int.)

In 1975, Jean Viney learned of a forthcoming feminist conference on education and equality of the sexes in Christchurch. The CPA membership was informed and the Christchurch New Life Church responded by organizing its own antithetical conference two weeks earlier. With placard waving children dressed in white and the theme "Save Our Homes" it attracted 2000 participants, and wide media coverage, with the opening speech given by MP, Bert Walker. Mrs. Viney's vigorous leadership role within the CPA provides something of a paradox, given the Religious Right's views on the role of women but it was this aspect of cultural capital she was fighting to maintain. Michael Apple (2001) explains this contradiction in terms of the historical practice within American evangelical movements of providing space for women to assert themselves as authoritative "in public" (p. 126).

...there is no doubt that this continues to this day, as many women in evangelical movements whose official beliefs centre around God-given gender roles occupy that public space in creative and powerful ways ... [thus] contradictions of patriarchal authority are solved within authoritarian populist religious movements. Women are *both* passive and active at the same time. (Apple, 2001, pp. 126-127)

Another indefatigable campaigner, letter writer and Wairarapa Secretary of the CPA, Mrs Meise Ooman, organised many meetings in the Waikato district, while Mrs Beryl Leahy became a defender of the CPA position in Auckland in the round of public meetings that followed publication of the Johnson Report. In his

analysis of the CPA's conservatism, Openshaw (1985) discussed the group's antipathy towards feminism which it viewed as having the aim "of securing radical social change through the schools [and being] successful in imposing their views on the New Zealand Education Department and the children" (p 234). Openshaw outlined the CPA's position as being " first, that changes in sex roles may prove harmful to both individuals and society; and second, that such changes are contradicted by biological evidence of sexual specialization" (Openshaw, 1985, p. 236). In attacking the Women in Education conference organized by the Department of Education as part of the 1975 International Women's Year, the *CPA Newsletter* of December 1975 asked the following rhetorical question.

Should the Feminist movement be encouraged to influence children via the schools? They have already formed groups, checking books for sex role stereotyping, and groups writing 'non-sexist' books. Such radical changes could mean boys and girls might develop with no clear idea of what their role should be. How can children be expected to learn about proper family structure and relationship if their ideas on sex roles are being confused?

Openshaw (1985) has suggested that the antifeminism of the CPA may be at least partly attributed to class divisions where greater power to influence government decision making lay with liberal middle class women than with those of the lower- middle and upper- working classes, the latter forming a large segment of CPA supporters.

Moreover, as a relatively 'new' society, New Zealand still pays lip service to rough-and-ready make egalitarianism. A tradition of state welfare has not essentially changed strongly conservative social attitudes. For all these reasons, organizations like CPA are able to effectively capitalize on residual suspicion and fear, thereby winning support from a wider grouping than they might otherwise find possible. (Openshaw, 1985, p.. 236)

In pursuit of its ideology relating to the role of women and sex education, as indicated in Figure 1, the CPA recruited "expert opinion" from a range of international sources.

## **THE CPA'S USE OF "EXPERTS"**

Since the work of the Johnson Committee was concurrent with the CSA Bill the CPA made almost identical submissions to both Committees, making

extensive use of the opinions of overseas 'experts'. These included Americans Norma Gabler and Dr Rhoda Lorand, and a retired English psychiatrist, Dr Louise Eickhoff. Eickhoff, who had worked with delinquent girls in remand homes, had conducted her own British campaign on the dangers of sex education between 1972 and 1976, lobbying the Minister of Education, local education authorities, and the British FPA and earning a reputation as an authority on the subject. In 1975 she addressed a Committee of the House of Lords, giving her views on "social demoralization" grounded in the biologically based deterministic view of female sexuality held by the Religious Right. Eickhoff stated that "the promiscuity of Oxfordshire girls was not the fault of the American soldiers that happened to be there but the direct outcome of sex education alone".<sup>18</sup> Before retirement, Eickhoff had been involved in the treatment of 'sexual aberrations' from within a Freudian paradigm.

In 1952 I was faced with a depressed 16-year-old mother and her two and a half year-old toddler, begotten of the incestuous act of her well-schooled brother that had wakened her from sleep. Her own natural reserves had been destroyed for she too had been taught the facts in school. Her education had made her ready for sex and she neither resisted nor called out against her brother's trespass as she would have done instinctively had she had no sex education ... Girls are active sex seekers. They can't help it. They are so prepared for sex that no courting is needed: and the male senses their readiness, so he gets on with it ... And their [school] instruction has opened a great field of experimentation, playing around and fascination that makes all childish things pall.<sup>19</sup>

In this extract Eickhoff reveals no insight into the power dynamics or socioeconomic factors in her case study. She cited statistics on ex-nuptial pregnancies in Britain throughout the decade of the 1960s, linking these with curriculum materials used in schools. Nowhere in her writings are boys held responsible. It was girls who had the power to corrupt and undermine the social order, and it was girls who must use their biology as a force for moral good, a position based soundly on the Doctrine of Original Sin.

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<sup>18</sup> Transcript of Dr. Eickhoff's address to the House of Lords (1975), circulated in New Zealand by the CPA. (Author's file)

<sup>19</sup> Transcript of Dr. Eickhoff's address to the House of Lords (1975), circulated in New Zealand by the CPA. (Author's file)



I am having to examine an increasing number of young girls from the age of 12 who have had an abortion and been either fitted with an intra-uterine device or issued with a contraceptive pill. They have been put on their sex-seeking path by their education in these matters and by films, which would be regarded as pornographic if shown in the public cinema ... By the time they have embarked on their sex seeking they profit almost not at all from any further schooling.<sup>20</sup>

Eickhoff's view was that exploratory sexual activity ended the "preparatory, immature and childish phase" of Freud's latency period and unleashed this "wanton force" into society for destructive ends. Sex education, she suggested, thus interfered with natural development and ends childhood prematurely. It was therefore a "subversive" activity that could be channelled into political ends having the potential to undermine the social order. "It [sexual activity] was designed to come at the end of the parented stage, after, and not before the individual was capable of surviving independently, ready to create offspring, AND BE A RESPONSIBLE PARENT."<sup>21</sup> Eickhoff's views were regularly reported in the CPA newsletters and were supported by another expert, Dr Rhoda Lorand, a psychotherapist and Associate Professor at the Long Island University Graduate School of Education involved in training counsellors. Lorand also espoused the position that the Freudian latency period was a time during which children were asexual, and that to interfere with the "natural" growth of their other capacities through the stimulation provided by sex education material would be to corrupt this developmental stage and catalyze precocious sexual experimentation.

As to the nature of this latency period, its various aspects are not rigidly defined. There are questions in the minds of those who fully accept its existence, as to what extent it is culturally determined and to what extent biologically...We speak of the 'major portion' of sexual energy and curiosity being sublimated...Open manifestations of sexuality are occasional and only become intense in a disturbed child. Child analysts have the experience of treating children who have had no latency, or seriously disturbed latency. Invariably it is found that this lack is an important contributing factor in the children's neurotic problems, prominent among them being difficulties in

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<sup>20</sup> Letter from Dr. Eickhoff to the *British Medical Journal*, 3, December 7, 1975. Ref. No. 5975 (Author's file)

<sup>21</sup> Transcript of Dr Eickhoff's address to the House of Lords included in the CPA submission to the Johnson Committee.

learning in school and in achieving self-control. Here then, is the latency child. Having renounced his oedipal wishes, identified with his parent, suppressed the major portion of his sexual drives he comes to school eager, even if a bit fearful. He faces the exciting prospect of learning how to read and write and add and subtract and show his parents what a big boy he really is. He enters school and immediately is taught how to go to the toilet and how to make babies. In the course of these scholarly pursuits the child soon learns that his omniscient parents are actually inferior people ... he then unconsciously identifies with a denigrated parental image. (Lorand, 1970, pp. 27-28)

In America, the dissemination of Lorand's writings by the Gablers's organisation Educational Research Associates, had been influential in the attack on SIECUS. Both Eickhoff's and Lorand's views of human development and human nature include behavioural class distinctions based on socioeconomic status and, by implication, ethnicity, echoing earlier eugenics arguments.

The importance of safeguarding the peace of the latency period is made dramatically clear through observation of milieu in which children are not protected from observation of adult sexual activities (There are families in slum areas in which this does not occur). Under such circumstances latency is non-existent and the children exhibit openly sexual behaviour during this period. This is precisely the point at issue; it *is* possible to destroy latency by a sexually over-stimulating environment. And what are the results? It is a well-established fact that the greatest number of non-learners in school come from such environments as do the majority of sexually delinquent youth. (Lorand, 1970, p. 27)

The latency period was seen as "natural" because it served a biological purpose in affording children the opportunity to develop their own cognitive resources, in order to prepare to undertake the pro-social aspects of culturally-determined adult roles. Sex education could stimulate a premature interest in emergent sexuality by arousing, or distorting, personality and 'character' development. Eickhoff's and Lorand's arguments formed substantial components of the CPA submissions, both to the Royal Commission on CSA, and to the Johnson Committee.

We wanted to protect girls from insidious influences that undermined their modesty. New Zealand had a *penchant* for importing ideas from overseas at a time when these methods were being abandoned. Dr Eickhoff who worked with delinquent girls for many years was able to explain how bypassing the

natural developmental process, through sex education, can shock a girl and destroy her sense of modesty and privacy. (M. Viney, Int.)

In its role of moral entrepreneur conspiracy theory was used to good effect by the CPA Executive to incite alarm. The *Newsletter* of July/August 1977 informed members that “some Primary training College students have been given sex education material designed for young children [and ] told that they might find it useful”. This material was reported to include diagrams of sexual intercourse and an illustration “of a pregnant woman who is not wearing a wedding ring ... students were led to believe that implementation of the Johnson Report was a foregone conclusion, hence the issuing of this material”.

### **CPA CONFRONTS THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

Because CPA had made a formal submission to the Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion in Christchurch it was entitled to interrogate submissions made by other agencies. Its target was the Department of Education and the Director-General.

In the context of the Royal Commission’s hearings Jean Viney for CPA and Patricia Bartlett of SPCS went together to Wellington with the common objective of eliciting from the D-G the Departmental position on sex education. It was also hoped that this arena would provide some clues as to what might be in the Johnson Report.

We wanted to pin the Department down and make it state its position, but it wouldn’t put its submissions on the CSA Bill in, in time for others to read and prepare ahead. We knew that these questions would be heard in an official context, and recorded and we wanted to be able to say to parents ‘this is what the Department of Education is going to do’. We asked: “does the Department regard the teaching of homosexuality in classrooms as normal? And Renwick replied: “The Department is neutral.” (J. Viney, Int.)

This was the standard Departmental response to any potentially controversial issue, consistent with the D-G’s obligation to public service neutrality, but it did nothing to placate the CPA. Both Renwick (shown below in Illustration 27) and Gandar, aware of the range of personal opinions among MPs and the fact that the CSA Bill was a conscience vote, knew that they were walking on thin political ice. In interview Jean Viney described the diplomatic Bill Renwick as “as slippery

as they come". Attempts to pin the Director-General down continually failed but the CPA was persistent, both in its questioning and in making public the responses of politicians through the medium of its *Newsletter*.

Is the Department prepared to uphold the traditional view that sex should be an exclusively heterosexual activity confined within the marriage bond, and to direct that instruction on sexual behaviour should only be in the context of promoting chastity and self-control? This question was put by CPA's Secretary to Mr. W. Renwick, Director General of Education, when he appeared at the Royal Commission. Mr. Renwick replied that his department has 'no view' on such matters. (CPA *Newsletter*, June 1976)

On sex education and on other issues CPA was irked by the D-G's strategies of informed disinterest and consultation with his policy community, interpreted as evasion. "He [Renwick] delayed answering letters ... People [in the Department] kept hiding behind the Human Rights Bill, which said you couldn't speak out against homosexuals" (J. Viney, Int.).

# EDUCATION NEWS

Registered at POHQ as a magazine Vol 1 No 11

## "Schools must help all children ..."

Director-General of Education, Mr. Bill Renwick, said Napier Rotary Club in December last year. He took as theme a subject now very much in the news - educational standards.

There has been a good deal of comment on a very old - the question of educational standards and I feel sure is rather too much termed public comment standards just now. There are people saying that our standards in the basic subjects are falling and their only consolation is that it is feelings are not evidence facts that are available support them. If a standard any day is to set up to that have to reach up to differ vastly in their

it will still be accused of setting impossible tasks for those with the least ability and it will also be criticised for not extending the ablest. Since teachers try to do the best they can by all their students, there is the perennial question of where they should place their own emphasis. Do they give more time to the almost because they have so precious talent to be developed for themselves and for society? Do they give more time to the average because most children fall somewhere near the average? Or do they give more

publicly acceptable standards that all children can achieve. What is more, no country is even within sight of doing it - not even the USA, which has the longest tradition of educational research, the greatest commitment to research, and vast resources for the development of instructional techniques, not even Sweden, which, in educational terms, has been the most favoured country in the world during the last 40 years. There is a third problem with standards. It is the problem of making any kind of valid comparison from one generation to another. Let me make two points under this heading. The school population whose standards are being judged today is very different from what it was forty or even twenty years ago. I can illustrate what I am

population. It is a regrettable matter of fact that, generally speaking, they have more difficulty with learning what the schools require than do Maohi children.



Bill Renwick  
Take another factor I will

school (the secondary schools have I believe, responded magnificently to the challenge of these students. But their persistence in secondary schools is not by itself evidence of falling standards. It is a reminder of the broader educational mission that secondary schools must now have. In the light of these comments, let's look at the evidence we have on educational standards. The first is an interesting study undertaken by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research in 1968. Among tests of intelligence used in New Zealand schools the most popular has for many years been the Otis Intelligence Test. It is a test of general mental ability. It was standardized by NZCER for use in New Zealand schools in 1958. Thirty-two years later, in 1990, the

districts. This suggests a lowering up over the 32-year period of educational standards in country districts. Let's look now at some other evidence from research on the subject in New Zealand over the last 20 years. **Reading** First reading. There have been four national surveys of reading during the last 20 years. Three were undertaken by NZCER in 1962, 1968 and 1978. The fourth was undertaken in 1984 by the Department in consultation with the New Zealand Council for Educational Research. These surveys show the following conclusions to be drawn. In terms of the average child, standards in reading were maintained between 1962 and 1968. For 12-year-olds the

Illustration 27 – The Director-General of Education, W. L. Renwick, published in the context of an article reporting his December 1977 speech to the Napier Rotary Club. *Education News* 1978, 3, (11), 1.

The CPA *Newsletter* maintained the threat of conspiracy by frequent suggestion that the recommendations of the Johnson Report would have already

been introduced into the curriculum by the time it was released. Another complaint was the Department of Education's failure to publish all the representations made to it following publication of the "Ross Report" and to forward those representations to the Royal Commission on CSA. The CPA *Newsletter* of August 1977 used capital letters for emphasis.

Much time and effort was spent in letting the Department and Government know what they thought (about the "Ross Report") BUT THE DEPARTMENT NEVER PUBLISHED ALL THE FINDINGS AFTER ALL THE PUBLIC VIEWS had been expressed .... THE ROYAL COMMISSION WAS FORCED INTO MAKING ITS RECOMMENDATIONS TO Parliament in the absence of all the information and views which had been sent to the Department through the Ross and Johnson Committees and BEFORE EITHER THE PUBLIC OR THE COMMISSION HAS HAD ANY CHANCE TO FULLY DISCUSS AND DEBATE THESE FINDINGS, as has been promised by Mr. Renwick, the Director General ... AND NOW EMPTY PROMISES.

This edition goes on to berate both the D-G, and Minister for tardiness in releasing the Johnson Report into the public domain.

In June 1977 CPA Executive urged its membership to bombard the department with a letter writing campaign, as shown below in Illustration 28 summarising CPA frustration with the 'neutrality' of the public service bureaucracy. Throughout the controversy the CPA Executive as moral entrepreneur, used its *Newsletter* in a manner similar to that of the early English political pamphleteers. Subsumed in the construct of moral panic is the notion of a "boundary crisis". This refers to a period when established societal norms and values appear under threat from sources which the media plays a part in identifying. (Shuker, Openshaw & Soler 1990). While the role of the national media will be examined later it has been here shown that the CPA *Newsletter* acted as a small but powerful print medium of both prophesy and "call to arms" within the CPA's crusade against sex education.

**cpa**  
concerned parents' assn.

NEWSLETTER

JUNE

1977



# Mr RENWICK (DIRECTOR GENERAL OF EDUCATION) WANTS TO KNOW — TELL HIM!

Fancy phrases to calm parents' fears were again uttered by Mr. W. Renwick, the Director-General of Education, when he addressed the Canterbury PTA Federation in April. Speaking of the Human Development and Relationships controversy, he told parents - "the issue is now back in the public domain". He looks forward to hearing the views of parents.

What about all the parent views he has heard for the last 3 years? Is he going to ignore them? The actions of his Department certainly lead one to think so .....

At considerable outlay of time and energy the Department of Education was given extensive feedback from the public following discussion of the Ross booklet 'HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND RELATIONSHIPS IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM' over 3 years ago BUT THIS FEED BACK WAS NEVER PUBLISHED.

Instead, the then Minister of Education appointed the Johnson Committee on Health and Social Education to continue and expand the work begun by the Ross Committee which produced the original booklet.

*(Continued overleaf)*

**Illustration 28 – The front page of the CPA Newsletter published the month before the Johnson Report was handed to the Minister. The article that follows exhorts members to write to the Director-General of Education, urging him to support legislation against the implementation of sex education in schools. Pro-forma material for inclusion in such submissions is provided in the text of this article.**

This was not the only campaign waged by the CPA. Some of its concerns, such as its opposition to behavioural teaching methods and secular humanism, were conducted in the context of its campaign against sex education. Other issues, such as those relating to falling academic standards and the curriculum review of the early 1980s overlapped with the Johnson Report controversy,

extending and lasting beyond it. There were therefore a series of overlapping issues that occupied the CPA in lobbying on a number of educational fronts. Because this thesis is concerned with the Johnson Report however, it can be suggested that there was a sense in which that controversy can be seen to have been represented to the public as a boundary crisis by the CPA, in pursuit of which agenda it employed its *Newsletter*. The Vineys in particular were able to maintain their own unassailability by using the *Newsletter* to voice their ideology. While some supporters paid a three dollar annual membership fee to receive it, there were many who did not, but who read and were influenced by its prosyletising.

### **THE CPA SUBMISSION TO THE JOHNSON COMMITTEE**

The CPA's submission was made to the Johnson Committee in September 1976 and published in consecutive *Newsletters*. Much of it was a repetition of its submission to the Royal Commission on CSA. It is possible that the CPA believed that the selective wealth of opinion and statistics it provided in support of its arguments constituted unquestionable fact. The main thrust was that students could be adversely influenced through "questionable" teaching content. It outlined the following points regarding the dangerous potential of sex education.

Interfering with their natural psychosexual development during the latency period ... disturbing the pupil's emotions ... producing a detached and clinical approach to sexuality, engendered as a result of public discussion of intimate topics and destroying a pupil's sense of modesty and propriety ... alienating a pupil from his/her parents through encouraging pupils to question their parents' authority and values ... making parents appear ignorant, out-of-date, embarrassed<sup>22</sup>

It recommended that the primary school regulations regarding classroom sex education be retained; that all courses in social, moral, values and religious education be optional and out of school hours; and that formal regulations ensure consultation with parents regarding proposed sex education while specifying the

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<sup>22</sup> CPA submission to the Committee on Health and Social Education. September, 1976, p1. The content of this submission appeared in a number of CPA Newsletters.

nature of this consultation. In addition the submission dealt at some length with the dangers it saw inherent in current classroom teaching methods.

Certain psychological techniques of behaviour modification (sensitivity training, encounter groups, role-playing etc.) can distress a child, particularly if he is already subject to other emotional strains. It is a grave mistake to envisage the school as some sort of clinic, with the teacher as the therapist".<sup>23</sup>

The texts of writings by Eickhoff and Lorand were included with the submission, along with an earlier one made to the Social Services Committee on the Cinematograph Films Amendment Bills in March of the same year objecting to the Sol Gordon film , *About Sex*. In January 1976 the CPA had circulated a discussion booklet written by Martin Viney called *Home and School: Cooperation or Conflict?* This summarized the CPA position on the dangers of implementing the recommendations of the "Ross Report", shared the main points of its submission to the Royal Commission on CSA, foreshadowed what it believed might result from the current workings of the Johnson Report and expressed apprehension over all of these. It also contained a range of discussion points for interested groups. A section was devoted to the "sanctity of marriage and the family unit" and another to the "training, selection and personal qualities of teachers of family life education" who should have "demonstrated success in this area by being stably and happily married for several years ... preferably the parents of teenage children."

Its submission to the Johnson Committee included the following points from *Home and School: Cooperation or Conflict?*

1. That influences promoting sexual activity and arousal in the young included television, advertising, pop music and the record industry, and sex education in schools.
2. That the effects of extensive education in sexuality and contraception had been failure in arresting the rise of ex-nuptial births, and venereal disease. Calls for contraceptive education furthered the interests of the women's liberation movement, rather than the well being of children.

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<sup>23</sup> The CPA summary of its submission to Johnson Report in the *CPA Newsletter*, December 1976, , p.7.



3. That the effects of availability of contraceptives to children and young people had failed to reduce the incidence of illegitimate pregnancies in the under 16 age group, and had, in fact adverse health consequences.
4. That the New Zealand Family Planning Association planned to use the State school system to promote its philosophy and products.

The text of the CPA submission was printed in installments in its *Newsletter* with the suggestion that supporters should use parts of it in their own individual submissions. As will be shown in Chapters Nine and Ten this suggestion would have a significant influence on the Johnson Report's outcomes. The CPA submission requested that there be no change in the law relating to the supply of contraceptives to those under 16, no information regarding contraceptives given in schools and no discussion of pre-marital sexual intercourse, contraception, abortion or social studies topics on the possible relationship between birth control methods and population control.<sup>24</sup>

### **CONTINUED VIGILANCE AND "CAREERIST-THEORISTS"**

The newsletters that followed the dropping of Clause 56 of the Contraception, Sterilization and Abortion Bill were both jubilant and exhorting of members not to decrease their vigilance in monitoring what was going on in schools. The RR collectively had good cause to remain vigilant. With the closing of one legislative window of opportunity for changing the Education Act offered by the CSA Bill, Departmental hopes for a liberalizing of the curriculum to include human development and sex education were now pinned on the anticipated report of the Johnson Committee. The primary school prohibition on sex education remained, although the health syllabus still allowed information on human development to be offered without any reference to sexual development. With the school curriculum under increasing public scrutiny however, and with the ongoing public questioning by CPA of the private morality of specific teachers, principals and boards had good reason to be both cautious and apprehensive. A month prior to the release of the Johnson Report John Kennedy

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<sup>24</sup> Summarized from the CPA submission to the Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilization and Abortion. CPA Newsletter, December, 1976.

wrote in *The Tablet* of the evils of secular humanism, with implicit reference to the educational bureaucracy.

The heart of the education problem lies between those who see education as a process of imparting, acquiring and transmitting knowledge, and those who see education as an instrument of social change. The fact is that we are now witnessing in our New Zealand schools the beginnings of a struggle for the minds and hearts of the next generation. This struggle is being found out in the classrooms of New Zealand State schools. It is being found by opposing groups ... A minority of committed Christians, parents and teachers who recognize that Christian values are not only necessary for society's spiritual growth, but are also the only true guarantee of society's most cherished possessions: order, stability, justice, freedom, wisdom and compassion and the planners and manipulators for the new order: the humanist ideology. These people, well educated, articulate and clever, have an elitist vision of what is good for the well being of society.<sup>25</sup>

The CPA began to adopt Kennedy's term, "careerist-theorist" to summarise its disdain of the policy community's endorsement of curricular change based in theory linked with liberal ideology.<sup>26</sup> CPA newsletters frequently railed against the secular humanism epitomized by Kohlberg's theory, which it correctly viewed the CDU as promoting. Martin Viney summarized these views in the NZEI journal, *Education*:

Humanism teaches that there is no God, no afterlife and no absolute standards of right and wrong. It regards religion as positively harmful, and considers that man is solely the product of his environment, which should therefore, be controlled, preferably by humanists, so as to produce a world-wide-secular society. Humanists believe that values derive their source from human experience and that ethics is autonomous and situational.<sup>27</sup>

In the context of the "Ross Report" debate a group of Christchurch academics had formed the Humanist Society of New Zealand, and published the *New Zealand Humanist Magazine* (1974). By 1977 it had become the Humanist Education Service the main concern of which was to refute the arguments of the CPA. That humanists had found it necessary to take the CPA lobby so seriously confirms that

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<sup>25</sup>*The Tablet*, n June 15, 1977. Cited in the *CPA Newsletter*, August, 1977.

<sup>26</sup>*CPA Newsletter*, July-August, 1979.

<sup>27</sup>Martin Viney in a letter to the Editor published in *Education* 5, 1979.

the Religious Right had become a powerful force with influence across the conservative spectrum of the population.

The CPA lobby began from within the South Island where there had always been a strong European Calvinistic element. It was also ethnocentric, predominantly white and monocultural. The *CPA Newsletter* between 1974 and 1980 reveals neither interest in nor awareness of issues relating to Māori or Pacific people. It was inevitable that any aspects of Māori culture that might be reflected in the discourse of the Johnson Report would be unfamiliar to, and therefore misunderstood by, CPA supporters.

## **THE ROLE OF PRESSURE GROUPS IN A DEMOCRACY**

Pressure groups exerting a sustained lobby can be grounded either in particular interests or attitudes, and the CPA combined both. Ippolito and Walker (1980) have stated that the interest group uses systematic communication channels and adopts responsibility for keeping members informed about what the government is doing, or proposing to do, and for informing those in government about the preferences and opinions of the group's members. They also suggested that the interest group supplements political parties as a mechanism for transmitting popular influence to government. Such groups do not nominate candidates for public office, but concentrate on convincing officials that their particular ideological position should be adopted. They canvass politicians they perceive as holding similar views, as has been shown in this discussion in relation to the CPA's activities. Castles (1967) described pressure groups within a pluralistic society as having the function of mediating between State and citizen to provide a balance of forces. Such balance serves, through conflict, to produce social consensus and thus influence policy. Castles pointed to the paradox inherent in the pressure group's role. On the one hand, he suggests, they provide a useful and socially desirable channel for democratic participation between elections. On the other hand they can assume considerable power as vested interests "exercising great influence behind locked doors" (p. 67). Although operating outside government, the groups comprising the New Zealand religious right of the 1970s — CPA, SPCS, SPUC and COME — had allies among the politicians and were both collectively and separately attempting to bring about

policy and legislative change. As previously argued, there was considerable catchment potential in the range of CPA *Newsletter* concerns — falling educational standards, deviation from traditional content of literacy and numeracy, the liberal redefinition of the school's role as an agent of socialisation and the general infiltration of society by humanist philosophy. The rallying call to arms however, and main element of RR discourse during the Johnson Report controversy, focused on the issue of sex education in the primary school, as encapsulating the dangers inherent in liberal curriculum reform.

Roger Openshaw (1985) has suggested that throughout the period of the New Zealand controversy the CPA experienced problems in being outside the policy-making community, and was therefore unable to exploit channels of communication used by organisations operating within the established hierarchy, such as the teacher unions. Furthermore, he suggested, a common sense of frustration engendered by being in this position may account for the CPA's rapid membership growth. Such frustration, he stated, is fuelled by the fear and suspicion that decisions are being, and will be, made without the knowledge of parents, with the consequent conviction that many of the resulting policies are wrong. Certainly its range of concerns was partly responsible for its increasing membership but, although it remained outside the policy-making community, CPA had some influence with Members of Parliament at an individual level in both major political parties. Sympathetic MPs included Bert Walker, Trevor Young, Norman Kirk, Ben Couch, Frank Gill and George Gair. The succession of Merv Wellington as Minister of Education in 1978 would allow the CPA to further its political potential to influence events. Another strength lay in its ability to recruit and use the American anti-SIECUS campaigners and their arguments to promote CPA aims. As Openshaw suggested, such pressure groups need to be viewed from more than just an educational perspective.

The alleged dangers of 'humanism' in education may well be a non issue for many New Zealanders, but feminism, public morality and the question of educational policy implementation without adequate prior consultation with interested parties are issues of considerable public unease in a number of countries. CPA therefore, like the New Right in America and STOP/CARE in Queensland, is able to claim with some justification that it has considerable community support. (Openshaw, 1985, p. 242)

In the opinions of Jean and Martin Viney as expressed in interview, leadership was necessary to alert citizens to the dangers inherent in the 1970s' climate of educational change. The success of the moral entrepreneur depends on the ability to create a public awareness of, and support for her or his perspective. From the ideological perspective of the Religious Right it was simply 'Too Great a Risk' to allow the State to proceed with uncensored curriculum reform. In contrast, it was the view of the liberal educational community of interest that the real risks to the nation's youth lay in the dangers of ignorance.

## **SUMMARY**

The issues outlined here exemplify recurring ongoing and insoluble antagonistic tensions between competing ideologies that manifest in controversies within democracies. The differences between liberals and fundamentalists with regard to sex education centre on the answers to questions such as 'how much repression is necessary to maintain the current order?' and 'what are the most effective ways of managing deviations from the established sexual norm?' These are issues relating to the stability of society, gender and the respective roles of family and school as agents of socialisation. A feature of the Johnson Report's historical context was the pervasiveness of social change in which sexual "norms" were subject to redefinition. As with the CPA, the report of the Johnson Committee would show the latter group to be similarly concerned with deviance, "anti-heroes" and the maintenance of social order. The difference, and therefore the tension of the controversy, lay in the suggested solution from each group. While the CPA wanted to protect the innocence of children through ignorance of sexual matters and preserve the primacy of parental rights in this as a matter of cultural capital, the liberal policy and wider education community viewed the perpetuation of ignorance as social irresponsibility.

This chapter has shown how the first wave of the controversy over the Johnson Report was characterised by conservative apprehension set against the background of the Johnson Committee at work and in the context of parliamentary debate over the CSA Bill. In relation to moral panic theory it has been argued that

the CPA Executive assumed the role of the moral entrepreneur in its activities of informing the public and lobbying politicians. The function of the CPA *Newsletter* in relation to this has been shown as contributing to the sense of a boundary crisis. The objective of the moral entrepreneur is to change legislation which must be done by “deviantising” others in order to create the climate of collective anxiety that will lead to legislative protective measures for the vulnerable population, as happened in the Mazengarb Inquiry. The CPA strategies for defining deviance included labelling teachers and identifying “questionable” educational practices. CPA definitions of deviance encompassed humanists, liberal educational bureaucrats, homosexuals and feminists — all those who were seen to be threatening cultural capital of the RR. In pursuit of this crusade it employed the Freudian arguments of overseas “experts”.

In relation to episodes of moral panic in New Zealand Janet Soler (1988) has made the point that whereas the processes of a moral panic had been explained by theorists such as Cohen, what was still lacking was “an understanding of the reasons for a moral panic to occur in the first place” (p. 27). It has been suggested here that the apprehension of the RR can be understood in terms of the enmeshment of ideological and psychological elements. When individuals’ belief systems are under attack, and when they comprise a significant group of the population, the activity of a moral entrepreneur becomes necessary to preserve these endangered belief systems. In defense of its position the CPA was shown to have sought support from within the political power structure. Furthermore, its activities went beyond defence into the realms of crusade. As Yarborough (1999) has suggested the human drive towards the maintenance of a coherent set of beliefs is strong and anxiety leads people to seek to maintain coherence by joining with others of a similar ideology. Thus the cause of either a moral panic, or an episode of controversy such as the one described in this thesis, is a combination of psychological, social and political factors, having a particular focus in response to perceived conspiracy or threat. This issue of sex education became the focus in the Johnson Report controversy and thus the main site of contestation. This thesis has used the term “collective anxiety” to describe the expressions of apprehension made by citizens over a range of educational issues, throughout the campaign orchestrated by the CPA Executive. What was under threat in the New Zealand controversy was the ideology of the Religious Right

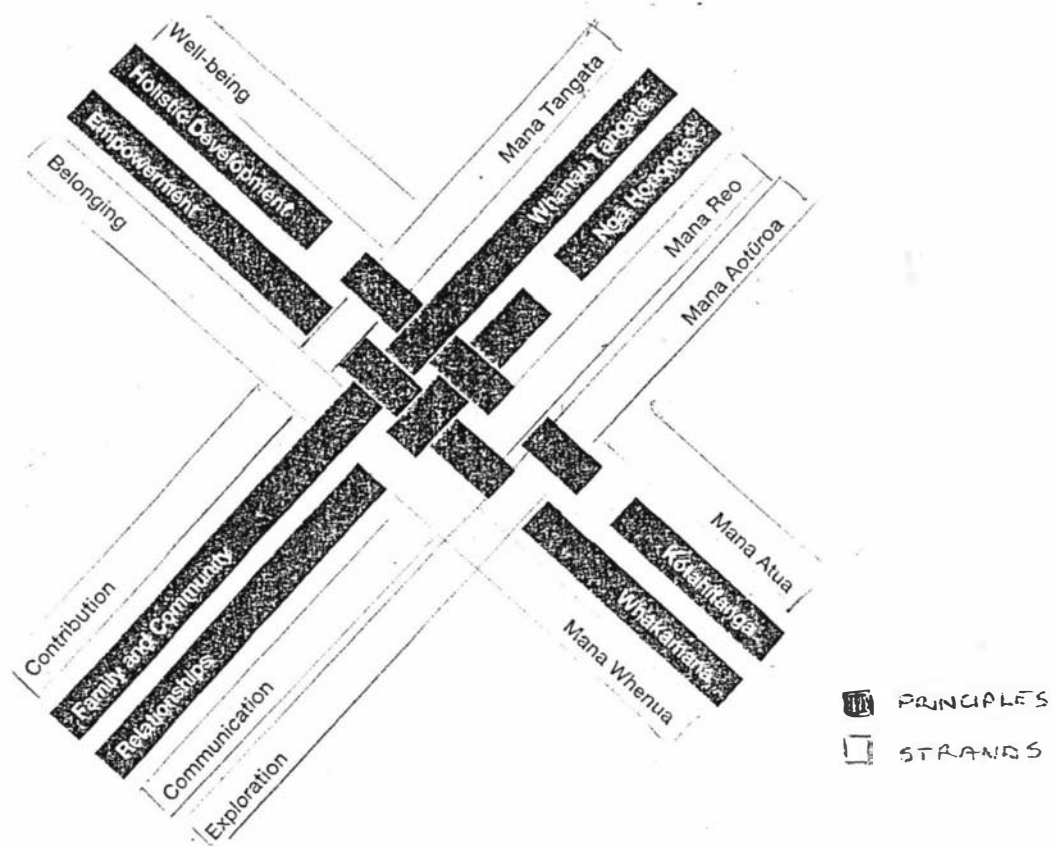
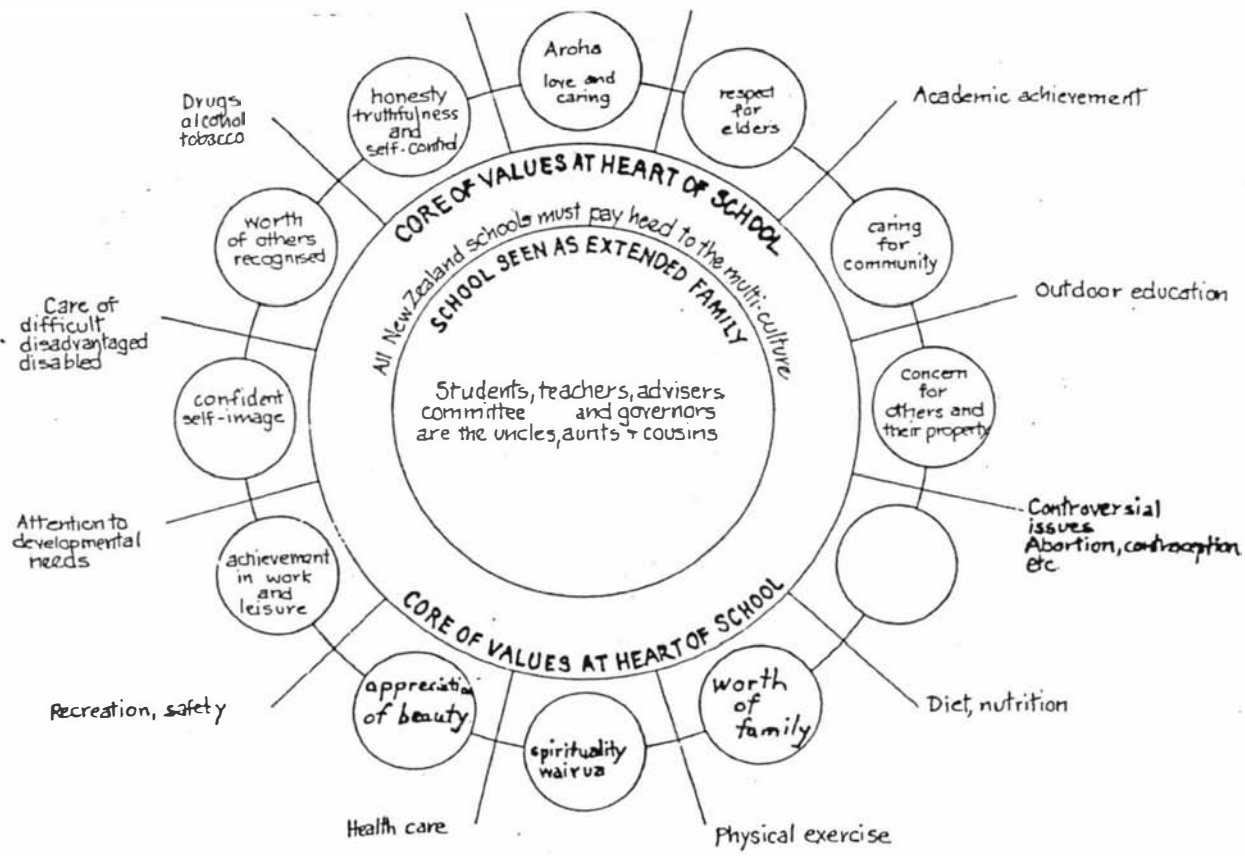
relating to the cultural capital epitomised in the pre-ordained biologically-determined of gender roles and therefore marital status, social class and institutional hierarchies, and through these, social order. These are ancient issues relating to the state's education of its citizens and ones that have been manifested historically in moral panics ranging from the 17th century European witch-hunts (Trevor Roper, 1967), through Puritan America to 20th century youth deviance (Shuker, Openshaw, & Soler, 1990) and homosexuality in New Zealand (Hood, 2001).<sup>28</sup> It has been argued here that the Johnson Report controversy does not meet all the criteria for a moral panic as outlined in Chapter Two because the media did not undertake the classic role of defining deviance as outlined in the literature. This was a role perhaps no longer possible in the social climate of the 1970s, as will be explained in a later chapter. It has however been shown how the characteristics of the moral crusade and moral entrepreneur, as described by Becker (1963), and Ben-Yehuda (1986) can be applied to the activities of the CPA Executive. The next chapter will examine the rhetoric of the Johnson Report to see to what extent the fears of the CPA were realised.

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<sup>28</sup> Lynley Hood's book examined the courtroom transcripts of the trial of a Christchurch male creche worker convicted of sexual abuse, revealing the extent to which interpretations of events differed. The case made headlines during the 1990s with its suggestions of satanic and ritual abuse of children.

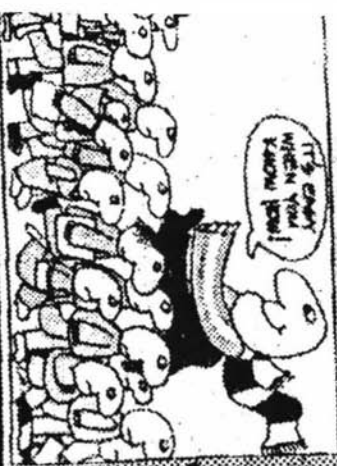






**Illustration 29** – A comparison between the educational philosophies developed at Hillary College in the 1960s and that underpinning *Te Whaariki Matauranga mo nga Mokopuna o Aotearoa Early Childhood Curriculum* (1996) reveals some similarities. The Hillary College model (above) is explained on pp 157-158. As with Hillary College, the expression of *Te Whaariki*'s principles and strands within each early childhood centre's curriculum is to be determined collaboratively with its community. See Chapter 12 for further discussion.

# KNOW HOW



THE offending book

By MICHAEL SMITH

**BIG Red School Book dealing with drink, drugs and gays has been severely caned by Education Minister Merv Wellington.**

And the Minister has written to a number of his colleagues divorcing himself from the book - even though his own department put up a load of cash to back the venture

Too far

## \* \* \* \* \* Minister pulls out over contraception article that goes too far \* \* \* \* \*



MERV WELLINGTON... "pretty hot" over contraception article.

**Illustration 30** – The Minister of Education continued to be haunted by echoes of the Johnson Report controversy. The “Big Red School Book” was published by Burnham House in the year following Mr. Wellington’s decision over the recommendations of the Committee on Health and Social Education on sex education. It covered topics that included alcohol, homosexuality and venereal disease. Although financial support for this publication had come from the Department of Education Mr Wellington distanced himself from the article it included on contraception, on the grounds that it breached current law. This article appeared in the *Sunday News* on October 11, 1981. Mr Wellington’s role in the controversy is discussed in Chapters 10 and 11.

