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RURAL SCHOOL - COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

A THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
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GARRY KINGSLEY FRATER

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DEDICATED TO RURAL TEACHERS

- Past, Present and Future -

MANY THANKS TO DR T. K. PREBBLE FOR HIS  
ADVICE AND ENCOURAGEMENT

## ABSTRACT

The Wanganui Education Board Annual Report for the Year Ended 31st January 1977 stated : "Without wishing to overstate the problem, it is worth recording that recent years have been marked by an increasing incidence of breakdown of amicable relationships between teachers and local communities." This study examines the area of rural education, and particularly that of rural school - community relationships in order to ascertain the 'nature', 'extent', 'reasons' and 'possible actions to help alleviate' such breakdowns occurring.

The literature discussing rural education in New Zealand reveals the preoccupation of educational authorities since the time of early settlement with ensuring the country child receives a level of educational opportunity equal to his urban counterpart.

Rural principals in the Wanganui Education Board in response to a questionnaire indicated their viewpoints on a range of matters related to 'living' and 'teaching' in rural communities. While many areas of satisfactions with living and teaching in rural communities were expressed, the 'morale' of rural principals appears to have been adversely affected, by such factors as the escalating cost of living and the status and promotion opportunities perceived in the proposed 'broadbanding' scheme.

To ascertain the viewpoints of parents on a range of matters related to rural education, interviews were conducted with 17 school committees in the Wanganui Education Board district. The parents perceived the most important qualities of a rural principal to be : an ability to fit into a country community and communicate with its people; and having an attitude of interest and concern in the school and community. They also expressed a desire for more say in the appointment and termination of staffing.

To determine the 'nature' and 'extent' of rural school - community relationship difficulties, data was solicited by questionnaire from N.Z.E.I. Counsellors involved in cases 'related to' and 'affecting' such relationships. Problems relating to the broad areas of 'School Management' and 'School Programmes' together made up nearly three-quarters of the cases contributing to rural school - community relationship difficulty. Just over one quarter of the difficulties



reported were resolved by the transfer of the teacher, yet in no case was transfer compulsory under the provisions of the Education Act. From the actual data supplied, on average one school in every 7.5 is experiencing a school - community relationship problem involving a counsellor during a four terms period.

Advisers to Rural Schools and N.Z.E.I. Counsellors, in response to similar questionnaire items, gave their opinions as to possible 'reasons for' and 'actions to help alleviate' rural school - community relationship difficulties. On analysis, 10 broad categories of school and community behaviour that could provide reasons for breakdowns in relationships, were identified. Possible 'actions to help alleviate' such difficulties occurring were classified into 7 areas, a number of which may need to be effected, if there is to be an improvement.

The complexity of human nature and the variables operating to complicate the issues in each situation preclude any simple answer as to why so many rural communities and their teaching staff are having relationship problems. It seems quite clear however, that in the current times of rapid social change, the rural school principal, staff and their families can find themselves, with their community members, especially if living at a distance from urban growth centres, less able to achieve and maintain living conditions, whether economic, social or environmental as in the past. Furthermore their conditions may not compare favourably with those in the urban sector. Such a climate is not conducive to attracting and retaining skilled teachers, a necessary component of good school - community relationships. The study concludes with a list of recommendations considered supportive of both the school and community, and hopefully the relationships between them.

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CHAPTER ONE

RURAL SCHOOL - COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS : INTRODUCTION

THE PROBLEM AND ITS IMPORTANCE

"Without wishing to overstate the problem, it is worth recording that recent years have been marked by an increasing incidence of breakdown of amicable relationships between teachers and local communities - a hazard which seems to be confined to small schools in rural areas and often arising from a lack of understanding of the powers, responsibilities and functions of the school principal. During the year the General Manager had to mediate with several communities demanding transfer of teachers for reasons in no way related to their professional competence. In each case the school inevitably suffered and in none has the teacher's conduct given grounds for disciplinary action or compulsory transfer under the provisions of the Education Act."

Wanganui Education Board Annual Report for the year ended 31st January 1977.

The above statement highlights the area of school - community relationships as providing situations of concern in the Wanganui Education Board. Such situations have of course occurred throughout our history. A.G. Bagnall (1) for example relates a classic instance in 1868 where the Greytown School Committee without giving reasons informed the teacher that his appointment would not be renewed. Although a successor had been appointed, the teacher refused to give up the records and vacate the school. Whereupon 'three men firmly carried the recalcitrant teacher outside.' In subsequent court proceedings the Committee's action was upheld.

The importance of rural school - community relationships is highlighted by the Director General of Education, Mr W.L. Renwick in his 'Foreword' to 'The Rural School - A Handbook for Principals and Staff' when he stated :

"All principals face similar responsibilities whether their schools are urban or rural, but there are certain features of a rural school and its setting which call for special treatment. This handbook identifies these, and in particular makes suggestions on teaching several classes at once and on relationships between school and community. These topics are also dealt with to some extent in School Administration : A Guide for Primary and Intermediate School Principals, Department of Education, Wellington, 1975."

(1) A.G. Bagnall, Old Greytown, 48 : Greytown Borough Council, 1953.

The Wanganui Education Board Annual Report statement in discussing possible reasons for the difficulties in rural school - community relationships stated :

"The Board welcomes community involvement in school affairs and accepts that from time to time there may be differences of opinion with the principal. In most cases, disagreements do not escalate into outright conflict because of a mutual awareness of the need for harmony in the interests of the school. The inevitability of conflict arises only when there is failure to recognise that the yardstick by which a teacher should be judged is his professional competence to administer a school to the satisfaction of the inspectorate; not by his social acceptability, nor by his reluctance to drive the school bus; nor because his views on education do not coincide in every way with the community at large.

Conversely it should be recognised by teachers that in this age, the principalship of a small school confers not only the responsibility for the education of children but also the need to have regard for the susceptibilities and traditions of the community which that school serves."

This study, and prompted by the Wanganui Education Board Annual Report Statement, addresses itself to the situation of 'Rural School - Community Relationships' and seeks answers to such questions as :

- . The 'nature' of rural school - community relationship breakdowns?
- . The 'extent' to which such problems are occurring?
- . The reasons for such breakdowns occurring, and actions that can be taken to help alleviate them?

#### DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Rural School : Refers to State Primary Schools of Grades II to IVb  
(figure 1 )

figure 1 Grade, Roll and Staffing of State Primary Schools as for 1978

| Grade | Full Primary Roll | Contributing Roll | Staffing  |          |
|-------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|----------|
|       |                   |                   | Principal | Teachers |
| II    | 9 - 25            | 9 - 28            | 1         | -        |
| III   | 26 - 60           | 29 - 60           | 1         | 1        |
| IVa   | 61 - 90           | 61 - 90           | 1         | 2        |
| IVb   | 91 - 120          | 91 - 120          | 1         | 3        |

Community : Refers firstly, to those people living in a geographic area (in which there is a rural school) together with those who, for various purposes spend a considerable amount of time in that area, and secondly, those people who share social relationships and cultural values.