## Chapter 8

### **GROWING, SHARING, LEARNING — THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL EDUCATION**

The Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education, *Growing, Sharing, Learning*, was presented to Minister Les Gandar in August 1977.<sup>1</sup> This chapter will discuss the contents and rhetoric of the Report and analyse the critique and commentary of that time. It will be shown that the Johnson Report's recommendations with regard to physical health reflected the historical issues that had jointly occupied the Departments of Health and Education. The issue of sex education was subsumed in this dimension. It will be argued that the Report presented a vision of a healthy bicultural society based on a holistic perspective that saw health and wellbeing as involving both individual and community responsibility. This was the result of discussion within a group of liberals who believed in the transforming power of education but failed to consider the power relations involved in institutional change and who proposed only bureaucratic means to support changes that it saw as necessary. It will also be argued that the Johnson Report presented no challenge to the cultural capital of the Religious Right in relation to gender issues, and that the cause of feminism was not advanced by its rhetoric.

#### **GROWING, SHARING, LEARNING**

*Growing, Sharing, Learning*, was (and is) not an easy document to read for a number of reasons. It was structured into five topic sections but the content of these was not discrete, since there were a number of themes, such as school climate and community consultation, woven throughout the Report. Similarly, its

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<sup>1</sup> Ministerial Circular 4789/D-77PT 1977, p. 4. National Archives ABEP 4262, 17/3/30/3. Box 860 (undated).

holistic perspective meant that it did not contain a linear argument. The Chairman's influence on the written style of the Report also meant that it was embellished with literary allusions that served to confuse rather than to clarify the points being made. In addition, it used Māori vocabulary not generally understood by Pākehā readers. The Report consisted of 120 pages, of which 19 were appendices containing historical information, statistics, lists of submissions and the photographs of Committee members. The first section is introductory, giving statistics relating to "social concerns" such as alcohol and sexually transmitted disease, with the comment:

It would be useful if the Committee could quote incontestable research evidence to support the views and recommendations it has formulated over the course of its deliberations. This cannot be done. First, because human behaviour is so complex, every question that we could pose about the environmental contributions to healthy growth and development gave rise to a myriad of other questions that must be answered first. Each answer that we could offer needed to be qualified to take account of such factors as cultural difference, changing attitudes ... and the extent to which particular results could be generalised to explain other human situations. Most of the research that we did examine had been carried out in other countries and has not been replicated here. (p. 11)

This quotation gives an indication of the breadth of discussion that had occurred within the Committee, and also of the circumlocutory nature of the Report's prose. It did nothing to placate the CPA which believed that its own marshalling of expert opinion had proved there were some "unquestionable" facts and certainties regarding human behaviour and development, consistent with the assumptions underlying their position. The Johnson Report's introduction is followed by consideration of the question, "What is health and social education?" Adapting the 1969 definition of the World Health Organisation (WHO) that had been adopted during the EDC, the aims of health and social education are given as follows: "to equip parents and teachers to promote the positive physical and mental health of themselves and their children; to equip children to grow more and more responsible for their own health and to act morally towards other people" (p. 12). From its

introduction onwards, the tone of the Report is humanistic, and a concern with the bicultural and multicultural society is foreshadowed. "We must recognise too that a major task of social education in this country is the creation of a harmonious multicultural society" (p. 16). The introduction also asserts the expectation that health and social education will gradually be disseminated throughout the curriculum, as schools become "more sophisticated in their approach". It concludes with the statement that "the Committee sees the task of life-long health and social education as being very much a partnership of the school, the parents and the community generally" (p. 17). Thus the relationship between health and wellbeing, and membership of a co-operative, happy, sharing, community, is stated clearly in the introduction.

### ***The Report's structure, recommendations, and priorities***

The Johnson Report makes seventy recommendations all of which are included in Appendix V. These are condensed into the following nine priority clauses, "intended to provide directions for new policy".

1. The provision of an appropriate climate in all schools for healthy growth and maximum development;
2. The vigorous promotion of health and social education including education in human development and relationships, morals and values;
3. The substantial upgrading of physical education and of outdoor education;
4. The training and retraining of teachers both in health and social education and also in process, as distinct from content learning;
5. The extension of education for parenthood as a matter of urgency throughout our society;
6. The real involvement of parents (and where appropriate, students) in the formulation and implementation of health and social education programmes;
7. The extension and up-grading of medical services to the children in our schools and to the community through our schools;

8. The establishment of the concept that every person is responsible for his own health and that of his dependants; including the proper knowledge and skills that enable the ready acceptance of that responsibility;
9. The formation of regional councils in health and social education, and national council in health and social education, a curriculum team within the Department of Education, and an inter-departmental Committee. (Johnson Report, pp. 97-98)

An utopian view can be discerned within these priorities, with the pursuit of health and wellbeing seen as both an individual and community endeavour. The Report is structured into the following five sections, each of which give rise to a number of recommendations encapsulated in the nine priority areas. They are: "major concerns for schools"; "the needs of parents and their children"; "the community and its contribution"; "problems for the school-parent- community partnership", and "implementation". These sections however cannot be regarded as discrete since their subject matter is woven throughout the Report. It is not surprising that some readers found the Report confusing since it is difficult to understand its discourse without an understanding of the Chairman's influence and the liberal perspectives on the moral and spiritual themes that had occupied the Committee. As articulated in subsequent debate, the topics that citizens had most difficulty in understanding what the Committee had advocated related to the moral and spiritual dimension. On the matter of physical health however there was little meat for public debate, apart from the issue of sex education.

## **PHYSICAL HEALTH**

A national course on health education at secondary level in 1972 had been held to review current programmes and their relationship to other curriculum areas.<sup>2</sup> The summary notes from this course stated that few schools were operating comprehensive health education programmes with, "important topics being treated

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<sup>2</sup> This course was under the direction of an Auckland Secondary School Inspector, L. Brunetti. Since health education was still not a standalone subject the teachers attending were from a range of curriculum areas.

factually, often superficially and in isolation without recognition being given to the human relationships involved” (cited in Weir, 2001, p. 73). In 1974 another national course on health education and fitness in primary schools had recommended that the aims outlined in the Health Handbook of 1969 “should be extended to include the development of children’s attitudes and values”.<sup>3</sup> The Johnson Committee had been well aware of the Department of Education’s attempts to address health issues in ways that would also satisfy the concerns of the Health policy community, and its Report summarized submissions it had received on these topics.

Health education was seen by many to be important and a number of professional organisations expressed concern about the paucity of education on subjects such as diet, nutrition. Obesity, sickness, disease and dental health. [Health] was felt to be a specialized subject requiring special training and facilities and not to be lumped together with physical education. Further, it was felt that school tuckshops and canteens should reflect health education practices ... Finally health education needed to place greater emphasis on community preventive medicine ... Central to all [submissions] was the urgent need for an updated and vastly upgraded physical education content in children’s education so that the foundations for an active life of sporting and recreational activity could be laid. This was felt to be an impossible goal at present because of ... budgets, lack of interest by teachers, lack of facilities. (Johnson Report, p. 9)

That the pursuit of health was seen as a lifelong endeavour is emphasized in the Report’s photographs of very young children and adults exercising, possibly as a response to statistics the Committee had been given on the incidence of heart disease. Healthy lifespan habits were espoused and the effects of alcohol were discussed, with the suggestion that “a high proportion of adults in New Zealand spend much of their leisure time in front of a television set or in taverns” (pp. 7-8). This began in adolescence when “young people from 12 to 17 are bored and restless because they find little offering in the community for them” (p. 30). The

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<sup>3</sup> ABEP, W4262, ACC 40/13/18 Health Education Development (Restricted file). Archives New Zealand.

individual's responsibility for health and a positive attitude towards exercise was seen as beginning in the primary school with "a daily lesson for every child [of] ... at least twenty minutes duration" and special provisions for pupils with special needs (p. 47). Different developmental objectives were stated for different age groups. At primary level, it said, physical education "must be fun and all children should leave their primary school wanting more" (p. 48). In middle childhood "knowledge about physical development should be provided so that children may be prepared for their own biological development before puberty" (p. 41). At intermediate and secondary school level the aim was seen as imparting "knowledge and technical ability to keep fit through life". This was not to be done though "fitness training" but rather through "a varied programme of movement education" that included a range of options such as yoga and golf. An important objective was to be "the subjective feeling of wellbeing" (p. 48). This acknowledgement of developmental stages, reflects the holistic view of relationships among learning, health and wellbeing — a view central to the liberal-progressive educational philosophy at a time when the benefits of physical exercise were less widely known.

### ***Competitive sport***

The role of the school in relation to organised sport was viewed as providing a learning environment conducive to "healthy exercise, personal challenge and risk taking" (p. 43). Outdoor education pursuits were one recommended means of achieving this, the virtues of which were seen as including both opportunities for discovery learning about the environment and "improved individual adjustment and social relationships" (p. 43). Thus outdoor education was seen as engaging the learner in the construction of personal meaning as well as social development. In this cause, a week in the "wilderness or back country" was recommended for every secondary school student.

As if to placate those who believed that competitive sport was the road to success and character building, the Johnson Report suggested that outdoor



education “may train character as effectively as football or netball”.

The mystique of team games, especially ... of rugby football for boys, needs to be re-examined. Victory and defeat, and acceptance by and rejection from the group are significant features of modern life ... but they are not the phenomenon of major importance which they have become in physical education at many schools. Many children derive minimum pleasure and benefit from gregarious competition of a physically vigorous kind, yet develop enthusiasm and reach a high level of skill in one or other of the many activities which physical education may now embrace. (p. 49)

Teachers were urged to “make up their minds what contribution can be made to social and moral education by physical education in general and by competitive sport in particular”. Fair play, it commented, could not be enforced by rules or a referee, but “can and should be taught”. To this end “cooperation in human relationships” and “the human values of benevolence and justice” were to be fostered (p. 49). In the Report’s discourse the benefits of a healthy lifestyle in terms of the relationship between the physical, cognitive, social and emotional domains of development merge and flow into a utopian commentary on New Zealand society. Since guidance in leisure activities would help develop the individual’s sense of wellbeing and self-esteem, teachers should assist students to develop a high degree of skill from a range of choices, with special guidance to those who failed to get satisfaction from some recreational activity (p. 31).

Physical education in school has an important contribution to make to social education in a multi-racial society... Cultural activities, games, sports and dances belonging to one or another ethnic group can keep alive cultural traditions and identity while encouraging mutual respect between cultures. (p. 49)

### ***Community health measures***

On the subject of preventative health the Report espoused a bureaucratic response. The current role of the Department of Health was outlined with regard to pre-school health, vision checks, dental health vaccinations, and the increasing

prevalence of glue ear. Noting the discontinuance of routine physical health checks in schools in 1963, the Johnson Report recommended an extension of the Public Health Nurse role to include weekly visits to primary schools and the appointment of school nurses in intermediate and secondary schools. In its discussion on the role of the medical profession in health education it suggested that doctors should “by personal example show the benefits of stopping smoking, moderation in food and alcohol, exercise, and attention to family and other relationships” (p. 68). It is likely that Riseley, Jensen and Collins had considerable input to this section. It recommended that the school become a community health centre with the objective of the “building of neighbourhood community networks to provide support to families” (p. 68), and envisaged a group of locally based medical and social workers, youth workers providing a service to a cluster of schools. It was also suggested that community medicine should become a more “coordinated programme of continuing education to reach the whole community” (p.70). These were recommendations that required either additional government funding or a rearrangement of existing allocations.

### ***Sex education – an aspect of health***

The Johnson Committee had been mindful of the Department’s agenda with regard to sex education. Through Peter Macpherson it would have known of the delicate negotiations outlined in Chapter Four that Renwick and Gandar had undertaken in relation to clause 56 of the CSA Bill. The deletion of this clause from the Bill placed pressure on the Johnson Committee to resolve this unfinished business and to do it in a manner the public would find palatable. It was an impossible task.

The Report tackled the topic of sex education by referring to the Royal Commission’s original eight recommendations. The first four of these are given here with the Johnson Committee’s suggested modifications in italics.

Our Committee has considered Chapter 3 of the report of the commission, and in general endorses the eight recommendations, which we quote below with our qualifications and comments.

1. "That courses in human development and relationships be provided in all schools." *We would prefer the word education to courses. We see concern for human development and relationships permeating many existing courses and, more fundamentally, the climate and organisation of the school.*
2. "That such courses aim at inculcating a sense of responsibility towards both the individual and the community, recognising the family as an essential feature of a stable community." *Again, we would prefer education to courses... and fostering to inculcating.*
3. "That programmes be suited to New Zealand conditions and be kept as flexible as possible to cater for the special needs of particular areas and different groups of pupils." *No change recommended.*
4. "That sex education forms a logical part of a carefully integrated programme on human relationships and not be treated as an isolated topic." *No change recommended.*

The remaining four recommendations of the Royal Commission dealt with who would prepare such programmes (the Department of Education), the training of teachers and teacher trainers, and the establishment of a resource curriculum team (within the Department). These were things the Department had hoped would become law as a result of the CSA Bill, and were precisely what the CPA had opposed. If the Department had seriously hoped that the Johnson Report would succeed where the CSA Bill had failed it was still underestimating the determination and organisation of the RR lobby. The Johnson Report arrived at the following two recommendations known as "clause 2.23" in subsequent debate.

- a. The eight recommendations of the Royal Commission, as qualified by this Committee, be implemented. Implicit in these recommendations is the repeal of Section 2 (1) (b) of the Police Offences Amendment Act 1954.
- b. The Government take urgent action to permit human development and relationships education to be taught in all schools forthwith by removing from the health syllabus the statement "there is no place in the primary school for group or class instruction in sex education."

There followed three more recommendations on the role of the Department in planning and implementation. The first concerned teacher training since “children can only benefit from receiving correct, relevant and appropriate information from caring adults rather than misinformation from their peers” (p. 41). The second suggested that sex education programmes be constructed in consultation with the school community. The final recommendation stated that a parent “who, after consultation with the principal, and being made aware of the agreed programme contents, still believes that the programme is not in the best interests of his child, has the right to withdraw his child” (p. 40). In relation to this, the Report made a proviso that would have realised the fears of the CPA and confirmed the wisdom of their strategy of monitoring classroom content. “The difficulty” said the Johnson Report, “has been that the Committee has seen human development and relationships as permeating wide sections of the curriculum and it could not suggest how such a right of withdrawal could be exercised in this type of approach without great disruption” (p. 41). It was hoped, it continued, that “human development and relationships education should remain an undramatic and integrated aspect of the total curriculum” (p. 41). The use of the word ‘undramatic’ is interesting in that it implies that the Committee is directly addressing the Religious Right. It was however somewhat naïve if it believed sufficient reassurance for concerned parents had been thus achieved, despite expressing “sympathy with the submissions which we received from groups such as Concerned Parents’ Association and the Society for the Promotion of Community Standards concerning the suitability of some teachers for educating children in this area” (p. 41). On reading the Report’s section on sex education it would have been clear to the CPA that its fears over the subversive intent of the Johnson Committee had been justified, and that it had been a mechanism to pursue the hegemonic agenda of the liberal policy community. Nor would scrutiny of what it had to say on values and moral education provide any further reassurance. To understand the Report on these issues however it is necessary first to examine its bicultural discourse since it is argued here that an understanding of what the Johnson Report was saying about moral, values and spiritual education hinges on

an understanding of its bicultural perspective. While the sex education clause generated further opposition and controversy, the Report's other recommendations on physical health however were generally greeted with approval.

## **THE BICULTURAL DIMENSION OF *GROWING, SHARING, LEARNING***

The bicultural dimension of the Johnson Report was central to the Committee's interpretation of a social and moral curriculum appropriate to New Zealand in the 1970s. These issues were raised early in the Report's discourse.

We must recognise too that a major task of social education in this country is the creation of a harmonious multi-cultural society. The Maori people must be able to expect a solid Maori side of language, values and expressive arts throughout the system and not just in schools with a large percentage of Maori pupils ... The Maori people as tangata whenua of our country have the same rights to the promotion of their cultural heritage in our schools as the dominant pakeha majority ... The painful effects of failure in this respect in the past are only too well-documented – in low expectation of school success, job aspiration and so on ... Educational variation for migrant children of all kinds will find its inspiration and models for effectiveness from a firmly-based bi-cultural provision in the first instance. (Johnson Report, p. 16)

A reference to school programmes already showing “a real concern ... for the personal needs of young people” gave the example of “senior students helping younger children in the school community” (p. 17). As stated in Chapter Five, this was the whanau house system and practice of tuakana-taina adopted at Hillary College. Mental health, suggested the Report, required an atmosphere that was relaxed, warm and open, “like that of a happy family” where “the spiritual element which enhances in such a family” serves “some purpose greater than self” (p. 20). This was the Report's first reference to spiritual matters and subsequently the term Wairua is used.

Implicit also in the section on “schools” was the comparison between a collectivist, ensembled culture, such as traditional Māori tribal society and the individualistic one characterised by America and other European nations. The Report suggested that the former was to be equated with a warm open, happy family school culture, as opposed to “closed” and “rigid” school climates (p. 20). It urged “the replacement of too much competition in schools with cooperation” (p. 20). The contrasting of schools as cold sterile places with the potential for becoming warm, happy environments instead is a theme that had occupied liberal followers of John Dewey, and was echoed in both the Thomas and McCombs Reports. The Johnson Report lauded *Towards Partnership* (1976) for considering “ways of ensuring close co-operation between schools, parents and communities” (p. 2), and stated that it was “essential that every school clarify the moral values it is developing by its tone and programmes” (p. 19). In its introduction the Johnson Report acknowledged the importance of both the Thomas and McCombs Reports and “welcomed the Whanau House” concept, as outlined in a 1975 Departmental publication, *Secondary Schools for Tomorrow*, as “the birth of a new type of climate for secondary schools”.

The name, which signifies ‘extended family’, in our opinion indicates the kind of atmosphere we seek. There is implied a spirit of obligation to others, a reaching of standards of social responsibility, an acceptance of “aroha” in caring relationships, and a sense of belonging to a group small enough for each child to react effectively to others around him. (Johnson Report, p. 23)

This was the Report’s first use of the word aroha, which was repeated in subsequent sections. The “intimacy” of the child-teacher relationship, as practiced in schools within Māori communities was also seen as important.

It has long been traditional for primary teachers to consider all of the child’s needs whether they be intellectual, emotional, social or otherwise, and this was best exemplified in Maori schools [where] close links were established between parents, teachers and students, both in the school and in the community. In fact, there was no real division between school and community and the Committee is aware of excellent guidance offered in

this way in schools like Whakarewarewa, Te Kaha, Hiruaharama and Ruatahuna. (Johnson Report, p. 25)

Despite the Report's assertion that "we do not see any one form of organisation as providing a necessary model for the [warm, open] climate we have referred to" (p. 24), it continued to elevate the ideals of both the whanau house concept and involving students in joint planning since "a school which seizes the responsible support of its students [in ] shared involvement will enliven and stimulate every facet of the life of the school community" (p. 24). Examples given to support these assertions include "the country schools, especially in the old Maori service" (p. 24).<sup>4</sup>

The Report's discussion of "moral, spiritual and values education" elevated "an awareness of the worth of the family" and "a caring for, and awareness of those around, including the community as a whole ... a recognition of the wisdom gained from life's experience ... the wisdom of elders" (p. 32). This was an indirect reference to the Māori cultural significance of the link between past and present generations, and the relationship between tupuna (grandparent, ancestor) and mokopuna (child, future) — relationships central to the deeper meanings of whanau, iwi, and marae. The value of aroha was also asserted in relation to wairua.

In the words of one member of our Committee, "Love for the instinctive things of the whole human history of man: fire, water, trees, the earth as a living thing, the sense of life and mystery in it all. Maori people think this of course. We need that feeling to save New Zealand from becoming a dead, bleak place. Perhaps Maori people can best touch our sensitivity to the world around us, to the mystery of things, to the grand vision of the history of man and his roots in the soil and water, sky and sea ... People who wouldn't regard themselves as Christians know this is true. Unless the sensitivities of our youth are touched in this way, they may be driven to seek the bizarre and strange." (p. 32)

This statement alluded to the universal parents in Māori mythology: Ranginui (the sky father) and Papatuanuku (mother earth) as well as some of their children,

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<sup>4</sup> This is a reference to the "Native Schools" system in which Johnson had taught as a young man.

Tanemahuta of the forest and Tangaroa of the Sea, spirits with shared responsibility for the natural world and the relationship of humans to the land. Such oratorical prose could have been the voice of Johnson, or John Rangihau, or even Father Tom Ryder. What is significant is that although Committee members understood and endorsed this bicultural rhetoric there would be many other citizens mystified by what such statements had to do with a moral curriculum.

The Report equated the spiritual dimension with “seeking purpose and meaning in life” as opposed to the “narrow strictures” of religious doctrines, and expressed “[the] hope that teachers of all subjects would be able to incorporate some of this dimension in their teaching” (p. 35). In this passage the CPA belief that the Johnson Report would present a doctrine of secular humanism was confirmed.

The section on the “needs of schools” contained the suggestion that some part of pre-service and in-service teacher training should be community based, and take place on a Marae. Furthermore, “principals who will return to, or be appointed to, schools where there are Maori minorities should spend part of their course on a marae” (p. 35). In this statement can be seen Johnson and Rangihau’s belief in the effectiveness of the Marae visiting programme known as “Smith’s Circus”.

The Report reiterated that “New Zealand society has much to learn from the concept of *whanau* – the kinship group ... [it] believes that the co-ordination of a network in each community to give the kind of extended family support where this does not now exist should be pursued vigorously” (p. 54).

Although primacy was given to biculturalism, the Johnson Report also heralded the multicultural society. Because “schools are dealing with people who are maturing in a pluralistic and multi-cultural society, great care must be taken to understand and respect differences between people” (p. 36). At the primary school level “the Committee believes that all children need to know the traditions and origins of their culture, in order to allow them to develop fully as New Zealanders. This means including Maori mythology, ancient Greece and the Judaeo-Christian tradition” (p. 36). In secondary schools with “Maori or other Polynesian cultural



traditions” hospitality rituals “which include a strong spiritual element” should be part of the school climate, reflecting “the depth of its spiritual relationships” (p. 36). In this sentence the significance of manaakitanga was acknowledged and seen as a means by which a caring school climate could be fostered.

The average Pākehā New Zealander’s awareness of Māori culture and concepts in the 1970s was such that an understanding of the report’s bicultural dimension would prove difficult, and in the ensuing debate none of its critics articulated such understanding. It was the retrospective opinion of both Bill Renwick and Helen Shaw that within New Zealand “there weren’t other things going on at the same time that would help to support it [the Report] in terms of bicultural understanding” (Renwick, Int.). Renwick recalled that the Johnson Report “preceded any serious talk about biculturalism within the Department [although] the education system was one of the leaders in trying to get the community keyed up to a notion of biculturalism” (Renwick, Int.).

## **MORAL, SPIRITUAL AND VALUES EDUCATION**

To understand what the Johnson Report said about moral, spiritual and values education it is argued that the reader must be informed by the preceding discussion on the bicultural dimension since its discourse on both is enmeshed. This in turn must be informed by the discussion in Chapter Five regarding Garfield Johnson’s Freirean style of problematising with his own school students and by his influence on the Committee. It is however important to note that nowhere in its terms of reference was the Johnson Committee required to address moral education. Three reasons are suggested for why it did so.

### ***Why did the Johnson Committee address moral education?***

The first reason lies in the Committee’s awareness that moral education had been a Departmental concern during previous decades (Weir, 2001). The summary

document of the EDC, *Directions for Educational Development* (1974), had contained the recommendation “that further public discussion of the issues involved in moral and religious education in schools be promoted”.<sup>5</sup> Moral education also involved historic issues of hegemony regarding the relationship of the State and Catholic school systems. But it was not just Catholics with an interest in moral education. Phil Amos had initiated a series of “informal discussions ... between Officers of the Department of Education and the Churches Education Commission in 1973” (Weir, p. 64). These were followed by an in-service conference at Hogben House in September 1974, at which Renwick, then Assistant D-G, stated that “a growing interest in morality, values and religion was evident in New Zealand and overseas [and] ... it appeared an opportune time now to consider the place, if any, of moral and religious education in State schools” (Weir, p. 65). Peter McPhail, who had produced the English values clarification programme, attended this conference, the purpose of which was not to produce curriculum guidelines but to “provide an opportunity for individuals with a wide range of religious and non-religious views to arrive at a common perception of the issues involved in religious and moral education in schools” (Weir, p. 65). None of these events would have been seen by the Religious Right as activities appropriate to the development of a moral curriculum for schools since mainstream churches were seen by fundamentalists as not being truly Christian and since the Hogben gathering had also included members of the New Zealand Rationalists’ and Humanists’ Associations. In 1976 a conference on Moral and Values Education in Teachers’ Colleges with Renwick, now D-G, as keynote speaker. In this speech he encouraged teachers’ colleges “to examine the implications of incorporating a new dimension in the total college programme covering values, beliefs and emotions in human relationships and to seek ways and means of implementing this dimension”.<sup>6</sup> In the liberal climate of the mid 1970s, in the context of changing social mores and redefinition of sexual norms, the educational community of

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<sup>5</sup> Advisory Council on Educational Planning (1974). *Directions for educational development*. Wellington: Department of Education. Recommendation 7.16.9, p.130.

<sup>6</sup> Conference on Moral and Values Education in Teachers’ Colleges, held at Lopdell House, Auckland, November 22-26, 1976. (Cited in Weir, 2001, p. 68)

interest found the McPhail values clarification style of inductive inquiry attractive. It is interesting to note that since the 1974 EDC summary the word "religion" had disappeared from the titles of such gatherings, being replaced by the phrase "human relationships". CDU members, Macpherson and Buxton, were both members of the policy community with an interest in moral and values education, as was the D-G. They would have made it known to Johnson and the Committee that these issues were on the Departmental agenda. There was therefore an implicit expectation that they would be addressed in some way.

The second reason for the Report's discussion on moral education was the fact that a number of the submissions it received were concerned specifically with matters of religion and moral education. It was not therefore a subject that could be ignored without sparking some reaction.

Finally, it is suggested that the Committee chose to wade into these waters also because of the individual interests of Committee members who brought agnostic, atheistic, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Baptist viewpoints to their discussions of moral and values education. Committee members' comments in interviews suggested also that they revelled in the intellectual stimulus of such debate. "I had to accept that they would have different views from mine and that of course was what made it so interesting" (Ryder, Int.). "Later in the phase they [Johnson and Ryder] began to introduce a spiritual element" (Wadsworth, Int.). "Ted Wadsworth and I were both really atheists. Tom Ryder was the other extreme. Garfield had a very humanist viewpoint. John Rangihau had very strong Maori spiritual values and of course that was what made it so lively" (Buxton, Int.). This was however, in-house discussion among educated males, and there may have been a point in these lively exchanges when it began to be taken for granted that the understandings of Committee members regarding the spiritual domain would be passed by 'osmosis' to the general public.

Thus the agendas of the Department, the public and Committee members all contributed to the discussion in the Johnson Report regarding issues of moral and spiritual education.

### ***The Committee's views on moral and spiritual education***

The Johnson Report began to tackle the moral-values-spiritual dimension with the comment that “society would like to see a reinforcement of, and a return to, some basic values” (p. 32). What these basic values might be, the reader is left to infer. “Most submissions” it stated, affirmed that the school should share moral, spiritual and values education with the home, but where the home “neglected basic values” this was a role that should be undertaken by the school “throughout the total organisation of the school and the philosophy and relationships within it. Every teacher is a teacher of values” (p.33). Education in the spiritual dimension was seen as being concerned with two aspects:

- (a) an awareness of ultimate concerns and (b) an awareness of those concerns in other people, both near and far, in time and place. These two are linked, and the outcome we seek will be a growth in personal maturity and a greater tolerance and understanding of other people.

(p. 35)

The Report then advocated precisely what had been causing apprehension to the RR — that teaching strategies based on secular humanism, such as those espoused by Kohlberg and McPhail, be adopted within the context of curriculum subjects to inculcate school-determined values. While values education could be provided as a separate subject, it was seen as best integrated within the whole curriculum under the guidance and co-ordination of a senior teacher who would develop a syllabus and provide in-service training. Schools could thus provide opportunity for the discussion of controversial issues which included “euthanasia, pre-marital sex relationships, abortion, contraception, racism, alternative life styles, competition and nuclear power” (p. 34). While suggesting that it is valid for teachers to express their own opinions, this section also stated that they must strongly emphasise “values accepted by the school and community”.

It is sad to relate that in today's materialistic society, for the majority of New Zealanders, the word “religion” suggests a switching-off from the world of the twentieth century; or that one goes to church to get away from the realities of living ... This is not what we refer to. We are talking about

what Professor Geering exemplifies in the questions; Who am I? Why am I here? Where have I come from? Where am I going to? While we see these as being deeply religious questions, we prefer in this context to use the word 'spiritual' as more accurately describing the type of school involvement we envisage. ( p. 35)

This was a humanist discourse. The reference to Professor Lloyd Geering, a Presbyterian theologian who had been tried by his church for heresy in New Zealand during the 1960s, was unlikely to allay fundamentalist apprehension. "Spiritual searchings", continued the Report, are "a necessary part of education" and should involve "discussion, without doctrinal preference" (p. 35). While opportunities should be taken to answer children's questions about the purposes of life, about God and about death, different beliefs, it stated, should be compared, with "special attention" given to Māori, classical Greek and Judaeo-Christian traditions. The reference to Greek classicism is likely to have come from Johnson who had a particular interest in English literature. Teachers, the Report suggested, should give their own opinions responsibly and give children the opportunity to express their opinions freely to a "safe person", so they could be encouraged to "resist peer pressure and make moral decisions freely and confidently for themselves" (p.36). These arguments are paradoxical. On the one hand the Report espoused a concern to uphold traditional values, through phrases such as "parents deserve to feel comfortable", "happy partnership", and "dangerous lack of basic values within our society". On the other hand there was a strong emphasis on the need for comparative and situational approaches to the teaching of values.

Because schools are dealing with people who are maturing in a pluralistic and multi-cultural society, great care must be taken to understand and respect differences between people ... Nor must there be any suggestion of doctrinal preference so long as the state system is the one we work in ... it is recognised that there is a clear place for learning about purpose in living without ever becoming involved in any one particular religious viewpoint or dogma. (p. 36)

At primary school the Johnson Report stated that it was appropriate for students to discuss the tenets of various religions on a comparative basis, much of which, it

suggested, could be done within the social studies syllabus. The CPA fear of the indoctrination of vulnerable young minds through a social studies syllabus impregnated with MACOS-type material appeared to be realised. Nor would they find reassurance in the suggestion that at secondary level “the total climate of the school will reflect the depth of its spiritual relationships”, which were to encompass bicultural content ( p. 36). There were no guarantees that school rituals such as “grace before meals” would be traditional Christian ones, and little compensation in the Report’s condemnation of the “bizarre and anti-sacred ... young people whose lack of knowledge and interest leads them to unusual and off-beat paths, e.g., the use of hallucinating drugs, witchcraft and the occult” (p. 37).<sup>7</sup> The suggested remedy for such adolescent exploratory behaviour was to provide opportunities for students to talk through their ideas with others

who while accepting their search as relevant, can yet guide them into mature paths. They deserve to emerge from their seeking as did the seventh former who recently was able to write: ‘Man’s beauty like this pond is rippled. In time of calm the God in him shines through’. (p. 37)

Here either Johnson or Ryder indulge their literary inclinations, intended to lift the Report’s tone from the prosaic into a loftier level. The result however was more likely to have been bewildering for the reader who looked for a commitment from the Committee to fundamental Biblical based values to counteract the “evils” to which children and adolescents were exposed. It was not reassuring that the mentors to guide the student in her, or his, search for clarity and values would be classroom teachers, and most likely liberal ones at that. The discussion on moral education culminated in recommendations for “the fostering of a non-sectarian spiritual dimension in New Zealand state education”, and “necessary in-service courses for teachers, and the compilation of resource materials” (Johnson Report, Recommendations, Clause 2.22).

Although the Johnson Report’s discourse on moral, spiritual and values education served to amplify and complement the bicultural dimension it has been

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<sup>7</sup> The popular 1970s teenage game of Dungeons and Dragons was then being criticised for its occult aspect, while the Gothic style was current youth fashion.

argued here that an understanding of this relationship was not accessible to those who had not been privy to the shared experience of the Johnson Committee in the process of working through its terms of reference.

What the Report stated was that social education encompassed moral and spiritual realms. How such a curriculum could be organised was also discussed, with the Committee concluding that a “new type of school” would be necessary to foster this holistic vision.

### **A ‘NEW’ TYPE OF SCHOOL IS ESPOUSED**

The dissemination of the dimensions of physical health, bicultural, moral and spiritual education throughout the curriculum was addressed at length in the Johnson Report and to this end it was decided that “a new type of school” was necessary in order to “equip children to grow more and more responsible for their own health and to act morally towards other people” ( p. 12). The new school was envisaged as one where “moral growth comes about through the process by which one lives and learns ... an education which is guidance-centred ... will also foster academic performance” (p. 13).

The Committee faced the apparent conflict between this view of the school and the “learning factory” concept which concentrates mainly on the skills to keep the technological society going. It sees no difficulty. If a study of human development and relationships is to displace any or part of any of the traditional academic disciplines, the latter must look to their essentials. Nor only does the Committee see the difficulty being resolved in this way but it stresses that intellectual development (and subsequently academic performance) cannot take place if children and adolescents are beset by problems not only of an abnormal kind but also of their own normal development. ( p. 12)

Conceding that the abilities to read, write, speak and calculate are important, the Report suggested that much of the specialised study taking place in schools “could well be postponed till later and replaced by concerns of socialisation and of healthy society” (p.15). This sentence alone was guaranteed to prompt unease from the

entire conservative spectrum since curriculum “frills” were frequently cited as the reason for falling academic standards, a position endorsed by John Graham, Principal of the prestigious Auckland Grammar School, whose media comments were also printed in the *CPA Newsletter*.<sup>8</sup> The physical aspects of healthy development, stated the Johnson Report, should involve “organising medical and social services in a network, with the school as its focus” (p. 12). It conceded however that the “new school” required certain organisational structures and responses including the promotion of a healthy school climate, which implied a guidance-centred approach, changes to the selection process for trainees entering teachers’ colleges, and the content of in-service and pre-service training and school policies aimed at increasing community participation and fostering parent education. How each of these elements might contribute to each school’s organisational structure was spelled out.

### ***The “new” school - School climate and guidance networks***

The Report reiterated the theme that schools needed to replace over-emphasis on academic performance with a warm student-centred school climate, since “we do not approve of schools where success tends to be measured only in terms of academic ‘pass rates’ and victory in approved sports”. The system, it asserted, should be “adjusted to the child not the child to the system” ( p. 20). Such adjustment was to be achieved through parent, staff and student cooperation and partnership within school communities, through health and social education, including human development, being disseminated throughout the curriculum and through school guidance systems aimed at promoting “ the educational, vocational and personal growth of students” in order to help them “cope with the social and personal disruption which characterizes present-day society” (p. 25). The Johnson Report’s discussion on guidance networks thus furthered the Department’s new

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<sup>8</sup> A number of John Graham’s comments were reprinted in the *CPA Newsletter* of July 1977, in which he blamed attempts to introduce social education for falling academic standards. Following his retirement in the 1990s, Graham went to Hillary College, which was then experiencing falling rolls and management problems. He was subsequently reported as stating that he had changed his mind over the primacy of academic achievement over other kinds of learning (author’s recall).



policy on guidance systems in which Renwick, Print, and Wadsworth had been involved.

Within the construct of guidance the Report also presented a model of a “developmental educative preventive system” that involved mobilizing the guidance network around the student, who then becomes more enabled and more motivated to learn. The curricular elements of this learning network are to include self-knowledge, relationships, behaviour, responsibilities and critical thinking. This is the closest the Johnson Report came to discussion of “deviant” and reluctant learners. As with the Currie Report, the school was seen as the residuary legatee of neglected social obligations, because of “unstable family relationships, lack of controls in the home, and general social maladjustment” (p. 25) and because the school population reflects “the social and personal disruption which characterises present day society ... reflected in the primary school age by truancy, vandalism, delinquency ... at the secondary school level [by] truancy, sexual promiscuity, pregnancy, vandalism, violence, drug taking, criminal offending, depression and suicide” ( p. 26). Although issues were labelled rather than individuals, the need for a guidance-based school system was justified in this paragraph of declaratory prose that could have come from either the Mazengarb Report or a CPA newsletter, revealing that the Committee’s stance on “basic values” was essentially conservative.

The Johnson Report also suggested how the roles and personal qualities of principals and teachers should contribute to the warm, family-based climate of the “new school”. Principals, it stated, should not merely be professionally competent but also charismatic, with the “ability to lead and inspire”, while teachers should be professionally trained to offer “caring, imperturbable and considerate support to their students” (p. 23). The role of parents within this warm supportive school climate was to be one of “educational partnership”, whereby parents would be assisted to “enhance the self-image of their children and to develop their own knowledge and skill as mothers and fathers” (p. 24). In this suggestion the Johnson Report went beyond the McCombs Report in recommending parent education and education for parenthood. The systems within the new school “at all levels” would

support pupils with special needs by establishing “strong links with the support services which operate across the total community” (p. 27). These services would include the Department’s Psychological Service which, the report recommended, should be further developed to work in the classroom, using a guidance teacher approach.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Teacher training for the “new” school***

The key to the kinds of changes being espoused in the new school lay not only in parent-school cooperation but also in teacher education and the “fostering and extending of ‘human’ skills in teachers” (p. 50). The Johnson Report stated that both pre-service and in-service levels of training needed attention and that pre-service selection procedures should favour young men and women of 25 to 30 years over school leavers, on the grounds of their “greater maturity” and because “other life experiences should be taken into account as well as academic performance” (p. 50). An emphasis on the personal qualities of teachers permeated this discussion. At both pre-service and in-service levels professional development, stated the Report, should include the “interpersonal skills of empathy, respect, genuineness, clarity and openness” (p. 51), constructs that were favoured among counsellors of that time. It recommended that professional studies at pre-service level include “...a detailed study of human development ... child psychology, plus an awareness of the application of this knowledge in the classroom ... health education, including human development and relationships... and understanding of the values held by minority groups and their customs” (p. 51). In-service training was to “extend” and deepen “human” skills in teachers, in order to further professional growth “in relation to their role in the personal and social development of the pupils” ( p. 52). The Report also recommended special training for principals in order that they might develop “skill in the fields of relationships, delegation, communication, cultural respect and all aspects of

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<sup>9</sup> Between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s Guidance Classes with specially trained teachers were situated in selected schools to serve a population cluster. The role of the guidance class was to work with students and their classroom teachers on behavioural and learning related issues.

supportive management” (p. 52). Advanced courses in health and social education for teachers and the co-ordination of all advisory services — inspectors, vocational guidance officers, advisers, curriculum development officers, and visiting teachers were also advocated.

### ***The “new” school within the community***

The new school, suggested the Report, should also be one of increased community participation including “second chance education,” “community programmes” and an increase in the “community use of schools” (p. 87). It asserted the need for parenthood education for “both” parents, to be coordinated by a proposed council on health and social education but delivered within the local school community. Such programmes, it was envisaged, could offer courses about relationships “within marriage”, about the developmental needs of children, and about the handling of children at different stages of their growth. Through such programmes, parents would receive the support that in former times was provided by the “extended family”. While the assumption was made that “both parents” will be present in children’s lives, the Report’s rhetoric was careful not to condemn working mothers, citing that there is “no evidence that children suffer from having several mother-figures while stable relationships and good care are provided by each ... no reason to believe that the use of day nurseries, or creches, has a harmful long-term effect ” ( p. 55).

The Johnson Report’s section on community involvement and parental influence echoed some of the CPA’s concerns about society. In relation to drugs, alcohol and tobacco it stated that while the school “must give positive education in these areas parents by both their own example and their involvement in education, must also play a greater leadership role” (p. 72). It also opined that it was essential for the health of a community to have “a philosophy which includes a distaste for, and aversion to, aggression and violence in any form” (p. 73), concluding that the amount of television violence should be reduced. The Report found the issue of truancy to be complex.

The evidence seems to suggest that both legal and illegal absences from school are frequently no more than the symptoms of complex socio-educational problems which so far neither the school authorities, parents, the courts nor society as a whole have been able to deal with" (p.74).

Effective school checking systems and a more severe attitude towards defaulting parents were the recommended remedies. Each school, suggested the Report, should analyse and modify its own philosophy and curriculum to satisfy the needs of its pupils, in order to keep them motivated to attend. What the Johnson Report had to say on community involvement reflected the EDC report, *Improving Learning and Teaching* (1974) which stated that education emphasising "learning about living and the quality of life implies definition of what constitutes quality – a definition inescapably linked with the community of which the student is part [that] should participate in defining qualities which the school should reflect" (p. 87). In its discussion of the "new school" the Johnson Report articulated what was already being favoured within the policy community and had been expressed in both *Parent-School Communication* (1973) and the McCombs Report.

## **IMPLEMENTATION – MORE BUREAUCRACY**

The Johnson Committee gave some consideration to the structural mechanisms by which the "new school" might be resourced towards its objective of community partnership. Its answer was a bureaucratic structure linked to Head Office for the implementation of new policies that would follow its recommendations, as well as for resource preparation and curriculum monitoring. In this it anticipated that the *modus operandi* of the CDU would continue. Continuing interdepartmental liaison was envisaged with the setting up of fourteen regional councils, each with a regional education officer and the services of a professional publicity agency, each consisting of representatives from government departments and voluntary organisations, and interested groups. Each regional council's duties would be to assess the region's priorities and decide on suitable

programmes and the most appropriate means for administering them. A national council of health and social education, with an annual budget, but independent of government, would allocate funds to the regions.

Two other groups were recommended — a curriculum team within the Department to provide resources and assist with in-service training, and an inter-departmental Committee representing relevant government departments. At this time health was still not a stand-alone curriculum subject, although it had received considerable CDU attention during the first half of the 1970s with health education advisors scattered throughout the country. Again the Johnson Report can be seen to be furthering the Department's hegemonic agenda. In these structural recommendations however it did nothing to challenge the existing hierarchical model of power relations within the school system. Renwick articulated these issues in relation to the position of subject teachers in the secondary schools.

If you think particularly of secondary schools the subjects are the dominant components. Then you have another group of teachers, in the arts generally, who have regarded themselves as being second-class citizens in many respects [and ] a third group of teachers who also regard themselves as not being of any particular status in the way secondary schools are run. Nevertheless because their contributions are so important they have to be recognised and the Johnson Report pulls all of them together and starts to say to the system and to the country ' Here are things that have to be done'. Now that gave them a sort of a banner but it didn't actually change their power relations in the school system. (Renwick, Int.)

Among the teachers without such status during the 1970s were those working in special needs. The Johnson Report did however refer throughout its discussion to the educational rights of children with special needs, invoking the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child. It recommended increasing support services for special needs learners and lowering the pupil-teacher ratio in special classes. In line with the current departmental policy which was then moving towards "mainstreaming" prior to the "inclusion" movement, the Report stated that children with special needs should join existing preschools and schools and that, if necessary, special educational facilities should be located within ordinary schools.

## **CHANGE, NOT REFORM**

Throughout the Johnson Report's discussion the image of schooling presented was personalistic, humanistic and liberal, and yet, it can be seen that it also reflected some of the anxieties of the RR. Despite the expression of a bicultural dimension the predominant values are monocultural and patriarchal, and the espoused values mainly Judaeo Christian (p. 32). The Report endorsed the need for order within society and its vision of change does not embrace institutional reform despite the image of the "new school". Its goals of biculturalism and personal development within a community climate of aroha are still seen as the individual's goals, with the implication that change on a personal level will lead to a more caring society. The Freirean construct of conscientisation can be seen in the Report, but tentatively and not in a manner that represented a challenge to the status quo. The traditional nuclear family is still the norm, expressed in such phrases such as "the problem of the solo-parent home" ( p 54) and "delinquency is strongly associated with broken marriages" (p. 55). Such comments suggest cultural reproduction rather than transformation. And yet a transformative image of schooling can also be discerned in the coming together of an holistic and bicultural basis for curriculum development and the recommended opening of the "new school' to community influence. Such paradoxes illustrate some of the psychological tensions in this period of social change as experienced by individuals living through these events. It seems likely that the middle aged, mainly male, members of the Johnson Committee were themselves grappling conceptually with issues raised by feminism, sole parenthood, abortion and homosexuality.

## **GENDER ISSUES**

As might be expected in the context of such paradoxes the Johnson Report also handled gender issues tentatively and ambiguously. Under the heading

“equality of opportunity” a somewhat confused rhetoric emerged revealing both an ignorance of the complexity of gender issues as articulated by second wave feminism and a traditional view of gender-based work roles. A patriarchal view is implicit in the references to the traditional nuclear family (pp. 12, 54, 55). But there is also an emergent expression of awareness of the need for change in educational gender practices.

A girl must realise that it is possible to be a leader without losing an intrinsic femininity and boys must understand that they are not threatened with ... a loss of masculinity because a girl happens to have undertaken a leadership role. The small number of women in the decision and policy making areas of workaday life has caused many able girls and women to fail to qualify themselves to take such leadership in many fields. This is seen even at school where girls do not often occupy positions as head of the school council, chair student Committees, and so on. Changes are occurring and girls are able, but not enthusiastically encouraged, to undertake training or studies which will qualify them for careers previously only undertaken by boys. (p. 83)

The Report also talked of promoting a “wholesome interaction in society between men and women”, and the need for schools to “reflect the partnership between the sexes, with both able to undertake responsibility in equal measure”. The desirability of a common school programme for boys and girls was noted. Nevertheless the Committee reiterated the importance of “home-making and motherhood” as “a dignified and honourable career preference” (p.83).

Notwithstanding our concern for equality of opportunity which would give women more choice to decide their own life-styles, we believe that domesticity and the role of wife and mother will be the natural choice of many women and they should not be made to feel inadequate because of this ... The Committee is aware that many women are able to exercise their capabilities by voluntary work in the health and social field and it is doubtful if society as we know it would be viable without such work. ( p. 83)

There had been no strong feminist voice on the Committee to challenge gender stereotyping although at one point in the Committee’s formation the Principal of

Waitaki Girls' High School, Roz Heinz, had been nominated for membership. Her appointment would have brought a feminist dimension to the internal debate but would possibly also have threatened the emergent consensus then in process. Perhaps this was known within the Department, contributing to the reason she was not selected. The Report's conservatism is illustrated further in its comment on the subject of deviant role models, as portrayed on television. There is, it stated, "no place for 'anti-establishment heroes'" within the state curriculum (p. 34). Although there was surprisingly little feminist comment on the Report at that time Marijke Robinson (1978) was alert to the Report's gender inconsistencies, challenging its assertion that there must be no "anti-establishment heroes". Such a comment, she stated, was a "don't rock the establishment" attitude that permeated both the sections of the report on parent education and on equality of the sexes, upholding a conservative position and creating inconsistency in the Report's apparently liberal stance.

Bringing about real equality ... will need a re-definition of the role of men, a drastic change in male lifestyles, a considerable lessening of male power, changes in the times and conditions of work structures, and a greater involvement of the state in the lives of children. These may indeed be among the "radical views" which, according to the Report, at present polarize the sexes. Nevertheless, I do not believe that education for parenthood, or parent education, will be of any value to anyone if these issues are not discussed. (Robinson, 1978, p.30)

In a retrospective feminist analysis of the Johnson Report Anne-Marie O'Neill (1996) made the point that whereas the Thomas and Currie Reports were concerned with meritocratic objectives — the former with aptitude for entry into the labour market and citizenship within a stratified order, and the latter with the economic efficiency of meritocracy — the Johnson Report "signalled a discursive shift in the relations of education."

It was the first state acknowledgment of the centrality of educational results or outcomes as indicative of equality, as opposed to the earlier emphasis on access. Such results were seen to be closely linked to the quality of the educational content and experiences of young people at



school and the subsequent development of their psychological wellbeing. The report acknowledged that such factors were related to the nature of wider social conditions. (O'Neill, 1996, p. 51)

O'Neill criticised the Report for its failure to articulate an understanding of the intrinsic nature of inequity in terms of gender roles, and of the nature of power relations in terms of the education system's institutionalised mediation of power. Despite its acknowledgement of discrimination towards women, she argued, the Johnson Report endorsed traditional conceptions of masculinity and femininity.

It suggested that within the bounds of traditional masculinity, men could fulfil child rearing functions, but was careful not to question the content of masculinity or femininity or the sexual division of labour or the detachment or downgrading of women's association with domesticity. Indeed it openly acknowledged the necessity of unpaid work to the maintenance of contemporary society ... Equality was desirable but this should not imply any change to the traditional patterns of gender interaction ... Thus the Johnson Committee gave superficial acknowledgment to the changes in gender relations taking place in New Zealand society ... The ideological and structural barriers to women's employment and the entrenched sexism of many home and school environments; the very concerns that the liberation movement sought to highlight, were ignored in the analysis this Report presented. (O'Neill, 1996, p. 61)

This position is hard to refute. The movement towards gender equity articulated in the Johnson Report was tentative but O'Neill wrote from the perspective of twenty years' hindsight and the pervasiveness of gender inequity would not have been evident to members of the Johnson Committee within the matrix of their own personal histories. The only other feminist comment of 1978 came from Dr Margaret Sparrow, Senior Medical Officer of the Wellington FPA, a venereologist at Wellington Hospital, who queried whether contraception was "really an issue?" as the Johnson Report's had suggested by discussing it within the section on "controversial issues".

Also disappointing is the discussion on equality of opportunity – a token page to women, which reflects the male dominance on the Committee. We

are told that motherhood can be the most fulfilling role in human living. Other capabilities can be expressed in vital voluntary work! This belief that domesticity is a 'natural choice' must be challenged. (Sparrow, 1978, pp. 19-20)

Referring to the Report's recommendations on sex education Sparrow lamented that repeal of the Police Offences Act section on sex education is unlikely in view of the fate of the CSA Bill, and the fact that this had also been recommended by the Statutes Revision Committee in 1974 and endorsed by the Women's Rights Committee in 1975.

Apart from the issue of gender, most of the academic commentary that followed the Johnson Report's release was occupied with the topic of values teaching and the issue of teacher neutrality in relation to this.

## **CRITIQUES – VALUES TEACHING AND TEACHER NEUTRALITY**

As well as the Religious Right, academics were among those who scrutinised the Johnson Report in relation to its discourse on moral and values education. Throughout the Report it had been suggested that classroom teachers, with training, could undertake values teaching from a relatively neutral stance, and this had been the thrust of Ivan Snook's inaugural address to the Committee. Others however questioned such assumptions, suggesting, as did Cooper (1978), that values and "norms" needed to be more closely examined and finding a lack of clarity in the Report's underlying assumptions about educational aims and "desirable educational practice." "Notions such as 'healthy growth and development', and 'need' presuppose a norm but do not say what should be aimed at" (p. 24).

A major confusion in the religious section is between teaching about morality, religion and values and actually teaching them. The former could become part of a worthwhile liberal education, but the latter could become a commitment to specific beliefs. ... the latter could become insinuated into the curriculum in the guise of the former. (Cooper, 1978, p. 20-25)

Bates (1978) accused the Committee of confusing socialisation with social education. It was, he stated, “little more than an impressionistic tour de force”.

Bates pointed out that submissions suggesting knowledge of law, civil liberties, consumer protection and the nature of the workplace were essential for social education but had been largely ignored by the Committee. In this he was making the incorrect assumption that there had indeed been many submissions on these issues. John Codd (1978) described the report as “dangerously ambivalent” on the question of the neutrality of teachers in values education.

The report says that teachers owe it to the students to acknowledge their own personal viewpoint when challenged, but they must ensure that values accepted by the school and community, in partnership, are strongly emphasized. New Zealanders are too inclined to equate democracy with consensus.....Democratic values education does not need to produce a shared set of beliefs, but it should produce a dialogue of informed views, governed by the principles of impartiality, objectivity and inter-personal respect. It is for these principles that the teacher should stand. ( pp. 30-39)

David Shields, from the University of Waikato, lamented the prose in which the report was written for its lack of clarity over the issue of values teaching and thus its potential to provide support for the lobby of the RR.

There is something rather sad in wading through the peripheral aspects of a report to come to the core – moral, spiritual and values education – and find it so unenlightened, so uninformative, and so badly written... We are encouraged by Mr. Gandar’s introduction to believe that the document may stimulate discussion. I am sure it may. What matters however is the level of the discussion ... it performs an active disservice to education by encouraging a blanket of verbal vapourising which may give the impression of meaningful debate, but which at the end leaves us even more exposed to the self-interested machinations of the pressure groups.<sup>10</sup>

The general consensus of academics was that the rhetoric of the Report was somewhat woolly and obscurantist, though none traced the historic issues related to

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<sup>10</sup> Shields, D. “ Report on HSE seen as failure.” Article in *Waikato Times* (U ndated). (Author’s file).

the Department's hegemonic agenda that had led to setting up the Committee. Liberals were looking for exciting new policy directions that they failed to discern.

Rex Dalzell (1979) wrote a master's thesis on the Johnson Report using discourse analysis to condemn its utility as a policy document on the grounds of "conceptual confusions", "ambiguities" and lack of "specificity".

The imprecise and confused manner in which the Committee presents its deliberations has had the effect of obscuring the intent of what it has had to say. It has been shown to be confused in its statements on values education and its prescription for dealing with controversial issues has been shown to be inadequate. With reference to spiritual education, its proposals, insofar as they can be interpreted, have likewise been shown to suffer from similar limitations ... Rather than explaining the basis for its own views and explaining the rationale for rejecting the various criticism that have been made of the Ross report proposals, it has largely avoided them and seems to have assumed that its own declarations merit unquestioning acceptance. (Dalzell, 1979, p. 73).

Since discourse analysis requires meaning to be totally encapsulated within the text presented, without reference to its historical context, it is unsurprising that Dalzell's search for coherence was unrewarding. Neither his nor any of these commentaries suggest that the bicultural element of the Report was comprehended. John Codd saw in the Johnson Report a "personalistic image" of schooling, "a kind of antidote to the dehumanizing ethos that accompanied the technocratic image" — an image which "evolved around the notions of 'personal experience', 'subjective meaning' and 'human relationships'" (Codd, 1985, p. 29). In the New Zealand context, he suggested, this personalistic model "found its first adherents within the discourse of primary and early childhood education during the 1950s", and in the next decade gained "expression in discussions and documents relating to the secondary school."

By the mid 1970s the rhetoric almost reaches a crescendo, firstly in the Report of the Committee on Secondary Education where it is explicitly stated that: 'The secondary school of tomorrow should be a humane institution' ... then, one year later the Johnson Committee on Health and

Social Education repudiated what it called the 'learning factory' concept of the school ... In a torrent of persuasive prose the Report of the Committee on HSE projects an image of 'a new type of school' whose climate is 'warm', 'open' and 'supportive'. (Codd, 1985, p. 29)

It is an image of schooling, suggested Codd, drawn from existential psychology which assumes that "worthwhile change must recognize the primacy of the individual, the power of emotions...a view of schooling imbued with interpretative rationality in which the concepts of intentionality and intersubjective understanding are central." Central to such a model is an assumption of the "shared meanings and empathic understanding that exists between the people who dwell in particular institutions rather than on the administrative processes and established social structures that characterise those institutions" (p. 29). In Codd's view the problem of such a model lay in the fact that it ignored the "structural aspects of social relations based on power and status", focussing exclusively on the psychological aspects of human experience. In ignoring the political dimensions of schooling the personalistic image thus tended to "preserve the status quo and give conservative endorsement to existing social arrangements" ( p. 30). Thus positive change from such an image tended to be confined to pedagogy.

It may well lead to the humanising of bureaucratic procedures. It may enable some management strategies to become more efficient, because they are more palatable; it may lubricate the interpersonal links in the organisational chain of command- but it will do little to transform the social context in which education occurs ... [it] represents a romantic form of liberalism which can give the appearance of subverting the schools' capacity to meet the productive requirements of a segmented labour market. This explains why such liberalism finds some of its strongest critics amongst the conservative proponents of what has come to be called the back-to-basics movement. (Codd, 1985, pp. 30-31)

The analysis of the Johnson Report undertaken in this chapter supports Codd's argument regarding its predominantly personalistic image and lack of challenge to power structures within schools. However it has also been argued here that in its vision of a health curriculum developed with, within, and for, a wider community

than the physical boundaries of the school and in its bicultural discourse, the Johnson Report also contained a tentative emergent transformative view of schooling.

In the subsequent context of the controversy the RR lobby sifted through the writings and media reports of academics for local “expert” opinion that would lend support to its own arguments and, as will be subsequently shown, it initially found the views of Ivan Snook most compatible.

### **CONSENSUS, BUT NO “BLUEPRINT” FOR ACTION**

Some of the critique, such as that of Dalzell, was directed at the Johnson Report’s failure to produce “a blueprint” for curriculum development. This phrase, which did not appear in the terms of reference, was taken from the comment made by Johnson at the time the Report was passed to the Minister, in which he stated that the Committee had “endeavoured in the light of its terms of reference, to produce a blueprint for action in the realm of health and social education” (Johnson Report, p. 3). In this comment he was referring to the Planner’s Guide (Johnson, Int.), but the word “blueprint” was taken up as a standard by which to evaluate the Report itself. “The close scrutiny to which the Committee’s blueprint in this area has been subjected has revealed, yet again, major problems” (Dalzell, 1979, p.40). The Planner’s Guide (see Appendix vi) was the Committee’s effort at providing an exemplar for schools to use in developing their own programmes in health and social education, described in the Report as an attempt to unravel the major stands of health and social education. “These strands are related and interwoven and such unravelling may not be necessary in teaching ... Each strand develops vertically downwards ... the level at which the topics are treated should meet the needs, readiness and maturity of the students concerned” (p. 90). In keeping with the Report’s developmental perspective the Planner’s Guide showed a continuum of topics sequenced in content at different developmental levels from early childhood through to adulthood, grouped under the headings “healthy living”, “personal development” and “family and social living”. The Report stressed that the guide

was not to be considered a programme since programme development was seen as the responsibility of each school-parent community. As was stated in Chapter Six, there was no text on the loosely-inserted Planner's Guide to link it with the Johnson Report. It was most likely most often mislocated and lost. In subsequent debate no mention was made of the lift-out Planner's Guide.

That the Johnson Report represented the consensus of the Committee was revealed in the comments of members who were interviewed and in a letter from Johnson to the Secretary of the Committee for the Defence of Secular Education, Jack Mulheron, in which he explained, in Pākehā terms Māori cultural practice relating to decision making.

As Chairman I determined right from the outset of the Committee's work, with agreement from the Committee, that no votes would be taken but matters would be talked out till consensus was reached. Thus no matters on which consensus was not reached are included in the final report. Our Committee endeavoured to practise what we preach.<sup>11</sup>

It was partly this consultative process that had driven Peter McIntosh to resign from the Committee. However, it was the opinion of the remaining members that the Report represented consensus over the range of concerns given in the terms of reference. "The breadth of it was tremendous. The whole bloody lot was there" (Dallow, Int.). "I thought they'd never had a dog show of getting anywhere with that [the spiritual element], but it came out and it was defined too ... Wairua but nothing denominational" (Wadsworth, Int.). The term was defined perhaps for those who had taken part in the Committee's discussions but not in a way that was easily digested by readers who had not participated in that process. Apart from its list of recommendations (see Appendix v) the Johnson Report's clearest statement was the overlooked Planner's Guide which provided one example of how its holistic, humanistic, bicultural rationale might translate into curriculum.

The educational bureaucracy must have realised at this stage that the Johnson Report was unlikely to provide an easy platform from which to frame policy regarding sex education. The nebulous terms of reference had allowed too

much scope for the Committee to follow its members' interests in exploring ideas. While the Department of Health's longstanding issues had been addressed, without an inspection of the Planner's Guide, the Report's rhetoric provided only vague guidelines for the public on what should be included in a curriculum on health and social education. Readers looked to the Report's seventy one recommendations to clarify what the Committee was saying and in the main found little to object to. Clauses 2.21 and 2.22 on the spiritual dimension and 2.23 on sex education, however were another matter, and afforded reason enough for the controversy that ensued.

## SUMMARY

It has been suggested in this chapter that the Johnson Report made a number of assumptions regarding the accessibility of its arguments on moral and spiritual education by the general public, and that its rationale was grounded in the Hillary College model developed by the Chairman. What had been achieved in Hillary College lent support to Johnson's belief that such processes of change might be possible in all communities, and Committee members were receptive to this notion. The Johnson Report presented a vision of a bicultural and, to a lesser extent, multicultural society in which lifespan health services centred on the local school which disseminated them throughout that community in a process involving consultation and shared decision-making. The effect of these local microcosm initiatives, it was suggested, would ripple across the macrocosm of the nation, creating a healthier population. Current undesirable societal trends such as drug, alcohol, tobacco use, truancy, obesity and violence were seen as being best addressed by a combination of informative educational programmes at a range of developmental levels from early childhood, education for parenting and parent education, in which the school also played a key role. In this context of community endeavour, spiritual and moral values revolved around concepts of caring and

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<sup>11</sup> Letter from Johnson to Mulheron, Secretary of the Committee for the Defence of Secular Education, May 10, 1979, Alexander Turnbull Library. Ref. No: 97-035-20/1



aroha inclusive of the whole community. In this respect the Report can be seen to have transformative elements. In the context of such a vision sex education was simply a part, since an holistic liberal educational philosophy does not view it as an issue that can be separated from education for healthy human relationships and therefore community wellbeing, as suggested in Chapter Two. There was therefore, in the words of one Johnson Committee member, “little to debate”. While this may have been true of the Committee however it was certainly not the view of the RR. The Johnson Committee’s terms of reference had been written to encompass the historic concerns of the Departments of Education, Health and Police. The issue of sex education was however “really the nub” of the matter (Renwick, Int.).

On reading the Report it would have been clear to the CPA that the Johnson Committee had been a mechanism to pursue the hegemonic aims of the liberal policy community. The fact that its Report was a paradoxical mix of conservatism and utopianism, doing little to challenge existing institutional education power structures, was little consolation. The fact that it proposed an additional semiautonomous bureaucratic health education council was simply seen as strengthening the *modus operandi* of the liberal CDU.

A reading of the Report’s clause 2.23 endorsement of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on CSA would also have proved to the CPA that the Department’s agenda in setting up the Johnson Committee had been to further the “Ross Report’s” earlier recommendation to remove the legal proscription on sex education in primary schools.

The apprehension and lobbying that had marked the Johnson Report’s period of preparation was now intensified. In Chapter Nine it will be shown how the controversy developed in the context of public submissions on the Report’s content.



## **SUBMISSIONS, LOBBYING AND DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITY**

Debate on the CSA Bill, and the dropping of its Clause 56 on the place of sex education in schools, had indicated to the Department of Education the need for ongoing caution. In this climate of apprehension it was necessary for the Department to be seen continuing the process of public consultation prior to any future policy development. In November 1977 Gandar released the Johnson Report to the public, calling for submissions on its recommendations. In collating and interpreting public opinion, he stated, the role of the Department of Education would be “essentially consultative and advisory”.

In association with officers of other government departments and of the Departments of Health and Social Welfare in particular it will assist the Government and the public in clarifying the issues at stake ... The Department of Education will have the responsibility of collating all comments on the Report of the Committee on HSE ... The department’s advice to me on the recommendations of the Report of the Committee on HSE, in the light of public comment on them will itself be released to the general public.<sup>1</sup>

That the Department was picking its way delicately in the aftermath of the CSA Bill is indicated in the same Ministerial circular which stated that audio-visual materials on human development provided to schools by the Department’s National Film Library would be reviewed by a specially appointed panel. Existing pilot programmes on sex education in primary and secondary schools were also to cease during the period of public consultation on the Johnson Report and while contraceptive advice to young people was still illegal under the Police Offences Act of 1954 that had followed the moral panic over the

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<sup>1</sup> Ministerial circular 4789/D-77PT 1977, p. 4. National Archives ABEP 4262, 17/3/30/3. Box 860.

Mazengarb Report. Out-of-school hours programmes, known as “mother and daughter” and “father and son” evenings would be permitted to continue, the main speakers at these evenings being Health Department personnel. Members of the public now turned their attention to the Johnson Report.

During the three-month delay from the time the Johnson Report was presented to Minister Les Gandar and its release however, Gandar lost his parliamentary seat to the Social Credit candidate for Rangiteiki following a rearrangement of electoral boundaries and Mr. Merv Wellington became the new Minister of Education.

This chapter will examine the tenor of the submissions that followed the Johnson Report’s release, showing how the lobbying of both the Religious Right and liberals further polarised debate. It will be argued that the policy community worked under increasing pressure and public scrutiny in its attempts to assert some hegemony in the matter of sex education. It worked within a climate of social flux in which the earlier liberal optimism of 1970s’ educationalists was being increasingly tempered by National Government policies and a new Minister of Education.

The submission phase that followed the Report’s release resulted in a renewed outpouring of opinion from liberals and conservatives alike most of which was directed at clause 2.23 of the Johnson Report that recommended the repeal of Section 2 (1) (b) of the Police Offences Amendment Act of 1954 forbidding sex education in the primary school. In relation to these events and with reference to moral panic theory a new concept, *moral cathexis*, will be introduced in this chapter to explain the effectiveness of the RR lobby.

As has been shown in the cartoons presented previously, the media had an interest in the Johnson Report but it has already been suggested that the media did not play a defining role in the pursuit of deviance, as is characteristic of moral panics. The Media did however contribute to the attenuation of the controversy and it will be shown subsequently that media interest lasted beyond 1980. The part played by newspapers and television will be pursued in greater depth in Chapter Ten but during the period of submissions of between

1978 and 1979 sustained media interest was an ongoing thread of the events of the controversy described in this chapter.

## **MEDIA SPECULATION DURING THE PERIOD OF WAITING**

During the period of waiting newspapers, television and radio interviews had kept the issues simmering. The phrases “sex education” and “moral education” made good headlines, allowing the Johnson Report to be revisited on slack news days. At the time of the Report’s release there was a flurry of media hype, both in newspapers and on television which continued through to 1979. Everyone with an interest in the issues wanted to know how the new Minister, Merv Wellington, intended to proceed on the Report’s recommendations. A news item in the *Auckland Star* stated:

The Minister of Education, Mr. Wellington, has received 1266 submissions on The Johnson Report, 806 from organisations and groups and 440 from individuals, filling 25 files standing 1.5 metres high – but will go on receiving comments until July 15 [1979]. The Education Department, which has been collating and analyzing the public’s comments, will then report to him and he will consider the next steps to be taken in dealing with the report and its recommendations.<sup>2</sup>

On the Report’s release the CPA began a campaign in its newsletter, encouraging supporters to make submissions, but there were plenty of people on both sides of the ideological continuum willing to express their opinions either in a letter to a newspaper editor or on talk-back radio. Some, including (Elliot-Hogg (1978a), the New Zealand Employers’ Federation, and the Humanist Education Service (1979) released their submissions concurrently to newspapers as did J. and D. Sharp whose submission to the Minister was published in Wellington’s *Dominion*.

Sociologically the Johnson Report makes repeated reference to the proliferate benefits to be accrued through ‘sharing’, regardless of what

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<sup>2</sup> News report in the *Auckland Star*, April 24, 1979. (author’s file)

guide such a concept is presented in. Carefully teased out it becomes apparent that this rather euphemistic concept is merely a mellifluous appellation for 'social control' ... The pervading tacit doctrine being advocated is a prescription for increased social control per medium of the school.<sup>3</sup>

Submissions finally totalled 2,800, A summary of their main themes reveals the extent to which views were polarised, and the range of ideological positions defined in Chapter Two. As explained in Chapter Three it was not possible to locate all of the submissions on the Johnson Report since they appear to have been destroyed at the time the Department became the Ministry of Education.<sup>4</sup> While some were given to the researcher by Johnson Committee members, in the following discussion the analysis of the Report made by Link Consultancy Ltd has been used as the main secondary source of information on submissions.<sup>5</sup>

## **SUBMISSIONS ON THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL EDUCATION**

As with submissions to the Johnson Committee during its working phase, some made on the finally released Report focussed on a single issue while others ranged across a variety of topics. The state's role in socialising the young through the agency of the school was a recurring theme and Colin McGeorge (1978) remarked upon the difficulty in trying to find common ground on these issues.

Some hold that the schools should take a hand in moral education because the churches' influence is waning; others consider moral education itself a threat to religious belief. There are parrot-cries of

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<sup>3</sup> Letter to the Editor from J and D Sharp. *Dominion* October 31, 1978. (Author's file)..

<sup>4</sup> This was the belief of Jock Crawford whose job it was to collate submissions for the Department. "Whereas the Johnson Committee had received only 122 submission during its working phase the report itself attracted almost three thousand stacked in boxes from floor to ceiling taking up almost the whole of a departmental office" (Crawford, Int.).

<sup>5</sup> An analysis of public submissions on the Johnson Report was requested by the Minister, Merv Wellington. This was undertaken by Link Consultancy Ltd and is discussed in some detail in Chapter Ten.

“indoctrination” if God is mentioned and “humanism” if He is not.  
(McGeorge, 1978, p. 12)

Submissions, and the activity surrounding these, will be grouped and discussed here under the following headings:

1. Responses of the Religious Right and the conservative-right.
2. Responses from national organisations
3. Responses from liberal citizens and groups
4. Responses from the educational community of interest

These headings are somewhat arbitrary since many of the submissions made by national organisations and the educational community were liberal in content. Nevertheless there are some distinctive aspects of each group that have dictated this organisation.

## **1. THE RESPONSE OF THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT AND OTHER CONSERVATIVE GROUPS**

The substance of the CPA submission both to the Committee and to the Minister on the Report has been discussed in Chapter Seven. It centred around its rejection of “primary socialisation” as a major function of the school. One of the issues reiterated was that of the rights of parents to withdraw their children from classes where they did not approve of the content. In its clause 2.27 in the section on “the spiritual dimension in education”, the Johnson Report had recommended that “a parent who, after consultation with the principal and being made aware of the agreed programme contents, still believes that the programme is not in the best interests of his child, has the right to withdraw his child” (p 40). This however left CPA members with the vexed issue of how to monitor such content when it was diffused throughout the curriculum through teaching methods based on a humanist doctrine. The CPA submission on the Johnson Report therefore included a demand for the CDU to

prepare discrete units of curriculum that could be examined by parents for contentious material, prior to their issue to schools.

The phenomenon of the “copycat” submission was a feature of the RR campaign. This lobby tactic was adopted from the American NRR, and also used by Rev. K. J. Campbell of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in New Zealand. Campbell’s submission on the Johnson Report was a printed 10-page booklet, released simultaneously to the media, exhorting citizens to oppose the entire report on the grounds of its “godless totalitarianism”. Campbell’s readers were urged “to act, to write to the Minister of Education, to their local members of Parliament, to local newspapers and to their friends and neighbours.” To this end he supplied content for others to include in their submissions. Sympathisers were urged to express concern about the “State’s encroachment” over:

... the God given privilege and responsibility which belongs to parents alone of educating their children, especially in spiritual and moral values. This ground alone is sufficient for parents to oppose the recommendations made by the Johnson Report. But, there is another ground which invalidates any justification the state school system may believe it has ... the absence of a value system which would be acceptable to all parents. There is only one value system acceptable to Bible believing parents, namely, the Law of God ... The report seeks to over-ride these two grounds, which invalidate its claims.<sup>6</sup>

Most submissions from the RR reproduced text from CPA newsletters and parts of the CPA’s original submission to the Johnson Committee.

One supporter, Mr. T. L. Waite of Hamilton, called on the government to “reject this ill-informed and irresponsible document completely,” stating that he was “opposed to controversial issues and teachers’ viewpoints on moral issues being taught in the classroom.” Waite requested that “the Act stating ‘there is

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<sup>6</sup> *The moral and spiritual education of children*. Submission of Rev. K. J. Campbell to the Minister of Education on the Johnson Report’s recommendations, p. 2. (Author’s file)..



no place for sex education in the primary school' be retained."<sup>7</sup> An almost identical letter was sent to the Minister by Mrs. A. M. Caress of Christchurch, who added her "objection to primary socialisation, spiritual dimension, morals, sex, and religion in schools."<sup>8</sup> Another with sections of identical comment came from E.J. Thomas of Christchurch who stated that "both the Johnson and Ross reports were engineered to justify the manipulation of vast amounts of education funds for non educational and left wing rackets."<sup>9</sup> A submission from the Moreau Catholic College Board of Governors lamented "at no stage did the Johnson Committee attempt to define any of its terms, leaving the way open for multiple interpretation over which there can be no control."<sup>10</sup> A Christchurch group called 'Integrity', stated its belief that only two major groups were making submissions on the report:

...radical folk with socialist ideas, intent to see our schools succumb to situational morals, Godless values, and an unspecified spiritual dimension on the one hand, and dedicated Christians who want to see God given back his rightful place in our country on the other.<sup>11</sup>

At St Luke's Church in Waikanae, the Reverend C. W. Haskell warned his congregation that "the Johnson Report seeks to inculcate a vague humanism which led to the rise of Hitler and other dictators."<sup>12</sup> As it was in the American text book and anti SIECUS campaigns, the pulpit was used in New Zealand to exhort supporters to crusade against "godlessness".

A letter from L. Roche to the *NZ Herald* illustrates the enmeshment of the Johnson Report controversy with the ongoing debate on student indiscipline, falling academic standards and changing methods of academic assessment. These were ongoing issues that had occupied the Currie

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<sup>7</sup> Letter in departmental file. Archives New Zealand ABEP w 4262, 17/3/30, Part 8, Box 855.

<sup>8</sup> Letter in departmental file. Archives New Zealand ABEP w 4262, 17/3/30, Part 8, Box 855.

<sup>9</sup> Letter in departmental file. Archives New Zealand ABEP w 4262, 17/3/30, Part 8, Box 855.

<sup>10</sup> Submission to the Minister of Education from Moreau College Board. (undated). (Author's file)..

<sup>11</sup> Both the Moreau College and the Integrity Group's submissions are cited in the Link Report, p.11.

<sup>12</sup> Copy of press report in *Kapiti Observer*, February 5, 1979. Alexander Turnbull Library. Ref. No. 87-181-11/13 Tapuhi IRN 599129 Public and Social Affairs Committee of the Church of Province of NZ, Wellington Diocese.

Commission. They would resurface in the 1980s in the context of the core curriculum review and were central to the cultural capital of the Religious Right.

New Zealand is out of step, ploughing on, though trends overseas are being reversed. The Johnson Report [recommends] that the role that has been expected of our schools throughout the whole of this country's history should be replaced by socialisation. What other country has taken such a drastic step? We need to rebuild a workable consensus on education. A start has been made with the formulation of the Educational Standards Association ... The consequences of irresponsible innovation in the area of social values are particularly grave, a fact well illustrated by present levels of indiscipline.<sup>13</sup>

### ***The New Zealand Employers' Federation –Curriculum concerns***

This theme was echoed by the New Zealand Employers' Federation (NZEF). Although it had not made a submission to the Johnson Committee, NZEF responded to the Report in a submission, released concurrently to the media on May 7, 1979, that attacked both the Committee and the education system for failing to prepare young people for working life. Its focus was declining standards of literacy and curricular orientations that "failed to ensure" the attainment of pre-vocational skills by school leavers.

The Committee appears to deny the responsibility of the school to enhance the conditions under which our youth will be better able to cope with the world of work is cause for concern for all employers ... Educational authorities and the community must accept that most secondary students will not continue on to university to pursue professional qualifications.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Submission on the *Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education*, by Lawrence Roche, printed in the *NZ Herald* on February 12, 1979. (Author's file).

<sup>14</sup> Submission on the Johnson Report to the Minister of Education, Mr Wellington, by the Employers' Federation, May 7, 1979. Archives new Zealand ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30. Box 855.

To this criticism Johnson responded through the *Auckland Star* with accusations of a superficial reading of the report.<sup>15</sup> The NZEF had an ongoing political lobby on educational issues. Its submission was therefore given serious consideration by the Department of Education as will be subsequently discussed. The Employers' Federation had its own agenda with regard to the state education system, having less to do specifically with the Johnson Report than with what Clarence Beeby (1992) described as an "educational myth" based on the Darwinian thesis of survival of the fittest — a myth on which Beeby claimed the structure of the New Zealand school system was based during the first three decades of the 20th century. It was, he stated, "the myth that, if the state gave a minimum of free elementary education to every child, those with the greatest natural ability would somehow fight their way to the top".<sup>16</sup> Subsequent discussion of departmental activity in relation to the NZEF submission will demonstrate further how the issue of health and social education within the state school curriculum had become a catch-all for the range of issues that concerned the conservative spectrum from middle to RR.

### ***The CPA sounds out the new Minister***

The President of CPA, Peter Clements, met with the new Minister on February 21, 1979, to express his group's "differences in educational philosophy" in relation to the Johnson Report, and to ask that the "rights of parents be written into the Education Act". This appears to have been a lively meeting with Clements accusing the Department of "pushing" the Report.<sup>17</sup> The Minister's response was to invite the CPA to use the "avenues open to parents at the local level."<sup>18</sup> This the CPA was already doing, through its

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<sup>15</sup> News report, Angry riposte to criticism by employers in the *Auckland Star* May 8, 197, p. 20. (Author's file)..

<sup>16</sup> Beeby's introduction in Renwick, W. L. (1986). *Moving targets*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, p. xviii.

<sup>17</sup> Minutes of meeting of the Minister with Clements, February 21, 1979. .Archives New Zealand, ABEP W4262, 17/3/30, Box 855.

<sup>18</sup> Minutes of meeting of the Minister with Clements, February 21, 1979. .Archives New Zealand, ABEP W4262, 17/3/30, Box 855.

initiative in having supporters elected to school Committees and boards and in its self-appointed role of monitoring curriculum resources and morally “questionable” teachers. At this stage it was making its position quite clear to Mr. Wellington, probably in the hope that he would declare his own. He was however new to the role, at that stage looking for guidance from his Director-General, and not yet ready to “reveal” his hand (Wellington, 1985, p. 72).

## **2. THE RESPONSES OF NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

Church groups and women’s organisations comprised the majority of the national groups responding to the Johnson Report. Their submissions expressed both consensus and reservations of members, arrived at through a lengthy process of national surveys and local discussion in the context of each groups’ policies.

### ***The mainstream Churches — Reservations and support***

The submission made by the Anglican Church typifies that of large national organisations that had given serious consideration and systematic discussion to the Johnson Report. Individual Dioceses made their own responses as well as the national Committees. That of the Public and Social Affairs Committee of the Anglican Diocese of Wellington was released in July 1978.

We urge that those aspects of the Report’s stated priorities which have general support in the community should be implemented as soon and as fast as finance and staffing allow. Our survey suggests that the following would have public approval: - A continuance of the current trend to education of the whole person. Improving discipline, citizenship and moral tone. Upgrading resources for physical education. An increase in the calibre of teaching staff and improvement of their working conditions. Emphasis in adult education on training for parenthood and family life.

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Emphasis on school-parent-community cooperation at local level without expensive new regional machinery.<sup>19</sup>

This submission, which avoided a stance on the sex education clause, expressed disappointment at the Committee's definition of health which, it stated, should include "spiritual health equally with physical, mental and social well being" since "our heritage, both Pakeha and Polynesian, is to base such health on faith in a divine Creator and Providence; and the Report has done that heritage scant justice".<sup>20</sup>

The Anglican Diocesan Board of Christian Education found "no necessary conflict between humanism and religion since "a humanist need not be a Christian, but a Christian inevitably places a high value on human dignity and relationships and welcomes any movement to protect and enrich these".<sup>21</sup> This statement was often quoted by Committee members Johnson and Ryder in the round of public speaking that followed. The submission of the Anglican Diocese of Wellington produced a statistical analysis of 162 responses to its survey on the Johnson Report's recommendations in which it expressed disappointment at the lack of recognition "of the part which faith, reverence and love of God can play in the motivation and the building of self-esteem".

In the view of this group, as with others, the school's role as an agent of socialisation was seen as inextricably entwined with issues of teacher autonomy and training, although "as a corollary to parental responsibility in the field of values, there should be limits to the freedom of teachers.

Not all are regarded as able to deal to the satisfaction of some parents, with controversial or religious questions."<sup>22</sup> This concern was echoed by Paul Reeves, then Anglican Bishop of Waiapu in Napier and later Governor-General, who questioned the capacity of the school to fulfill the role of the parent in helping children develop their own ethical and value systems:

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<sup>19</sup> Submission to the Department of Education regarding the Johnson Report, Church of England in New Zealand (undated). (Author's file).

<sup>20</sup> Submission to the Department of Education regarding the Johnson Report, Church of England in New Zealand (undated). (Author's file)..

<sup>21</sup> Submission of the Anglican Diocesan Board of Christian Education (date unknown) cited in the Link Report.

Values education implies debate, disagreement, controversy, experimentation and getting your fingers burnt ... In the report I see no real acknowledgment of the sweat and pain involved in carving our values. I have never been sure what teachers believe about big issues. To me they seem to be a very careful professional group, sandwiched between children and their parents, anxious about what is fair or acceptable, stronger on techniques than commitments. (Reeves, 1978, p. 29)

The Salvation Army, which had for many years run a home for unmarried teenage mothers in Auckland, was another national organisation that undertook extensive consultation with its membership. Its submission, issued from the Army's Territorial Headquarters, was supportive of the Report's recommendations, particularly on the topic of collaboration between school and home, while avoiding a direct reference to sex education.

While the Salvation Army still believes that the family can provide the best foundation for a secure and stable society ... it recognises that in many instances, stable family situations are sadly lacking and it is now the school which somehow is expected to provide the security lacking in the lives of many children. It therefore agrees with the tenor of the report and its emphasis on collaboration between home and school to foster a secure society.<sup>23</sup>

In contrast to the conservative views being expressed by John Kennedy in the South Island Catholic newspaper *The Tablet*, the Catholic Education Council for New Zealand supported the Report's recommendations concerning clause 2.23 with the proviso "that sex education form a logical part of a carefully integrated programme on human relationships and not be treated as an isolated subject."<sup>24</sup>

The more liberal Auckland Catholic Diocesan Pastoral Council was quoted in the media as saying that the Johnson Report was "a far-

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<sup>22</sup> Submission of the Anglican Diocese of Wellington, cited in the Link Report.