A Rural School - Community Relationship Problem : A problem 'related to' and 'affecting' school - community relationships and requiring the services of an N.Z.E.I. Counsellor.

N.Z.E.I. Counsellor : A member of the New Zealand Educational Institute's Counselling Service which assists members (teachers) who encounter difficulties which affect their teaching. (Appendix 1)

Advisers to Rural Schools : An adviser who works principally in smaller rural schools and assists teachers to develop and implement programmes appropriate to all children in the multi-class teaching situation, and after consultation gives practical assistance on such matters as administration, relationships, community and educational agencies and groups, to ensure the smooth functioning of the school. (Appendix 2)

School Committees : Every school district has its committee, and in the case of the rural schools in question, 5 members elected by householders in each school district biennially. As 'guardians' of the local school and school committee members are responsible to the Education Board for the upkeep of school premises and the payment of the cleaner. (Appendix 3)

#### ORGANISATION AND METHOD OF THE STUDY

- (1) Rural Education - "The Gem in Our Educational System" (Chapter 2) As an organising framework for discussing the literature on rural primary education in New Zealand, the measures taken to ensure that rural children receive the same educational opportunities as their city counterparts are outlined.
- (2) Rural Education - Observations of Rural Principals (Chapter 3) To ascertain the viewpoints of current rural principals in the Wanganui Education Board on a range of matters related to 'living' and 'teaching' in rural communities, a Questionnaire (Appendix 4) was utilised.



Because of the range of areas in which data was required, the questionnaire was designed to facilitate computer analysis. In most instances question items required a Yes/No response. A few questions required an elaboration of a 'Yes' response, and in some instances an indication on a 'three' or 'five' point scale was solicited.

In most groupings of question items the respondents were given the opportunity to add further data if they so desired. One question required a written response only.

The computer analysed this data according to percentage responses of respondents on each item, and in a number of areas cross tabulations were employed to determine relationships between selected items.

Written responses and elaborations were classified and quantified according to being of a 'strong', 'moderate' or an 'individual' expression of opinion.

(3) Rural Education : Observations of School Committee Members

(Chapter 4) To ascertain the viewpoints of parents on a range of matters related to rural education, interviews were held with 17 school committees in the Wanganui Education Board district. School committee members were considered to represent the viewpoints of parents in their school district and certainly of parents actively involved in the affairs of their school.

The school committees interviewed were selected on the basis of school size (at least 3 in each of the four grades), and geographical spread throughout the Wanganui Education Board district.

Discussion topics (Appendix 5a) were read one at a time to each school committee group by the interviewer who took no part thereafter other than to illicit further information if the meaning was not clear. When discussions on each topic appeared to be exhausted the interviewer asked the next question. Each discussion was recorded.

Transcripts of the tape recordings were made and the main points were classified and quantified according to being of a 'strong',



'moderate' or 'individual' expression of opinion. In some instances numbers of committees giving a specific response were given.

To enable a specific and quantifiable response to be made on three issues a Questionnaire for each committee member, requiring an indication on a five point scale, was utilised (Appendix 5b).

(4) The 'Nature' and 'Extent' of School - Community Relationship Problems : Observations of N.Z.E.I. Counsellors (Chapter 5)

In order to ascertain the 'nature' and 'extent' of rural school - community relationship problems, a Questionnaire (Appendix 6) was sent to all N.Z.E.I. Counsellors. Counsellors involved in cases 'related to' and 'affecting' rural school - community relationships were invited to respond to the questionnaire.

Descriptive data related to rural school - community problems was classified into general categories according to the 'nature of the problem', the 'source of the complaint', and 'the outcome of the problem'. Actual cases were allocated to respective categories in order to ascertain a quantitative assessment of the school - community relationship problem situation.

To ascertain the extent of rural school - community relationship problems actual cases during the four term period (1978 and Term 1 1979) were compared with the number of rural schools in the country during the period in question. An observation as to whether there was an increasing incidence of such problems was solicited of Counsellors and also the Advisers to Rural Schools (Appendix 7).

(5) Possible 'Reasons for' and 'Actions to Help Alleviate' Rural School - Community Relationship Difficulties : Observations of N.Z.E.I. Counsellors and Advisers to Rural Schools (Chapter 6)

In order to ascertain 'possible reasons for' and 'actions to help alleviate' rural school - community relationship difficulties, Questionnaire items were directed to NZEI Counsellors (Appendix 6 Question 6.7) and Advisers to Rural Schools (Appendix 7 Question 1.2). The Counsellors responding were those involved in problems 'related to' and 'affecting' school - community relationships and Advisers to Rural Schools who are closely involved with rural schools and their communities.

The descriptive data obtained was classified into general categories related to 'possible reasons for' and 'actions to help alleviate' rural school - community relationship difficulties. No attempt was made to quantify these categories as in each section explanations of the problems and possible remedial actions would often span a number of categories.

(6) Conclusions and Recommendations (Chapter 7)

The conclusions and recommendations reached are based upon the data outlined in the course of the study. They relate to rural education generally and specifically to the area of rural school - community relationships.

CHAPTER TWO

RURAL EDUCATION (PRIMARY) - "THE GEM IN OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM"

"New Zealand is widely known for the unusual efforts it has made to provide for the country child educational facilities as nearly as possible equivalent to those enjoyed by children in the cities."

Report to the Minister of Education, 1956.

Rural life has undergone very striking changes since the earliest colonial days. Demographic changes or urban drift, changed birth rates and a decline in the proportion of people living in rural areas, improved transport and roading, the major social trends of increasing specialisation, mobility and a fragmentation of community life into multiple groups, technological changes (e.g. mechanisation of farming, television), and economic factors have all had direct and indirect effects upon rural schools and communities.

Since the time of early settlement the concern of educators has been to provide educational facilities in rural communities that will assist in achieving the same standards that apply to city children. Over the years much has been done to help rural children and their teachers, and today, because of this, the quality of education provided by small rural schools is ranked high in the world. "Few countries, if any, have done more to place rural and urban children on the same footing, and this is, perhaps, the Dominion's most notable achievement." (2)

It is the purpose of this section to examine the measures applied in New Zealand to ensure that the country child receives a level of educational opportunity equal to his urban counterpart.

A major preoccupation of education authorities has been to improve the quality of teaching in rural schools, and various means have been used to achieve this end. In 1914, for example, 86% of the teachers in charge of schools with under 15 pupils were uncertificated, and as late as 1924 the figure was still as high as 50%. As facilities for teacher training improved, the proportion of uncertificated teachers gradually diminished, and over the past 20 years or so their number

(2) U N E S C O : Compulsory Education in New Zealand (1969) p 60.

has been negligible, even in the smallest schools. Teachers Colleges furthermore give all students training and practice in the complexities of running a small school, usually in association with the one or more rural type 'model schools' which are attached to each Teachers College.

Teachers in small country schools are further assisted by visits from Education Department Inspectors and Education Board Advisers to Rural Schools who have specialised knowledge of the organisation and methods of teaching appropriate to this type of school. Specialist Advisors in such areas as science, art and craft, and physical education also pay visits.