<sup>23</sup> Submission on the Johnson Report by the Salvation Army of New Zealand (undated). (author's files)

seeing document which is a milestone in New Zealand education". It suggested that the Report's principles should be regarded as a "blueprint" for future policy and that the recommendations "should be implemented as a whole, not in a fragmentary way". The Council "approved of the strategy to have schools reinforce basic values ... to help reduce socially disruptive trends", but warned against "the imposition of values without respect for individuals and groups in the community".<sup>25</sup> Presbyterian theologian Lloyd Geering, while not formally representing the views of his Church<sup>26</sup>, commented that the Johnson Report outlined:

a very moderate and balanced position which gives no support to either extreme. The best indication of this is that it is receiving its strongest criticism from two opposite poles – secularists... and those who would advocate the traditional Christian doctrines.<sup>27</sup>

### ***The women's lobbies***

As previously described, the National Council of Women shared with both the Anglicans and the teacher unions a history of policy development in relation to the issue of health education and human development (NCW 2000). The NCW submission on the Johnson Report repeated much of the submission it had sent the Committee, reiterating NCW policy. The majority of the Johnson Report's recommendations, including the contentious clause, 2.23, were approved by NCW<sup>28</sup> with the spokeswoman of its Standing Committee on Education, Helen McIvor, informing the NCW annual conference of 1978

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<sup>24</sup> Submission to the Minister on the Johnson Report by the Catholic Education Council for New Zealand (undated). (Author's file)...

<sup>25</sup> The contents of this Catholic submission were reported in the *Auckland Star* on February 21, 1979. (Author's file)..

<sup>26</sup> The author could not locate any reference to a formal submission by the Presbyterian Church.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Methodist paper, *New Citizen*, November 2, 1978, Alexander Turnbull Library, Tapuhi IRN 733620. Ref. No. 7460-3 Papers of John Mulheron.

<sup>28</sup> Submission of the NCW on the Johnson Report. (Author's file)..

We are generally agreed that the greatest good for the greatest number must prevail regarding the teaching of human relationships and spiritual and moral values, in spite of the objections of some parents who feel that the school should not usurp parents' rights.<sup>29</sup>

At this conference a keynote address was given by Dr. Sheila Godfrey of the New Zealand Women's Medical Association in which she made strategic use of the phrase "concerned parent" in an apparent attempt to counteract its monopoly by the RR.

As a concerned parent I share the view of many that one of the most controversial issues of the Johnson Report is concerned with sex. But many concerned parents are not able to communicate fully with their children and are failing to carry out the very facet of the Johnson Report, which they disapprove of schools teaching.<sup>30</sup>

The submission of the Family Planning Association expressed both approval and support for the Johnson Report's recommendations on sex education urging their immediate implementation. That the Johnson Report received such widespread endorsement from national organisations representing a diverse range of views was probably partly attributable to its essentially conservative endorsement of existing power relations.

### **3. SUBMISSIONS FROM LIBERALS - A RANGE OF VIEWS**

A range of other liberal responses from citizens and groups provided both endorsement for and critique of the Johnson Report. The Humanist Education Service (HES) criticized the Report's discourse as having a "very formal and managed tone". It warned that the establishment of councils for the purpose of creating "warm and open" schools could lead to "Councils of Conformity for the Establishment of Norms", and suggested that

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<sup>29</sup> Minutes of the report of this conference were published in the *NZ Herald*, September 28, 1978, Section 1, p. 12. (Author's file).

<sup>30</sup> *NZ Herald*, September 28, 1978, Section 1, p. 12. (author's file)



implementation of parts of the report would lead towards “a closed manipulated society” (HES, 1979, p. 13). HES pinpointed the paradox of the Report’s liberal prose but conservative value stance, and the danger to progressive curriculum reform inherent in such contradictions.

In spite of some comments the direction seems uni-cultural rather than multi-cultural. The public statements by some religio-moralists, the ‘orthodox’, reveal that they see these parts (2.4.2-12, and particularly 2.4.8 –12) as potentially very useful or agreeable...There is a danger that the worthwhile material in the report be lost in the attacks on ‘sex education’ and ‘bringing religion in’. (HES, 1979, p. 13)

In a similar vein the Committee for the Defence of Secular Education, that had formed in 1978 in the context of the Johnson Report controversy, claimed that the Report provided dangerous potential for indoctrination of “captive” children by “religious groups.”

The members of the Committee on HSE are middle aged to elderly and in age and occupation far too narrowly based ... The report should be popular with politicians because the recommendations sound big, but cost little, and because it is basically authoritarian and strengthens the hierarchical structure in the teaching profession and the Education Department. Above all it provides an enormous loophole for moral religious groups to use to indoctrinate captive audiences of children and to intimidate minorities.<sup>31</sup>

A group calling itself the Concerned Teachers’ Association had also emerged in the context of the controversy “to protect and extend the free, secular nature of State Education In NZ”. Its stated goal was to:

... uphold the principle of religious liberty and freedom of conscience and to promote a system of education whereby children of different races and beliefs can be educated together in an atmosphere of tolerance and respect for diversity in belief and culture ... We feel that some organised groups in the community who are pressing for a return to “basics” and

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<sup>31</sup> October newsletter of the Committee for Defence of Secular Education (date unknown but 1978. (Author’s file)..

“the old values” place too high a value on competitive education, vocational and economic success, conformity and a narrow morality.<sup>32</sup>

This group posted notice of a public meeting in Wellington on March 15, 1978, stating “You will be concerned to learn of the ways in which religious education and instruction are infiltrating other areas of the curriculum in State Schools in contravention of the secular requirements of the Education Act 1964, Sections 77-80”.<sup>33</sup> Whether or not this meeting was well attended is not known but sufficient time, money and energy had gone into publicising it to suggest that the Concerned Teachers’ Association felt strongly about the issues. The fact that this was a Wellington-based group also indicates that concern over issues of ethnicity was not confined to teachers in the multicultural suburbs of Auckland.

An Auckland lawyer presenting “a parent’s view” queried whether parents were the best people to determine a child’s moral education, and suggested that teachers should not adopt an attitude of neutrality on contentious issues but be encouraged to speak their views “and if the views are different from those of the child’s parents – so much the better” (Dugdale, 1978, p. 53). Psychiatrist Roy Muir, of the Department of Psychological Medicine at the University of Otago found in the Johnson Report “a vision of the process of education as a continuing one, involving child, parent, teacher, in a mutual endeavour.”<sup>34</sup>

#### **4. THE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY OF INTEREST**

As with the NCW and mainstream churches, the teacher unions — PPTA and NZEI — had undergone a decades-long process of forming their

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<sup>32</sup> Alexander Turnbull Library, Ref No. 96-342-05/13, Tapuhi IRN 318328 National Council of Humanist Society of NZ (undated). The Secretary of the Concerned Teachers’ Association was listed as Sally Quaddel.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid Alexander Turnbull Library, Ref No. 96-342-05/13, Tapuhi IRN 318328 National Council of Humanist Society of NZ (undated).

<sup>34</sup> Letter from Muir to Renwick, July 24, 1978. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30. Part 4, Box 855.

policies “as a result of debate at annual meetings”<sup>35</sup> The submissions of both unions were supportive of the Johnson Report’s recommendations, including clause 2.23. This was hardly surprising given Dave Kerr’s membership of both the Johnson Committee and NZEI, and Print and Johnson’s long standing associations with PPTA. . Ida Gaskin, then Vice-President of the PPTA, commented that the thinking of the Johnson Committee could be summarized in its sentence on socialisation, which was congruent with the views of the PPTA Curriculum Review Group, *Education in Change* (1969).

By stating it again so clearly and categorically, the Committee on HSE has invited all concerned with education to question once more their assumptions concerning the primary aim of the schools ... The emphasis laid by the report on education for leisure, education for health, the need for guidance, the need to establish ... ‘warm’ and ‘open’ climates in schools as against ‘closed’ and ‘rigid’ climates (para 2.1.2.p 20) shows that the emphasis on ‘socialisation’ is indeed the key phrase. (Gaskin, 1978, p. 84)

Individual teachers also expressed their opinions. The principal of Ramanui School in Hawera, Mary Whata, supported its discussion on the spiritual dimension with the comment that “only primitive societies were able to maintain traditional mores without friction”.

Man’s dilemma has not been to make explicit the human virtues in theory, but rather to get people to carry them out in practice. The Johnson Report (section 2.4.2) therefore exhibits a further example of the genuine human concern to identify a set of human values that will satisfy the universal social conscience. It would be ethically difficult to contest the worth of either its arguments or its recommendations ... the report achieves special significance when it states that society is entitled to expect positive leadership from its schools in examining the controversial issues in the areas of moral, spiritual and values education. (Whata, 1978, p. 82)

An article written by Ian McLean, Principal of Hutt Valley High

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<sup>35</sup> NZEI submission on Johnson Report (undated), Alexander Turnbull Library, The Johnson Report, ACC 91-9, Box 26/3

School, pointed to some of the difficulties in assuming that in a favourable school climate administration “will be collegial rather than bureaucratic” and teacher ideology “humanistic rather than custodial”, and echoed the theme of the school as the residuary legatee of neglected parental obligations.

Soon after the Report had been released, my staff spent the whole of a two-hour meeting on student self image and ways to enhance it, based on one brief phrase from the Report. Ideas were constructive, positive and numerous, but the follow through was rather disappointing. A problem with much educational idealism is that it is seen to present teaching as a static situation in which teachers are able to implement freely ideas, which they believe to be educationally sound. Unhappily this is not the case. Pupils have motivations other than learning and these change almost daily ... But I believe the Johnson Report, looked at as a whole, has placed its finger on our contemporary human condition. For the sake of survival, lost and weakened community influences must be replaced by a new synthesis. It should, of course, begin in the homes. The homes are many and varied and often vulnerable, and there is no unifying influence.

Where else, then, but in the schools? (McLean, 1978, p. 80)

Christchurch Teachers' College lecturer John Fletcher, commended the Johnson Committee for its recognition that “teacher training is not something that can possibly be completed in the pre-service training period.” He urged that professional development be seen as “steady and systematic, beginning at teachers' college and continuing thereafter” (Fletcher, 1978, p. 21). In this concern he was supported by Mrs. F. Deveneux who raised questions over “the selection of teachers and those who will lecture on moral and political subjects”, before requesting ongoing teacher training.<sup>36</sup> The New Zealand School Committees' Federation submission however expressed a “weary skepticism” over the outcomes of “reports from officially appointed Committees.”

Some people have now discussed the issues involved two or three times previously and are concerned that no cognisance is being given to what

they have said in the past ... these people and also the community that have some time ago accepted the principles now being expounded in The Johnson Report should have some reassurance that their views are not being put aside.<sup>37</sup>

### ***The New Zealand Guidance Counsellors' Association***

During the Johnson Committee's working phase the New Zealand Counselling and Guidance Association (NZCGA) had possibly relied on the participation of Wadsworth and Print to further its concerns, which were represented in Section 2 of the Report. It did however respond to the call for submissions following the Report's release. The incoming and outgoing presidents of NCGCA saw it as being about "healthy living" with guidance as a core element of the school's role (Hermansson & Bemstone, 1978). However, they stated, the proposals were too broad and generalized to provide a detailed "blueprint" for action. In 1979 the Waikato branch prepared a paper which was ratified as the Association's submission on the Johnson Report. This noted that the Minister of Education had adopted a "no action" stance on the Report and "concern was expressed that he seemed to be stonewalling on a number of such matters, and was even adopting unusual strategies such as personally reviewing all social education films!" (Hermansson, 1999, p.52). The NZCGA was, like other sectors of the public, divided over the some of the permissive directions in society such as the experiment in communal living at Auckland's Centrepont.

There was some ambivalence around in the counselling field at the time about this community [Centrepont] and its counselling and relationship work. Some were attracted to the philosophy being promoted of openness and a liberal stance to sexuality. Others, however were concerned about it ... (Hermansson, 1999, p. 45)

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<sup>36</sup> Letter to Minister of Education from Mrs F. Deveneux (undated). Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30. Part 8, Box 855.

<sup>37</sup> Submission from the NZ School Committees' Federation (undated). (Author's file)..

Individual counsellors, not all within the education system, expressed opinions on other agendas from absenteeism and truancy to competition and the emphasis on academic assessment. While generally lauding the Report's expressed concern with the need for schools to foster a positive climate, the Counsellor at Nga Tapuwae College queried how this might be achieved without improving conditions for the teachers who were to be responsible for its creation (Devalient, 1978, p. 15). Another saw the Report's value being in its emphasis on schools as models of "successful living where people have respect for self and others and communicate in an open, direct and caring way" (Clyma, 1978, p. 79). A youth aid officer expressed the "wish" that the Committee had "indulged itself a little more and recognised the dire need for guidance in primary schools [and] the inadequacy of the existing network to meet the needs of children from minority cultures and lower socio-economic groups" (Workman, 1978, p. 30). The Johnson Report had in fact discussed these issues. It was as possible for liberals as for the RR to read the Report from the stance of a particular agenda.

## **MORE RUMOURS OF CONSPIRACY**

Lobbying continued throughout 1978 and 1979. During this period both the RR and members of the Johnson Committee embarked on a round of public speaking across the country to interpret the Report from their respective perspectives. It was a stage of the controversy accompanied by rumour and further allegations of Departmental conspiracy.

A persistent rumour circulating among CPA, SPCS and COME members was that the Johnson Report was not the "real" report. There was, it was rumoured, another more sinister secret report, the recommendations of which the Department of Education was already insinuating into school programmes (M. Viney, Int.). Such scaremongering reflected the strategies of the American NRR used to maintain a climate of suspicion (Hottois & Milner, 1975). Although the Minister had put a hold on the use of sex education

resources and films in classrooms the CPA strategy of denouncing teachers involved in such “subversive” activity continued. Following the release of the Johnson Report the SPCS and FRA joined CPA in publicly naming and questioning the suitability of some teachers, particularly those known to be living in homosexual or de facto relationships. Some school principals under siege from conservative members of their own school communities became sufficiently wary to counsel de facto couples on their staff regarding discretion and at least in one instance suggested that one the couple resign for the sake of propriety.<sup>38</sup>

Another rumour, nurtured in CPA newsletters, was the allegation that the Department of Education had anticipated the outcomes of the the Government’s decisions “by distributing resource information to schools on possible human development programmes and by Departmental associations with seminars and discussions on the implications of The Johnson Report for teachers” (Link Report, 1979, p.7). As with the Alison Crawford incident reported in Chapter Seven, confirmation of this was provided by hearsay incidents reported in the *CPA Newsletter*.<sup>39</sup> By the close of the period allowed for submissions CPA prosyletising had reached its zenith, as shown in the editorialising of the July/August 1978 issue of the *Newsletter*.

Described by one education reporter as ‘Holocaust Day’ because of its implications for the takeover by the government of the upbringing of children, July 15, the date set for receipt of submissions on the Johnson Report, has come and gone. Hundreds of submissions flooded in during the last weeks before this date – we trust that our members all sent theirs.

The RR however was not alone in its allegations of conspiracy. An inspector of secondary schools in Canterbury, Colin Knight, dubbed 1978 “bash a teacher year”, lashing out at both the CPA and “ultra conservative” school principals.

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<sup>38</sup> The author was at that time teaching in a state secondary school and personally knew of such incidents.

Minority groups of extremist parent and Church organizations receive vocal support from the principals of some ultra-conservative North Island schools who are far more concerned with preserving the image and status of their schools than with the welfare of their pupils. These parent groups, by carefully planned strategies, create concern and misunderstandings at top government and political levels...These groups have set up vigilante SIS groups to keep dossiers on teachers and other educational liberals who dare to initiate change. They operate a private textbook surveillance system and keep biographies on all authors.<sup>40</sup>

Without specifically naming CPA, Knight also alleged that such groups within New Zealand were organised internationally and currently receiving funding from an American oil company, Hunt Petroleum. In interview Jean and Martin Viney denied that CPA had received financial assistance from outside sources, but it seems likely that there was some support at least in the form of the overseas speakers who visited New Zealand. These included an anti-sex education crusader, Danish businessman Svend Laursen, and American Norma Gabler, principal of the textbook research institute, ERA. A newspaper reporter, Warwick Roger, picked up on Colin Knight's reference to a link between Mrs. Gabler and Hunt Petroleum then searching for oil off the New Zealand coast. In the *Star Weekender* he continued Knight's speculations, on the basis that the oil company's principal, H.L. Hunt, published an anti-sex education Christian fundamentalist magazine, *Life Lines*. Another rumour tried unsuccessfully to link Hunt professionally with a former SPUC president.<sup>41</sup> Battle lines were drawn between liberals and the RR and in this climate of antagonism and suspicion, sustained by the media's ongoing interest, it was not difficult to incite the "concerned" public of all sides of the spectrum to respond. Secretary Crawford's summary file of submissions

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<sup>39</sup> These rumours were printed as small paragraphs in CPA *Newsletters* beginning with phrases such as "A teacher has informed us that..." or "We learned from a member..."

<sup>40</sup> This statement was cited by reporter Warwick Roger in the *Star Weekender*, .September 16, 1978, p. 5.

<sup>41</sup> This statement was cited by reporter Warwick Roger in the *Star Weekender*, .September 16, 1978, p. 5.



contained letters from citizens who had not actually read the report, but had based their opinions on the reported views of others and on hearsay (Crawford, Int.), such as one by Mrs E. Tregaskis objecting “..to the usurpation of parents’ rights, and sex education to children below high school age” on the basis of having “read a critique of the report.”<sup>42</sup>

## **THE CPA RECRUITS SUPPORT FROM A NEW ZEALAND EXPERT — ISSUES OF ACADEMIC NEUTRALITY**

In this phase of the controversy the CPA looked for local experts to support its cause and thought they had found an ally in Ivan Snook, a university lecturer in educational philosophy with a special interest in religious education. At the Department’s request Snook had addressed the first meeting of the Johnson Committee and co-authored a book on moral and values education, a draft of which had been given to the Committee members to read. (Snook & McGeorge, 1978). During the controversy that followed the Johnson Report’s release, Snook recalled being perceived as a champion of the CPA cause.

I was on the hustings for months, going around. I talked to almost every PTA in Christchurch and ... got picked up as an opponent of the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education because I was kind of an academic critic of it. Most academics were highly critical of it because of what we thought of as its looseness ... Quite often I was the only speaker and I was asked to set out what was in the Report for parents. And then I’d do my critique of its looseness, its fluffiness, its lack of justification for the moral values it said the school should stand for.  
(Snook, Interview, June 29, 1998)

Word travelled the RR network that here was a local expert who could perhaps be recruited to the cause. Snook recalled a second phase of his involvement in the controversy.

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<sup>42</sup> Submission to Minister on Johnson Report from Mrs E. Tregaskis (undated), in Departmental file. Archives New Zealand. ABEP W4262, 17/3/30. Part 4, Box 855.

I was picked up by the Concerned Parents' Association and the Southland Educational Development Association. I remember going down to Southland talking to a huge crowd about this [ Johnson Report] and then they'd pick up what I'd said and they take select bits off it and put it in their newsletter. So for a time I became the darling of the moral right because they said 'here's a neutral academic saying that it's no good. And we think it's no good because it's anti Christian' - and so on. So that was the line that was taken. (Snook, Int.)

In what he described as "a third phase" of his involvement in the controversy, Snook, attempting to retrieve his academic neutrality appeared at meetings in opposition to CPA spokesman Martin Viney on some occasions and CPA supporter, Nancy Meates, on others.

I ended up in a kind of debating thing with people like Nancy Meates who was mounting a campaign that no way was any form of sex education to go on in schools ... Nancy was a great opponent, a good Catholic mother and a good speaker. She was invited everywhere and I was always invited to give the other side and my side was described by her and a few others as 'sitting on the fence', and she'd get tremendous applause. I would get up and say. 'well I don't think we should go overboard about this'. I wasn't even advocating it. I was just saying children have a right to know, whether it's done in school or not. And I'd be greeted by stony silence ... There were these huge rallies. I remember speaking to an audience of around 800 at Villa Maria and heard of a meeting at another high school where they closed the doors, and told the rest to come back the next night for a repeat session. (Snook, Int.)

It was Snook's opinion that educationalists "like myself" learned something very important from the commentary stage of the Johnson Report controversy.

We learned a lesson which has been very influential I think in our participation in the Tomorrow's Schools debate. We learnt that if we were purely academically impartial we would be used by sides that we'd rather not be used by. By the time we got to Tomorrows' Schools rather than do a kind of pure academic analysis of it as if 'I'm removed from all this' we would be in there, boots and all, advocating those policies which

we thought were good and opposing those policies we thought were bad.

(Snook, Int.)

Following the crowded Southland meeting “with the Religious Right in hot pursuit” Snook stated that the CPA “abandoned me as beyond the pale. Once they probed me they found I wasn’t on their side” (Snook, Int.).

## **ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE DEPARTMENT**

As the round of public speaking by members of the Johnson Committee continued throughout 1978 the hegemonic activity of the Department of Education came under increasing scrutiny from the RR. Some Departmental activities were guaranteed to cause alarm, such as a national in-service course led by Peter Macpherson at Hogben House in Christchurch on May 15-19, 1978, with the title, “The Johnson Report and its implication for schools”. This course, intended to further the Department’s process of interpreting the Report, was attended by the teacher unions, the Combined Churches Education Commission, District Inspectors and teachers, who were then expected to disseminate these discussions and interpretations within their wider spheres of influence. This Hogben House course brought CPA criticism, prompting a public response from Departmental officer Peter Brice denying “official support” for the Johnson Report, and stating that “to initiate and participate in discussion of the Johnson Report is not to support it.”<sup>43</sup> Suspicion of the Department was continually refuelled during the public speaking activities of articulate CPA members such as Meise Ooman in the Wairarapa and Auckland branch Secretary, Beryl Leahy. Leahy urged CPA supporters to attend meetings wherever the Johnson Committee members were scheduled to speak, in order to present “a united opposition”. During the week of September 11, 1978, she addressed meetings at Elm Park Primary School and the Somerville Presbyterian Church, at both of which she produced a little yellow booklet compiled by the CPA to be passed out at such meetings. It

asked questions guaranteed to foster parental concern, from which it was easy to suggest links with the Johnson Report to those who had not read the Report for themselves, or those who had read it but not understood clearly what it was saying. This booklet targeted existing levels of apprehension with its opening questions.

Are you concerned about : Too little emphasis on basics? Text and library books containing swearing, sex and violence? Pressure groups like Gay Liberation, Abortion Law Reformers and the Family Planning Association talking in schools? Class projects which intrude on privacy, and others which discuss occult practices? Explicit or permissive sexuality education, topics including petting and masturbation? <sup>44</sup>

With many parents already floundering in their understanding of the new curricula in maths, English and social studies, it was easy for CPA to develop a rallying cry around the issue of back to basics. If new and potentially dangerous subjects such as social education or, worse, sex education, were to infiltrate the curriculum then what, they asked, would be replaced? Mrs. Leahy, pictured in illustration 29 below, was much in demand as a visiting speaker to church and parent groups.

Further suspicion of a Departmental conspiracy stemmed from the CPA's insistence that the Johnson Committee members' speaking engagements were undertaken at the taxpayer's expense. Both CPA newsletters and statements at public meetings protested what they saw as state-funded proselytising. "Evidence" lay in the fact that Departmental officers Macpherson and Buxton were also engaged on the public speaking round. It was both Crawford's and Johnson's recollections in interview however that groups requesting speakers reimbursed the travel expenses. <sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Letter from Brice, published in the *National Education Newsletter*, April, 1979. Archives New Zealand ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Part 6, Box 855.

<sup>44</sup> Booklet printed by the CPA and available to members on request. (Author's file)..



**Illustration 31** — Mrs Beryl Leahy, an active speaker in the Auckland branch of the Concerned Parents' Association. This photograph was published in the *Auckland Star*, on September 16, 1978, p. 5.

The contiguity of the CSA Bill aftermath with the Johnson Report submission phase gave the CPA scope to continue its concurrent campaign against the FPA. The leading article in its *Newsletter* of July/August, 1979 proclaimed "GOVERNMENT BACKS SEX WITH CHILDREN", followed by the news that Prime Minister Rob Muldoon had announced that FPA was to be funded to the extent of one million dollars. This was, declared the *Newsletter*, "a move to complete the process of depriving parents of the responsibility for the sexual welfare of their children". As submissions continued to flow into the Minister of Education, public speaking engagements were undertaken by both Johnson Committee members and the RR speakers, with Johnson much in demand.

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<sup>45</sup> This is confirmed by letters in the Author's files.

## THE CHAIRMAN FACES THE PUBLIC — “TALKING PAST EACH OTHER”

In November 1978, Garfield Johnson addressed a packed public meeting in Invercargill at the request of the Southland PTA and School Committees' Federations. This was conservative heartland and his lengthy address was punctuated and at times drowned, by heckling. The following extracts are from this talk in which the Chairman attempted to interpret to parents what he described as “in essence a very simple report”.

First it is a report on health ... any consideration that the report gives to social concerns or social education is only as these relate to the improving of health. For that reason, and to avoid the misinterpretation that some groups have placed upon its motives, I would rather it were simply called ‘the report of the Committee on Health Education.’ We therefore had to give people the support and knowledge to be much more responsible for their own health, and to behave in ways which would promote health. The most effective institution to do this we saw as the family – the old-fashioned, two-parent family supported by grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins. We decided that whatever we recommended must be designed to strengthen this, where it exists, recognising that such families are far from uniform ... We suggest the school and its close community or neighbourhood should regard itself as the extended family of support. To allow it to do this we recommended that the formulation of programmes of social and health education should be the responsibility of each school community – parents and teachers together; that the role of the Education Department in this should be just to provide resources in the same way as our Committee provided a Planners' Guide. We believe that our measures had to be designed to give children the right to an unworried and unanxious childhood, and to do this we must relieve them from the bonds of ignorance and peer pressure ... This has nothing to do with social control, or changing society except changing behaviours for better health ... Any aspects of values and spiritual education lie quite

simply within our version of the strengthening of the family... Considerations of the physical led to our recommendations of physical and outdoor education, on diet and nutrition, on certain aspects of our planners' guide – of the mental to our recommendations on school climate and its effect on mental health, on the spiritual dimension, or man's relationship to God, and of the social to morals, values, human relationships, drugs and so on ... We see in this report the vision of a society, which, while at many points at variance with the direction of contemporary New Zealand life, is something worth working towards for the future well being of our country. We do not see 'humanistic' and 'religious' education as opposed.<sup>46</sup>

At one point in this address Johnson projected onto a screen a diagram of the school as an "extended family". This was the model developed at Hillary College and shown as Figure 3 in Chapter Five, but it was impossible for those who had not been part of the Committee's process of deliberations to interpret the significance of this model from only either Johnson's speech, or the Report. Referring to this diagram he continued:

Note that it [the school] regards itself as the support, not the replacement of the role of the parents. That teachers, students, Committeemen, Board, and so on are the uncles, aunts and cousins. Once, in my youth, we all had the support of our 'extended families' and our small communities. We were not just brought up by our parents – aunts, uncles, cousins, friends of the family, the local 'bobby' – all had a hand in it. With urbanization, that has gone. Somehow or other we have to give back to our children the same kind of support – especially to solo-parent families. Parent and family need our love, our sympathy, our support ... this is our suggestion. Note the core of values which we would like to inculcate – no controversy here. Is this what the opponents of the report are up in arms about? Which value would you remove? The school works out

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<sup>46</sup> This meeting was held in the Tweedsmuir School Hall on November 8, 1978. A copy of the full text is in the author's files.

those values ‘in the painful way’ Bishop Reeves suggests, in the quality of its human relationships which is what fundamentally makes up its climate, in its organisation, in its practices.

In attempting to allay conservative fears through such rhetoric Johnson was unlikely to have been aware of just how far he was contributing to their inflammation. What he was suggesting to the CPA supporters in his audience was abhorrent — a further widening of the state’s role in socialising the nation’s children. In this same speech Johnson he directly addressed the two most contentious recommendations of the Report. Referring to clause 2.23(b) on sex education, he stated:

I believe we want this [the proscription] removed only so that there is no legal inhibition in the way if the need for such instruction is seen – particularly at intermediate level. Remember each school decides for itself but there should be no such artificial barrier to its wishes.

Against a backdrop of further audience unease he referred also to the issue of contraceptive guidance contained in recommendation 2.23( a).

[Of] the worry about contraceptive instruction to those below 16 recommended by both the Royal Commission and by our Committee and hedged around by the minister’s letter of advice,<sup>47</sup> our Committee saw this [recommendation] as being necessary to allow advice by school counsellors, doctors, or nurses. In no way did it imagine introduction of Malthusian drill *a la* Aldous Huxley’s “Brave New World.” Tuesday, Period 3 – contraceptive technique ... end of term exam on techniques – 50% pass, 50% fail!

Such oratory was hardly likely to impress the RR. In his literary allusions and very articulateness it seems likely that Johnson would have appeared too overtly clever and evasive for some. The CPA wanted to know *exactly* what children were being told. Liberal teachers, counsellors, doctors and nurses could not be expected to support conservative parental values. Nor was reassurance forthcoming on the vexed issue of moral education, despite



recommendation 2.21(a) that resource material in “the field of basic values and controversial issues” be made available to parents. The audience at this speech was also worried about the Report’s recommendations 2.22 (a) and (b) which espoused the fostering of “a non-sectarian spiritual dimension” in state schools, along with teacher training to effect this aim. They wanted to know what this meant.. What exactly was a “non-sectarian” spiritual dimension? Against a prevailing backdrop of listener incomprehension, Johnson attempted to explain to a South Island Pākehā audience a recommendation encapsulating biculturalism that also allowed for the expression of humanistic, atheistic or agnostic beliefs.

The report does not talk about religious instruction as such. It does speak about a spiritual dimension – a recognition that man’s relationship to God or no-God if you like, is one of the fundamental questions everyone must face. The reconciliation of each individual to this question has a profound effect on mental health and is a proper consideration of such a report. How it should be worked out in practice in the school system is a proper subject of public debate. But we do believe that Maori, Greek and Judeo-Christian beliefs should all be taught as a part of every New Zealander’s cultural heritage. And we say so ... When I listen to some critics I am quite bewildered. They seem to be talking about another report altogether which they’ve written in their own minds, making something very complicated out of something quite simple ... We do not see ‘humanistic’ and ‘religious’ education as opposed. A humanist need not be a Christian, but a Christian inevitably and consequently places a high value on human dignity and relationships and welcomes any movement to protect and enrich these.

In the question and answer session that followed Johnson was as bemused by the inability of this audience to understand the concept of *Wairua* as they were by his inability to talk in Biblical terms of right and wrong What this

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<sup>47</sup> This letter referred to the Ministerial circular 4789/D-77PT, 1977, p. 4, introduced at the start

speech did was to provide for the CPA confirming evidence that Johnson was humanist, liberal, academic and too dangerous to be providing leadership regarding the state curriculum.

## **OTHER REQUESTS FOR CLARITY**

It was not only the conservative lobby that found the Report difficult to read, as illustrated by a request from the teaching staff at Onslow College to provide further clarity. To this the Chairman responded with the following interpretation in which he again referred to the Hillary College model of Figure 3.

The Committee became convinced that unless heart as well as head became engaged in the educative process we should still have to go on picking up the casualties of our social system ... What better model for action for a school to adopt could we offer than that of a good family? Even those organisations who hold that values education has no part in the school system base their judgment on the model that the family is the best vehicle for it They just do not trust schools and teachers to do the same kind of job. We, on the other hand, given the kind of training and the cooperation of parents and community agencies which we recommend in the report, do. Hence we came to the kind of model represented in the accompanying diagrams. A good school, we say, like a good family, will concern itself with all the things shown, not least academic achievement. Hence we are not, as some would have the public believe, offering an either/or choice. We believe in the basics of reading and writing and preparing yourself for the workaday world. How else can a person feel happy and useful? We just do not believe that is ALL we have to do. And we think we have shown that if our recommendations are carried out, such achievement is enhanced, rather than hindered. We just do not believe that you can divorce values education from the school ... I'm sure the Committee members would be anxious for me to explain that the report hopes to actively promote and encourage people to look after

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of this chapter.

their own health rather than wait to have it “delivered” to them ... It can be seen that considerations of health and social education hang naturally together. It is right and proper then for a report like ours to concern itself with school climate which we see as needing to be one which will actively promote mental health. It is fair to say that some current practices in our schools may be inimical to mental health. The moment you concede that a school’s climate should be warm and caring you are into the values game. The Committee stands by partnership between parents and school and unanimously supports the McCombs Committee in this educational strategy.<sup>48</sup>

Often the public meetings involved other speakers who used this opportunity to present their own organization’s views, providing further confirmation for the CPA of subversive alliances. One such meeting on July 12, 1980, was organized by University of Auckland Department for Continuing Education. Its speakers, Garfield Johnson; Jenny Gibbs, former president of the Auckland branch of the FPA; Dr Margaret Tillott, Chairwoman of the FPA’s National Medical Advisory Committee; Dr Bruce Conyngham; and lawyer and civil libertarian, Barry Littlewood; faced a packed audience that peppered each address with interjections. The CPA questions, contained in the little yellow book distributed by Beryl Leahy and others, had been circulated to members of the audience who asked again and again at such meetings about the ability of teachers to teach about values and human relationships. In the face of persistent and hostile questioning Johnson responded “We think that members of the Concerned Parents Association are placing all the emphasis on the people whom they know and who are *not* suitable for the job, creating bogies in people’s minds”.<sup>49</sup>

Also on the speaking circuit, Tom Ryder was facing antagonism from conservatives within his Church:

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<sup>48</sup> This undated written commentary was provided by Johnson at the request of Judith Richards, of Onslow College, Wellington (author’s files). See also Richards (1978a, 1978b) in the bibliography.

<sup>49</sup> Johnson debate renewed. (1980, July 14). *New Zealand Herald*, p. 3.

There were two Roman Catholic Churches – one in the South Island and one in the North. While there were those who welcomed Vatican II and saw in it opportunities for a deepening of community spirituality combined with the chance to dispel ignorance and help people become responsible for their own actions, others saw that same force as threatening the very basis of their beliefs. (Ryder, Int.)

Ryder was in his element at such meetings, enjoying the intellectual stimulation of the debate (Ryder, 1997). He recalled speaking on the moral and religious aspects of the Report at a packed Auckland meeting when he used the radical views of a member of the audience to preach the more moderate message of the Johnson Report.

I noticed two fellows in the front and something told me they were waiting for me to speak and would attack me ... One of them was an abortionist and totally agnostic or atheist. He spoke furiously and emotionally ... I didn't say anything, and then a chap stood up and he said "well, I am an agnostic and I must say that I've found religion is an issue that has been debated by the greatest minds for thousands of years. I take my hat off to this gentleman who can solve it all in ten minutes." And then he sat down and the whole place just shook with laughter and cat calling! I couldn't do anything wrong after that. (Ryder, 1997, p. 107)

Ryder had frequent public brushes with Patricia Bartlett of SPCS, whom he saw as focusing on "the sexuality aspect and not the total. The Report was clearly saying that this is not going to be discussed as merely physical sexuality [but] in the settings of value systems ... The Patricia Bartletts may have perceived darkness" (Ryder, 1997, p. 110). John Kennedy, Editor of *The Tablet*, frequently attacked the views of both Ryder and Johnson.

The heart of the problem lies between those who see education as a process of imparting, acquiring and transmitting knowledge, and those who see education as an instrument for social change. The fact is we are now witnessing the beginnings of a struggle for the hearts and the minds of the next generation being fought over by two opposing groups: - a majority of committed Christians, parents and teachers who recognize that Christian values are not only necessary for society's spiritual growth

but are also the only true guarantee of society's most treasured possessions: order, stability, justice, freedom, wisdom and compassion, and the planners and manipulators for the new order: the humanist ideology. These people, well educated, articulate and clever, have an elitist vision of what is good for the well-being of society. But their ideas clash with man's spiritual nature. Overseas experience and history show that their ideas do not work in practice.<sup>50</sup>

By the end of 1978 Johnson had addressed more than 82 meetings and Ryder, Print and Departmental officers Macpherson and Buxton a similar number.<sup>51</sup> CPA members, such as Peter Clements, Nancy Meates, Meise Ooman and Beryl Leahy also remained active. Their agenda was two-fold — firstly to assert the place of fundamentalist Christian values in the state curriculum, and the rights of parents to assurances regarding this, and secondly to alert the public to the Department's perceived intent to push ahead with implementation of the Johnson Report's recommendations. To effect this agenda a climate of suspicion regarding Departmental activity had to be maintained. Throughout 1978 and early 1979 the new Minister of Education however remained outside the sphere of debate as he waited to see how best to ascertain the public's wishes in ways that would offer an indisputable basis for his future decision making.

## **THE POLICY COMMUNITY PROCEEDS CAUTIOUSLY**

Against this backdrop the educational policy community tackled the twin challenges of damage control in the face of allegations and providing the new Minister with guidance on policy implementation. The latter task involved setting up an in-house study group within the Department. This was underway by March 8, 1978, when its chairman, Jim Ross, stressed the need "to attend

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<sup>50</sup> Article in *The NZ Tablet*, cited by Warwick Roger, *Star Weekender*, September 16, 1978. p 5.

<sup>51</sup> Information given in interviews.

meetings and consider the main issues of the Johnson Report before final decisions on new policies are made".<sup>52</sup>

It was the task of this group to examine the Report's recommendations and work out how these might, or might not, be implemented within current policy guidelines. This study group provides an insight into the policy community at work, in relation to the process of curriculum development in a contentious area, and shows how hegemonic activity with regard to the curriculum outcomes from the Johnson Report became increasingly difficult in the context of the controversy and in a new, and more conservative, political climate. In this context also the previous permeability of the CDU by the educational community of interest, as shown in Figure 2, began to lessen.

### ***A Departmental study group works on the Report's implications***

The in-house study group began to work systematically through the Johnson Report with the aim of "formulating the department's view, priority ranking and implications for implementation."<sup>53</sup> Its minutes of August 14, 1978 show that this meeting was devoted to attempts to make links between the Report and existing Departmental policy, in relation to the section on school climate. At a meeting on September 27, 1978, each clause and recommendation was discussed point by point in relation to "ongoing activity within the Departments of Education, Health, Police and Social Welfare."<sup>54</sup> At this time the study group met weekly as it sought to extricate policy directions that did not require new legislation from the Report's recommendations. One issue discussed was the ongoing reproach from citizens that no summary report of the views received on the "Ross Report" had ever been made public. It was decided that this would need to be addressed with

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<sup>52</sup> Minutes of first meeting of the Departmental in-house study group on the Johnson Report, March 8, 1978. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Part 4, Box 855.

<sup>53</sup> Letter signed by R, Middleton, Secretary of the Department's in-house study group on the Johnson Report accompanying the minutes of August 16, 1979). Archives New Zealand, ABEP W 4262, 17/3/30, Part 4, Box 855.

the Johnson Report in order to allay further allegations of secrecy. Furthermore, before his departure, Gandar had promised that a summary of submissions would be made public. How submissions could be categorised to produce this summary was another matter. The task was delegated to Jock Crawford, as the Johnson Committee's Secretary and, since he was not a member of either the policy community, or study group, the hegemonic strategy of informed disinterest was thus again enlisted.

Crawford was seconded to spend a week of each month at Head Office reading, summarising, and categorizing the content of the submissions. Each month he presented a status report of his analysis to the Minister, who at the beginning of this exercise was Les Gandar. "My clear impression at the time was that Minister Gandar was interested in these reports and was interested to learn that the report was being received with favour" (Crawford, Int.).

The study group also discussed the extent to which guidance counsellors could meet the range of the problems facing secondary schools, the fact that some rural schools had no counsellor, and the possibility of a pastoral role for all teachers. The Johnson Report's community health centre model was also debated in conjunction with a proposed medical check for all pupils children to Form 4 level. Summaries of these discussions formed the basis of background statements on possible policy directions supplied to the Minister.<sup>55</sup> Relevant recommendations from the study group were referred also to the interdepartmental Health, Education and Welfare Committee.

Senior Health Department officer and Johnson Committee member, Max Collins, followed these minutes with interest. A letter from Collins to his Minister of Health, Frank Gill, suggested "the production of a television film on the [Johnson] report, emphasizing its positive aspect." Gill referred this

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<sup>54</sup> Minutes of in-house Departmental study group on the Johnson Report. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Part 4, Box 855.

<sup>55</sup> Minutes of in-house Departmental study group on the Johnson Report. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Part 4, Box 855.

request back through Renwick to the Departmental study group.<sup>56</sup> This suggestion coincided with a similar one from K. Collings, a member of the South Auckland Education Board, in a letter to the Minister on May 8, 1978 in which he expressed “the concern of school Committees in this group that the report may well be subject to ill-informed criticism.” Collings suggested that the Departments of Education and Health combine to pay for advertisements in television, radio and press so that “wider coverage and understanding would be forthcoming. The cost of such advertising is small compared to the impact that the report could make if implemented”.<sup>57</sup> This suggestion received some consideration. A memo from Macpherson to Peter Brice, discussed a meeting between the latter and principals of Television One and Commercial Television (later Television Two) on June 28, 1978, at which the possibility of a series of programmes on the Johnson Report issues were discussed. In his memo Macpherson sounded a “warning that we could end up with national polarisation instead of local discussion.”<sup>58</sup> This seems a likely surmise, given that both the Johnson Report and aftermath discussion on the CSA Bill were still enmeshed temporally. The Department wanted to focus on the Johnson Report’s message regarding the need for partnership between schools and their local communities in relation to what should be included in the health and social education curriculum. This was the message conveyed at a media seminar organised by the Department on July 19th and 20th, 1978, with Peter Macpherson as the key presenter and interpreter of the Report.<sup>59</sup>

The submission from the New Zealand Employers’ Federation, a group with an historically influential lobby in relation to issues of credentialling, was given serious consideration by the study group. Departmental Officer Rory O’Connor presented an analysis of this to Jim Ross, with the suggestion that

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<sup>56</sup> Memo from Collins to Minister of Health, May 8, 1978. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Part 4, Box 855.

<sup>57</sup> Letter from Collings to Minister of Education, May 8, 1978. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Part 4, Box 855.

<sup>58</sup> Memo from Macpherson to Brice (undated). Archives New Zealand, ABEP W4262 17/3/30, Part 4, Box 855.