The District Senior Inspector and his staff in each Education Board District is responsible for inservice training in his area and country schools loom large in his annual planning. A National Refresher Course Committee organises residential courses for teachers during the summer vacation and every year at least one or two courses directly concern country teachers. National and Regional Courses organised by the Department of Education and of interest to country teachers are also held periodically. Since the mid-1960's relieving teachers have been employed to free teachers to attend such courses.

Another avenue for broadening the professional responsibilities of practising rural teachers is the provision of extra-mural study courses by Massey University and the Department of Education's Correspondence School's Diploma in Teaching Courses.

Rural teachers have shown their readiness to spend time, effort and money in attending local and national inservice training courses, and in many instances more apply to attend than there are places available.

The achievement of well staffed rural schools with quality teachers has been largely brought about by carefully designed salary scales and promotion structure. Regulations were adopted to prevent teachers from leaving a school until they had served a specific period. Then it was determined that a teacher's salary could not rise above a given level until he had taught as an adult teacher for six years in a town school, or for two years in a rural school. The general position at present is that until a teacher has served three years in

a country school he is not eligible to receive certain increments in salary. The country-service salary bar as it is called operates after five years of service and up till the teacher turns thirty years of age. Furthermore, additional salary allowances were paid to teachers in the remoter districts, and these made it attractive to the teacher to stay more than the minimum number of years. These methods ensured that most men spent at least a few years teaching in country schools.

To further slow down the rate of staff change in rural schools, salary regulations in 1938 ensured a teachers salary, during the first part of his career at least, depended mainly upon years of service rather than upon the position occupied. Current salary scales observe the same principle.

It is therefore by a combination of promotion structure, salary incentives and salary barriers, that teachers were, and still are enticed or forced into the country schools for a period in their teaching careers.

"At no stage in our educational history could it be claimed that country primary schools have only had second-rate teachers. They have always had their share of the best, and the most recent statistics show that sole-charge schools, headships of two, three and four teacher schools, attract the most highly assessed of our younger teachers. (3)

The longstanding practice of providing houses for teachers in country schools has made country service more attractive to many than it might otherwise be. In 1978 Education Boards provided some 2321 of these houses.

A principle of educational thinking and planning has been to ensure that the quality of rural education is not inferior to that provided in towns. To this end no deliberate difference has ever been made between the curriculum of the rural schools and that of town schools. Some adaptation has, indeed, taken place, but not a great deal, partly because country parents have always been suspicious of any proposals that had the slightest appearance of resulting in the loss to their children of advantages enjoyed by their city cousins.

(3) Simmonds E.J. : Primary Education p 87  
 Mitchell F.W.(ed) : New Zealand Education Today  
 A H & A W Reid (1968)

The six 'standards of instruction' drawn up by the Education Department in 1878 applied equally to town and country schools, as did the system of annual examinations of the children by the inspectors of schools. This did much to ensure a uniform level of schooling in town and country. The method of 'grading' teachers put into operation throughout the country in 1931 worked in the same direction. Whether deliberately or not the annual grading for promotion ensured that teachers in all kinds of schools would strive to achieve similar standards of work. The current grading system has a similar effect.

Manual Training Centres in which woodwork and cookery (homecraft) are taught were established in the principal centres before 1900. Since then they have been extended to country districts, and today there are centres in most country towns. Buses bring the Form I and II children from two or three surrounding schools, for weekly periods of one and a half hours, or for one full day a week for one term of the year.

Curriculum support is further provided by the borrowing or purchase of a range of audio-visual materials from National and local Education Board Libraries. Country teachers can select from the daily programmes of the School Broadcasting Service, and obtain booklets for use with the broadcasts. The School Publications Branch supplies free to schools 'Journals', 'Bulletins', primary textbooks, teachers' handbooks, and 'Education' a magazine for teachers. All these publications are written with a distinctive New Zealand flavour or with special reference to New Zealand needs.

Apart from the permanent libraries which schools set up from Education Board grants and locally raised funds, all country schools receive periodically throughout the year hampers of books through the School Library Service. In addition through a request service a book or sets of books can be borrowed for teacher or pupil use.

Equipment assistance to country primary schools is the same as for urban schools. As distribution is determined on the basis of classroom numbers children in rural schools have a proportionately more generous access to audio-visual aids than would be the case of urban children.



In the 1920's considerable interest was shown in the movement in the United States of America to close small schools and to convey these pupils to larger schools in townships. Gradually this policy of centralisation or 'consolidation' came to be adapted in New Zealand and by the late thirties it proceeded at a rapid rate.

In the year 1877, there were about 730 public primary schools in New Zealand and some 72,000 children were enrolled in them. Over 420 (58%) of these schools had only one teacher and about 150 (20%) had two teachers. The schools therefore accounted for more than three-quarters of the schools in the colony and provided primary education for nearly half of the children.

During the first quarter of the twentieth century land settlement continued and in 1927 the peak was reached in the number of primary schools open. In that year there were 2601 public primary schools, of which just over 1560 (60%) had only one teacher and about 560 (21%) had two. Between them, one and two teacher schools enrolled nearly 30% of the 210,000 children attending public schools.

Since the peak year of 1927 there has been a fall in the number of public primary schools. In 1947 there were only about 1900 schools in all, of which some 780 (41%) had a single teacher and 450 (24%) had two teachers. By now they provided for only about 33,000 children, 16% of the enrolment. However, by 1970 there was a rise in the number of primary schools up to 2,215. The decline however continued in small rural schools with 316 (11%) one teacher and 543 (24%) being two teachers.

The decline in small rural schools has continued, the reasons for which are many and varied. The improvement in country roads and the consequent extension of school transport services helped. There has been a drop in child population, the growth of one teacher schools into two teacher schools, the decrease in the teacher-pupil ratio, and the depopulation of rural areas all had their effect. Evidence of this change can be clearly seen in many rural areas today where disused dairy factories and country stores are now deserted and turned into hay barns. Another major factor has been the increased mechanisation and amalgamation of small farms into larger units resulting in fewer job opportunities in the country.

For those children who are still too remotely situated to attend any school or who suffer from severe physical handicaps, the Department of Education set up a Correspondence School in 1922. The curriculum is as far as possible the same for children attending school, and written materials and assignments are supplemented by daily radio lessons. In addition teachers from the Correspondence School in Wellington visit pupils' homes in the first term each year, while in certain areas itinerant 'resident teachers' call regularly on Correspondence School pupils in their districts.

In the early days, before the advent of the national railway system, children had either to walk to school or to ride on horseback or in a horse drawn vehicle. Every school had a horse paddock for those pupils who rode. Even the early inspectors of schools did their rounds in horse drawn gigs.

As rail and road transport improved, it was increasingly used to convey children to school free of charge, whether they were going to public or private schools. By 1895 the Education Department was paying the fares of children who had to travel by rail to the nearest school and soon it granted allowances for road travel too. In 1905 provision was made for the Education Boards to arrange for the transport of children to schools, and by 1907 school transport was a fully accepted fact.

The provision of school transport services which mainly benefits country children, has developed to the extent that in 1978 there were 4178 daily transport services, including 1364 private transport allowances, 73 cars and 205 public transport allowances. These services travelled a total distance of 42,477,600 km and cost \$19,255,386.

The practice of bringing country children by bus from outlying districts to centrally located schools has been a significant factor in ensuring equality of educational opportunity for country children.

The Education Act of 1877 made provision for the election of school committees consisting of 5 - 9 members (depending on school roll) and elected every two years by householders in each school district. It was the intention of these committees to counter-balance the power of the Education Boards, but today the committee is "the guardian of a



local school." (4) As 'guardians' school committee members are responsible to their Education Board for the upkeep of school premises and the payment of the cleaner. Necessary funds are received from the Government through the Education Board.

Since the 1914 Education Act took away the power of school committees to recommend the appointment or dismissal of teachers and the 1964 Education Act the right of committees to suspend a teacher, only two significant functions remain : to take part in the election of the Education Board and, since 1962, to decide in consultation with the school principal whether or not religious instruction on the basis of 30 minutes per week be permitted in their school.

Despite many fine sounding official descriptions of school committees as the 'cornerstone' of the public school system's administrative structure, probably the most worthwhile work done by committees is in organising 'working bees' to improve the school grounds and facilities, and to raise finance for purchasing teaching aids and equipment over and above that supplied by the Education Department. It is in this area that rural school committees with the support of their communities have excelled. Many rural schools for example could boast of a 'swimming-pool' and a 'movie projector' well before their city counterparts.

While the legal powers of school committees are limited, their potential for both constructive and destructive contributions to rural education can be considerable. In the constructive sense school committees can give invaluable support and encouragement to a principal and his staff. However, rural school committees can sometimes make a destructive contribution, and one which is not modified by any set of formal or informal ethics such as those that govern the conduct of educational professionals. The committees can, for example frustrate the work of a principal by providing inadequate support or on the other hand by applying pressure or interfering in the principal's professional role.

"For the man and his wife living in any rural environment the education of their children is a major preoccupation." (5)

(4) Commission on Education, 1962, p 73.  
 (5) Commission on Education, 1962, p 438.

Rural communities not only support working bees and raise finance as indicated, but participate and attend in numbers such activities as : parent days where children can be seen at work, school picnics, concerts, music festivals, inter-school sporting fixtures, agricultural days, folk dance evenings, and educational visits, often to larger centres.

There has been considerable discussion about the standard of education in small rural schools. It would be hard to find Inspectors and Advisers who will say that the quality of education is necessarily of lower quality than that provided in city schools. They would probably say it depends on the teacher. Where the teachers are competent and hard working the quality of education will be high but where they are not the effects can be much worse than in larger schools. In other words a large school can carry an inadequate teacher but a small school can't.

In 1969, W.B. Elley of the New Zealand Council of Educational Research published an article titled "Changes in Mental Ability in New Zealand School Children" in which he disclosed results of surveys conducted in 1936 and 1968 to assess the general reasoning skills of New Zealand children. The results indicated that whereas in 1936 there were marked and significant differences between country and city children in recorded IQ scores, these differences have diminished in the recent standardisation of the Otis Test.

It is suggested by Elley that access to books, to schooling, and to mass media is easier now for the country child than was the case in 1936. Consolidation of rural schools, and the country service bar for teachers are also cited as possible reasons for the improved quality of education in country schools in relation to those in the city. He further reports that the average attainment of country children in the standardisation of the PAT reading tests was also within one or two points of the means for town children who were generally only one point behind city children. Elley concludes -

"The smallness of these differences supports the view that educational opportunity for country pupils up to the age of 15 years is not greatly restricted in relation to the opportunities enjoyed by their city counterparts." (6)

(6) Elley W.B. : Changes in Mental Ability of New Zealand School Children  
NZ Journal of Educational Studies 4 : (1969) p 154

In Parkyn's (7) landmark study of small rural schools, their communities, teachers and pupils, he concluded -

"In the main it would seem possible to provide very well for the educational needs of the younger children in the small country school, as long as there are enough of them to ensure companionships and social activity."

The 1962 Currie Commission on Education echoed Parkyn's sentiments and acknowledged that children at the intermediate stage benefit from being brought together in larger schools.

Rural groups in all parts of the country during the 1974 Educational Development Conference discussions expressed general satisfaction with rural primary education. They listed the benefits of rural education as : there is a closer relationship between teacher and community; the children are more self-reliant; they develop their own personalities; they have a healthier attitude to sex; more individual tuition is possible; and there is a family atmosphere associated with the smaller school. Above all, high quality teachers were seen as the key to a better deal for the country child.

The fierce sense of pride that the rural community have for their schools was summed up by one EDC discussion group member when she stated -

"The country pupil has so many advantages, a stronger character and a more stable personality, that towns should be ruralised." (8)

As a country whose economy is heavily dependent upon its agricultural production New Zealand is naturally anxious to maintain the standard of education of its agricultural producers and of other rural residents whose work contributes to the efficiency of farming. It is not surprising then that from the earliest days of colonial education rural parents have felt and "suffered from an understandable and indeed, entirely commendable anxiety lest their children should be educationally disadvantaged." (9)

Marked progress has been made in rural education since the then Minister of Education, Peter Fraser, officially declared in 1939 -

"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 a kind for which he is best fitted and to the fullest extent of his powers."

- (7) Parkyn G.W. : The Consolidation of Rural Schools NZCER (1952) p 139-40  
 (8) Education Development Conference : Talkback; Report of Public Discussions Department of Education : Wellington (1974) p 21  
 (9) Education Development Conference : Improving Learning and Teaching Department of Education, Wellington (1974) p 209

Much ingenuity has been applied and substantial resources have been made available to counteract the difficulties of distance, isolation and expense that inevitably affect the maintenance of educational services in rural areas. The retiring Minister of Education in 1969 had reason to laud the rural primary school as "the gem in our educational system." (10)

Two recent measures indicative of a commitment to improving the educational services of rural districts are currently being implemented.

The first of these measures relates to the introduction of a new staffing policy, based on a teacher-pupil ratio of 1 to 25 in Full Primary Schools. As from 1 February 1979, Full Primary Schools with rolls between 9 and 28 have been placed on a class size of 25 pupils to a teacher. This means two teacher status is achieved with a roll of 26 rather than 29 under the existing procedure. The implementation of the new 1 to 25 staffing ratio will proceed in 1980 with schools with rolls between 29 and 90, and in 1981 with schools with rolls between 91 and 155.

This measure will have the effect of reducing class sizes in small rural primary schools. In some cases with falling rolls it will enable a school to maintain its grade and hence its current staffing entitlement, and in others it will result in the appointment of another teacher.