<sup>59</sup> Note in file on in-house Committee. Archives New Zealand, ABEP W4262 17/3/30, Part 4, Box 855.



the NZEF submission should be discussed with the Minister.

The [NZEF] paper purports to be a response to the Johnson Report but raises a number of much more general issues and comments on the aims of education and on educational standards. The Employers Federation report confuses the part (Johnson Report) with the whole (School Objectives) and proceeds to criticize the former for not being the latter ... There are a number of statements in the paper which educationists would endorse, for example "creation of the machinery for the community to influence and participate in the development of the school curriculum and the establishment of formal mechanisms for collaboration between education and industry".<sup>60</sup>

O'Connor's analysis addressed the NZEF submission point by point, highlighting internal contradictions and inconsistencies of argument, as well as areas of agreement and near-congruence with the Johnson Report. "It is claimed that the Report has not considered issues related to the world of work. This is not so [it] discusses self-concept, decision making, and the skills listed on page 2 of the Employers' Federation paper"<sup>61</sup> This careful response illustrates the efforts made by the Departmental study group to limit the range of debate over the Johnson Report's recommendations, placate the NZEF and continue cautious hegemonic activity in relation to the issue of sex education. Framing up policy directions from the Johnson Report therefore involved Departmental activity that was at the same time both reparative and proactive, reflecting the dilemma of a policy community under public scrutiny, with a new Minister whose demands and expectations were not yet entirely clear but who was clearly not liberal. The historical issues of the NZEF had always been political in relation to curriculum development, and effort had to be made by the Department to ensure that a serious response was given, as the following

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<sup>60</sup> Statement to the Assistant Secondary Director of Education from Departmental Officer, Rory O'Connor, on the submission of the NZ Employers' Federation (undated). Archives New Zealand. ABEP W4262, 17/3/30, Part 6, Box 855.

<sup>61</sup> Statement to the Assistant Secondary Director of Education from Departmental Officer, Rory O'Connor, on the submission of the NZ Employers' Federation (undated). Archives New Zealand. ABEP W4262, 17/3/30, Part 6, Box 855.

extract reveals.

A concept of a consultative Committee on the curriculum, as has been discussed within the department, envisages several interested groups discussing curriculum both at the national and local levels. Mathematics is one subject which already has an advisory Committee. This may provide a suitable framework within which to hold discussions on the curriculum and could provide an answer to recommendation 1 (a) of the [NZEF] paper. This could also enable parents and other interested groups to be represented ... The issues raised in this paper are of significance to the work of the head office curriculum aims and objectives study group. It is important that a tentative discussion paper of the group's proposals should be available in the near future for use with such lay groups which may include representatives of the Employers Federation ... If the employers' paper is discussed with the Director General and the Minister, issues such as these could be raised. The [Employers'] paper will have considerable exposure ... consideration of ways of handling the comments made ... should be discussed with him [the Minister].<sup>62</sup>

O'Connor's carefully considered statement also reveals that the Department was clearly preparing for the extensive media coverage that it knew the submission of the NZEF would also attract.

## QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE

As it had been with both the "Ross Report" and the CSA Bill, the ongoing task of the policy community and Director-General was to anticipate new developments in the RR lobby in order to respond to the Minister in ways that would assist guiding the Report's contentious recommendations into policy through what had now become a minefield. As well as dramatic CPA comments about "holocaust day" and "sex with

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<sup>62</sup> Statement to the Assistant Secondary Director of Education from Departmental Officer, Rory O'Connor, on the submission of the NZ Employers' Federation (undated). Archives New Zealand. ABEP W4262, 17/3/30, Part 6, Box 855.

children”, the Department’s study group worked against an ongoing background of questions in Parliament. On November 24, 1977, Norman Jones, National MP for Invercargill, had responded to his constituents’ lobby with a question in the House, “what action is to be taken to implement the recommendations of the Report of Committee on Health and Social Education?” Gandar replied that copies were then being distributed, and because of the strong public interest in the issues he intended to allow the public at least 12 months to express views which would be collated by the Department with a report made back to him which he would release.<sup>63</sup> Both National and Labour MPs kept the pressure on Gandar in relation to procedures that would be followed to allow full community consultation and disclosure over the Government’s plans for the Report’s recommendations. National MP Bill Birch asked the Minister on August 23, 1978, whether there was yet a deadline for submissions. Gandar replied that the Report had gone into its third printing, and since many people had not yet received a copy he had extended the original deadline to “about July next year”. Liberal Labour MP Eddie Isbey joined the debate.

MP Isbey repeatedly asked the Minister to confirm that the Johnson Report had received wide commendation from parents and teachers.

Gandar: It has received commendation but it has also received criticism. I am trying to find out whether we can obtain a consensus of opinion and the only way to do that is to get as many people and organisations as possible to express their views.<sup>64</sup>

On September 5, 1978, Peter Brice attended a Human Relations Trust Symposium, on behalf of the Director-General. His report back to Renwick described the participation of the new Minister, Merv Wellington.

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<sup>63</sup> Hansard notes in Departmental file (undated). National Archives, ABEP W4262 17/3/30, Part 4, Box 855.

<sup>64</sup> Hansard notes of debate in House on August 23, 1978. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, Part 4, Box 855.

[He] gave the impression that his mind had been made up on the issues, based on correspondence that he had received, and what his constituents were telling him ... His [ Wellington's] thesis was that the Johnson Report was speaking about things that related to 5% of the school population and that the govt and the dept should not legislate for the 95% on this basis.<sup>65</sup>

It was now clear to the policy community that Mr. Wellington held different views from those of Gandar and that the sex education clause of the Johnson Report's was likely to prove a sticking point. Meanwhile Renwick remained diplomatic in his maintenance of informed disinterest, as revealed in the following 1978 speech to the Federation of School Committees.

The Department of Education is not pushing any particular barrow in the public discussion that has been going on for several years now – and is still unresolved – about the role of the schools in education in human development and relationships ... We have accordingly interpreted our role as a department of State to be one of helping the community by identifying the issues, spelling out the implications, and by drawing public attention to the matters upon which new policies or changes would be needed if schools were to do more for education in human development and relationships. That was the reason for the establishment of the Ross Working Party ... in 1972. It was also the reason why, in 1975, the Minister of Education set up the Johnson Committee on Health and Social Education.<sup>66</sup>

Such was the level of interest in the issues that the School Committees Federation had asked Renwick to spell out some of the implications of the Johnson Report. He did this in general terms, stressing the need for “effective working partnership between home and school” and emphasizing that the Johnson Report's recommendations did not imply a de-emphasis on academic

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<sup>65</sup> Note from Brice to Renwick (undated).. Archives New Zealand, ABEP W4262 17/3/30, Part 4, Box 855.

<sup>66</sup> Address by W. L. Renwick to the N.Z. School Committees Federation Conference, May 12, 1978. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W3514, Box 46.

standards. The Director-General was no doubt mindful that there was a cluster of very conservative MPs, in the National Government.

## **THE MINISTER'S DIRECTIVE ON THE WEIGHTING OF SUBMISSIONS**

Engaged in the ongoing task of summarising submissions, Jock Crawford began to realize that there were a number of identically worded submissions endorsing the arguments of the CPA. He appealed to Renwick for guidance on whether to accord these letters the weighting of one response in total, since they contained the same content, or to count each letter as a separate opinion and, therefore, one submission. At the same time he asked whether single submissions representing, for example, five hundred members of an organisation were to be counted as five hundred submissions, or as only one. Mr. Wellington's decision, transmitted back to Crawford, was that individual identical submissions were each to be counted separately. The same ruling was to apply to all group submissions, regardless of the number of individuals they represented. Thus the submissions of national organisations such as NCW and church groups who had canvassed hundreds of members, and tried to reflect the diversity of their opinions in their submissions, counted as one opinion only. Crawford recalled feeling that that his analysis of the submissions on the Johnson Report was now being biased. Whereas he had gained the impression that Gandar was in favour of the Report's recommendations, Minister Wellington appeared to have different views.

He certainly wasn't helpful in some of his rulings ... For example, there were quite a number of pro-forma letters initiated by the Concerned Parents and other like-minded groups. Each opposed the report and of course each one had to be counted as one in opposition. I knew when to expect these, as the original would appear in the Concerned Parents' Newsletters. If the original included some strange punctuation, wrongly spelt words, or the unusual use of capital letters, each letter received was

an exact copy of the original, although written in the hand of the signatory ... Groups in favour of the report included the NZEI, the PPTA, the Auckland Catholic Diocesan Pastoral Council, the Association of Home Science Alumnae of New Zealand, etc – each representing hundreds of individuals - each of these submissions counted as one only.<sup>67</sup>

Under these instructions Crawford classified each of the pro-forma letters as “strongly opposed” to the Johnson Report’s recommendations in the reports he prepared for a Minister who had begun to reveal his own conservative stance. This left the policy community with the dilemma of how to reinterpret the Report’s sex education recommendations in ways that would encourage the new Minister to assist them into policy in the context of the Report’s overall themes on health. Merv Wellington however had strong opinions regarding the role of the school in the teaching of values. He had viewed the EDC exercise of the early 1970s as:

... just the beginning of a determined effort by the social engineers to replace proper schooling with a view of education... The Education Development Conference couldn’t have presented the country with a worse direction than its loose, vague and meaningless emphasis on ‘relating,’ choosing’, ‘challenging’ and ‘responding’. (Wellington, 1985, p. 71)

In Wellington’s view a “battle for young minds” had raged throughout the 70s.

When I became Minister of Education the country was still fired up over the [Johnson Report] issue and vigorous debate, sometimes personal and vicious, was still widespread. The report brought to a head the conflict between traditional educationalists and those I call the social engineers. (Wellington, 1985, p. 70)

This statement and the rhetoric of his autobiography generally reveals that his sympathies lay with the RR rather than his liberal bureaucracy.

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<sup>67</sup> Undated 1999 letter from Crawford to author.

### ***The policy community treads warily***

The policy community itself was now in defence mode between a vociferous lobby from the CPA and an autocratically inclined fundamentalist Christian Minister of Education on the other. In this situation hegemonic activity over the issue of sex education became increasingly difficult. The CPA lobby had fuelled public apprehension in a climate of changing social mores, exacerbating middle conservative citizens' impressions of a moral boundary crisis. The Departmental study group had considered using District Inspectors to educate and inform their communities on the Johnson Report, but also realised that this might further fuel perceptions that the Department was pushing the report. Instead, District Inspectors were given "guidelines for handling public discussion" stating the need to stress that the Report was "not a departmental report" but rather about the "joint responsibility of the community and the school in improving the health of the children of the community".<sup>68</sup>

As Crawford ploughed on with his task of summarising submissions, CPA supporters kept up a constant flow of letters to the Minister. Mrs. Ooman wrote on April 8, 1979, requesting "immediate legislation to protect the rights of parents regarding human development and humanist situation ethics programmes in the school syllabus, independently of the results of the JR discussions", and noting that the Department's "failure to release the submissions made on the Ross Report gives the lie to continued assurances that full notice would be taken of public opinion regarding the Johnson Report".<sup>69</sup> A letter from M.E. Purdy asked the Minister "whether the Arney Road Teachers Centre is being used at present for the training of teachers in conjunction with the Johnson report, in anticipation that the report will be implemented?" Probably advised by Renwick of the need at this stage to maintain an aura of informed disinterest, the Minister's reply assured Mr.

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<sup>68</sup> Memo from Peter Brice, Director of Development to Culliford and Ross (undated). Archives New Zealand. ACEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Box 855.

Purdy that the courses held by “a range of groups” provided “opportunities for teachers and others to study the JR report with a view to commenting on it”, and that “no decisions will be undertaken until the close of the period for public debate”.<sup>70</sup> In a Minute to the Minister on May 14, 1979, Renwick advised Wellington against his intention of replying to letters from Elliot-Hogg, of COME, and to fellow MP R. Bell, reminding the Minister of his previously stated position that he “had been careful not to take up a position on either the recommendations contained in the JR or on the form of the publication of my department’s report to me”. It was Renwick’s opinion that if the Minister replied sympathetically to COME “the issue could become larger than you would wish it to become at this stage.”<sup>71</sup>

In these exchanges the Minister was already showing his intent to be hands on and his own conservative ideology would have been increasingly evident to the policy community who were now under siege even from the left of the political spectrum. Jack Mulheron, Secretary of the Committee for the Defence of Secular Education requested strongly that the Department make available to him “for inspection” all the written submissions that had been made to the Johnson Committee because of his disapproval of the Report’s “spiritual dimension”.<sup>72</sup> Mulheron, saw the Johnson Report as part of a crusade “which unless some common sense prevails will end up wrecking the state system as we know it.” On the basis of a report in Zealandia on February 12, 1978, Mulheron accused the enthusiastic Tom Ryder of telling a meeting of 500 Roman Catholic teachers that the Johnson Report “effectively ended the era of the ‘secular’ class in education and the exclusion of religion from the classroom”.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Letter from Mrs. Meise Ooman, to the Minister (undated). Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Part 4, Box 855.

<sup>70</sup> Minister’s reply to M. E. Purdy, April 9, 1979. Archives New Zealand. ABEP W4262, 17/3/30, Box 855.

<sup>71</sup> Written comment from Renwick to Minister, May 14, 1979. National Archives, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Box 855.

<sup>72</sup> Letter to Minister from Mulheron (undated). National , Archives, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Box 855

<sup>73</sup> Alexander Turnbull Library Tapuhi IRN 733620, Ref. No. MS papers 7460-3. Papers of John Mulheron.



By now the policy community was attuned to the sensitivity with which the Johnson Report's contentious, and indeed all recommendations, would need to be handled if any of them were to become curriculum policy. On October 9, 1978, Renwick circulated a Departmental Minute "concerning thinking towards the shape, content and emphasis of the Department's report to the Minister at the end of the public discussion on the Johnson Report." The Department, he stated, had to consider action on "three related aspects" of the Johnson Report, "(a) collation of the public response (b) report of the in-house study group on the report (c) suggestions to the Minister about possible action on the recommendation of the report."<sup>74</sup>

It was decided that a report on the public's submissions should be written for the Minister that could also be released to the public. This would take care of Gandar's promise to release the Department's advice on the Johnson Report, and ongoing accusations that the "Ross Report" submissions had never been released. The group that produced this included Peter Boag, Jim Ross, Rory O'Connor, Peter Macpherson and Peter Brice, but not Crawford, who "cannot be seen as the author of this report because he is 'contaminated' by his secretaryship of the Johnson Committee."<sup>75</sup> It was agreed however that since Crawford had "an extensive and intimate knowledge of the responses [he] should be available to help as the 'ghost writer' [to] save several weeks of time."<sup>76</sup> The resulting report included Crawford's Johnson Committee file summary to March 31, 1979.<sup>77</sup> At this time there had been correspondence from 775 organisations and groups. Of 610 letters from individuals "22 were identical in content, and all but one of these came from the South Island ... eight copies also of a typed pro-forma letter were logged,

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<sup>74</sup> Memo from Peter Brice, Director of Development, to Culliford and Ross (undated). Archives New Zealand. ACEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Box 855.

<sup>75</sup> Memo from Peter Brice, Director of Development, to Culliford and Ross (undated). Archives New Zealand. ACEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Box 855.

<sup>76</sup> Memo from Peter Brice, Director of Development, to Culliford and Ross (undated). Archives New Zealand. ACEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Box 855.

<sup>77</sup> Report on Johnson Committee File Summary to 30 April, 1979. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Part 5, Box 855.

also from the Christchurch area".<sup>78</sup> Of the group submissions received, the Crawford file summary stated that the majority were "generally supportive" of the Report's recommendations. That there continued to be requests for copies of the Report indicated the level of public interest. Meanwhile Minister Wellington was pursuing his own agenda in reviewing the current health education teaching resources.

## **HANDS ON — THE MINISTER REVIEWS HEALTH EDUCATION RESOURCES**

Following the "Ross Report" and during the mid 1970s, the Department had responded to the need to update health education resources by setting up panels of community representatives to consider films and tapes issued by the National Film Library as school resources. These panels included educational, church and Red Cross Society representatives. A Departmental Minute records that the CPA had been invited to participate in these review panels but had declined.<sup>79</sup> The result of these reviews was the production of a series of health education resource cards, distributed to schools in 1978 as teachers and the public awaited clarification on the sex education issue. These cards were meant to supplement secondary school programmes and the primary school health syllabus and teachers handbook. They listed books, films, charts, and other materials that were merely compilations of resources already in circulation dating back to the 1960s. However this reissue was ill-timed since the cards included items, such as the comic *Too Great a Risk*, and the Sol Gordon films that SPCS and the CPA had pursued through the Indecent Publications Tribunal as pornographic, and sent to the new Minister of Education for his personal inspection. The out-of-date health education syllabus still required attention but Merv Wellington made it his business to view

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<sup>78</sup> Report on Johnson Committee file summary to 30 April, 1979. Statement released by the Minister of Education. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30. Part 5. Box 855.

<sup>79</sup> Report on Johnson Committee file summary to 30 April, 1979. Statement released by the Minister of Education. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30. Part 5. Box 855.

personally the sex education films on the list. His autobiography reveals that his own views were in accord with those of the CPA (Wellington, 1985). It is argued that at this stage of the Johnson Report controversy a process of alignment between the ideologies and objectives of the Religious Right and the Minister of Education occurred. A new construct, that of moral cathexis, is introduced here to explain this process.

***Moral cathexis — a linking of the moral entrepreneur with legislative power***

The construct of moral cathexis, as conceptualised by the author in this study, relates to the construct of moral panic. Leibman (1983) has suggested that the efficacy of fundamentalist conservative lobbies, such as that of the RR in the New Zealand controversy, is nurtured by alterations in the political environment that provide opportunities for collective action. A political alteration, from liberalism back to conservatism, was occurring in the late 1970s in New Zealand. Researchers on moral panics such as Becker and Cohen also support the notion that the lobby of the conservative right in such a context requires a “moral entrepreneur with the ability to create a climate of apprehension regarding possible conspiracy within the legislative bureaucracy” (Leibman, 1983, p. 57). It was argued in Chapter Seven that this was a role being ably performed by the CPA in the Johnson Report controversy. Paul Spoonley (1987) linked moral conservatism with a belief in the rights and exclusivity of certain groups having ideology grounded in notions such as biological determinism, combined with a suspicion of dominant agencies. It has been shown here how the CPA was able to arouse and maintain the public’s suspicion over Departmental activity. Spoonley used the term epistemological determinism to describe a group’s belief in its unique access to truth (p. 43) and such a description also fits the CPA. Moral cathexis it is argued here occurs when a conservative lobby group, with such a belief in the exclusivity of its

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truth, is able to enmesh ideologically with a key figure, or figures, in the political and legislative power structure in order to achieve centralisation of leadership. This occurred when the moral entrepreneurs of the CPA Executive found a willing ally in the new Minister of Education, Merv Wellington. The term cathexis is defined as “the concentration of psychic energy on a single goal” (Collins, 1993, p.210). That it comes from Freudian theory is appropriate to the context of this controversy in which the Religious Right employed psychoanalytic arguments in its lobby. Cathexis was chosen in preference to the term confluence since the latter is defined as “a flowing together” (Collins, p. 276). The merging of the CPA lobby with Mr. Wellington’s own beliefs was more than a flowing. It was a focused and sustained directing of energy of some intensity towards the same goal, that of preventing the State’s usurpation of parental rights in the areas of socialisation involving morals, values and sex education. While the RR had already found allies within government, such as Bert Walker and Trevor Young, these individual MPs could do little other than lobby their own parliamentary colleagues on an inter-departmental basis. Moral cathexis, involving centralisation of leadership, however requires the potential for the exercise of autocratic power of a kind that can influence legislative outcomes. And it has been shown in Mr. Wellington’s ruling over the weighting to be given to group and individual submissions on the Johnson Report, and in his autobiographical comments, that he was exercising autocracy and power on behalf of the fundamentalist ideology that reflected his own inclinations.

## **A LETTER TO THE MINISTER FROM THE JOHNSON COMMITTEE**

Members of the Johnson Committee were also aware that Merv Wellington was delaying his response to both Crawford’s summary and the Departmentally prepared statement on the Report’s recommendation. They discussed how best to assist the Minister to adopt a more positive view of the

Report without having to compromise his own strongly held principles. It was decided to send him a letter containing a rationale for the Report's implementation by re-interpreting the more contentious issues. Committee members, including those within the policy community, put considerable thought into this letter, hoping to provide Mr. Wellington with the arguments he needed to allay the fears of the CPA without jeopardizing their political support, and to persuade him to revisit his own views. Sent on March 24, 1979, it took the form of a "Memorandum to the Hon. M. Wellington", stressing to the Minister that the Johnson Report had suggested nothing undemocratic, nothing new, and nothing irrevocable. It stated that it had recommended that each school review its more controversial curriculum aspects each year. It expressed support for the authority of the Minister and pointed out that the 1945/1965 primary school health syllabus statement "that there is no place for group sex instruction" did not have the force of law, being simply a syllabus statement of no known authorship and therefore easily removed.

The Committee realizes, however, that this is a sensitive area, that the minority groups have invested it with 'sanctity' and so we strongly recommend to the Minister: That he rule where a school (parents and teachers in agreement) wishes to include a course in sex education that it have the right to apply to the Minister for permission to do so. There is a precedent for this already with regard to religious education (Section 78A of the Education Amendment Act 1978).<sup>80</sup>

This conciliatory letter urged the Minister to make no decision that would "irrevocably shut the door" on controversial sections of the Report, but to allow local school communities to take initiatives where they wished. The Committee asked that the Minister ensure that it was made clear that the school community meant the *local* school, its teachers and its parents, and did not include representatives of national pressure groups. It was a desperate effort by the Committee, and also the policy community, to salvage the Report's recommendations on sex education. Merv Wellington however did not respond,

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<sup>80</sup> Memorandum to the Minister of Education from the Johnson Committee, March 23, 1979. (Author's file)..

and subsequently denied seeing any such letter. In the aftermath of the controversy Ted Wadsworth referred to this memo.

The Committee on HSE went out of its way to enable the Government to avoid making an unpopular decision over implementations of its report ... Mr. Wadsworth said he remembered the letter very well and that the Committee had put a lot of effort into trying to provide the minister with political middle ground ... He said the Committee had considered it 'obnoxious' that a political decision should force all schools from North Cape to the Bluff to do the same thing and wanted it left to individual communities to decide whether they wanted the regulation debarring sex education waived for their areas.<sup>81</sup>

In his 1985 memoirs Mr. Wellington deplored the fact that the "Johnson Report avoided more important educational matters", and that proselytising had occurred as members of the Committee toured the country speaking in support of their views. But he also knew that the heat of the controversy was such that there would be a further outcry if debate was curtailed.

I had no option but to extend the deadline to July 1979, giving the people of New Zealand 21 months in which to discuss and express their views. Throughout the country, school, church and community groups met and talked. Despite much pressure, I refused to declare my own position until the time came to make a decision.. (Wellington, 1985, p. 72)

The policy community was again walking on eggshells. For Mr. Wellington the role of the state school in relation to sex education was unambiguous, but he needed a way to remove himself from the proximity, and thus the personal responsibility of decision-making, while remaining resolute in his own intentions. Moral cathexis had been achieved. Its demonstration would involve the commissioning of an external analysis of submissions by independent consultants. (The next chapter will examine the outcomes of this particular decision.) Crawford was finally released from his ongoing task of summarising and collating the public's response, and instructed to hand over all his

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<sup>81</sup> Letter 'took effort'. Report in the *Waikato Times* June 7, 1980, (Clipping in author's file)

summaries and the public's submissions to Link Consultants Ltd. While the Minister's intention was to justify future decisions on the basis of an independent analysis of the public's will, the consultants employed were not to be sufficiently independent to decide on the weighting of submissions. It was made clear to the Link Consultants, as it had been to Crawford, that each submission was to count as one, regardless of the numbers of citizens whose opinions were represented (Link Report, 1979, p. 3) Through this strategy the Minister was in a position to continue his control of outcomes over the issue of sex education.

Employers were worried by the lack of skills among some school leavers. Youth unemployment was still growing ... More and more people were realising that education must be more relevant to work ... that the school's first duty was to teach information, knowledge and skills, not to provide a social service. Without hesitation, I agreed with this view .... In June 1979 I asked Link Consultants Ltd to analyse the submissions. I wanted complete objectivity. (Wellington, 1985, p. 73)

At this stage it would however also have suited the policy community's agenda to seek an independent channel through which the Minister might be persuaded that the Johnson Report's recommendations on sex education still had merit. This was possibly the first time a government department had used outside consultants (Renwick Int.). It was a practice that became common from the late 1980s, in the aftermath of *Tomorrow's Schools* and one which allowed politicians to exercise personal hegemony by justifying their decision-making with reference to independent outsiders. The use of consultants can therefore be seen also as another means by which to promote the illusion of bureaucratic informed disinterest. In the context of this controversy this strategy suited both the Minister and his bureaucrats, although for different reasons.

## SUMMARY

This chapter has shown how the Johnson Report controversy escalated throughout 1978 and 1979 in the context of public submissions on the Report,

and the accession of a new Minister of Education. It has been argued here that the hegemonic activity of the policy community in the form of its in-house study group became increasingly more complex in the climate of suspicion and collective apprehension that the Religious Right was able to create and sustain — a lobby in which rumours and allegations played their part.

In the public speaking phase that followed the Report's release it has also been shown how views became further polarised, and how the discourse of both the Chairman and the Report with regard to sex education and the spiritual dimension served to maintain, rather than diminish, the apprehension of conservative citizens. In the engagement of Ivan Snook with the CPA, an example has been given of how in this climate of suspicion and accusation, academic neutrality became an issue. The concept of moral cathexis has been introduced to explain how the CPA Executive, in its role of moral entrepreneur, was able to achieve centralisation of leadership of its cause in the person of the Minister of Education.

In this submission phase, critics of the Johnson Report began to point out the paradox between the Report's liberal overtone and its espousal of basic conservative values. But, it has been argued that it was this very paradox that made it possible for the more conservative-centre national organisations to support the Report's sex education clause.

The next chapter will show how moral cathexis operated to control outcomes over the Johnson Report's sex education recommendations. It will examine the part played by the Link Report in the controversy, and analyse the role of the media.



## **THE LINK ANALYSIS, THE MEDIA AND THE MINISTER**

The decision of the Minister of Education to turn the public submissions on the Johnson Report over to external consultants for further analysis and his subsequent refusal to release that analysis to the public ensured that the controversy would continue. Other factors that had attenuated debate were the ongoing interest of the media and the extended period allowed for submissions. The controversy was turning into a nationwide debate on the aims of education, but, unlike the EDC exercise, this debate was more publicly partisan with the Religious Right lobby now targeting the Minister. This combination of factors served to maintain the ideological tensions inherent in the debate, increasing the complexity of Departmental attempts at hegemonic activity in translating the Report's recommendations into policy. It will be shown in this chapter how moral cathexis translated into practice to achieve centralisation of leadership, resulting in legislation that upheld the 1945 ban on sex education in primary schools. In these events the media played a role that served to attenuate debate. By the mid 1970s New Zealand had two television channels and a proliferation of radio talkback programmes. Some of these were on private airwave frequencies which served to spur competition with the state-funded radio stations in terms of maintaining the momentum of public discussion by encouraging listeners to express their opinions on contentious issues. This chapter will analyse the role of the media in the events and will continue to argue that, although there were elements of a moral boundary crisis, the Johnson Report controversy did not constitute a moral panic, as defined in Chapter Two.

From incubation to the post-release phase the Report had run the gamut of a liberal Minister, Phil Amos, through the moderate Les Gandar, to the fundamentalist Merv Wellington. At the approaching deadline for submissions, set for July 15, 1979, a total of 1,885 had been received from individuals, 158 from churches, 115 from organisations, 8 from national education organisations, 503 from parent teacher associations, school

committees, parents' centres and schools, and 10 from government departments — a total of almost three thousand submissions (Link Report, p. 9). Since Mr. Wellington had failed to respond to the rationale in the carefully considered March memo sent to him by the Johnson Committee, it was clear to the Department that its agenda regarding sex education had stalled. Wellington now sought a clearer mandate from the public for grounds on which to reject the contentious clause 2.23 (Johnson Report, p. 93). It is not clear who initiated the use of external consultants. Perhaps the bureaucracy suggested it, hoping it would provide a means by which the Minister could be persuaded to revise his ruling regarding the equal weighting decreed for group and individual copycat submissions. In a press statement of June 26, 1979, Mr. Wellington announced his decision to call for an external analysis of the submissions on the Johnson Report because of "the obvious independence offered by those outside the education field" (Link Report p. 5). Elsewhere he stated: "I asked Link Consultants Ltd to analyse the submissions ... [because] I wanted complete objectivity" (Wellington, 1985, p. 73).

## THE LINK CONSULTANTS

The Link Consultants' brief was to study all submissions in order to "identify the issues of debate, highlight the areas of agreement and disagreement and draw conclusions from the debate on the lines of future action and study" (Link, 1979, p. 6). Link's Directors met with the Minister on June 7, 1979. Their contract allowed three months for completion of the analysis and a \$10,000 consultancy fee paid from the Publications item of Vote Education.<sup>1</sup> Commissioning an external analysis was also a means by which the Minister could himself give the appearance of informed disinterest. Link Consultancy Ltd was a public company formed in 1978. When it was known that the Minister was seeking an independent analysis, Link approached the Department on the basis of having "demonstrated that it could do the job by its

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<sup>1</sup> Notes in Departmental file ( unsigned, undated) Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Box 854. Committee on Health and Social Education., Part 1.

analysis on the Government's goals and guidelines" document on energy."<sup>2</sup> Link had a staff of three, its two Directors, John Hill and Jack Lee, and an employee, Ms Julie Dalzell, a young journalist who undertook the main task of collation of submissions' recommendations.<sup>3</sup> In this task she was assisted considerably by the previous analysis of submissions undertaken by Jock Crawford.

## THE LINK REPORT

The Link Report was presented to the Minister on November 22, 1979, with the following preface:

Public response to The Johnson Report cannot be divorced from opinions and concerns as to the state and direction of New Zealand society generally ... the ensuing debate may be seen as part of a continuing concern with, and exchange of, ideas on the role of education in society. (Link Report, 1979, p. 2)

It began with a brief summary of the antecedents of the debate, including a comment about the proselytising role of Committee members during the public speaking phase that followed the Report's release.

There is clear evidence in submissions that the continuing role of the committee members stimulated reaction ... there is comment about what some submissions refer to as the 'hard-sell' tactics of members of the Johnson committee. The N.Z Truth gave its support to these claims in its coverage of the debate. On a few occasions this concern is linked with what is considered to be Departmental promotion of the report, a claim which is answered by the Department which states that Johnson committee members attended meetings at the request of community groups organising meetings ... There are also a number of allegations made ... that the Department has anticipated the outcomes of the debate by distributing resource information to schools on possible human development programmes and by Departmental associations with

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<sup>2</sup> Press statement by Link Consultant Jack Lee (undated). Departmental files. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Box 854. Committee on Health and Social Education, Part 1.

<sup>3</sup> Julie Dalzell subsequently started, and edited, *Cuisine*, the most financially successful magazine in the history of New Zealand periodicals.

seminars and discussions on the implications of The Johnson Report for teachers. (Link Report, p. 7)

Of the weighting given to the individual versus group submissions the Link Report stated:

It is difficult to assess the total numbers of people who participated in the debate ... many come from organisations with very large memberships, it can be expected that many more people were involved through meetings and informal discussion. There is no assurance that the weight and nature of opinion expressed in submissions is representative of public opinion as a whole. (Link Report, p. 17)

Link selected a series of short quotations to represent the diversity of views expressed in submissions. These ranged from the Secretary of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, who “claimed attempts had been made to stifle anything critical [of the Johnson Report]”, to the statement from Te Aute College Board of Governors that the Report “merely documented what had already been implemented by many schools for years.” Many submissions were statements of “what should have been happening and is, in fact, current policy, but implementation has failed for one reason or another” (p. 25). Link found some issues to be “of persistent concern”.

The rights and responsibilities of parents; the capacity of schools and teachers to service the “new school”; the implications for educational standards in academic and technical subjects; [differentiation of] areas for national direction and control and for local initiative and responsibility; the practicability, soundness and financial cost of the Johnson prescription. (Link Report, p. 50)

The Link Report carefully avoided the term sex education in stating that the “most dominant issues” related to “human development and relationships” and “human development and spiritual education within the curriculum” (p.72). It presented a few quotations to indicate the polarisation of perspectives on these aspects of the Report’s recommendations, and summarized submissions on these themes with the comment that there was “very little evidence in submissions that groups among those who support the report put the same sort of organization and endeavour into promoting their views as those groups who strongly oppose it” (p.14). Link also referred to the pro-forma letters of individual CPA supporters.

Several organisations produced background material on issues in the report to which they accorded particular importance. The submissions include many letters based on this material, the text of which are largely identical. (Link Report, p.11)

### ***The Link analysis reflects the public's confusions***

An issue identified by Link as “dominant” was “concern over the report’s proposals regarding moral, spiritual and values education”, and on this subject it failed to discern clarity in the public’s perceptions.

The provision for a ‘non sectarian spiritual dimension’ was subject to multiple and contrary interpretations ... Many people are not sure what the Johnson Report was advocating. Is the aim to teach religion, or to teach about religions, or to introduce Christian teaching, or to explore spirituality? Not surprisingly, reactions vary according to their interpretation. People persistently ask: ‘What does the Committee mean?’ (Link Report, p. 78)

Its text makes it unlikely that the Link Consultants perceived the bicultural dimension of the Report, although a passing reference is made.

Despite the report’s stated intentions of providing education for a multi-cultural society, there is some comment that the overall impact of the report points towards the creation of a uni-cultural society ... in the view of the Humanist Education Service ...’ education for conformity rather than diversity’. There is further irony. A member of the Te Aute College Board of Governors sees it as ‘being written for the Pakeha ...’ Some others, seeing a Maori theme ... are led to ask: ‘Is all that is Maori good?’ (Link Report, p. 110)

Link found that most submissions opposing values education in schools came from “individual Christians and from groups with church affiliations” (p.11). On the one hand, it stated: “Humanist and non-Christian groups interpreted the proposals to mean teaching religion, making submissions that expressed opposition... to further extend religious indoctrination”. On the other hand, it noted: “Many people see The Johnson Report as a humanist document”. Link found that submissions supporting school programmes based on Christianity “as the foundation of New Zealand society” formed “three shades of opinion”:

1. Those who insist that only Christianity is fostered and that the inclusion of any other religion would be incompatible with their Christian belief.
2. Those who prefer that Christianity in any consideration of comparative religion be accorded what many describe as 'most favoured religion' status.
3. Those who accept that Christianity be accorded equal status among a discussion of world religions. (Link Report. pp. 80-81)

If the Department and Minister had hoped that the Link analysis would provide clear indications of what policy initiatives would be welcomed or tolerated by the public with regard to moral education they were to be disappointed. It proved as difficult for the Link Consultants as for Jock Crawford to extract a succinct analysis of the public's views on the slippery topics of morals and values.

### **THE LINK REPORT FAILS TO PROVIDE THE MINISTER WITH A CLEAR MANDATE FOR ACTION**

While the Link analysis could do no more than paraphrase selected comments from a range of submissions, it did find that the public held "a general concern that the Johnson approach holds dangers of manipulation".

A large number see the creation of a value wasteland in which anyone's values are as good as the next. Some tie this to the deficiencies they see in the report's discussion of various techniques of value education. Others fear any discussion of values without Christian moral absolutes, and strongly oppose situational ethics as the alternative. (Link Report, p.88)

Once the Link analysis moved out of the murky waters of value education it found little debate. On the topics of recreation, physical education, drugs education, outdoor education, absenteeism and the influence of television violence Link found that the majority of submissions endorsed the recommendations of the Johnson Report. Similarly, it stated, submissions related to the clauses on school climate and guidance attracted little comment. Link found "unanimous support" for the principle of integrating children with special needs into the wider school system, although reference was made to

the omission in the report, of the special needs of gifted children. Gender issues were mentioned only briefly, with Link quoting an unnamed submission “that claimed the Report offered a sketchy and somewhat paternalistic treatment of equality for the sexes”. However, it continued, the Moreau College Board of Governors found the Report’s discussion on gender issues to be “a very moderate and middle of the road statement on women’s rights”. In its summary the Link Report concluded: “the bulk of the report’s recommendations are broadly accepted”. In relation to the place of health and social education in the state school however Link suggested that instead of clarifying the issues the Johnson Report “had created further confusion.”

Anxiety, uncertainty and sharp and deep-seated divisions of opinion emerge in the reaction to the ... proposals for a greatly extended role for schools in social education. The programmes envisaged in the report for moral, spiritual and value education ... are the nubs of the debate and controversy. For most these are the catalyst for involvement in the debate and the sole concern of their submissions ... It is clear that The Johnson Report has done little to resolve the controversy ... The analysis of the submissions shows that an acceptable basis for policy determination on the role of schools in social education has not yet emerged. (Link Report, 1979, pp. 111-112)

Rex Dalzell, whose Master’s study had condemned the Johnson Report for “failing to provide a blueprint for action” sent his thesis to the Minister of Education offering it for use in the Link Consultants’ analysis.<sup>4</sup> As was customary it was re-routed through the Department to Link, but there is no recurrence of its rhetoric in the Link Report.

The policy community would have soon realised that the Link Report offered no clear directions on which to base policy guidance for the Minister. Departmental officers read it during the first weekend of December 1979, and met with Renwick on December 5. The outcome of this meeting was a memo to Mr. Wellington stating: “It became apparent that in order to provide you with as clear a picture as possible it would be advantageous to request Link

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<sup>4</sup> Letter of thanks from Minister’s office to Dalzell (undated). Archives New Zealand, ABEP W4262, 17/3/30, Box 854.

Consultancy Ltd to re-order the annex to their report".<sup>5</sup> This revision, commissioned at a further cost of \$400, contained a numerical breakdown of submission viewpoints with regard to the Johnson Report's recommendations on clauses. It does not provide clear information on the diversity and numbers represented in each submission, all of which have been accorded equal weighting. As a lobby strategy the copycat letters of the CPA had proved very effective.

## THE PUBLIC AWAITS THE RELEASE OF THE LINK REPORT

As the work of the Link Consultants proceeded in late 1979 there were those who hoped it would spell a death-knell to the issue of sex education in primary schools, and those who hoped for a removal of the 1945 proscription. In June 1979 Mr. Wellington replied to a question from the Labour MP for Taupo, Mr. Ridley, on what progress had been made on implementing the Johnson Report's recommendations. Mr. Wellington's response did not enlighten his questioner.

We are on the threshold of a structural change of unprecedented scope. At the moment schools and communities are involved in a philosophical debate. The Johnson report has become the focal point on which the debate hangs. Public interest has been unprecedented. It would be difficult to imagine greater interest than at present ... I am bound to say however that I foresee certain dangers in seeing our schools as the potential panacea for most or all of society's problems. It is wrong for the school to be seen as the ambulance station or air raid shelter for all the difficulties of family, adolescence and childhood.<sup>6</sup>

The Minister's reply sounded a warning bell for the policy community regarding his intentions on clause 2.23 of the Johnson Report. As the public waited, the media continued to play a role in keeping the issue in the public domain. In a double page spread, *Auckland Star* reporter Warwick Roger examined current practice in schools in human development and relationships,

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<sup>5</sup> Memo from Peter Brice (Director of Development, for the D-G to the Minister December, 1979. Archives, New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30. Box 854



interviewing both protagonists and antagonists of the Report's recommendations.

In church and school halls the community is discussing a curious kind of best-selling book – the Johnson Report on health and social education. If acceptable to the community, it contains a blueprint for a major change of education direction. More than 30,000 copies have been sold. But not everyone is happy with some of the report's recommendations ... Battle lines have been drawn and a war of words is underway.<sup>7</sup>

When Merv Wellington received the Link analysis in January 1980 he also would have realised that it offered no clear guidelines for either mandate or veto of the Johnson Report's clauses on human development and relationships, 2.23a and 2.23b. To release it would almost certainly prolong public debate. Furthermore a close reading would reveal some depth of support for, as well as opposition to, the recommendations on sex education. It would also reveal for public scrutiny his directive regarding the weighting given to individual and group submissions. This would inevitably re-fuel the heat from the Labour party, mindful as they were of the next year's general election. During the 1960s Opposition spokesman on Education, Russell Marshall, a former Minister of the Methodist Church, had been active within the Marriage Guidance Council which at that time had been involved in training people to undertake a "limited amount of sex education in secondary schools" (Marshall, Interview, February 21, 2003). He was also a member of the advisory group responsible for setting up Labour party policy, which emerged from Phil Amos' education caucus of 1972. In the years that followed however, he recalled "a growing 'mantra' that people who were practicing should be excluded from policy [making]" (Marshall Int.). This was likely to be at least partly the a consequence of the perceived dangers of the permeable model of curriculum development (as shown in Figure 2). If it was Mr Wellington's intention to curtail the power of the CDU he needed alternative systems that would make the policy community more biddable and more accountable to him. This meant that the periphery of practising teachers and liberal theorists

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<sup>6</sup> Mr Wellington's reply to a question in the House by the MP for Taupo. Archives New Zealand, ABEP W4262, 17/3/30, Box 854.

<sup>7</sup> *Auckland Star Weekender*, February 5, 1980. (author's file)

would need to be detached from the centre-periphery model of the current CDU working model. Prior to Wellington's accession, Marshall and National's Les Gandar had been in accord over the need to remove the 1945 proscription of sex education.