A second recent measure aimed at improving the educational services of rural areas has been the establishment in the districts of Gisborne, Taihape, Blenheim and Alexandra of a 'Rural Educational Activities Programme' (REAP). This programme provides for each region to benefit from developments in pre-school and guidance services, support for remedial and preventative programmes, as well as inter-school and community liaison.

Each programme has been established under the management and general oversight of a local representative management committee. These committees have no statutory authority and where staff are employed, administrative arrangements have been developed with an existing statutory board or council.

Nine more districts, also educationally isolated, and in communities experiencing a period of slow, or declining economic growth have been identified for receiving the programme over the next three years.

(10) Evening Post, 10 December (1969)

New Zealand certainly has reason to be proud of its efforts in rural primary education. But is all well within the rural community? What are the effects and implications of recent social changes upon the rural school and the people it serves? Is it time for new supportive measures?

### CHAPTER THREE

#### RURAL 'LIVING' AND 'TEACHING' TODAY - OBSERVATIONS OF PRINCIPALS

The Wanganui Education Board has within its boundaries 80 rural schools, that is one to four teacher schools. Of these 80 rural schools 75, or 93.7% of their rural principals responded to a questionnaire (Appendix 4) designed to ascertain their viewpoints on a range of matters related to living and teaching in a rural community. Of the 75 schools, 19 were Grade II, 36 Grade III, 17 Grade IVa and 3 Grade IVb. The spread of the 80 rural schools throughout the Education Board District is indicated on the map (figure 2). As can be seen the small rural schools are most densely situated in the country areas around the cities of Wanganui and Palmerston North.

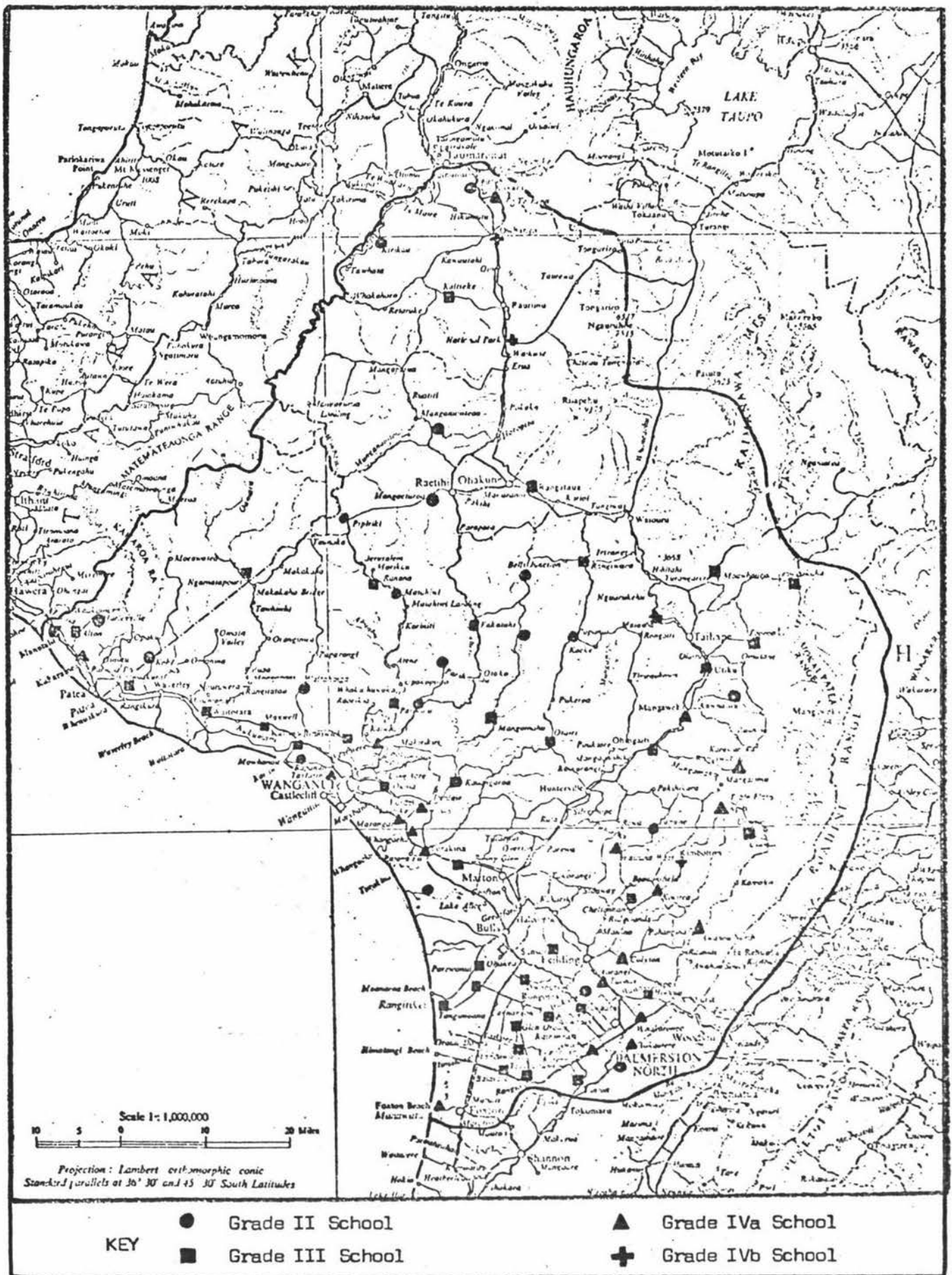
Of the 75 schools of responding principals, 71 or 94.7% have houses provided by the Education Board for the use on a rental basis for the school principal. In 10, or 14% of the cases, the principal does not live in the schoolhouse but prefers to live outside the school district.

The teaching service of the responding principals ranged from 4 years to 37 years. The mean teaching service was 13.7 years and the median 12.4 years. Service in current positions ranged from less than a year to 17 years with the mean 3.0 years and the median 1.9 years. Sixty-eight per cent of the principals responding were actually in their first 2 years of service in their current position. Prior to taking up this position previous rural service ranged from none (13.3%) to 24 years, with the mean 6.2 years and the median 5.4 years. As rural service was not specified in the questionnaire as teaching in 1 to 4 teacher schools it can be assumed that many respondents considered teaching in larger schools in rural areas to be rural service, hence the relatively small number (13.3%) not having had previous rural teaching experience.

With regard to "significant advantages of living in a rural community" (figure 3) 50.7% of the respondents did not consider cheap housing an advantage, and only 26.7% considered there to be rural recreational advantages. Well over half of the respondents saw as advantages of living in rural communities : small educational opportunities for their own children (58.9%); a feeling of being part of a community (60.8%); and the quiet and peacefulness of rural countryside (76.0%).



figure 2 DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL SCHOOLS IN THE WANGANUI EDUCATION BOARD



KEY

- Grade II School
- Grade III School

- ▲ Grade IVa School
- + Grade IVb School

figure 3 SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGES OF LIVING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

| Advantages Claimed   | YES % | NO % |
|--|-------|------|
| the provision of cheap housing                               | 49.3  | 50.7 |
| a feeling of being part of a community                       | 60.8  | 39.2 |
| the quiet and peacefulness of rural countryside              | 76.0  | 24.0 |
| small school educational opportunities for your own children | 58.9  | 41.1 |
| rural recreational opportunities                             | 26.7  | 73.3 |

Other significant advantages of living in a rural community were listed by respondents as : "clean air"; "learning about farming and country values"; "less pressure"; "free firewood"; "cheaper meat"; and "opportunity to participate in such perks as haymaking, school cleaning etc." The above, however, were all expressions of individuals so they cannot be considered to be of general applicability.

The "disadvantages of living in rural communities" (figure 4 ) as claimed in the questionnaire indicated a number of areas of concern to the respondents. Well over half of the respondents saw as a disadvantage : restricted contacts with people of similar interests (72.6%); distance from medical services (68.0%); distance from commercial services (81.3%); high cost of living (65.8%); and limited educational opportunities for your own children (56.9%). On the other hand only 44.6% considered they had poor quality roading, 30.7% inadequate housing, and 11.0% saw themselves as representative of interfering officialdom.

figure 4 SIGNIFICANT DISADVANTAGES OF LIVING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

| Disadvantages Claimed                                   | YES % | NO % |
|---|-------|------|
| restricted contacts with people of similar interests    | 72.6  | 27.4 |
| distance from medical services                          | 68.0  | 32.0 |
| poor quality roading                                    | 44.6  | 55.4 |
| distance from commercial services                       | 81.3  | 18.7 |
| inadequate housing                                      | 30.7  | 69.3 |
| being seen as representative of interfering officialdom | 11.0  | 89.0 |
| high cost of living                                     | 65.8  | 34.2 |
| limited educational opportunities for your own children | 56.9  | 43.1 |



A strong expression of "other disadvantages of living in a rural community" were listed by respondents as : "high cost of travel"; "lack of opportunity for relaxation as individuals - a 24 hour a day job"; "high costs of services"; "limited sporting and cultural contacts without long distances involved"; and "difficulty in saving for a home in readiness for returning to town."

Other expressions by individuals of disadvantages experienced included : "loneliness"; "the conservative nature of farmers"; "little incentive for living in rural areas"; "inadequate standard of housing"; "poor telephone services"; "poor radio and television reception"; "a moral obligation to carry out many menial tasks"; "a lack of job opportunities for a wife"; "secondary employment opportunities limited"; "isolation from relatives and friends"; "a feeling of being a 'transient'"; and "the distance from secondary school."

Of the 75 respondents, 65 or 86.6% indicated they were a married male principal living with their wife in the school community. The feelings of these wives on a range of matters was solicited (figure 5 ). Most significant of the findings was that 61.5% of the women did not feel personal fulfilment with the relationships the school community provides and almost a third (31.3%) do not feel fully accepted as a member of the community.

figure 5 WIFE'S FEELINGS WITH LIVING IN A RURAL COMMUNITY

| Feeling of Wife  | YES % | NO %. |
|--|-------|-------|
| personal fulfilment with the relationship the school community provides          | 38.5  | 61.5  |
| she is fully accepted as a member of the community                               | 68.7  | 31.3  |
| obligated to attend local women's organisations of which she has little interest | 37.3  | 62.7  |
| she is used to convey 'individual' or 'community' feelings to the school         | 43.3  | 56.7  |

A moderate expression of other feelings of wives related to rural living included : "sporting, social and cultural organisations and activities necessitate long car trips"; "there is difficulty in finding friends outside the community"; "travel is required for shopping"; "you get lonely and bored"; "your own interests cannot be pursued"; and "you are always the teacher's wife."

Individual expressions of concern included : "you cannot feel free to speak your mind"; "there is a community expectation of what a school teacher's wife should be"; "there is resentment of the financial benefits accorded a teaching wife"; "our young children have no playmates"; "I dislike to be party to the diplomacy of the principal and the community"; "there is a lack of privacy"; "you live at a distance from your own family and friends"; "teachers are only transients"; "you are on call at any time to entertain visitors"; and "petty attitudes of rural people are frustrating."

The respondents when asked to indicate on a five point scale (Very High to Very Low) the 'respect' or 'status' accorded the rural teacher by the community; most of the teachers indicated they saw themselves as being accorded a 'Moderate' to 'Very High' status by the community. (figure 6)

figure 6 PRINCIPAL PERCEPTION OF 'STATUS' OR 'RESPECT' ACCORDED

| Status Rating Scale    | Very High | High | Moderate | Low | Very Low |
|------------------------|-----------|------|----------|-----|----------|
| % Accorded Each Rating | 10.8      | 31.1 | 51.4     | 6.7 | -        |

The "availability and opportunity to participate in recreational, cultural clubs and organisations" by rural principals was solicited (figure 7). Respondent replies indicated that while in 60.0% of the rural communities there were clubs and organisations in which a rural principal could participate, only 48.0% in fact do. On the other hand, 76.0% take part in clubs and organisations outside their school district. Just under a third took an active leadership role in school district clubs and organisations (30.7%), and felt pressure to take an active leadership role (29.7%).

The rural principals when asked if they were "aware of any 'sectional interests' or 'groups' which tended to divide the community," 65.3% indicated in the affirmative.

An analysis of the stated 'sectional interests' or 'groups' the principals considered tended to divide the community revealed that socio-economic factors, and largely farm ownership as against worker status, was the most significant divisive factor in community relationships.

figure 7 AVAILABILITY AND OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN RECREATIONAL, CULTURAL AND SPORTING PURSUITS

| Participation in Recreational Pursuits  | YES % | NO % |
|---|-------|------|
| are there any clubs and organisations in which you could participate in your school district?     | 60.0  | 40.0 |
| do you participate in any club or organisation in your school district?                           | 48.0  | 52.0 |
| do you take an active leadership role in any of these school district clubs and organisations?    | 30.7  | 69.3 |
| do you feel any pressure by the members of such clubs and organisations to take leadership roles? | 29.7  | 70.3 |
| do you take part in clubs and organisations outside your school district?                         | 76.0  | 24.0 |

Also important in contributing to community divisions were religious groups, early residential status as against newcomers, inter-farmer groups (sheep, dairy, hill country, flat land, forestry etc), maori and pakeha, other occupational groups and commuters and those who choose to send their children to other than the local school.

Other groups claimed to divide the community were: alternative lifestyle groups; participation in elite clubs; those who consume alcohol and those who abstain; political groups; inter-family rivalry; and inter-community geographical parochialism.

When questioned as to teacher satisfaction on a range of areas related to rural teaching, three quarters or more of the respondents indicated satisfaction with the specific items given, except for the "opportunities for inservice education" where 59.5% were not satisfied (figure 8). Of particular interest is the 86.3% who experience significant satisfaction with the community involvement in the school.

In response to listing other aspects of the teaching job which gives "significant satisfaction" there was a strong expression of satisfaction in "being one's own boss" - being able to do one's own thing in terms of the school's physical development, organisation and management.