I was marked out early as someone to be avoided [by the RR] Afterwards, watching us [Gandar and Marshall] on these issues between 1975 and 1978, Renwick commented that we looked like two people standing side by side, holding hands behind our backs, trying to stare down our party leaders ... Politicians buckled a bit under the lobby. Bill [Rowling] tended to be pretty careful, more conservative. Kennedy [Editor of *The Tablet*] was close to Muldoon. (Marshall, Int.)<sup>8</sup>

Under pressure from both his parliamentary colleagues and the media, Merv Wellington began to dribble the Link Report's findings out selectively. Questioned at a press conference, he produced an excerpt from the Link Report which, he said, showed nearly 500 persons or groups opposed to sex education in primary schools, with only 100 in support.<sup>9</sup>

### ***A new Link initiative is rejected***

The Link Consultants followed the ongoing debate with interest. In January 1980 its Directors, Hill and Lee, approached the D-G to offer their services again "as an independent agency" to handle the Department's public relations over the continuing controversy on "sensitive curriculum development issues". It suggested preparing a report on how this might be done, but from a Departmental perspective the wording of this initiative was ill chosen.

The public reaction to the Johnson Report and its recommendations indicates the failure of the Report to set acceptable directions for change. In the public mind the Government and the Department is now identified with this failure.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Russell Marshall became Minister of Education on July 26, 1984.

<sup>9</sup> Editorial *Auckland Star*, March 26, 1980, p. 8. (Author's file).

<sup>10</sup> Letter from J.M.K. Hill, Director of the Link Consultancy Ltd, to Peter Brice, acting for the Director-General (January 28, 1980). Archives New Zealand. ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Box 854.

Link suggested assisting “in discussion with the community interests involved and, on the basis of these, producing a report and recommendations on lines for future actions.” It can be imagined with what little enthusiasm this suggestion was received. It was one thing to purchase an independent analysis to further hegemonic activity but the policy community was not about to admit outsiders with only a superficial awareness of the history of the issues, or the considerable efforts the Department had already made to help the Minister receive Johnson Report with favour. It had been hoped by the educational bureaucracy that the Link analysis would assist the process of guiding the Report’s recommendations into policy, but it had not, and now the Link Directors were suggesting yet another report. That the untimely phrase “identified with failure” was not appreciated is revealed in a handwritten comment by Director of Development, Peter Brice who referred Link’s new approach to Renwick with the comment: “Link is not aware enough of the considerable consultation we undertake in developing policy. As they pressed strongly, I said I would place it before you.”<sup>11</sup> Mr. Wellington was apprised of Link’s new offer in a memorandum that summarises the Department’s official *modus operandi*.

It is felt that policy development is the Government’s prerogative and that actions undertaken by the department following the policy decisions would be preceded by consultation with the groups concerned, in the normal course of the department’s activities.<sup>12</sup>

The new Link offer was declined, and Mr. Wellington’s decisions regarding the Johnson Report were presented to Cabinet on Monday, March 31, 1980.

## THE MINISTER’S DECISION

The day after the Minister’s release of his decisions to Cabinet he released the following press statement:

In brief the main decisions which have been taken are:

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<sup>11</sup> Handwritten comment by Brice on Letter from J.K Hill, Link Consultancy, to the Director-General (undated). Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Box 854.

- To retain the present position with regard to sex education in primary schools;
- To allow secondary school programmes in human development and relationships authorised by principals in consultation with boards of governors to continue, but with provision for a review of consultative procedures followed by schools to formulate a set of national guidelines which could be helpful to schools;
- To take no action to change the Education Act 1964, in the light of the decision not to build sex education programmes into the primary school curriculum;
- To authorise my department to proceed with a review of the primary and secondary school health education syllabuses within the context of my other decision as stated above;
- To consider, in relation to other priorities for increase in educational spending, those recommendations in The Johnson Report relating to school organisation and guidance, to physical and outdoor education, to children with special needs, community aspects, teacher training and research.<sup>13</sup>

The Minister promised to follow this announcement with a circular to “schools, educational authorities, and interested groups” setting out the background to The Johnson Report, the general tenor of the public submissions, and the actions he intended to take with regard to the other groups of recommendations. In the text of his April 1 statement Mr. Wellington also referred to the Link Report.

The analysis of written submission made by groups and individuals has identified the issues, shown up the areas of agreement and opened up those issues which are still not clear to the public. Most of the recommendations have not proved to be controversial, and received a considerable amount of support ... Two groups of recommendations did prove to be controversial and received both support and opposition, with no clear consensus emerging: Education about human development and relationships; Moral, spiritual and values education. At one extreme are those who hold that courses in human development

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<sup>12</sup> Memorandum to the Minister signed by Peter Brice, on behalf of the Director-General (undated). Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, Box 854.

<sup>13</sup> Press statement released from the Office of the Minister of Education, April 1, 1980. (author's file)

and relationships including sex instruction for primary school children, should be taught as an integrated programme. Taught in this way, there would be little opportunity for those parents who did not wish their children to take part in those parts of such programmes that dealt with sex instruction to know when to have their children temporarily withdrawn. At the other extreme were those who objected not only to the inclusion of sex instruction in any form in primary school syllabuses but who also took the view that, if school syllabuses did include such instruction, their children should not have to be subject to undue attention by having to absent themselves temporarily from their classes ... I have therefore decided not to proceed with the recommendations of The Johnson Report under this heading. The statement in the primary school health education syllabus, "There is no place in the primary school for group or class instruction in sex education", will be retained ... teachers have more immediate and, in terms of the tasks they are primarily established to do, more important responsibilities.<sup>14</sup>

Here was proof of moral cathexis — proof that the Minister's sympathies did not lie with the liberal ideology of his Departmental advisers. In his autobiography Wellington made his alignment with the Religious Right clearer, within a chapter expressing his view that a "battle for young minds" had been raging throughout the 1970s. He saw the consultative exercise of the EDC in the early 1970s as the beginning of "a determined effort by the social engineers to replace proper schooling" with directions that were "loose, vague and meaningless" (Wellington, 1985, p. 71). It was Mr. Wellington's opinion that when he became Minister "the country was still fired up over the issue and vigorous debate, sometimes personal and vicious, was still widespread. The [Johnson] report brought to a head the conflict between traditional educationalists and those I call the social engineers" (Wellington, 1985, p 70). Wellington's personal view of the proper role of school as the agent of cultural reproduction is extrapolated further in his memoirs where he stated that Johnson Report "avoided more important educational matters" (p 72).

Employers were worried by the lack of skills among some school leavers. Youth unemployment was still growing...More and more

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<sup>14</sup> The Johnson Report. Statement of the Office of the Minister of Education, Wellington April 1, 1980. See also the introduction to this thesis.

people were realising that education must be more relevant to work ... that the school's first duty was to teach information, knowledge and skills, not to provide a social service. Without hesitation, I agreed with this view. (Wellington, 1985, p 73)

As will be seen in the Fraser television interview in the next chapter it took journalists until 1984 to have Mr. Wellington acknowledge publicly his conservative ideology and the significance of this in relation to the outcomes of the Johnson Report.

## **THE PROHIBITION ON SEX EDUCATION REMAINS BUT DEBATE CONTINUES**

The Minister's announcement of his decisions on the Johnson Report made one thing clear, and others less clear. The prohibition on sex education in primary schools was to remain. The degree of government's commitment to the other recommendations was still to be determined. Requests were made by citizens wanting to access the full text of the Link Report, but Mr. Wellington refused to release it on the grounds that this would merely prolong debate.

From both the CDU's and the Johnson Committee's perspectives there were wins and losses. Outdoor and physical education were to receive attention. Social and values education were not. The legal ambiguity over the position of sex education in secondary schools remained unresolved. Five contentious years since the Committee was set up had ended with the maintenance of the status quo in primary schools, a path that had been enmeshed with the CSA legislation. The Minister's decision was greeted with approval by the CPA whose April newsletter of 1980 lauded the edict on sex education at primary level, but expressed disappointment at the Government's failure to legislate against human development courses in secondary schools as well. CPA also called for the Link Report to be released.

Following the Minister's announcement the educational community began to express its disappointment. The Presidents of the New Zealand Educational Institute, E. Pankhurst, and the Post Primary Teacher's Association, D. Baird, each protested at the dropping of the sex education recommendations, and added their voices to the call for the public release of

the Link Report.<sup>15</sup> Education Opposition spokesman Russell Marshall said that Mr. Wellington had “tackled the report in a personal fashion, leaving out the parts he does not like and making a weak commitment to the rest.”<sup>16</sup> Letters such as the following one began to flow to the Minister.

Dear Sir,

The Havelock North School Committee strongly recommends that you reconsider your decision not to make public the full analysis by Link Associates of the 2700 public submissions on The Johnson Report. Regardless of your wishes the debate on the introduction of courses on human relationships into primary schools and on other issues covered in The Johnson Report, will continue. Being aware of the very considerable effort put into the preparation of public submissions on The Johnson Report, this Committee is sure that the analysis of those submissions by Link Associates would be of value in that debate. There is also a real danger that your treatment of public submissions will make it more difficult to achieve broad spectrum participation in the debate in the future. As a result these areas which are of vital concern to the education of our children could well become the preserve of narrowly based pressure groups.<sup>17</sup>

Others joined the fray, including the Principal of Hutt Valley High School, Ian McLean, whose senior prize-giving address of 1980 offered an interpretation of Johnson Report, reported in Wellington’s *Dominion*:

In spite of discussions held widely in the community there is still a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding about the report. Because of the almost hysterical opposition by pressure groups to one small section it has become in effect a controversial document which in my view it does not deserve to be. The danger which I wish to stress tonight is that by focusing attention on five pages which deal with sex, many people are overlooking the main theme of the report altogether ... young people, parents, and the family unit itself are at risk in today’s world. The schools cannot beat this on

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<sup>15</sup> Letters from NZEI and PPTA to Minister (undated). Archives New Zealand, ABEP W4262, 17/3/30 Box 855.

<sup>16</sup> Minister says vital Johnson report document a secret. *NZ Herald*. April 2, 1980, p. 3. (author’s file)

their own. It will require co-operation of parents, social agencies, and the whole community.<sup>18</sup>

With the Link Report still not available to the public, the Department responded to requests for copies with a standard letter from the Minister.

In asking the Link consultants to analyse the responses I was contracting with them to do a task of analysis which otherwise would have been done by my department. I am therefore according their report the same status as a departmental report to me and it is not my intention to release it to the public.<sup>19</sup>

Debate however did not cease. Members of both the Auckland and South Auckland Education Boards, at their May meetings of 1980, voted “to lend support to requests” for the Minister of Education to review his decision and “negative attitude” towards the Johnson Report.<sup>20</sup>

## THE MAINSTREAM CHURCHES ENTER THE FRAY

The Christian churches that had been less vocal during the first wave of the controversy, relying on their nationally collated submissions, now spoke out in the wake of the Minister’s decision. A letter from the General Secretary of the Churches Education Commission to the Society of Friends (Quakers) requested a copy of the latter’s submission with the following explanation.

A number of the major churches have expressed concern that the feedback on the submissions to the Johnson Report has not accurately reflected what they intended with respect to human development programmes in schools. We are seeking to gather together submissions from all the major churches and Religious Groups to determine whether in fact their submissions were as conservative as the Minister of Education has suggested.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Letter to Mr. M. Wellington, Minister of Education, from the Secretary, Havelock North School Committee, July 11, 1980. (author’s files)

<sup>18</sup> Sex aspects of report taken out of context. Report of I. McLean’s 1980 prize-giving address, published in the *Dominion* (date unknown). (clipping in author’s file)

<sup>19</sup> Requests for the Link Report were sent to the Minister by P. Falkener, Chairman of the North Shore Branch of the CPA, and Jack Smith, National. Each received this response (undated, but in April 1980).. Archives New Zealand, ABEP W4262 17/3/30, Box 854.

<sup>20</sup> Minutes of Auckland Education Board meeting, May 14, 1980. (Author’s file).



Like others, the Quakers had been trying unsuccessfully to obtain a copy of the Link Report from the Department. In May 1980, Sue Stove, the Convener of their Public Questions Committee, wrote to Russell Marshall seeking his assistance.

We have written to the Minister stating our concern that the [Link] analysis remains secret. This is particularly objectionable because public participation has been one of the hallmarks of the [Johnson] report. To withhold information, and at the same time act on that information seems highly inappropriate.<sup>22</sup>

Russell Marshall's response was to ask the Minister question in the House on June 5, 1980, regarding what action the government had taken in implementing the Johnson Report's recommendations. Wellington's reply was that clause 2.23 b concerning the place of sex education in primary schools "has not been accepted."<sup>23</sup> Leaders within the mainstream churches maintained their own lobbies and the Methodist President, the Reverend L. Gibson, addressed his church's 1980 annual conference bluntly.

The denial of much of the maleness and femaleness in every human being has had many ugly consequences. With laws and suppressions we have caused as many ills in human behaviour as we have ever cured. ... I believe we are a short-sighted nation if the aims of The Johnson Report on human relationships and development are not fully implemented, especially if we allow the matters relating to sex to be dealt with the way the present Minister of Education reacts.<sup>24</sup>

The Anglicans were also tenacious, having put a great deal of effort into the consultative process behind their group submissions. A letter from the Napier-Hastings Association of Anglican Women to the Minister congratulates him on his endorsement of the sections approved for "future action" but suggested also that he reconsider his decision regarding the sex education clause.

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<sup>21</sup> Letter From Bruce Turley, Churches Education Commission, to Sue Stover, Convener of the Public Questions Committee of the Religious Society of Friends (undated). Alexander Turnbull Library MS Papers 2597 Folder 12/8 Society of Friends.

<sup>22</sup> Letter from Sue Stover, Convener of the Public Questions Committee of the Religious Society of Friends to Russell Marshall, May 31, 1980. Alexander Turnbull Library MS Papers 2597, Folder 12/8 Society of Friends.

<sup>23</sup> M.L. Wellington. Reply to written question in Parliament, June 12, 1980. (Author's file).. See also the introduction to this thesis.

<sup>24</sup> Call for change in sex outlook, *New Zealand Herald*, November 3, 1980

...there is a meeting place outside the realm of dogma where a curriculum, carefully drawn up...would be generally acceptable and prove more satisfactory in meeting children and young people's needs than is the case at present. We still believe that a human development and relationship course could be worked out...Why should our anxieties and difficulties win the day? Therefore I write to ask and encourage you to reconsider your decision.<sup>25</sup>

In the aftermath of the Minister's decision, in July 1983 the Auckland Anglican Diocesan Synod passed a motion urging all Anglicans to "encourage" the Minister of Education "to implement the guidelines and positive suggestions made in the Johnson Report and to ensure that every New Zealand child has the opportunity to study and discuss human relationships, sex and sexuality in progressive steps throughout each child's education."<sup>26</sup> Mr. Wellington's response to the media report of this motion caused another flurry in the press that further indicates the polarity between liberal and fundamentalist ideology, and reinforces the thesis of moral cathexis.

I am puzzled that the diocese should see fit to expend its time on the issue in the light of the great national debate on the matter between 1977 and 1980. I find your intrusion into these areas a matter of the deepest objection ... I have no intention of advocating to colleagues in the government that my decision of 1980 should be reversed. As a financial member of, and a lay reader in, another Protestant Church, I can only wonder at or about certain trends within the contemporary Church.<sup>27</sup>

In this response Mr. Wellington showed his alignment with the American NRR definition of a Christian, as one adhering to a fundamentalist doctrine and therefore his alignment with the moral entrepreneurs of the New Zealand RR lobby. In response to this rebuke however the Anglican Reverend Peter Davies suggested that Mr. Wellington was "six years too late in telling the churches to stay out of the issue [since] they had already put considerable energy over a long period of time in discussing the issues, surveying members,

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<sup>25</sup> Letter to the Minister written by Mrs Jean MacLean on behalf of the Napier-Hastings Association of Anglican women, July 17, 1980. Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Box 854, Committee on Health and Social Education, Part 1.

<sup>26</sup> Statement issued to newspapers by the Auckland Diocese. (Author's file).

<sup>27</sup> *Minister's reply rude. New Zealand Herald* October 18, 1983, p.5.

and making submissions.” The Minister, he said, “had picked on” the largest synod of New Zealand’s largest church, speaking on behalf of tens of thousands of people. “It is an inappropriate reply. He is trying to devalue the church’s contribution to the whole debate. The debate does not end when the Minister says so. It ends when people stop talking.”<sup>28</sup>

But people did not stop talking and one letter to the *NZ Herald* found it “disturbing that Mr. Wellington fears public debate. He is blocking the democratic process which up until this point has been one of the hallmarks of the Johnson Report.”<sup>29</sup> The talking continued through to December 1983 when Jack Shallcrass, wrote a column in the *New Zealand Listener* in which he made reference to the 1979 letter that Mr. Wellington could not recall having received from the Johnson Committee, the letter offering the Minister a rationale for alternatives to taking a prohibitive stance over the Report’s contentious clause 2.23.

In a letter to the Minister, Johnson urged that the Government pass *enabling* legislation which would leave the decision about what to teach with each school. This legislation would have required more than 80 per cent agreement by parents and staff before any change could be made to the curriculum. Johnson stated that he and his committee believed that the *process* of deciding would itself be a powerful educative means of resolving differences. Of course this is an affront to our national habit of imposing universal solutions. Decisions come from above. Johnson’s break with this tradition may well have given more offence to the Minister than the specific recommendations on human relations and sex education ... The Link Report is now available under the Freedom of Information Act ... The abiding impression is of the number who took part and of the countless hours that went into finding negotiated positions.<sup>30</sup>

Shallcrass, a regular television commentator was among the liberals with an interest in promoting the Report’s recommendations. Throughout the controversy the media reflected the spectrum of opinion expressed by the public, serving to prolong, rather than to control the debate and a discussion of

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<sup>28</sup> *Minister’s reply rude. New Zealand Herald* October 18, 1983, p.5.

<sup>29</sup> Letter in *NZ Herald*, April 5, 1980 from S. Stover of the Society of Friends. Alexander Turnbull Library, MS Papers 2597, Folder 12/8. Society of Friends.

<sup>30</sup> Shallcrass, J. (1983, December 3). *Vive les differences. NZ Listener*, p 75.

role of newspapers, radio and television will further illuminate an understanding of events.

## **THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN THE CONTROVERSY**

For the nation's news media the "Ross Report" had sparked interest in sex education, but until the release of the Johnson Report there had been meatier pickings to be found in the CSA Bill. During the 1978-1979 phase of submissions on the Johnson Report media interest was sustained for two reasons. The first was that individuals and groups making submissions to the Minister often released them concurrently as press statements. The second was the ongoing national circuit of public speaking, of both the pro and anti Report lobbies, in meetings, usually attended by a local or national news reporter. Thus the cut and thrust of the ongoing controversy was widely reported. Legislation regarding television also impacted on the controversy, and it is necessary to appreciate the part it played in the debate. It will be argued that the role of the media in the Johnson Report controversy did not precisely equate with that described by Hall, Soler, Cohen and others in relation to the defining and orchestrating of a moral panic.

### ***Television and the Broadcasting Act***

The influence of the broadcasting media on the Johnson Report controversy must be understood in terms of its own evolution as an institution. In 1973 the Broadcasting Act was passed abolishing the NZBC and the Broadcasting Authority, and establishing their place "three independently operated public corporations – one to run the existing television channel, another the proposed second channel and the third to take over radio services" (Gregory, 1985, p. 90). Michael King (2003) commented that the heroes of radio were "steadily eclipsed" by the new faces on television, including "Brian Edwards who astonishingly began to interrogate public figures on behalf of the public" (p. 453). The subsequent restructuring of the public broadcasting system under the third Labour government came into effect in April 1975 just months before the

government was defeated, at the time the Johnson Committee was conceived. Gregory describes the new sense of freedom among journalists at that time. "There quickly emerged a consensus among broadcasters that they were now relishing an atmosphere of creative purpose such as they had not previously experienced" (Gregory, p 91). However Smith (1996) explained this freedom was soon subjected to political control. "News and current affairs staff were... always under threat from government politicians who complained about the 'wasteful duplication' of two news services. Early in 1976 Prime Minister, Rob Muldoon, demanded that the two news services be merged" under the Broadcasting Act of 1976 (Smith, 1996, p. 10).

Under 1961 legislation the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation had been required to comply with the general policy of the government. The Act of 1976 however granted new journalistic and editorial freedom. During the period of the Johnson Report controversy the National Government made another attempt to reassert political control over the media. Gregory (1985) chronicled events in 1979 when PM Rob Muldoon banned particular camera crews from his news conferences, and the same year blacklisted television interviewer Ian Fraser, followed later by columnist Tom Scott. It was Fraser who would prompt the Minister of Education, Merv Wellington, to reveal his support for the CPA lobby, during an interview on the subsequent curriculum review of 1984.

Meanwhile, 1976 was the first full year of two channel television. For a three month transition period between governments the two television channels existed as independent corporations, and a new breed of investigative journalists emerged, vying for the same audience. The subsequent Official Information Act of 1982 increased the availability of politically sensitive information that had formerly been unavailable, allowing the revisiting of contentious issues, and in-depth examination and critique of government policies and politicians' actions, and it was under this Act that journalists and citizens finally obtained the Link analysis of the submissions on the Johnson Report. The second half of the 1970s also witnessed the emergence of the cult of the television personality, and the advent of news and current affairs programmes with the catchy names of *Eyewitness*, *Compass*, and *Gallery*.

Television One and Television Two had competing news programmes in the same evening time slot, which meant that any controversial morsel would be picked over for a new angle that might win the audience ratings. Johnstone (1998) provided an overview of these events. In this climate the sex and moral education aspects of the Johnson Report provided news items on otherwise quiet days.

A note from Peter Macpherson to Peter Brice discussed a meeting between Departmental officers and executives of TV1 and TV2 on June 28, 1978. This was to explore the possibility of a television series on the Johnson Report issues.<sup>31</sup> In this note Macpherson sounded “a warning that we could end up with national polarization instead of local discussion.” These programmes did not proceed, and the policy community was alert to the possibilities and pitfalls of media coverage as it continued its ongoing task of trying to gauge and predict public response and pressure on the Minister regarding the Report’s recommendations on education for human development.

### ***Radio talkback***

In the 1970s the public enthusiastically engaged with the new phenomenon of radio talkback., Morning radio news picked up the issues that had been on television the previous evening and in newspapers that morning, with the result that any new angle on the Johnson Report was recycled in a continuing interplay of commentary and opinion among its protagonists and adversaries. With the advent of the Link Report, and the attenuated progress of the Johnson Report’s recommendations, confusion was inevitable, as shown in the following radio interview on 1ZB in May 1980 in which the interviewer created further confusion as he tried unsuccessfully to elicit the Minister of Education’s position, with the Minister taking refuge in the strategy of informed disinterest enabled by the Link analysis.

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<sup>31</sup> Note in Departmental files (undated). Archives New Zealand, AEPB W4262, 17/3/30, Part 4, Box 855.

**Reporter:** Is there anything in The Johnson Report that you're not happy with? Or the Government isn't happy with?

**Wellington:** Well, we've made our decisions on the basis of an analysis of the public's findings. No, I don't take exception to the Report as such. [What] the Government is required to do, as I have said is make decisions not so much about the Report *per se*, but make decisions about the recommendations in the context and against the background and backcloth of public reaction. And that hasn't been a particularly easy task.

**Reporter:** If you hear now that the Report has been effectively shelved, if you take no exception to anything in the Report, could it now be released to the public?

**Wellington:** I think perhaps we are confusing the Report, which I understand to be the Johnson Report, and the Link analysis of the public submissions. You will recall I said I terminated the hearing, or receiving of submissions from the public on August 15<sup>th</sup> last year. We then, because I as Minister, the Government, my Department, didn't want to be seen to be too close to an analysis of those submissions, we hired Link Consultants to do just that — to analyse what had been said by the community. I took receipt of that, from memory, on 4<sup>th</sup> January this year and it said certain things, and I think the most important think it said was that whilst on most matters the New Zealand community is agreed that certain programmes, actions, approaches should be taken into very critical, sensitive, personal areas. I'm referring to areas of sex education. Primary schools on one hand, and I'm referring to the [1945] clause on the other. The analysis clearly showed that there was no common ground.

**Reporter:** We're not being allowed to actually see the Report?

**Wellington:** Well that's true, and the reasons are quite clear and quite simple. I regard the analysis as, I gave it the status if you like, of a departmental report to a Minister, and therefore it carries a degree of confidentiality. That's point one. Point two — the country really since the Ross Report, which goes back to the early seventies, has been debating these issues for about eight years. I am anxious to make decisions, put them behind us and look ahead into the eighties and I believe, and still maintain the release of the analysis will merely perpetuate a debate about a debate.<sup>32</sup>

By now the Minister was undoubtedly weary of being constantly challenged on the topic. From the perspective of his political career also, the perpetuation of this particular debate was undesirable.

## THE NEWSPAPERS

During the 1970s there were morning and evening daily newspapers in each of the main cities — Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland. The morning dailies took a slightly more conservative stance than the evening papers, although the newspapers of the less populated and more culturally homogenous South Island tended to espouse more traditional values in their editorializing than those of the North. During the 1970s Auckland was one city. It has since become five, two of which (Manukau and South Auckland) comprise the world's largest population of Pacific People. It was the *Auckland Star*, slightly more liberal in its editorialising than its conservative opposition, the *New Zealand Herald*, that presented the positive aspects of this increasing cultural diversity and frequently solicited comment from Garfield Johnson.

There were also two influential national weekly Roman Catholic newspapers. In the South Island *The Tablet* was edited by John Kennedy, a man of "some influence" with Prime Minister Rob Muldoon (Marshall, Int.). Kennedy also had a weekly television commentary programme in which he was publicly supportive of the CPA and SPCS. In the North Island the

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<sup>32</sup> Transcript of interview on 1ZB, Auckland, May 21, 1980. (The audiotape was loaned to the author by Father Tom Ryder).



*Zealandia's* Editor Father Ernie Simmonds, sympathetically reported the views of Johnson Committee member Tom Ryder.

The tabloid press in New Zealand consisted of the Wellington-based *Truth*, and the *Auckland Star's* Saturday sports edition, *The 8'Clock*. *Truth* published a mixture of prurience, sport and gossip, but its editorial policy in relation to the Johnson Report was curiously fundamentalist in its moralising tone.<sup>33</sup>

### ***Editorial positioning***

In the aftermath, first of the "Ross Report" and second of the CSA Bill, newspapers began to firm up their respective editorial positions on the issue of sex education. Initial responses to the Johnson Report were mainly condemnatory in tone. "CLAUSES DROPPED FROM ABORTION BILL WON SUPPORT" was the heading on an editorial in the *New Zealand Herald* which stated that the "controversial recommendations from the Royal Commission on CSA discarded by the Government" had "received priority" in the Johnson Report.<sup>34</sup> The *Auckland Star* responded with the dramatic heading "NO-HOLDS BARRED REPORT ROCKS SCHOOL SYSTEM." This headline preceded the comment "this blueprint for the healthy growth and social education of students wastes no time in attacking the foundations of schools."<sup>35</sup> Despite this sally into sensationalism the *Auckland Star* was predominantly sympathetic to the recommendations of the Johnson Report during the period following its release, as illustrated in a subsequent editorial in which the *Star* drew attention to a link between the Johnson Report and statements of the Social Development Council on family violence.

Not the least significant aspect of the Johnson Report was that it showed how children can be taught from an early age appropriate ways of handling aggression. The reluctance to fully heed the

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<sup>33</sup> Both the *Auckland Star* and the *NZ Truth* ceased publication in the 1980s.

<sup>34</sup> Clauses dropped from abortion bill won support (1977, November 18). *New Zealand Herald*, p. 14.

<sup>35</sup> No hold barred report rocks school system (1977, November 22). *Auckland Star*, p. 7.

lessons of that valuable report, and act on them, can be seen as a measure of a problem that should be everybody's concern.<sup>36</sup>

Wellington's *Dominion* took a more moderate position than it had with the "Ross Report" in heralding the release of the Johnson report with some factual reporting — a position it maintained for the most part in the controversy.

The Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education has come out strongly in favour of sex education in all schools. Released yesterday for public discussion and comment by the Minister of Education, Mr. Gandar, the Report also calls for the controversial recommendations on sex education made by the Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion to be implemented, but with qualifications. Other recommendations in the sex education section of the report call for the education department to make available resources for parents to assist them in the home education of their children.<sup>37</sup>

Following the release of the Johnson Report the Wellington based tabloid *Truth* launched into attack mode and maintained this stance throughout the controversy. "THAT REPORT'S A SHOCKER!" it trumpeted, describing the Johnson Report as "anti-academic, anti-Christian, and antagonistic towards parental authority".

License is given for practices which no responsible parent or teacher could possibly condone ... Does the committee seriously believe that a teacher living in a de facto relationship will allow a strongly censorious opinion on pre-marital sex to pass without comment?<sup>38</sup>

A two-page *Truth* spread followed in November 1978 under the headline "JOHNSON JACK-UP". The text of this article is largely a reproduction of the arguments that had been published previously in CPA newsletters.<sup>39</sup> Throughout the controversy *Truth* supported the arguments of the CPA moral entrepreneurs, and in this respect it came the closest of the national newspapers to the media's role as an agent in defining deviance and promoting moral panic. A year later *Truth* was still on the offensive. "The education department is pushing sex in schools as hard as it can go ... That is what the

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<sup>36</sup> Dealing with violence. (1980, May 28). Editorial. *Auckland Star*. p 6.

<sup>37</sup> News report in the *Dominion* (undated but most likely April 1978. (clipping in author's file)

<sup>38</sup> Truth looks at education. (1978, September, 1979). *NZ Truth*, p.4.

infamous Johnson Report is all about, sex for the tinies, sex for the juniors, sex for the seniors.”<sup>40</sup> This article also criticized the health education resources distributed to schools by the Department during 1978 which were a compilation of previously issued lists of teaching materials.

## THE DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE TO MEDIA INTEREST

The educational policy community continued to monitor media reports as the in-house study group proceeded with the task of how best to advise the Minister over implementation of the Johnson Report's recommendations, mindful of the critical element of the public. A memo to the Minister from the Director-General attached “for his information” three articles that appeared in *Truth* on December 12, 1978.

Truth has adopted a critical stance to the report similar to that of the CPA ... On page 4 there were three articles by the Truth education writer and a letter from J. Moore of Auckland, all critical of the way the Department is handling the report, and of what is alleged to be happening in schools.<sup>41</sup>

The Moore letter referred to here queried the source of funding for Johnson committee members engaged on the national public speaking round in defense of the report. A *Truth* article in December 1978 had accused Committee members Johnson, Kerr and Print of proselytizing on taxpayer funds, and organizing public meetings in such a manner that “the voices of any opponents would be stifled”.<sup>42</sup> The use of taxpayers' money was an ongoing reproach from the CPA. The same memo from Renwick to the Minister advised him that “The expenses incurred by Johnson committee members to attend meetings have, as far as it is known, been met by those organisations inviting them.”<sup>43</sup> The Department decided that the best response to ongoing

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<sup>39</sup> Johnson Jack-up. (1978, November 11). *Truth.*, pp. 10-11

<sup>40</sup> Attack on the home has begun at school. (1979, August 28). *Truth* Archives New Zealand, ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Box 854. Committee on Health and Social Education, Part 1.

<sup>41</sup> Departmental memo from D-G to Minister (undated). Archives New Zealand, ABEP W4262, 17/3/30, Part 3, Box 855.

<sup>42</sup> Truth on education. (1978, December 12). *Truth*, p.11.

<sup>43</sup> Truth on education. (1978, December 12). *Truth*, p.11.

media interest was to hold a two-day media seminar in Wellington at which journalists were informed of the rationale of the Johnson Report, its recommendations and the process of policy making that would follow Ministerial decisions.<sup>44</sup>

Following the Minister's statement of April 1, 1980, giving his decisions on the Report's recommendations the press enthusiastically revisited the topic of sex education. Garfield Johnson's response to the Minister's announcement was widely reported, and his opinions continued to be sought over the next several months. A headline for journalist Graham Kennedy's regular feature in the *Auckland Star's 8 O'clock* stated: "WHY THIS MAN IS SO ANGRY AS SEX GOES BACK TO THE PLAYGROUNDS".

A disillusioned Garfield Johnson riffled through his controversial report on the mental and physical health of New Zealand schoolchildren and reflects that political opportunism seems more lucrative here than ensuring the next generation's future. He is dismayed at the thousands of school-leavers who every year join society as ignorant misinformed young adults. And he is angered by the political machinery and its pandering to the louder pressure groups for allowing the situation to continue.<sup>45</sup>

During this phase the media became more partisan, with newspapers aligning themselves either for, or against the Minister's rejection of clause 2.23b on the issue of sex education. The *Auckland Star* remained editorially sympathetic to the Report's recommendations and a half-page spread in the *Star* on July 16, 1980, discussed how various members of the community, including Johnson, had received their own sex education. The *Waikato Times* was also consistently editorially supportive of the Johnson Report.

Even allowing for the vehemence of the conservative lobby, the Government's decision to reject almost all of the controversial recommendations of the Johnson Report on education must come as a surprise ... The sex education debate, like the abortion debate, seems doomed to be bogged down in emotionalism and the extremes

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<sup>44</sup> This is referred to in a handwritten note on a memo from Peter Brice to the Director General (undated). Archives New Zealand, ABEP. W4262, 17/3/30. Part 5. Committee on Health and Social Education.

<sup>45</sup> Why this man is angry as sex goes back to the playgrounds (1980, November 14). *Star 8 O'clock*, p 53.

of opinion. Yet, by comparison with the issues surrounding abortion, the question of whether or not factual education should or should not be taught to young New Zealanders at an earlier stage than in the past, seems a clear-cut and logical progression for the 1980s. That there is not even a slight move from the status quo seems stupid in a country that suffers its fair share of the social consequences of sexual ignorance.<sup>46</sup>

*New Zealand Listener* columnist Brian Easton raised the question, “We may ask why the Minister needed to make a decision at all. Could not it have been left to the individual schools to make their own decisions, reflecting community, family and teacher preference?”<sup>47</sup>

In opposition to these views, *Truth* and *The Tablet* continued to laud the Ministerial decision not to implement the recommendations regarding sex education.

### ***Cartoon commentary***

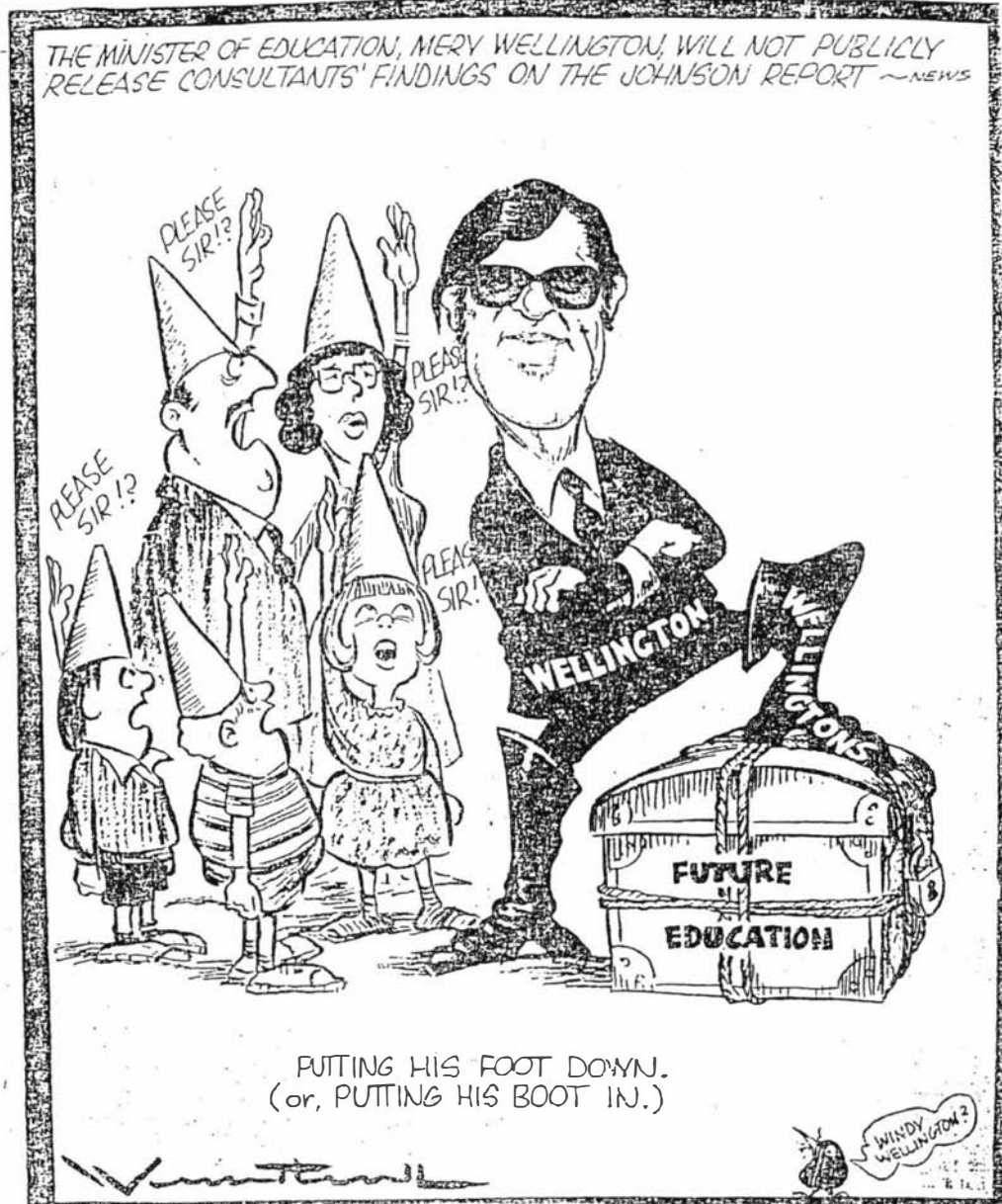
Newspaper cartoonists contributed to the controversy with their own form of political commentary which sometimes reflected perspectives differing from that of the editors. Throughout the controversy cartoonists were alert to the contradictions and themes of the debate, and some of these cartoons have been presented in the context of earlier discussion. The role of the cartoon is to question, to comment and to pique, with bureaucrats and politicians the most frequent targets of such critical commentary. The secrecy surrounding the Link Report had served to fuel suspicion regarding the Minister’s decision, among liberals as well as conservatives. A cartoon in *Truth*, in April 1980 showed parents, teachers and children appealing to an implacable Minister, “Windy Wellington”, to release the Link Report, reproduced here as illustration 30. Curiously, in this illustration the conservative editorial policy of *Truth* was juxtaposed with the freedom of the *Truth’s* cartoonist, as shown below. The Minister’s wish that the controversy would die was not to be realised while media continued to run with it, and cartoon artists found it a

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<sup>46</sup> Rejection a surprise? (1980, April 2). *Waikato Times*, p. 4. (author’s file)

<sup>47</sup> Vouching for education. (1981, August 29). *N.Z. Listener* p. 63. (Author’s file).

source of creative inspiration. This cartoon depicts the capture of legislative outcomes on sex education through the cathexis of political power with moral entrepreneur. “Windy” however was not a particularly apt term to describe Wellington’s stance, which had more to do with his own belief that the nation’s youth needed protection from the liberalising influences of what he called the “social engineers” and his own autocratic proclivities than with timidity.



**Illustration 32**— A cartoon by Wrathall in *NZ Truth* (date unknown), depicting Mr. Wellington in the act of suppressing information relating to his policy decisions, in the context of appeals to release the Link Consultants’ findings. He is impervious to requests from the public, shown in dunce hats to emphasise the Minister’s autocratic style. (Author’s file).

Throughout the Johnson Report controversy the role of the media was to maintain public focus on the issue of sex and moral education over a period of five years, serving to prolong debate and the polarisation of views. In this agency it cannot be seen as a united phenomenon having pursuit of any particular ideology, with the exceptions of *The Tablet* and *Truth* which supported the Religious Right lobby. Within the controversy the media did not play the classic role that could be expected of it in the context of a moral panic, defined by Hall et al. (1978) as being mobilised when a “deep structure of anxiety and traditionalism connect with the [media’s] public definition of crime” (p. 165). Studies presenting moral panics suggest that it is the media that achieves a reproduction of the ideology of the ruling elite. This is done “through various processes whereby they interpret the news and orientate the attitudes of the public towards the events which are taking place and towards the groups taking part” (Soler, 1988, p 29). The Johnson Report controversy was a media free-for-all in which editorial positions depended on either the journalist’s ideological bias or the potential of that particular news item for commercial headlines. Lacking also in the media’s role in the Johnson Report era is another characteristic of moral panics — a reciprocal and monopolistic link between media and other bureaucratic agents of control such as the Department of Education. The ruling elite in this case was in the process of movement from a polity of liberalism to conservatism, while the multimedia Fourth Estate was itself also in a process of evolution and freedom from previous political constraints.

## **SUMMARY**

The Link Report was a mechanism by which the Minister and his educational bureaucracy had, for different reasons, had sought a public mandate for policy directions on sex education. Instead of clarity however it served to heighten confusion over the public’s views and suspicion of conspiracy over the Department’s hegemonic activity. If the first wave of the controversy had been characterized by conservative apprehension leading up

to the release of the Report, the second phase, that of submissions on the Report's content, was marked by the intensity of polarized debate. The role of the media in this was to periodically refocus public interest on the Report's more contentious recommendations and thereby to refuel and continue debate. The controversy remained an antagonistic discourse between conservative and liberal ideology, focusing more on the issue of sex education and the relationship of this to the teaching of values than on the report's other recommendations.