Other expressions of individual "satisfactions" with rural teaching included: "strong staff involvement, morale and support by advisory services"; "intimate pupil knowledge and hence early identification of individual learning needs"; "knowing what is going on in 'education'

through contacts established with educational officers"; "seeing the growth of a child from entry through to F2 and then into secondary"; "when teaching a child for a number of years you can really get to grips with the developing strengths and helping improve weaknesses"; and "availability of parents for travel, sports and working bees around the school."

figure 8 SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGES OF TEACHING IN RURAL SCHOOLS

| Advantages Claimed   | YES % | NO % |
|--|-------|------|
| close personal contacts with children and parents                    | 89.3  | 10.7 |
| the feeling of having an all-round educative affect upon pupils      | 83.3  | 16.7 |
| a school climate which presents few discipline problems              | 89.3  | 10.7 |
| being able to enrich and use the environmental experiences of pupils | 80.3  | 19.7 |
| ready access to audio-visual and other teaching resources            | 82.7  | 17.3 |
| a classroom environment conducive to innovative techniques           | 73.2  | 26.8 |
| community involvement  | 86.3  | 13.7 |
| ample opportunities for inservice education                          | 40.5  | 59.5 |
| flexible programme opportunities                                     | 93.2  | 6.8  |
| independent pursuit of interests                                     | 78.1  | 21.9 |

When questioned as to "significant difficulties" experienced in rural teaching with a range of given areas, over half the respondents indicated difficulty with : the stimulus that is to be gained from contact with a variety of teachers (69.3%); catering for all areas of the curriculum (61.3%); and catering for older children in the more specialised areas (53.3%). (figure 9 ). Difficulty was also experienced by a good number in the areas of : the development of classroom management strategies suitable to multi-class teaching (32.0%); catering for the slow learner (46.7%); and lack of keenness in children that comes from competing against children found in numbers in large schools (30.7%). However, relationships with the school committee only concerned 10.7% and inadequate financial support 24.0%.

In response to listing other aspects of the teaching job which cause "significant difficulty" there was a strong impression of difficulty

in "coping with the twin demands of school administration and the preparation and implementation of programmes for the multi-class teaching situation with a reasonable allocation of one's time."

figure 9 SIGNIFICANT DIFFICULTIES WITH TEACHING IN RURAL SCHOOLS

| Difficulties Claimed   | YES % | NO % |
|--|-------|------|
| the development of classroom management strategies suitable to multi-class teaching                        | 32.0  | 68.0 |
| catering for the slow learner  | 46.7  | 53.3 |
| relationships with the school committee  | 10.7  | 89.3 |
| the stimulus that is to be gained from contact with a variety of teachers                                  | 69.3  | 30.7 |
| catering for all areas of the curriculum   | 61.3  | 38.7 |
| lack of keenness in children that comes from competing against children found in numbers in larger schools | 30.7  | 69.3 |
| catering for older children in the more specialised areas  | 53.3  | 46.7 |
| inadequate financial support   | 24.0  | 76.0 |

A moderate impression of concern was indicated in the areas of : "convincing the conservative by nature rural parents of current educational practices"; and "the difficulty in the small school situation of having unco-operative staff members - and often local farmers wives."

Other "difficulties" experienced by individuals included : "difficulty with travel for sporting, cultural and educational visits"; "lack of 'ears' to which one can express ones frustrations and problems"; "being responsible for such a wide range of items including equipment and grounds and often at much expense of time"; "covering the curriculum with all the cultural and sporting interruptions"; and "over exposure to the same classes of children for several years."

When questioned as to 'pressures' applying to their work and life in rural communities, 60.8% considered pressure from various sources requiring administrative action was their main concern. (figure 10) Almost half of the respondents also considered there was pressure from Departmental Officers in promoting curriculum change and developments (49.3%) and pressure to gain academic qualifications (48.6%). Over



one third considered there was pressure from parents in the area of pupil achievement and promotion (37.8%) and in the vicinity of a quarter considered there was pressure from community groups to take up positions of responsibility in clubs (25.7%) and pressure from community groups in endeavouring to raise standards in basic subjects (20.3%).

figure 10 PRESSURES EXPERIENCED BY RURAL TEACHERS

| Pressures Claimed   | YES % | NO % |
|---|-------|------|
| pressure from departmental officers in promoting curriculum change and developments | 49.3  | 50.7 |
| pressure from parents in the area of pupil achievement and promotion                | 37.8  | 62.2 |
| pressure from various sources requiring administrative action                       | 60.8  | 39.2 |
| pressure from community groups to take up positions of responsibility in clubs      | 25.7  | 74.3 |
| pressure to gain academic qualifications  | 48.6  | 51.4 |
| pressure from community groups in endeavouring to raise standards in 'basics'       | 20.3  | 79.7 |

There was no expression of 'pressures' of general concern on the part of the respondents. Individual expression of pressures included : "the need to cope with minor complaints from parents as they could assume more prominence than they deserve"; "junior children requiring extra individual assistance"; "from the 'obstructional' parent attempting to disrupt existing harmonious relationships for personal satisfaction's sake"; "community pressure to use your own car for sporting, cultural and administrative trips"; "from parents to conform to traditional methods of teaching"; "from various sources to undertake 'caretaking' and 'maintenance' tasks"; "community pressure for the school to achieve greater distinction (sport, cultural and academic) than the school up the road"; "various groups within society who wish to limit teachers' control over aspects of the curriculum - but provide nothing positive or helpful to the situation"; "from family to spend more time at home rather than at school"; and "initiating and maintaining programmes in all curriculum areas with many groups as required by the Department."

With regard to "possible pre-service training before taking up a rural principalship" over three quarters of the respondents on hindsight considered they would like covered : classroom management strategies

to cater for the multi-class teaching situation (82.2%); administrative guidance appropriate to the position (91.9%); programme planning for the multi-class teaching situation (93.2%); relationships with the school committee (78.1%); and school community relationships (81.1%). Catering for the slow learner was desired by 41.7% (figure 11).

figure 11 POSSIBLE AREAS OF PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

| Areas of Pre-Service Training   | YES % | NO % |
|---|-------|------|
| classroom management strategies to cater for the multi-class teaching situation | 82.2  | 17.8 |
| administrative guidance appropriate to the position                             | 91.9  | 8.1  |
| programme planning for the multi-class teaching situation                       | 93.2  | 6.8  |
| catering for the slow learner   | 41.7  | 58.3 |
| relationships with the school committee   | 78.1  | 21.9 |
| school - community relationships  | 81.1  | 18.9 |

The respondents in response to the invitation to list any other areas considered to be valuable pre-service training topics gave moderate support to : "leadership training - namely in the areas of delegation, communication, staff relationships and resource management"; "ways of dealing with parents, and especially those of the problem variety"; and "relationships, local procedures, and use of Education Board Officers and other advisory and support services."