Specific episodes of moral panic as described in the literature have historically involved an intense and time-bounded public reaction. The Johnson Report controversy however lasted for more than five years, during which debate was sustained but not always with the same degree of intensity, because the media did not undertake a defining role in the construing of a society under threat. Contributing reasons for this were the commercial opposition of newspapers and radio stations, the liberal ethos of the 1970s, and the *elan* with which reporters became more independent as investigative journalists operating under fewer political constraints.

At certain points in the controversy it appeared that moral boundaries had been breached, as indicated in newspaper headlines such as "that report's a shocker" and "sex goes back to the playgrounds". This impression was to some degree balanced by the presence of the media commentary of liberals such as Jack Shallcrass, and the inquisitorial style of television journalists such as Ian Fraser whose interview with Merv Wellington will be described in the next chapter. What moral panics and the Johnson Report controversy had in common was the media's orchestration of discussion on State's role in the socialisation of the young through the agency of its school system, and thence in the process of cultural reproduction. As already stated, this is an ancient dilemma with the ongoing potential to mobilise controversy around a specific issue at any point in history. The Johnson Report controversy saw the confluence of a particular public debate with new journalistic vigour and freedoms that served at times to maintain and at other times to intensify existing polarized ideological tensions. The timing of the controversy at the beginning of the history of modern mass



communication in New Zealand ensured that it would be a nationwide phenomenon.

The educational policy community had hoped that employment of an independent consultancy would serve as a mechanism to see the sex education clause of the Johnson Report find its way through to policy. In contrast, the Minister was likely to have hoped that the Link Consultants would provide objective evidence for his own belief that the public did not want the legislation of 1945 changed. The data based evidence was provided in the Link annex of submission categories was used in justification of his decision. Through his directive on the weighting of individual and group submissions, through his selective use of the Link Report's findings, and through his control of the release of information Mr. Wellington was able to justify his autonomy in the pursuit of his own ideological objectives. Within this matrix the CPA lobby achieved moral cathexis which served to negate the joint historical efforts of the Departments of Health and Education to overcome the legal impediments to sex education at primary school level remaining from discussions over the Thomas Report.

The next chapter will examine the aftermath of the controversy and its links to contemporary concerns.



## **THE AFTERMATH OF THE CONTROVERSY**

There was a final phase in the controversy on the Report of the Committee on Health and Education in the aftermath of the Minister's policy decisions, characterised by ongoing debate and suspicion. It was no longer however suspicion directed from the Religious Right at the CDU and educational policy community. Instead, suspicion was now channelled by liberal and middle-conservative citizens into questioning the grounds for Mr. Wellington's refusal to release the Link Report and to justify his rejection of the Johnson Report's recommendations on sex education.

Just as the outcomes of the Johnson Report had been enmeshed with the Royal Commission on CSA, suspicion over the Minister's autocratic style of decision-making intensified in the context of a proposed review of the core curriculum and a gradual reversion to what Jim Ross and others had described a decade earlier as teacher proofing. In this chapter the thesis of moral cathexis between the RR and the Minister will be further supported, and it will be shown how the policy community attempted to continue its hegemonic activity regarding sex education in this context. Parallels will be drawn between the ideological polarisations of the 1970s' controversy and public commentary at the end of the 20th century. Links between the bicultural aspect of the Johnson Report and a subsequent syllabus is also made.

### **POLICY DECISIONS ARE ANNOUNCED**

As discussed in the previous chapter the Minister released his decisions regarding the Johnson Report in a press statement on April 1st 1980 — five years after the Committee had been set up. The

following position on its recommendations was now clear to both the public and Press. These were:

1. Retention of the status on sex education in primary schools.
2. To allow secondary school programmes in human development and relationships authorised by principals in consultation with Boards of Governors to continue, but with provision for a review of consultative procedures followed by schools to formulate a set of national guidelines.
3. To take no action to change the Education Act of 1964 in the light of the decision not to include sex education in the primary school health syllabus.
4. To authorise the Department of Education to proceed with a review of the primary and secondary school health education syllabuses, within the context of these previous stated provisos.
5. To consider, in relation to other priorities for increases in education spending, the Johnson Report's recommendations on school education, guidance, physical and outdoor education.

## **REQUESTS FOR THE LINK REPORT CONTINUE**

Following the Minister's announcements on which aspects of the Johnson Report's recommendations would become policy the CPA expressed its approval while urging supporters to continue their vigilance on what was taking place in schools. The *CPA Newsletter* headline of April 1980 declared "Minister's Decision Worldwide Precedent."

Relief and gratitude will greet Mr. Wellington's decision that there is to be no sex education in Primary and Intermediate schools for the time being! Parents may now relax slightly in the knowledge that at least up to age 12 children will not yet be subjected to Swedish style "sex education" and the attentions of the contraceptive peddlers...His decision not to give parents any rights about their children's involvement in Secondary

School human development and relationships courses will come as a disappointment to members.

The CPA was particularly pleased that the Report's mooted national and regional health education councils had also been rejected, since "this proposal had presented the prospect of further bureaucratic control, and as such was extremely suspect".<sup>1</sup>

The *New Zealand Herald* greeted the Minister's decision with a headline referring to the Link Report: "Minister says vital Johnson Report Document a Secret".<sup>2</sup> This article quoted Johnson as saying "God help our kids. We spend a long time working this out and obviously nothing has been gained." While supportive of the Minister's decision the *New Zealand Herald's* editorialist queried why the Link Report should not be released into the public domain, quoting the Minister's statements.

There would be nothing but discord if the sex education recommendations proceeded. I believe it would be disastrous" The minister produced what he said was an excerpt from the Link analysis, which showed nearly 500 persons or groups opposed to sex education in primary schools, with only 100 in support. "Schools have more important tasks," he said. "Our primary goal is educating people for the workplace. It is the role of parents, nurses, churches and citizens advice bureau. There are all sorts of agencies to carry out this task. What I am saying is, for God's sake do not add schools to the list."<sup>3</sup>

These statistics reflected the weighting of submissions decreed by Mr. Wellington who used them in his autobiography to justify his decision on the sex education clause, as reproduced in Figure 5 below.

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<sup>1</sup> Comment within a letter of submission to the Minister on the Johnson Report from J.S. O'Neill of Dunedin, reprinted in the *CPA Newsletter*, June, 1980.

<sup>2</sup> Minister says vital Johnson Report document a secret. (1980, April 2). *New Zealand Herald*, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Editorial (1980, April 2). *New Zealand Herald*. (clipping in author's file).

2.23b The Government take urgent action to permit human developments and relationships education to be taught in all schools forthwith by removing from the health syllabus the statement 'there is no place in the primary school for group or class instruction in sex education'.

Link Analysis of Submissions

	Support	Support with reservations	Oppose with reservations	Oppose
2.23a Individuals:	25	1	2	294
All groups:	76	21	6	88
Viz National education groups – professional:	3			
National education groups – lay:	1			
Local education groups – professional:	3			1
Local education groups – lay:	48	14	3	51
	Support	Support with reservations	Oppose with reservations	Oppose
Churches and church groups:	3	6	3	28
Government departments/agencies:				
Others:	18	1		8
2.23b Individuals:	27	2	3	427
All groups:	76	7	10	128
Viz National education groups – professional:	2			
National education groups – lay:	1			
Local education groups – professional:	4		1	3
Local education groups – lay:	49	5	6	76
Churches and church groups:	3	2	3	40
Government departments/agencies:				
Others:	17			9

Figure 5 — The Link Report's annex on submissions regarding the sex education clause. The data shows the majority of submissions as opposing the recommendations. However it can be seen that there were many more citizens in support of these recommendations than opposing, a fact concealed by the decision to count each national group as one opinion only. It is reproduced here as it appeared in Wellington, M. (1985). *New Zealand education in crisis*. Milford, Auckland: Endeavour Press, p. 75.

In May 1984 in the context of debate over the Core Curriculum Review, a television interview revealed the extent of the moral cathexis between Merv Wellington and the CPA.

### ***The Fraser interview***

Ian Fraser was one of the new breed of investigative journalists. In prime viewer time on a Sunday in May 1984 he interviewed Mr. Wellington over the Minister's handling of the current Core Curriculum Review of 1984, of, as with the Link analysis, he had also ordered an independent review.<sup>4</sup> The nature of the journalist's questions reveal the extent to which the Johnson Report controversy remained of interest to media and public nine years after the Johnson Committee had been established. The Minister's replies reveal the extent of his moral alignment with the Religious Right.

**Fraser:** I asked you before, and you refused to give me a specific answer, which particular groups in the community had greater access to you, or who you paid more attention — whose views carried more weight? Can I ask you specifically whether the views of an organization like, say, the Concerned Parents' Association carries more weight with you than the more liberal religious and educational groupings?

**Wellington:** Yes.

**Fraser:** Does that also apply to the Society for the Promotion of Community Standards?

**Wellington:** I think any group or organization which has that as its aim is an organization that any Minister should listen to carefully.

**Fraser:** Okay, but the Society for the Promotion of Community Standards, the Concerned Parents' Association, SPUC, the

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<sup>4</sup> The videotape of this interview is held in the College of Education of Massey University at Palmerston North. The author transcribed it.

conservative moral groups, the conservative educational groups in our society, carry more weight with you?

**Wellington:** I think, as I have said, they are significant groups and should be listened to carefully, as indeed all groups should, but on particular issues, which occasionally impinge on education, I believe that they have something particularly important to say.

**Fraser:** They carry more weight with you than the liberals?

**Wellington:** Yes.

**Fraser:** Because they subscribe to that set of beliefs that you hold so passionately?

**Wellington:** I believe it's a set of beliefs in many instances which is endemic in New Zealand thinking.<sup>5</sup>

This interview exemplified the moral cathexis between the Minister and the CPA's Executive. Mr. Wellington's weighting of the submissions received from the public on the Johnson Report had ensured his control over its contentious recommendations. That Merv Wellington regarded the Chairman of the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education as an antagonist and dangerous liberal is revealed in his recall of his decision on the Johnson Report and by his labelling of Johnson's reported comments as "specious" and "shallow" (Wellington, 1985, p. 76).

My announcement raised a storm. Though I expected this, I wasn't prepared for the violence of the reaction. The social engineers were furious. Garfield Johnson himself claimed that my decision could only have come about because 'certain puritanical minority groups' had pressured me ... I was particularly distressed that people with sincere religious beliefs were the subject of his attacks. What's more, as chairman of



the committee, Johnson was exceeding his role ... It was for the Government to make the decision. The chairman had no right to abuse those whose point of view differed from his. (Wellington, 1985, p. 76)

## CONTROVERSY LINGERS

Whereas Mr. Wellington wanted the controversy to die down, perpetuating debate appealed to Labour's shadow Minister of Education.

Mr. Marshall stressed yesterday that under Labour their [Johnson Report recommendations] implementation would not be imposed on schools and parents would have the right to withdraw their children from classes where human relationships were being taught. Rejecting the objections of those who opposed the proposals on Christian grounds Mr. Marshall, a minister of religion, said the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education was "of the essence of Christianity and Christian people should support it."<sup>6</sup>

It was wishful thinking on Mr. Wellington's part that the controversy would disappear with the media's interest ongoing and editorials such as one in the *Waikato Times*.

Even allowing for the vehemence of the conservative lobby, the Government's decision to reject almost all of the controversial recommendations of the Johnson Report on education must come as a surprise ... The sex education debate — like the abortion debate — seems doomed to be bogged down in emotionalism and the extremes of opinion. Yet, by comparison with the issues surrounding abortion, the question of whether or not factual education should or should not be taught to young New Zealanders at an earlier stage than in the past, seems a clear-cut and logical progression for the 1980s. That there is not

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<sup>5</sup> TVNZ. *Sunday* programme. Interview by Ian Fraser with Merv Wellington, May 13, 1984.

even a slight move from the status quo seems stupid in a country that suffers its fair share of the social consequences of sexual ignorance.<sup>7</sup>

Teacher groups and others who had lobbied for legislative change continued to revisit the issues. The New Zealand Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation devoted an annual conference to "The Johnson Report, 1982: Inaction and Action".<sup>8</sup> The NZAHPER was among others who had welcomed the new policy on physical and outdoor education, while lamenting the lack of freedom to pursue issues of human development and relationships (Gluckman, 1978; Kelly, 1978; Lonsdale, 1978; McDavitt, 1978; Muir, 1978; Pickens, 1978; Shand, 1978; Shaw, 1978). Five years after the Minister's decision, the School Committees' Federation was still sufficiently angry to include a section on the Johnson Report in its submission on the Education Amendment Bill of 1985 which was aimed at facilitating the implementation of the 1984 Health Education Curriculum.

It has been argued that the Link Report revealed intense community division on this issue (human development and relationships in the curriculum) and therefore parents are not necessarily in support of such programmes. However, this argument can be refuted on three grounds (1) the statistical breakdown of submissions, (2) parental surveys, and (3) the manner in which people respond to official reports ... These (Link) statistics make valid the view that there are two sorts of liars, ordinary liars and statistics ... by giving a group submission the same rating as an individual submission the statistics are enormously distorted.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Labour keen on Johnson report. (Undated). *Auckland Star*. (Clipping in author's file)

<sup>7</sup> Rejection a surprise? (1980, April 2). *Waikato Times*, p 4.

<sup>8</sup> NZAHPER Conference and Refresher Course held at Lincoln College May 9-11, 1982.

<sup>9</sup> Submission of the New Zealand School Committees Federation to the Labour and Education Select Committee on the Education Amendment Bill, May 1985, pp 6-7.

That the controversy lingered in the minds of some citizens is shown in the following extract on the subject of spiritual care for Alzheimer patients, published twenty years after the Report's release.

Tragically, I believe, a move to bring the spiritual dimension into education in state schools by way of 'the Johnson Report' in the middle 1970s was destroyed, paradoxically by an aggressive group of extreme ill-informed fundamentalist Christians ... They confused spirituality with the practice of religion, and human development with sex education, and frightened the politicians. Had the Johnson Report been implemented as recommended, our country might have been saved from some of the social disruption, unhappiness and violence it is now experiencing in the last decade of the century. (Shamy, 1997, p. 88)

This utopian optimism was characteristic of the liberal pole of the ideological continuum throughout the controversy that simmered until overtaken by debate on the Core Curriculum Review (1984). Meanwhile, as teachers waited for a new health education syllabus, the position of human development and liberal studies programmes in secondary schools remained ambiguous.

### **AMBIGUITY REMAINS OVER THE LEGAL POSITION OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

As earlier stated, prior to his announcements on the Johnson Report the Minister had already begun his own scrutiny of health education resources. An article in the *Otago Daily Times* early in 1980 announced the Minister's embargo on Departmental purchasing of classroom material on Health and Social Education.

Mr. Wellington intends to personally review all sensitive material already in the National Film Library ... He denies that public pressure has prompted the embargo although " I

would certainly admit that the Johnson Report has heightened public awareness on such subjects,” he said.<sup>10</sup>

The current Police Crimes Act allowed for prosecutions of teachers who engaged in sex education in primary schools but there remained some ambiguity over similar activity where it touched on contraception in secondary schools. The teacher unions warned members not to embark on any such classroom activities (Kerr, Int.), a directive that affected existing secondary school programmes. Lyn Scott, a senior Dean at Waitaki Girls’ High School during the 1970s and subsequently Principal of Hamilton Girls’ High School, recalled the tensions under which principals and teachers worked in the early 1980s.<sup>11</sup>

We dealt with issues of sexuality and puberty within the cultural context of that time and place. The programme was publicized in local halls and via newsletters. Parents were kept fully informed of the programme because there were real community fears about it such as ‘is it going to make them promiscuous? Will there be teachers teaching sex?’ (Scott, Interview, June 22, 1997)

Scott recalled the Johnson Report as having a “negative backlash” on existing health and human development programmes, with the CPA networking among parents in school communities and using the term the sex report, instead of “the Johnson Report”. Scott recalled staff “having to defend our programmes to parents who had been coloured in their perceptions.”

What happened was that people jumped up and down about what they saw as the report advocating ... schools moving into areas of education that they saw as being parental, particularly the focus on sex education that they saw the report as being about. (Scott, Int.).

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<sup>10</sup> Article in *Otago Daily Times*, (1980, January 5). Archives New Zealand, ABEP W4262, 17/3/30., Box 854, Committee on Health and Social Education, Part 1. The unsigned, handwritten note of a Departmental officer across this article states that similar news items appeared the same day in the *Christchurch Star*, the *NZ Herald*, and the *Christchurch Press*.

<sup>11</sup> Lyn Scott later headed the National Education Qualifications Authority.

In issuing the draft of the subsequent 1984 health education curriculum Merv Wellington tried again to end the controversy.

This is a discussion document. I trust that many schools and their affiliated parent organisations will accept the invitation to study the draft syllabus carefully and present their views to the Project Team. These views will be taken into account by the team when it recommends a final syllabus for my consideration. However, I want to make it absolutely clear that there will be no change in the present provisions regarding sex education. Indeed, in the draft syllabus there is no provision for group or class instruction in sex education in primary and intermediate schools. I should add that whilst I am Minister of Education this position will stand and stand absolutely. In short, the decision I made in 1980 is made, fixed and final.<sup>12</sup>

The events leading up to this Ministerial statement had posed further challenges for the policy community whose attempts to exercise hegemony over the health education curriculum remained fraught in what had become a conservative political climate. These events, which have been discussed in detail by Kama Weir (2001), are worth visiting briefly for the way in which they illuminate the policy community's continuing efforts to reassert some control over the issue of sex education.

### ***A dilemma for the policy community***

In the aftermath of the Minister's decisions the in-house departmental study group that had been working so assiduously on the policy implications of the Johnson Report now turned its attention to what might still be achieved. A memo in April 1980 from Peter Brice, Director of Development, to the Director-General, Bill Renwick, stated:

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<sup>12</sup> Letter from the Minister of Education accompanying the new draft Health Syllabus (1984).

Subsequent to the Minister's decision on the Johnson Report and the public discussion, there appears to be two immediate actions that the department needs to take:- Set up machinery for the revision of primary and secondary health education syllabus; Undertake discussions with PPTA and SSBA to produce national guidelines for consultation at the local level.<sup>13</sup>

Mr. Wellington now authorized Renwick to assemble a Health Education Project Team to undertake the revision of the health syllabuses. Its work began in 1982 under the direction of Roy Phillips of the CDU, but it was led by a former science teacher experienced in health and parent education, Helen Shaw, who "took up the hottest seat in the country" (Renwick Int.). Like Murray Print, articulate and diplomatic, Helen Shaw was carefully chosen for the task by the educational bureaucracy and appears to have been head hunted (Weir, p. 160). It was Shaw's job in the aftermath of the controversy to begin another round of public consultation, prior to drafting a new syllabus. She was however aware of the magnitude of the challenge and the unresolved issues of moral and sex education.

One of the things that I tried to do was never to use the term 'human development and relationships' because it had become a label that was utterly tainted ... It was easy for articulate groups like the Concerned Parents' Association to drum up a sense of anxiety that something was being sprung on them ... So these labels, because they weren't clearly descriptive, were seen as portmanteaux for stuff that mightn't be liked ... So I tried to use specific terms that were age appropriate ... the changes of puberty; to unpack these portmanteaux. (Shaw, Interview, October 2, 1997)

Weir has made the point that Shaw was an excellent choice from the hegemonic perspective of the policy community, being "both an outsider and, to a lesser degree, an insider" (p. 161). Lessons had been learned from the Johnson Report and it was understood that the Minister needed diplomatic guidance. Shaw arrived with an

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<sup>13</sup> Memo dated April 21, 1980 from Brice to Renwick and Ross. Archives New Zealand ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Box 845.

impeccable background that included having worked at the University of Otago and Harvard Medical school and had a respectable reputation within the Christchurch education scene. It was probably hoped by the D-G that Shaw's leadership would prove acceptable to the Minister and other sectors of the public with an interest in the issue. It was important to achieve clarity and avoid possible sources of misunderstanding such as the Johnson Report's use of Māori language. This did not mean that Shaw would overlook the Treaty of Waitangi Act in drafting the new report but it did mean that she decided that the bicultural aspects would be spelled out "much more plainly" (Shaw, cited Weir, p. 165).

### ***Another round of public consultation***

Helen Shaw's brief was to begin another national process of consultation. Following this the Project Team within the Department of Education was to prepare a draft syllabus which would then be circulated throughout the educational community for feedback.<sup>14</sup> Such terms of reference would no doubt have resulted from Renwick's diplomatic discussion with the Minister who was not about to let liberal teachers, PTAs, school committees and school boards loose on the issues again without some process for controlling the debate. This was achieved by consigning the role of the educational community to one of comment rather than submission, and by restricting the list of topics to be discussed. These procedures would also have suited the objectives of the still-liberal policy community who knew well that the weighting given to submissions on the Johnson Report by national organisations had obscured an accurate revelation of public opinion. It knew also that the national groups such as the NCW, FPA, NZEI and PPTA remained in support of liberalising the curriculum on the issue of sex

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<sup>14</sup> This first draft was the *Health Education in Primary and Secondary Schools: Syllabus Revision: Report on consultations, Draft Syllabus*, Wellington: Department of Education, 1982.

education, the cause of which was thus adventitiously furthered despite the differences in the agendas of the Minister and his bureaucracy. Shaw's new health syllabus draft reflected the ongoing debate.

A large number of groups made comments on sex education. The preliminary paper that preceded the consultations made clear that no change was intended in the provisions for sex education in primary schools. This meant that any suggestions regarding sex education were therefore limited to the context of secondary schools. A large number of groups asked for their opposition to this ruling to be recorded, seeing the need for home teaching needing to be supplemented by sound programmes at school, particularly in view of the lower age at which menarche now begins.<sup>15</sup>

Weir (2001) made the point that the consensus established by the Health Education Project Team during the consultation period was sufficiently comprehensive to ensure that the draft syllabus resulting from this was well received by schools and parent communities. To implement a final syllabus however required the authorisation of the Minister of Education.

### ***Mr. Wellington balks again***

Neither Mr. Wellington nor the Religious Right would have been particularly pleased with the way Helen Shaw and her team circumvented the ambiguity over the status of sex education in secondary schools. This was done in the final draft by the strategic placement and careful wording of content of a section of the text. It began with a paragraph from the SPUC submission to the Project Team suggesting that "a healthy, responsible and balanced attitude to human sexuality is one of the most important factors in reducing the incidence of teenage pregnancies and the consequent demand for

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<sup>15</sup> *Health Education in Primary and Secondary Schools: Syllabus Revision: Report on consultations, Draft Syllabus*, Wellington: Department of Education, 1982, p. 6.



abortion”.<sup>16</sup> This was followed by “support for sex education programmes in secondary schools from the New Zealand Medical Association, the Family Planning Association, the Department of Health and the Secondary School Boards’ Association” (Weir, 2001, p. 178). Receiving the syllabus draft in November 1982, the Minister delayed replying to his Department until May 1983, making the Health Project Team’s completion deadline of mid-August impossible to meet.<sup>17</sup> By the end of the year however the annex of feedback from schools had been sent to the Minister. “We told him that there was a great deal of concern about the lack of sex education and that was that” (Shaw, cited in Weir, p. 183). There was still no response from Merv Wellington but the political climate was changing, and a general election in 1984 saw the Labour Party returned to government.

To the approval of the policy community, Russell Marshall, the “beleaguered liberal” who, with Les Gandar, had consistently supported sex education in the context of the CSA Bill, became the new Minister of Education. With minor negotiated amendments, (Weir, pp. 178-179) Marshall approved the health education draft syllabus in October 1984. It was however still subject to the passing of an amendment to the Education Act of 1964 which became the Education Amendment Act of September 1985. This provided a consultative framework within which schools could develop health education programmes based on the syllabus, with a two-yearly community consultation, implementation and revision cycle. The policy community’s twelve-year-old agenda, beginning with the 1973 “Ross Report”, was finally completed and the centralisation of leadership of the RR achieved through moral cathexis with a fundamentalist Minister had now dissolved.<sup>18</sup> The new Health

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<sup>16</sup> *Health Education in Primary and Secondary Schools: Syllabus Revision: Report on consultations, Draft Syllabus*, Wellington: Department of Education, 1982, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> A letter from the Project Team Head, Roy Phillips, on November 1, 1983, to the Minister, requesting permission to publish the draft for circulation to schools. Department of Education File No. e 30/2/4, EBEP, W4262, 34/2/17, Part 3.

<sup>18</sup> The word dissolved is defined here as “reduced to component parts” *Pocket Oxford Dictionary* (1960). Oxford: Clarendon Press, p.240.

syllabus began with an acknowledgement of the lengthy process that had preceded these events

This syllabus draws together twelve years of public discussion on the nature and content of health education for New Zealand primary and secondary schools. It is designed to serve as a basis for further discussion and consultation within communities, as needs are identified and programmes are planned for individual schools. Following the Ross Committee (1973) and the Johnson Committee (1977) this syllabus is the culmination of the work of a small project team set up within the department....That task is now complete and the resulting syllabus provides a framework that is soundly based, yet is sufficiently flexible [for] the needs and values of individual communities.<sup>19</sup>

The content covered in the new *Syllabus for Schools, Health Education in Primary and Secondary Schools* (1985) was as wide ranging as were the terms of reference given the Johnson Committee, an achievement made possible by the passing into policy of the majority of the Johnson Report's recommendations on physical health.

## THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT RALLIES

The Religious Right did not abandon its opposition to sex education without a last clarion call over the potential for the Education Amendment Bill to undermine parental rights. A special edition of the *CPA Newsletter* in June 1985 exhorted supporters to lobby against the Amendment Bill as being aimed at "getting sex education into primary classrooms", despite "the success of the CPA" in preventing this during the previous eleven years.

The family is the target of an Education Bill on which MPs will soon be voting. Passing the Bill in its present form will result in: Your primary school children's teacher telling them all

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<sup>19</sup> Foreword to the *Syllabus for Schools, Health Education in Primary and Secondary Schools*, Department of Education, 1985, p. 3.

about sexual abuse and incest and warning them that their home is the most likely place for this to occur. Homosexual and lesbian teachers giving sex education to your primary school children and being free to say that their life-style is as normal as an ordinary family life. Contraception instruction for 5-12 year olds in primary schools being legalised.<sup>20</sup>

Merv Wellington, now in Opposition, fought the Amendment Bill.

Russell Marshall ... was quick to align himself with the radicals. It was absolutely predictable that, as Minister, he should introduce, in March 1985, the Education Amendment Bill. This, which allows for sex education courses on a trial basis in selected schools, was just one of a series of measures designed by Labour to destroy traditional New Zealand society. (Wellington, 1985, p. 76)

Debate that had bogged down the revision of the health syllabus since the 1940s finally abated in the context of discussion over the Core Curriculum Review (1984). Illustration 31 below, shows a cartoonist's comment on the duration of the controversy.

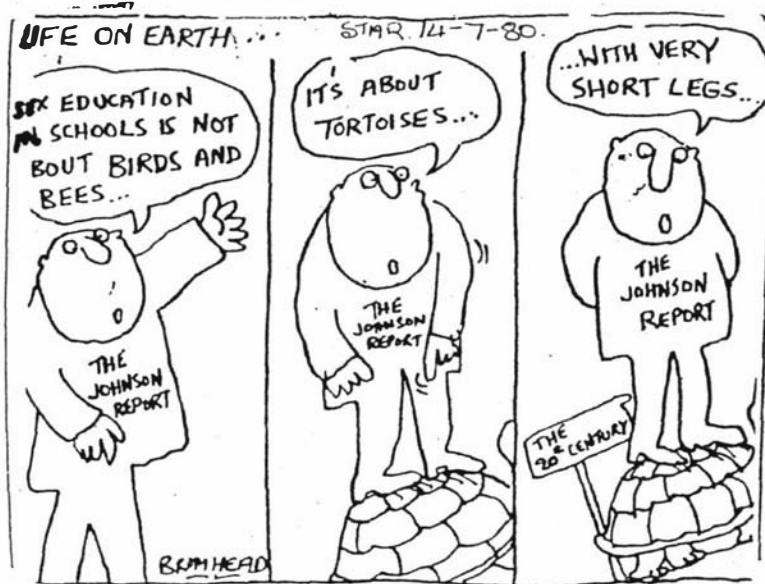


Illustration 33 — A Bromhead cartoon in the *Auckland Star*, July 14, 1980, reflected the drawn-out nature of the controversy.

<sup>20</sup> CPA Newsletter – Special Edition June 1985.

If the Thomas Report was the Johnson Report's predecessor in its holistic view of individual and societal health, its conceptual successor was the early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki* (1996). This document, describing itself as "the first bicultural statement developed in New Zealand" (p.7) had as its underlying principle "the aspiration" for children to grow up "as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a values contribution to society" (p.9). The bicultural dimension of the Johnson Report, expressed in its statements on *whanau*, *wairua* and *aroha* is extended in *Te Whāriki's* emphasis on the critical developmental role of "socially and culturally mediated learning and of reciprocal and responsive relationships for children with people, places and things" (p.9). In *Te Whāriki's* interweaving of the principles and strands of *Whanau Tangata* (family and community), *Mana Tangata* (Contribution), *Kotahitanga* (holistic development), *Mana Atua* (wellbeing) and *Nga Hononga* (Relationships), the national early childhood curriculum revisits the themes of the Johnson Report's bicultural dimension.

## TOWARDS A NEW CENTURY

The process of curriculum revision continued in the 1990s in an ongoing context of social change. A new core statement for "Health and Physical Wellbeing, one of the seven essential learning areas in the New Zealand curriculum" was gazetted in 1999.<sup>21</sup> Its foreword included a page containing a single phrase that echoed the rhetoric of the Johnson Report: "*Ne oranga ngakau, he pikinga waiora* — Positive feelings in your heart will raise your sense of self worth." Such liberal oratory in the context of the 1970s controversy would

not have appealed to those who saw the academic role of schools as having primacy, but the work of the Health Project Team, and the increasing governmental focus on the Treaty of Waitangi had moved the issues beyond simple ideological debate between Right and Left. The complexity of factors relating to educational achievement was being increasingly researched and understood as reflected in Ministry of Education curriculum statements such as the following:

In order to foster academic achievement and provide students with equal educational opportunities, schools need to address the broad health issues that affect students' learning. The health and wellbeing of students affects their academic achievement, and each student's attitudes, values and behaviour affect the people around them.<sup>22</sup>

Among the supplementary resources provided to support the updated 1999 health education syllabus was *Sexuality Education* (2002), which outlined the mandatory procedures necessary for consultation by each school with its community, giving guidelines to ensure consensus over programme development and the regular review of programmes.<sup>23</sup> As with the Johnson Report's Planners Guide, sample programmes were offered. By this time the introduction of sex education into the health syllabus had been assured with the Education Act of 1989, amended in 2001. The initial round of community consultation was to be completed with programmes implemented in 2002, thirty years after the Ross Committee was conceived.

New government policy however did not resolve the ideological tensions necessary to democratic debate. In the round of community consultation that accompanied the new health education draft syllabus the RR continued to target school boards and decry family planning, using the same arguments and methods of the 1970s.

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<sup>21</sup> Statement in the letter from Minister of Education, Wyatt Creech that accompanied the 1998 draft of the new syllabus (undated).

<sup>22</sup> Ministry of Education. (1999). *Health and physical education in the New Zealand curriculum*, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> Ministry of Education. (2002). *Sexuality education: Revised guide for principals, boards of trustees, and teachers*. Wellington: Learning Media.

In 1998 Family Life International (FLI), a Catholic anti-abortion organisation, hosted a tour by American campaigner, James Sedlack to encourage New Zealanders to adopt techniques still being used in the United States to stop sex education programmes in schools. During this tour the FLI distributed many copies of Sedlack's videotape and accompanying book, *Parent power ! How parents can gain control of the school systems that educate their children.*<sup>24</sup> The methods espoused by Sedlack were those of the 1970s' controversy — getting elected on to school boards, phoning board members at home to lobby, monitoring classroom teaching and teachers, circulating petitions against school programmes and getting letters published in newspapers. In contrast to the 1970s, when the RR sought alliances with politicians, it was now seeking to enter the political arena. Graham Capill, Leader of the Christian Heritage Party encouraged its members to oppose the Draft Health Education Syllabus. Strategic networking remained important such as links with Mrs Mary English, wife of the Minister of Health Bill English, who was President of the Family Education Network, an organisation explicit about anti-sex education lobbying tactics in a 1997 newsletter.<sup>25</sup> The new Ministry of Education continued to be questioned over the clause that guaranteed parents the right to withdraw their children from any aspect of sexuality education they deemed unsuitable. As in 1977, such guarantees were seen as continuing to require vigilance, surveillance and monitoring of classrooms. The Amendment to the Education Act that had been necessary to see the Draft syllabus through to policy had failed to satisfy the RR and in objecting to both the wording of the withdrawal clause, and the FPA, Graham Capill, stated: "We've had 20 years of children putting condoms on bananas and the teenage

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<sup>24</sup> This tour and book were referred to in an article by Pamela Stirling, "Sex + school = sin," published in the *N Z Listener*, 1998, April 18-24, pp. 30-31.

<sup>25</sup> *N Z Listener*, 1998, April 18-24, p. 32.

pregnancy rate has gone up and up.”<sup>26</sup> As the 20th century ended, cartoonist commentary was remarkably similar to that of the 1970s, as shown in illustration 32 below.



**Illustration 3.4**— A cartoon in the *New Zealand Listener*, April 18-24, 1998, p. 31. It accompanied an article “Sex + school = sin” published during the period of public consultation on the Draft Health Education Syllabus prepared by the Health Education Project Team led by Helen Shaw.

<sup>26</sup> Capill was quoted in an article “Sexual healing” *NZ Listener*, February 16, 2001, p. 18.

That the site of contestation for the RR has remained the same in the age of internet pornography and Aids is revealed in the following list of activity and commentary appearing in newspapers compiled by the author during the period of this research.

1. In August 1997, the National Coalition Government's Minister of Youth Affairs, Deborah Morris, advocated the provision in secondary schools of free condoms, a suggestion that was quickly denounced by Minister of Health Bill English.
2. In 1999 a government background paper on New Zealand's high teenage pregnancy, abortion and sexually transmitted disease rates stated: "In general, parents were reticent in discussing sexuality with their children", and warned that if school boards did not consult parents adequately "decisions could be dominated by a vocal minority" who were opposed to sexual education."<sup>27</sup> This in-house document, obtained under the Official Information Act by the Christian Heritage Party and released by the latter with accompanying condemnation, detailed the benefits of making the emergency contraceptive pill more widely available and expressed the opinion that abstinence only programmes were not highly effective because sexual exploration was an inherent part of adolescent development.
3. Throughout March and April 2000, the *New Zealand Herald* ran an editorial campaign providing a public forum for discussion on values education in schools. The letters and articles that flowed in reflected the same range of argument and reasoning found in the Johnson Report controversy. In her summary article, education reporter Theresa Garner stated that the response to this series had been "too varied to form any consensual conclusions".<sup>28</sup> The *Herald's* final editorial in this series stated: "It is disturbing that a drive to promote good character among the young should have to surmount such suspicion and uncertainty ... The difficulty the

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<sup>27</sup> Youth-policy team eyes sex education shake up. (1995, May 13). *New Zealand Herald*, p. A5.



[*Herald*] campaign has faced to date suggests we are just beginning”.<sup>29</sup>

4. In November 2001 Governor-General Sir Michael Hardie Boys addressed the National Marriage Education Conference, lamenting moral decline generally in New Zealand. He advocated teaching the virtues of modesty, self-restraint, and the “seeking of intimacy only within a loving, committed and permanent relationship.” Sir Michael said a reluctance to teach moral values was the result of a “quite disastrous philosophy ... To put a label on it, it’s the philosophy of moral relativism and privatized morality”. There was, said Sir Michael, “something, plainly that has gone dreadfully wrong in New Zealand society”. Newspapers and television picked up on this, and the speech was widely reported.<sup>30</sup>
5. In 2002, *New Zealand Herald* conservative columnist Garth George wrote about “sick, sick, sick people” seeking to teach sex education in primary schools.

The sex education strategies devised by educationalists and the inaptly named FPA, funded with taxpayer money by a succession of governments, are positively counterproductive and dangerous. This sexualisation of pre-pubescent children was been done over the legitimate protests of parents, teachers and others ... in a moral vacuum.<sup>31</sup>

Such commentaries served to continue the pamphleteering role of the *CPA Newsletter* of the 1970s’ controversy. While the RR continued to police these issues however, most citizens appeared to have other concerns. Page seven of the *New Zealand Herald* on

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<sup>28</sup> Garner, T. (200, May 4.). Values education draws support on broad front. *New Zealand Herald*, p. A4.

<sup>29</sup> Editorial in *NZ Herald*, May 4, 2000, p.. A 18.

<sup>30</sup> This speech was reported in the *New Zealand Herald*, November 18, 2001. 18.

<sup>31</sup> George, G. (2002, August 8). *NZ Herald*, p. A11

<sup>31</sup> Dr G. Greer quoted in article, “Sexual healing”. *NZ Listener*, February 10-16, 20

March 16, 2001, carried a small news item that would in the 1950s have been sufficient to catalyze an inquiry of Mazengarb proportions. It presented the latest venereal disease statistics for the Auckland area, showing that gonorrhoea was increasing and was most common in women between 15 and 19, with one-third of the current month's 71 notified cases being children under 15. Sex education, stated the writer, was needed. Not a single letter to the editor on this topic appeared in subsequent issues. The issue of teenage pregnancies that had occupied the Ross and Johnson Committees had been overtaken by the global AIDS epidemic.

## **SEX EDUCATION NOT ENSURED BY THE NEW CURRICULUM**

The community consultation aspect of sexuality education, espoused in the Johnson Report and carefully spelled out in the new health education syllabus, offered school communities of the 21st century the opportunity to implement programmes on human development and relationships. But they also allowed the possibility that some school governing bodies would choose not to consult comprehensively with their school communities. Others, while engaging in a consultative process would simply find the whole area too difficult to negotiate. In February 2001 a forthcoming television series about sexual behaviour in New Zealand was previewed in the *NZ Listener*. Dr Gill Greer, Executive Director of the FPA, was among those interviewed:

There's this perception that sexuality education in this country isn't working, and my answer to that is, 'What sexuality education?' We haven't had a comprehensive integrated programme ... It's been piecemeal. One school would do something that another twenty wouldn't.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Dr G. Greer quoted in article, "Sexual healing" *NZ Listener*, February 10-16, 2001, p. 18.

## SUMMARY

This chapter has provided further support for the thesis of moral cathexis as defined in Chapter Nine. In Chapter Ten it was shown how Mr. Wellington's weighting of submissions served to control outcomes in a manner that demonstrated centralisation of leadership of the Religious Right. Further evidence of cathexis has been presented here in the Minister's delay in responding to the new draft health syllabus and his revelations in both the Fraser television interview and his own autobiography.

Ivan Snook (1985) has suggested that economic issues may underlie allegations of State school godlessness by conservative Catholic and fundamentalist Christian groups. In his opinion the Link Report was suppressed because it was under the control of a Minister whose politico-religious views were congruent with this lobby. Snook's opinion is supported in this thesis where it has been elaborated as the construct of moral cathexis and shown how this operated to delay and derail attempts at curriculum reform in the area of sex education and education in human development and relationships.

It has also been argued that Mr. Wellington's Ministerial hegemonic activity was balanced by that of a policy community who continued to push ahead with their own agenda of liberalising the health education syllabus through the process of careful selection of the person to lead the new health education Project Team, and in its guidance to the Minister over the process of how the next round of public consultation ought to be conducted. In this respect the work of the CUD was assisted by a shift in the political climate and the

accession of a new Labour Minister of Education furthered the policy community's objectives. The work of the new Health Project Team was however undertaken against the background of the same spectrum of public opinion that characterised the earlier controversy.

It has been shown that the national early childhood syllabus *Te Whāriki*, published in draft form in 1997, was the first curriculum statement to adopt the emergent bicultural dimension of the Johnson Report and to elaborate on the latter's view of healthy development as involving and requiring a view of the individual as ecologically embedded within a nurturing family -type context.

Finally, this chapter has also given examples of citizens' activities and commentaries that reflect continuity between the ideological tensions and themes of the controversy of the 1970s and public opinion at the end of the 20th century.

## **DISCUSSION**

The period of educational history outlined in this thesis was marked by significant curriculum change. As Bill Renwick expressed it, education in New Zealand was “in a restless exploratory stage”. In this context, earlier issues of health education were revisited with the aim of developing new policy. The preceding chapters have addressed the first two questions with which this study began: What was the purpose of the Committee on Health and Social Education, and what happened during the period of controversy from 1975 to 1980? The discussion in this final chapter will attempt to summarise the significance of these events and the issues surrounding the trajectory of the Report on Health and Social Education.

### **THE POLICY COMMUNITY — INCREASING DIFFICULTY IN THE EXERCISE OF HEGEMONIC ACTIVITY**

David Scott’s analysis of the 1962 Currie Commission at work provides an example of how educational bureaucracies are sometimes depicted as hegemonic in intent. It has been argued here however that the exercise of hegemony over curriculum outcomes had become a much more complex enterprise a decade later. The reasons for this need further elaboration. From a Marxist perspective Scott (1996) described the Currie Commission as an “ideological tool ... working in the contested space between capitalist enterprise, public demands and governmental provision” (p. 17). As outlined in Chapter Four however the political, social and educational climate had changed between 1962 and 1975. By the early 1970s social problems, as they impacted on youth, had gained some urgency with the Departments of Police, Health, Social Welfare and Education which no longer saw a traditional curriculum as sufficient to ensure the

solutions to the raft of problems that included truancy, underachievement, drugs, solvent sniffing, teenage pregnancies and early school leavers. There was also perhaps a new political awareness, beginning with the National Government's Educational Priorities Conference and continuing through Labour's EDC, that the type of hegemonic control exerted by the activity of the Currie Commission was no longer appropriate. By the early 1970s the Department of Education was faced with requests from the public for curricular responses to a range of issues, from drugs to driver education. As Jim Ross stated: "Files and files of requests from citizens seeking change piled up in the Department". A committee formed to address these concerns needed to be large, with broad terms of reference that would inevitably result in a report unsatisfactory to citizens looking for clarity on specific issues.

The liberal educational theories being disseminated internationally at that time, such as Peter McPhail's work on values clarification in England and American Jerome Bruner's inquiry methods, were reflected in the ethos of the New Zealand Curriculum Development Unit and it seemed to the policy community that the time was right to tackle unresolved issues of values, health and social education. The EDC, coinciding with the "Ross Report", had however created a public expectation that curriculum change would become a more transparent process — one subject to citizens' input. Moreover the EDC had brought the news media into discussion about educational aims at a time when journalists were experiencing new freedoms in the context of a period of evolution in State broadcasting. This period saw greater public scrutiny of the centre-periphery model of the CDU and its permeability by teachers and other educationalists of liberal leanings. Increased permeability involved more transparency than a top-down model of curriculum development, making the policy community also more vulnerable to calls for accountability.

Changes of Education Minister also meant delays that worked in favour of the lobby against legislative change regarding sex education. Although the Johnson Committee was conceived under Labour's liberal Phil Amos, its Report was presented to Les Gandar who, while National, was nonetheless sympathetic to centrist lobbies such as that of the NCW. The

insurmountable obstacle to the policy community's hegemonic intent over sex education was its inheritance of Merv Wellington, a Minister determined to control his bureaucrats where their ideology differed from his own. Even if Gandar had remained in Parliament it was Renwick's impression that Prime Minister Rob Muldoon would, in any event, have replaced Gandar with someone more "hard nosed" (Renwick, Int.). In this changing political climate the activity of the policy community in pursuit of reform of the health education curriculum became increasingly difficult. Mr. Wellington was an autocratic Minister determined to harness the liberal propensities of his bureaucracy in the matter of sex education, and in this respect he was well served by the use of independent consultants whose analysis proved sufficiently ambiguous to be interpreted selectively. The conditions for such ambiguity had however been ensured prior to this by the Minister's directive to count group submissions representing hundreds of citizens as single opinions. This was a sticking point over clause 2.23 of the Johnson Report's recommendations and one unable to be circumvented by the policy community. While it is possible that the Link analysis did originate within the Department, it was a development that held the potential to work either for or against the policy community's own agenda on sex education, which was, in Renwick's words, "the nub of the matter".

It has been shown that putting debate on hold while pressing ahead with policy had become more difficult in the late 1970s than at the time of the Currie Report. A second look at the cartoon in Illustration 1 indicates the range and interplay of agendas of that time and encapsulates the tenor of public debate that followed the release of the Johnson Report. The cry of skills, not frills was a recurring theme throughout the 20th century. In this picture Minister Gandar, dressed as a knight, represents defensive action rather than a crusade and the forces ranged against the Department proved to be too strong to be resisted by the concerted hegemonic activity of this Minister and his policy community. The careful Departmental response to the Employers' Federation submission on the Johnson Report, outlined in Chapter Nine, illustrated the breadth of these issues and the need for diplomacy. The ongoing enterprise of revision of the health and social education curriculum proceeded throughout the 1980s within a climate in

which, as Howard Lee points out, there was an international movement towards defining educational outcomes with greater precision.<sup>1</sup>

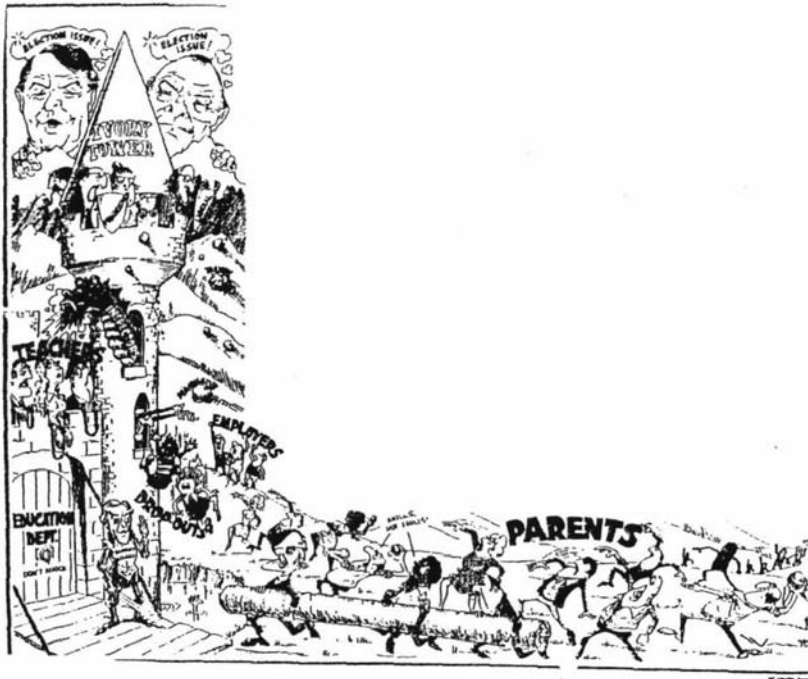


Illustration 1 — A cartoon in *Truth*, July 18, 1978, shown also in Chapter Four.

### ***The Johnson Report's holistic view of health***

In its statements on physical health the Johnson Report reflected what was becoming increasingly known in relation to nutrition, obesity, heart disease, drugs, tobacco use and the benefits of physical activity. It did

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<sup>1</sup> Lee, H. (2003). *Outcomes based education and the cult of educational efficiency: Using curriculum and assessment reforms to drive educational policy and practice*. Paper presented at the 30<sup>th</sup> annual conference of ANZHES in Perth, December 4-6, p. 440.



however consider these matters in relation to self-esteem and wellbeing, setting health within a community perspective. It was unsurprising that these aspects of the Report were overshadowed by issues of values teaching, evoking little public comment and no controversy. In Chapter Six it was explained that the Committee's terms of reference had not required it to address moral education, and reasons have been given for why it chose to do so. In its holistic view of the dynamic relationship of social and physical wellbeing the Report ventured beyond individual matters of health into cross-cultural community relationships, and outlined a new role for the school in this. It was a role that involved the school in the promotion of individual and community health across the human life span. Education for future parenthood and parent education were to play a significant part in promoting the healthy society of the future. Such a vision inevitably also raises issues of socialisation and values education. Parenthood education remains a problematic issue in 21<sup>st</sup> century New Zealand.

### **COLLECTIVE ANXIETY AT A TIME OF MORAL BOUNDARY REDEFINITION**

The Johnson Report's statements on physical health were overshadowed by the controversy over sex education, and the reasons for this have been discussed in terms of competing ideologies and moral panic theory. It has been argued that underlying anxiety related to fears of deviance and unsanctioned expressions of sexuality surfaces in times when social change is seen to challenge moral values that represent the "norm" and are thus integral to the preservation of cultural capital. Comparisons have been made with the moral panic surrounding the Mazengarb Report, as outlined by Janet Soler, and it has been suggested that the Johnson Report controversy did not meet the criteria for a "full-blown" moral panic because the media did not undertake the prerequisite defining and labelling role in relation to deviance. Some elements of moral panic theory were however found to apply. In a period of rapid social legislation relating to redefinition of the family unit it was easy for those assuming the role of moral entrepreneur to create a public sense of moral boundaries having been

breached. In this thesis an attempt has been made through discussion based on the model of ideologies and assumptions presented in Figure 1 (p. 52) to explain what underpins the emergence of a sense of collective anxiety and views on State means for regulating sexuality in times of moral boundary crisis. For the RR the view of gender as being biologically rather than culturally determined involving clearly differentiated male and female roles, is an important tenet. To threaten this view is to unleash a vision of uncontrolled female sexuality as having the capacity to threaten the stability of society. Public morality in Western societies is historically and culturally enmeshed with the Doctrine of Original Sin, and the lobby of the RR in New Zealand involved the marshalling of overseas experts who would support these views incontestably. In this context sex education became the main site of contestation having some similarity with the witch-hunts of the 17th century. "When a 'great fear' takes hold of society, that society looks naturally to the stereotype of the enemy in its midst ... it is a sign of such great fear when the elite of society are accused of being in league with its enemies" (Trevor Roper, 1967, p. 190). It is not too fanciful to make such comparisons with the New Zealand controversy of the 1970s when liberal ivory tower educationalists were seen by the RR to represent an elite, in league with a range of deviant others such as homosexuals, feminists, teachers living in sin and the industries supporting the family planning movement. It therefore became necessary for the CPA executive to assume the role of moral entrepreneur and to pursue political alliances, finally achieving centralisation of leadership through what has been described in Chapters Nine and Ten as a process of moral cathexis with a like-minded Minister of Education. In this pursuit, public accusations and hints of conspiracy, an important strategy of extreme right lobbies, served to generate apprehension in citizens throughout the country and to maintain collective anxiety.

Collective anxiety, it has been shown, is mobilised around a particular issue by the moral entrepreneur who then widens the range of concerns in focus to promote a generalised unease over the changes taking place in society. This focus inevitably returns to the role of the school as a secondary agent of socialisation. The expression of sexuality involves

energy which may be turned to good or evil ends, and since appropriate expressions of sexuality are culturally determined and depend on the nature of the socialisation of the young, society is seen as having the power to produce sexuality that is either responsible or irresponsible. Schools, being institutions outside the family, are settings for experiences and events that are often inaccessible to parents. This makes them potentially dangerous, and the site of political struggle at times of redefinition of moral boundaries. In the view of the New Zealand RR, as with the American NRR, the norm is heterosexuality and polarised gender relations. Sex education is a potentially subversive process that can threaten these norms, making it necessary to monitor classrooms and school resources in the manner described in Chapter Seven.

### **MISREADING THE TIMES — THE DEPARTMENT'S DILEMMAS**

The educational policy community also failed to understand early enough the nature and effectiveness of the conspiracy theory strategy employed by the CPA. Like the arguments advanced for the Freudian latency period, the rumours and allegations circulating during the controversy may have seemed too absurd to warrant serious public expert refutation. Throughout the post-Report speaking phase of the controversy there was a dismissiveness of opposing arguments by Johnson Committee members, stemming perhaps from a slightly arrogant belief that the superiority of a humanistic liberal educational philosophy above others was evident. Both the policy community and Johnson Committee failed to understand the roots of the CPA as being anxiety-based at a time of moral boundary redefinition as well as the need for careful and diplomatic ongoing reassurance over parental rights in relation to syllabus preparation. Even if this had been undertaken however it is likely that the spectre of a bureaucratic health council structure, as proposed in the Report, would have continued to catalyse suspicion.

It has been argued throughout this thesis that the tensions involved in the New Zealand controversy represent the old antagonisms between extreme right and left ideologies. Michael Apple (2001) has noted that

whenever the issues of moral and sexuality education arise together in public debate there will be antagonistic tension between conservative fundamentalists and progressives. This was as applicable to the New Zealand controversy as to the American episodes he described. By widening its rubric of concerns to include the more general curricular issues of declining standards and preparing the nation's young for future economic roles, the CPA succeeded in attracting a following of citizens of more moderate conservative beliefs. Its role as moral entrepreneur in relation to the issue of sex education thus linked a need for "economic dominance" with "political, moral and intellectual leadership." <sup>2</sup> Dale (1989) made the point that the mission of the moral entrepreneur is to control social behaviour by a set of rules and moral imperatives in which laissez-faire has no place. It is unrestrained market forces (such as the rubber industry) that are seen as producing pornography. Hence both legislation and some kind of moral lead from the State are called for by the moral entrepreneurs "which puts them in the difficult and paradoxical position of asking that institutions like schools must give a moral lead on matters which are simultaneously held to be properly none of their concern" (p. 86). This study has detailed how such tensions were manifest in educational debate during a period of rapid social change. The methods and strategies employed by the protagonists of the controversy have been examined, and it has been shown how alterations in political climate can shift the balance of power when competing hegemonic agendas are in play. The policy community's ultimate success in introducing sex education into the curriculum required another shift of ministerial leadership back to Labour, but it was a process that — although begun by the Health Project Team—still took another decade.

### ***The Report's stance on gender***

One respect in which the Report of the Committee on HSE can be seen to have failed to show leadership was in its equivocation over issues of

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Apple, in his foreword to Dale (1989), p .7.

gender equity. In 1975, both a conference on Education and the Equality of the Sexes and the Report of the Select Committee on Women's Rights had clearly stated the need for the education system to tackle the task of breaking down "the stereotypes and encourage a more enlightened view of the roles both sexes are capable of fulfilling".<sup>3</sup> Despite a directive from the D-G for the Johnson Committee to consider these issues it sidestepped rather than addressed them. O'Neill's (1996) criticism of the Report for its failure to articulate an understanding of the intrinsic nature of gender inequity was justified. It has been suggested here that Johnson Committee members, being themselves part of the power structure of the organisations to which they belonged, were unlikely to have had insight into the nature of what O'Neill described as the education system's institutionalised mediation of power. Despite an acknowledgment of the changing role of women, the Report endorsed traditional conceptions of masculinity and femininity. Certainly there was no strong feminist advocacy within the group and this was also indicative of the times. It was another decade before more articulate feminist educationalists attained positions of power within the policy community. Second-wave feminism of the early and mid-1970s in New Zealand was still in a consciousness-raising phase, and bypassing feminist concerns assisted the Committee in its management of its mammoth terms of reference. While suggesting that men could "fulfil child rearing functions", in keeping with its espousal of parent education, the Report questioned neither the underlying assumptions about gender nor the current sexual division of roles and labour. It must be agreed, as O'Neill argued retrospectively, that the Johnson Report gave only superficial acknowledgment to the changes in gender relations taking place in New Zealand society. Such dilemmas were also reflected in the group submissions made by women's organisations such as the NCW and AAWNZ whose own memberships expressed a range of opinions from centre conservative to liberal. Throughout the controversy the only strong feminist voice was that of the FPA.

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<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Select Committee on Women's Rights*, (1975), Wellington: Government Printer. p. 72.

## THE BICULTURAL DIMENSION OF THE REPORT AND CONTROVERSY

The Johnson Report was a report of paradoxes juxtaposing liberal with conservative positions on a range of themes. It has been argued previously that its bicultural dimension was visionary in its articulation of a new school, and therefore new society, based on values of reciprocity, tolerance and respect for cultural difference. In the context of the 1960s-1970s Maori Renaissance, Garfield Johnson pursued his own agenda in furthering the cause of Te Reo, in alliance with Māori leaders such as John Rangihau and John Turei. He brought to the Committee the perspective of the group that produced *Parent-School Communication* (1973), as well as his own efforts to establish Hillary College as the educational heart of a community partnership. His enthusiasm for educating others in Tikanga Māori, as demonstrated through “Smith’s circus”, perhaps led him to overestimate the degree of public understanding that it was possible to achieve through the rhetoric of the Johnson Report. The Chairman’s influence in Māori matters could extend only as far as his Committee members, and through them, the policy community. Thus the bicultural discourse of the Report was incomprehensible to many citizens.

In Johnson’s work within his school community during the 1960s and 1970s can clearly be seen elements of the Freirean processes of conscientisation. In seeking collaboration with the multicultural community of Otago and in his dialogue and mentoring programmes with his students, Johnson engaged his school community in a problematising, praxial mode. This was reflected in the retrospective comments of his Māori students and colleagues, as revealed in Chapter Five. It has been argued in this thesis that the Johnson Report contains the threads of a deeper level of bicultural discourse, presenting a vision of the school- community relationship as potentially transformative rather than merely personalistic as suggested by John Codd.

How firmly can it be stated that the Johnson Report was bicultural, rather than simply reflective of liberal notions? There are certainly similarities in the rhetoric of the Report and liberal, holistic educational

discourse which sees the school as a “whole envelope [where] the progressive curriculum provides, in its shared way of life the social conditions that themselves convey to the child the norms of social living” (Eisner, 1992, p.313). Significant evidence has been presented in Chapter Five however that the Chairman actively pursued bicultural objectives in his South Auckland school community, in the manner of Freire’s ‘revolutionary leader’ through a dialogical process of reflection and action. Following the Treaty of Waitangi Act of 1975 and “Smith’s circus”, the CDU began tentatively to explore its implications for the curriculum, aided by Māori educators such as Rangihau, Tauroa and Wilson. The 1980s thus saw the gradual introduction of Taha Māori [aspects of Māori culture], criticised by Graham Hinangaroa Smith as “a Pākehā defined, initiated and controlled policy which serves the interests and needs of Pākehā people” (cited in McCulloch, 1992, p.14). For Johnson however biculturalism and bilingualism were synonymous, as shown in his mastery of Te Reo. In its use of Te Reo the Johnson Report can be seen to be both ahead of its time, and the precursor to the 1996 national early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*.

In examining this aspect of the controversy, this thesis has also indicated the importance to educational history of researching not only the social and political context of educational reports but also the impact of the personal histories of Committee members on Report recommendations and outcomes.

## SUMMARY

This thesis has presented a case study of a particular controversy in New Zealand’s educational history. Although the main site of contestation was sex education it was a controversy that encompassed most of the issues to which contemporary debate on educational aims returns again and again: issues of credentialling, vocational and role preparation and the related issue of moral and values education. The 1970s confluence of the Johnson Report with the Royal Commission on CSA, in the wake of questions raised by the

“Ross Report”, was evidence enough of threat to the cultural capital of the dominant European population.

McCulloch and Richardson (2000) have suggested three aspects essential to a study of curriculum history. The first is to develop the connections between past and present in an explicit way. This has been done by tracing the historical antecedents of the controversy through to the new health syllabus written in its aftermath, in the context of late 20th century concerns. Their second criterion requires the provision of an adequate theoretical grounding for the historical events being developed. This exploration was begun in Chapter Two and continued in the subsequent discussion of events. The third criterion is the need to address the aspect of curriculum under investigation within the wider context of “society, culture and politics” in order to understand “the more general structures of and relationships in society as a whole” (p. 10). In the events, discussion and arguments presented in this thesis a process of historical, social and political contextualisation has been undertaken. This analysis of the Johnson Report controversy has examined an educational and social phenomenon in qualitative multidimensional terms as it unfolded over time. In revealing the dynamic interactions of the controversy’s participants, with each other and with events, previously unknown aspects of the controversy have been shown. In this enterprise, sociological and psychological perspectives have been included as appropriate to contemporary transdisciplinary approaches to the historiography of education.

Lee and Lee (2003) have described the tendency of government report committees to travel blind in relation to the policy lessons that might be generalised across time, given recourse to the hindsight now available through a study of educational history. Their discussion has relevance to the Johnson Report with regard to the ongoing antagonistic interface between fundamentalist and liberal lobbies whenever the issues of morality, values and sex education in the curriculum surfaces in the public arena. In the *New Zealand Herald’s* forum on moral and values education in 2000 which ran for six weeks, regrettably there was no recourse to relevant historical information. Similarly, in the preparation of New Zealand’s “first bicultural curriculum document”, *Te Whāriki*, there was no indication that the



curriculum group who developed this was aware of the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education.

Gary McCulloch (1992) stated that historiography in education must ultimately aim at “explanatory leverage on the problems and outstanding issues of the present day” (pp. 9-10). Silver (1990) made a similar point in stating that the incentive in historical analysis is to penetrate current debate and policy, “the processes, practices and vocabularies in which they are embedded, and which they reflect and engender” (p. 1). It has been argued in this thesis that the ideological tensions illustrated through this particular controversy are enduring ones with relevance to ongoing debate on educational aims and curriculum whenever moral boundaries appear to be in a process of redefinition. The lessons of the Johnson Report controversy suggest that at such times a moral entrepreneur will emerge and orchestrate a lobby aimed at gaining control of legislative outcomes. The particular form this process of control took in the 1970s has been defined as moral cathexis. At such times alterations in political climate are necessary to the restoration of a democratic dialectical balance between conservative and liberal influences on the curriculum and it is such shifts that a policy community must be attuned to in relation to issues touching on morality and values teaching. Sex education, as it relates to cultural capital, remains a site of contestation.

In the 1970s the liberal policy group and wider educational community, along with many others, believed it to be irresponsible for the Department of Education not to pursue change in the health education syllabus. In the social climate of the times it was seen as too risky to allow young people to remain in ignorance in matters of human development and relationships. To the Religious Right however the dangers inherent in sex education involved wider moral and societal issues, as symbolised by the comic with which their lobby began. For these citizens, to allow sex education in primary schools was also, for different reasons, simply *Too Great A Risk*.



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- Papers of John Mulheron, Taphui IRN 733620, No. 7460-3. Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand/ Te Puna Matauranga o Aoteroa
- Papers of National Council of Humanist Society of New Zealand. Tapuhi IRN 318328, No. 96-342-05/13. Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand/ Te Puna Matauranga o Aoteroa
- Papers of the Public and Social Affairs Committee: Church of the Province of NZ Wellington Diocese. Tapuhi IRN 599166, No. 87-181-11/22. Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand/ Te Puna Matauranga o Aoteroa
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- Society of Friends, New Zealand, MS Papers 2597, Folder 12/8. Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand/ Te Puna Matauranga o Aoteroa

### **Archives New Zealand/ Te Whare Tohu Tuhituhinga O Aotearoa, Head Office, Wellington.**

- Department of Education. ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Pt 1, Box 855 Archives New Zealand,/ Te Whare Tohu Tuhituhinga O Aotearoa, Head Office, Wellington.
- Department of Education. ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Pt 3, Box 855 Archives New Zealand,/ Te Whare Tohu Tuhituhinga O Aotearoa, Head Office, Wellington.
- Department of Education. ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Pt 4, Box 855 Archives New Zealand,/ Te Whare Tohu Tuhituhinga O Aotearoa, Head Office, Wellington.

- Department of Education. ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Pt 5, Box 855 Archives New Zealand,/ Te Whare Tohu Tuhituhinga O Aotearoa, Head Office, Wellington.
- Department of Education. ABEP, W4262, 17/3/30, Pt 6, Box 855 Archives New Zealand,/ Te Whare Tohu Tuhituhinga O Aotearoa, Head Office, Wellington.

### **Author's files**

Various papers, letters, submissions and newspaper clippings. Available on request until the end of 2005 when they will be offered to Archives, New Zealand, and the Alexander Turnbull Library.

### **Sound recordings**

1. Videotape of television interview of Mr. M. L. Wellington by Ian Fraser, on "Sunday" programme on 13.4.84. Audio visual library of Massey University College of Education, Palmerston North Campus. Transcribed by the author.
2. Audiotape of IZB radio interview of Minister of Education, Mr. M. L. Wellington on 21.5.80. Loaned to author by Father Tom Ryder.

## APPENDICES

- I (A)** - List of interviews conducted during research on the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education.
  
- I (B)** - Photographs of all members appointed to the Committee on Health and Social Education who participated to varying degrees throughout the period of the Committee's work, reproduced from the Report.
  
- II** - The consent form for research participants.
  
- III** - The letters of invitation to participate and information forms for research participants.
  
- IV** - Memo from the Chief Sound Archivist of Radio New Zealand and Sound NZ.
  
- V** - The recommendations of the Committee on Health and Social Education, as contained in the Report, *Growing, sharing, learning*.
  
- VI** - The Planner's guide included in the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education as a programme exemplar.


























**APPENDIX I (A) - List of interviews conducted during research  
on the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education.**

**INTERVIEWS**

The following interviews were undertaken for the purpose of this research. They are listed here in alphabetical order. Participants' signed consent forms are held by the researcher. The information sheet for participants, and the consent form, follow on the next pages of the appendix. All interviews were conducted, and transcribed, by the researcher.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>	<b>Place</b>
Mr Philip Amos	11.1.1997	Auckland
Ms Jill Amos	20.4.1998	Auckland
Mr Barry Buckton	6.12.1997	Rotorua
Mr Bill Buxton	10.12.1997	Wellington
Dr. Max Collins	9.12.1997	Wellington
Mrs Ruth Cowell	6.3.1998	By telephone
Mr Jock Crawford	13.8.1999	Christchurch
Mrs Alison Crawford	13.8.1999	Christchurch
Mr Graeme Dallow	10.12.1997	Wellington
Mr Garfield Johnson	27.8.1997	Auckland
Mr David Kerr	12.11.1997	Auckland
Mr Peter MacPherson	30.10.1997	Whangaparoa
Mr Russell Marshall	21.2.2003	By telephone
Mrs Lyndall Print	20.4.1998	Auckland
Mr Bill Renwick	2.12.1997	Wellington
Mr Reuben Riki	20.2.1998	Auckland
Dr. Ralph Riseley	6.12.1997	Rotorua
Mr Jim Ross	9.6.2002	Waikanae
Miss Helen Ryburn	22.10.1997	Auckland
Father Tom Ryder	18.9.1997	Papakura
Ms Lyn Scott	22.6.1997	Wellington
Mrs Helen Shaw	2.10.1997	Wellington
Dr Ivan Snook	29.6.1998	Palmerston North
Mrs Jean Viney	13.8.1999	Christchurch
Dr Martin Viney	13.8.1999	Christchurch
Mr Ted Wadsworth	1.3.1998	Cambridge
Mr Arnold Wilson	29.11.2000	Auckland

**APPENDIX I (B) - Photographs of all members appointed to the Committee on Health and Social Education who participated to varying degrees throughout the period of the Committee's work, reproduced from the Report.**

	Garfield Johnson		Dayll Jensen
	Gren Alabaster		David Kerr
	Patricia Barnes		Horowai Maniapoto
	Barry Buckton		Peter MacPherson
	Bill Buxton		Peter McIntosh
	Max Collins		Murray Print
	Ruth Cowell		John Rangihau
	Erolini Alailima-Eteuati		Ralph Riseley
	Graeme Dallow		Tom Ryder
	Anne Hall		Ted Wadsworth
	Don Hamilton		Neil Watene
			Jock Crawford

**APPENDIX II - The consent form for participants in the research undertaken on the Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education.**



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A L B A N Y

College of Education

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RE: RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE JOHNSON REPORT:  
GROWING, SHARING, LEARNING 1997

PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT FORM

I .....

Address: .....

.....

Telephone: .....

Agree to participate in the research project on Growing, Sharing, Learning (1997) (also known as the Johnson report) being undertaken by Josephine Bowler, at Massey University, Albany. Contact telephone: (09) 443-9661 E-mail: [J.Bowler@massey.ac.nz](mailto:J.Bowler@massey.ac.nz)

1. I understand that any comments I make that are to be included will be submitted to me in draft form, prior to submission of the completed thesis.
2. I understand that my name will be used in the text in relation to my comments.
3. I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study prior to its completion, and to decline to answer any particular question.
4. In the event that I am unable to approve inclusion of my reported comments for the final draft of the completed thesis. I do / do not wish to nominate another person to do this on my behalf.

My Nominee is: .....

Address: .....

I undertake to inform this person of my wishes in this regard.

5. My questions regarding the research have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at anytime.

Signed: .....

Dated: .....

APPENDIX III - The letters of invitation to participate and information forms for participants in the research study.

Massey University  
Albany Campus  
Private Bag 102 901  
North Shore MSC  
AUCKLAND NZ  
Ph. 443-9661  
Email: J.bowler @massey.ac.nz  
date

Dear .....,

I am writing to inform you that I am currently undertaking a Doctoral Thesis through Massey University on the topic of the JOHNSON REPORT: *GROWING, SHARING, LEARNING (1977)*.

The objectives of this project are to:

1. Research, document and describe events surrounding and following the commissioning and preparation of the Johnson Report.
2. Analyse these events in terms of their historical significance, educational and political impact.
3. Discuss some of the key factors in the period of the Johnson Report that still impact on the development of health curricula in the final years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

My supervisors for this project are Dr Roger Openshaw and Dr Gary Hermansson of the Department of Educational Studies and Community Support, at the Massey University college of Education at Palmerston North. Both can be reached on 06-356 9099.

If you would like further information I can be contacted at the above address and phone number and would be pleased to respond to any suggestions or queries you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Josephine Bowler  
Lecturer

**APPENDIX III - The letters of invitation to participate and information forms for participants in the research study.**



MASSEY  
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INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS IN THE DOCTORAL RESEARCH  
PROJECT ON THE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPACT OF GROWING SHARING  
LEARNING (1977) - THE JOHNSON REPORT

Being undertaken by Josephine Bowler, Lecturer in Human Development Studies, Massey University, College of Education, Albany Campus. Ph: (09) 443-9661 (direct line), Private Bag 102-904, North Shore Mail Centre, Auckland.

I am undertaking a doctoral thesis on the above topic. My purpose is to examine events leading up to the publication of the above report, it's subsequent impact upon the New Zealand community and the educational and political outcomes of this project.

My supervisor are:

Dr Roger Openshaw, (Chief Supervisor) & Dr Gary Hermansson  
Department of Educational Studies & Community Support  
Massey University, College of Education  
Private Bag 111-22, PALMERSTON NORTH

Both can be reached on (09) 443-9700 or (06) 356-9099 if you have any queries over your involvement in this project.

This research study will review, discuss and critically analyse the events surrounding the preparation, presentation and aftermath of the Johnson Report. It is a project that aims to contribute to the small, but growing body of literature that has examined ministerial educational reports in terms of political, social events within a contextual approach.

The aims of this study are to:

1. Research, document and describe events surrounding and following the commissioning and preparation of the Johnson Report.
2. Analyse these events in the terms of their historical significance, educational and political impact.
3. Extrapolate some of the key factors in the period of the Johnson Report that still impact on the development of health and sexuality education in New Zealand school curricula.

Your participation in this study is requested because of your involvement in the Johnson Report and activities relating to the work of the Johnson Committee at that time. It is intended to audiotape interviews with participants. The tapes from interviews will be transcribed either by the Principal researcher, or a professional transcriber who has signed a confidentiality statement.

APPENDIX IV - Memo from the Chief Sound Archivist of Radio  
New Zealand and Sound NZ.

**Radio NZ Sound Arch, 10:23 PM 10/23/9, Johnson Report**

Return-Path: <soundnz@tpnet.co.nz>  
Delivery-Date: Fri, 24 Oct 1997 11:23:09 +1300  
To: J.Bowler@massey.ac.nz  
From: Radio NZ Sound Archives <soundnz@tpnet.co.nz>  
Subject: Johnson Report  
Date: Thu, 23 Oct 1997 22:23:05 +0000

Dear Mrs Bowler,

I am writing very belatedly in reply to your letter of 3 Sept. re possible recordings about the Johnson Report in RNZ Sound Archives. I'm very sorry to say that we appear not to have anything. I have searched extensively, including through some newly arrived material that I honestly thought would have some material, and have found nothing. Sadly we do not hold any complete series of news or current affairs programmes from 1977-78, and while I expect an 'Insight' documentary to have been made on the report and ensuing controversy, we do not appear to have this either.

I am quite surprised by this lack of material, and am at a loss to explain it. Please accept my apologies both for the delay in my reply, and for the lack of success in my search.

Yours,

Bruce Russell,  
Chief Sound Archivist.

## 7 List of Recommendations

7.1 For easy reference, all the recommendations made by the committee are listed, in order, and as written in the report.

However, as no justification appears in the recommendation itself, the committee is concerned lest they be read out of context. The committee hopes the reader will refer also to the body of the report where these recommendations appear.

### 7.2 THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT:

#### *Research*

- 1.1 Research studies on the effects that parents, teachers and other people have on an individual's development be set up.

#### *Climate in Schools*

- 2.1 Research be undertaken into the ways of evaluating effective school climates.
- 2.2 Resource staff be appointed whose specific task would be to assist schools achieve the type of climate emphasised in this chapter.



- 2.3 Urgent attention be given to modifying existing school buildings to incorporate physical features which will encourage learning in a relaxed, supportive, attractive and considerate environment.
- 2.4 Steps be taken to see that:
  - a the physical environment of each school is attractive, able to capture student imagination and initiative and encourage responsible involvement of students;
  - b provision is made for the security of students' personal property; and
  - c provision is made, in washrooms, of essentials to effective personal hygiene.
- 2.5 There be a vigorous promotion of the "Whanau House" concept among teachers and that any opportunity be taken to extend this philosophy to existing schools.
- 2.6 Urgent and adequate provision be made for the special training of principals, potential principals and senior teachers.
- 2.7 School-based in-service training be provided for all classroom teachers, such training to focus on inter-personal relationships and their effect on all aspects of school activity.
- 2.8 Teachers be encouraged, and given assistance, to involve parents in the educational partnership.
- 2.9 Schools should be assisted in the development of their own aims and objectives within broad national guidelines, and that these be used as the basis of the evaluation of that school's programme.

#### *Guidance Network*

- 2.10 School-based guidance services be substantially increased.
- 2.11 Guidance network specialists identify and refer for treatment students with physical disabilities.
- 2.12 The systems of teacher support (similar to those operating in Mangere and Porirua) be extended.
- 2.13 A guidance network be developed in intermediate schools.
- 2.14 The psychological service further develop its work with teachers and students in the classroom.

#### *Recreation Guidance*

- 2.15 The curriculum of all schools provide a balance between vocational subjects and experiences that will enhance the use of leisure time.
- 2.16 a Teachers recognise the life-long recreational possibilities of the subjects they teach;
  - b teachers actively foster the skills and attitudes students need to achieve personal fulfilment during leisure hours.
- 2.17 Every school should provide special guidance and counselling for individual students who fail to attain the skills and rewards they seek in recreational activity.
- 2.18 Employers be encouraged to:
  - a establish work-based recreational programmes for their employees;
  - b prepare employees to cope with retirement.

#### *Moral, Spiritual, and Values Education*

- 2.19 Research be carried out into all aspects of our children's values. (This could well be funded from the Mental Health Foundation.)



- 2.20 Both at primary and secondary levels, provision be made for all aspects of health and social education to be given adequate leadership.
- 2.21 a appropriate resource material in the field of basic values and controversial issues be urgently prepared.  
 b these resources be made available not only to schools for student use but through schools for parent use.
- 2.22 a The fostering of a non-sectarian spiritual dimension in New Zealand state education be accepted.  
 b The necessary in-service courses for teachers, and the compilation of resource materials, be undertaken.

*Education about Human Development and Relationships*

- 2.23 a The eight recommendations of the Royal Commission as qualified by this committee, be implemented. Implicit in these recommendations is the repeal of Section 2 (1) (b) of the Police Offences Amendment Act 1954.  
 b The Government take urgent action to permit human development and relationships education to be taught in all schools forthwith by removing from the health syllabus the statement "there is no place in the primary school for group or class instruction in sex education".
- 2.24 The Department of Education provides specialist advisory assistance and resources to enable schools to establish human development and relationships programmes.
- 2.25 The Department of Education provides resources for schools which could also be made available to parents to assist them in the home education of their children.
- 2.26 The Department of Education should accept the responsibility of designing and implementing courses in the field of human development and relationships through life-long education for the whole community.
- 2.27 A parent who, after consultation with the principal and being made aware of the agreed programme contents, still believes that the programme is not in the best interests of his child, has the right to withdraw his child.

*Outdoor Education*

- 2.28 The Department of Education:  
 a establish outdoor education as an area of high priority for curriculum development;  
 b commission the production of further reference manuals, resource materials and equipment pools;
- 2.29 a A national outdoor education officer be appointed to co-ordinate curriculum development;  
 b Outdoor education advisers be appointed in sufficient numbers to ensure that all schools receive:  
 adequate in-service training programmes in all aspects of outdoor education; with special reference to age, affluence, culture and the possible disability of particular groups;  
 advice on the setting up and administration of school camps in co-operation with district camping advisory committees;  
 assistance in preparing outdoor education courses and curriculum materials.
- 2.30 Offers made by the Outdoor Pursuits Centre of New Zealand, the Cobham Outward Bound School, and the Federation of Mountain Clubs, to assist with the training of teachers be accepted.

- 2.31 A separate item be established in Vote Education for the improvement and continuing maintenance of camp venues. The sharing of costs by the Department of Education, the Ministry of Recreation and Sport, the Walkways Commission, the New Zealand Forest Service, the Department of Lands and Survey, the Queen Elizabeth Trust, the Mountain and Water Safety Councils, and other funding bodies who might assist with the development of outdoor education in this country, be investigated and promoted.
- 2.32 Teacher relief be approved for teachers conducting field trips in outdoor education.
- 2.33 Subsidies be made from a regional fund established for the purpose, to financially assist students who would otherwise be unable to go on outdoor education trips.

#### *Physical Education*

- 2.34 Physical education be included in the curriculum and cater for the needs of all students at all levels. (This includes special programmes for those in need of them.)
- 2.35 A greater time allocation be made available in the teachers colleges for the preparation of teachers in physical education.
- 2.36 Additional advisory positions be created in physical education to extend the range of support given to teachers.
- 2.37 In all intermediate schools positions of responsibility be created for heads of department in physical education.
- 2.38 The regulations governing the time requirement for physical education during the first three years of secondary schooling be enforced and extended to all class levels.
- 2.39 Provision be made to supply schools with a wider range of physical education equipment, and that the grants made for the replacement of the "incidental" items be increased.
- 2.40 Provision be made in all schools both for suitably equipped and heated indoor spaces, and for all-weather outdoor areas, for physical education.

#### *Teacher Training*

- 2.41 All interview committees and selection panels should:
- a include at least one member who is not professionally concerned with education;
  - b be trained in interview techniques;
  - c place emphasis in their selection on those applicants whose personal qualities enable them to relate well to others.
- 2.42 The pre-service training of all teachers should include courses in
- a human relationships;
  - b health and social education;
  - c the methods for creating positive school and classroom climates;
- and that college staff be especially trained in these aspects.
- 2.43 Teachers' in-service training gives specific attention to:
- a human relationships;
  - b health and social education;
  - c the methods for creating positive school and classroom climates.
- 2.44 Teachers' colleges offer courses for teachers in the nature and objectives of the human development programme.
- 2.45 An advanced course in health and social education be established in one of the tertiary educational institutions.

- 2.46 a Pre-service training for all levels of teaching be offered in the one institution;
- b All advisory services be co-ordinated.

#### *Education in Parenthood*

- 3.1 Education in parenthood be a priority in health and social education.
- 3.2 a Existing schemes of education in parenthood be surveyed;
- b responsibility for the co-ordination of these activities be a major concern of the proposed council on health and social education.
- 3.3 A wide variety of organisations be approached to seek their involvement in educating fathers as well as mothers.
- 3.4 Extension classes be funded so that each school can meet the needs of the members of its community.
- 3.5 Selected teachers and staff outside the teaching profession be specifically trained to be educators of parents.
- 3.6 a Schools engage in parent education;
- b details of current successful schemes be made available to schools as guides for the development of their own programmes in parent education.

#### *Neighbourhood Development*

- 4.1 A working party, preferably of the proposed health and social education council, be set up to investigate the problems and tasks involved in neighbourhood-building.

#### *Extension of Health Services*

- 4.2 a Nurses be appointed to ensure an improved preventive and consultative service for primary schools so that each school can be visited at least once weekly;
- b a school nurse be appointed to all intermediate and secondary schools;
- c the number of departmental medical officers be increased to give support to these nurses;
- d all medical staff be paid according to their training and experience;
- e it be recognised that these medical personnel work in the community as an extension of their work in schools.
- 4.3 Where suitable, a school be regarded as a community base to house the nurse and such supporting agencies as Social Welfare and Maori Affairs departments, the Youth Aid Section of the Police and appropriate voluntary organisations.
- 4.4 The importance of medical assessment, especially detection of eye and ear defects in the pre-school child, be accepted, and that suitable accommodation for such examinations be provided.
- 4.5 Parents of pre-school children whose sight is impaired be supported by adequate advisory services similar to those now available to parents of deaf children.
- 4.6 The Department of Health arrange for:
  - a all school entrants to be medically screened;
  - b further full medical examinations where necessary;
  - c review of the immunisation state of children;
  - d an investigation of the need for further routine examinations.
- 4.7 The successful service provided by the "mobile van" medical staff in the treatment of discharging ears be extended to other districts where such need exists.
- 4.8 Where necessary, the school principal should be able to act *in loco parentis* for the secondary school student to authorise dental care under the Dental Benefits Scheme.

*Drugs, Including Alcohol and Tobacco*

- 5.1 Education about drugs (including tobacco and alcohol) be part of an integrated health and social education programme, and that this be taken by teachers.
- 5.2 Special groups involved in these fields be used as resource people, and participate in the school programmes according to the teacher's plan.
- 5.3 Up-to-date resource material be provided on drug education (including tobacco and alcohol).

*Television Violence*

- 5.4 Positive and immediate steps be taken to substantially reduce the amount of violence depicted on television.

*Absenteeism*

- 5.5 The suggestions and recommendations in the statement of the Special Working Party on Absenteeism be given serious consideration.

*Children With Special Needs*

- 5.6 a A support service for parents of all handicapped infants and children, similar to that already operating for parents of the deaf, be established urgently;  
b advisers of the handicapped be appointed.
- 5.7 The pupil-teacher ratio in schools and classes for the handicapped be lowered.

*Councils of Health and Social Education*

- 6.1 Regional councils of health and social education:
  - a be established;
  - b be comprised of representatives of Government departments, voluntary organisations and members of the general public;
  - c have the professional support of a chief health education officer and a public relations consultant.
- 6.2 A national health and social education council with fiscal authority be established.



# APPENDIX 6 Planner's Guide—the Strands of Health and Social Education