Other areas of individual concern for possible pre-service training topics included : "the bus controller's role"; "the nature of rural people and their way of life"; "extending the brighter child"; "relationships with the maori community in the rural setting"; "priorities within a new school"; and "parental involvement in the school."

figure 12 METHODS OF INFORMING PARENTS OF CHILDREN'S WORK AND PROGRESS

| Methods of Informing Parents                 | YES % | NO % |
|--|-------|------|
| the issue of written reports                 | 98.7  | 1.3  |
| formal interviews with parents               | 87.8  | 12.2 |
| PTA type meetings                            | 65.8  | 34.2 |
| open days where parents visit the classrooms | 77.0  | 23.0 |
| informal discussions with parents            | 100.0 | -    |

With regard to methods of informing parents of children's work and progress a high proportion of the responding schools issued written reports (98.7%); had formal interviews (87.8%); provided open days (77.0%); and had P.T.A. type meetings (65.8%). All schools utilised informal discussion opportunity with parents. The respondents indicated that extensive use was also made of newsletters, school magazine, and the sending home of work samples. (figure 12)

The rural principals were asked if they had in any one year a number of functions to which parents and community were invited. A high proportion of the schools had : inter-school sports days (97.3%); a school concert (87.3%); open days to allow parents and community to see the school programme in action (78.4%); an agricultural day (74.7%); and a school picnic (61.3%). Least popular was folk dancing evenings where 40% had such functions. (figure 13)

figure 13 FUNCTIONS TO WHICH PARENTS AND COMMUNITY ARE INVITED

| School Functions   | YES % | No % |
|--|-------|------|
| agricultural day   | 74.7  | 25.3 |
| school concert   | 89.3  | 10.7 |
| folk dancing evening   | 40.0  | 60.0 |
| inter-school sports days   | 97.3  | 2.7  |
| open days to allow parents and community to see the school programme in action | 78.3  | 21.6 |
| school picnic  | 61.3  | 38.7 |

The respondents also indicated widespread use of such functions as : social evenings (sometimes involving a 'housie' or 'barbeque'); Christmas parties or 'Break-ups'; fundraising evenings; and presentation of end of unit and term displays.

Other types of functions indicated included : school assemblies, speech contests and Guy Fawkes evenings.

With regard to "parental and community involvement in the life of a school" (figure 14) over half the schools had such involvement as : providing transport for educational trips and sporting contacts (98.7%); coaching sports (66.7%); assisting in hobbies clubs (62.7%); providing expertise in cultural areas of the school curriculum (62.7%); and assisting with library work (61.3%). Least utilised were people acting as resource persons for various specialised programmes.



Other areas where the respondents indicated parental and community involvement is widely used include : outdoor education programmes and especially camping; working bees; pupil/parent sports days; fund raising activities and mother helper groups. Some schools utilise such support also in their extended arts and crafts programme.

figure 14 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL

| Types of Parental Involvement                                      | YES % | NO % |
|--|-------|------|
| by providing transport for educational trips and sporting contacts | 98.7  | 1.3  |
| by assisting in hobbies clubs                                      | 62.7  | 37.3 |
| by providing expertise in cultural areas of the school curriculum  | 62.7  | 37.3 |
| by acting as resource persons for various specialised programmes   | 42.7  | 57.3 |
| by coaching sports   | 66.7  | 33.3 |
| by assisting with library work                                     | 61.3  | 38.7 |

The respondents when asked to indicate on a three point scale "their community's understanding of current educational practice," 36% indicated they were 'inadequately informed.' (figure 15)

figure 15 PRINCIPAL PERCEPTION OF COMMUNITY'S UNDERSTANDING OF CURRENT EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

| Rating Scale           | Very well Informed | Adequately Informed | Inadequately Informed |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| % Accorded Each Rating | 10.7%              | 53.3%               | 36.0%                 |

The respondents indicated that the school facilities were only utilised on a regular basis by community groups in 32 or 42.7% of the school districts. In many areas extensive use is made of the swimming pool, concrete areas for netball and tennis and the playground for rugby and cricket at the appropriate times of the year. A number of respondents reported that their grounds and facilities were utilised for picnics and occasionally for weekend camps. Only 37 instances were reported whereby organisations and clubs made use of the school buildings and facilities on a regular basis. These included thirteen adult organisations, five adult social and hobbies groups, four indoor sporting

activities, and fifteen youth groups and activities.

Many support services are available to assist rural schools. The respondents when asked to indicate whether specific "support and related services responded and make themselves available when required" a response indicative of general satisfaction can be seen by : Health Department officers (94.4%); Rural School Advisory Service (91.9%); Road Traffic Instructors (89.0%); Inspectorate (87.0%); Education Board officers (80.6%); Social Welfare Officers (68.6%); Psychological Service (66.2%); and Curriculum Area Advisers (62.3%). (figure 16)

figure 16 AVAILABILITY OF SUPPORT AND RELATED SERVICES

| Support Services              | YES % | NO % |
|-------------------------------|-------|------|
| Rural School Advisory Service | 91.9  | 8.1  |
| Curriculum Area Advisers      | 62.3  | 37.7 |
| Psychological Service         | 66.2  | 33.8 |
| Inspectorate                  | 87.0  | 13.0 |
| Education Board officers      | 80.6  | 19.4 |
| Social Welfare officers       | 68.6  | 31.4 |
| Health Department officers    | 94.4  | 5.6  |
| Road Traffic Instructors      | 89.0  | 11.0 |

The respondents were asked to indicate whether they had during the 1978 year attended or undertaken a range of avenues for promoting their personal professional development (figure 17). Responses in order of popularity were : regular attendance at Country Teachers Group Meetings (71.6%); attendance at in-service courses adding up to at least 5 days absence from teaching (70.7%); regular attendance at NZEI meetings (50.7%); attendance at a single refresher or in-service course of 5 days duration (40.0%); undertook extra-mural university work (22.7%); and undertook a Diploma in Teaching Correspondence School Course (9.5%).

Eleven of the respondents indicated they had a regular programme of professional reading and three stated they attended Principals' Association meetings. One principal was on a Curriculum Revision Committee and another was undertaking music tuition.

figure 17 AVENUES FOR PROMOTING PERSONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

| Avenues for Promoting Professional Development                               | YES % | NO % |
|--|-------|------|
| regular attendance at NZEI meetings  | 50.7  | 49.3 |
| regular attendance at Country Teachers Group meetings                        | 71.6  | 28.4 |
| undertake a Diploma in Teaching Correspondence School Course                 | 9.5   | 90.5 |
| undertake extra-mural university work  | 22.7  | 77.3 |
| attend a single refresher or in-service course of a week's duration (5 days) | 40.0  | 60.0 |
| attend in-service courses adding up to at least 5 days absence from teaching | 70.7  | 29.3 |

School committees play an important part in the life and smooth functioning of a rural school. When invited to indicate whether the school committee had ever 'interfered' in what could be called the principal's professional domain, 20.3% indicated they had experienced such interference. The most common areas of committee 'interference' were related to : lack of consultation, or regard to the principal's wishes over equipment purchases; pressure to increase supervision and improve the discipline of the children; interference in the class and sports programmes; and negating or laying down conditions for proposed educational visits. Other individual cases of committee 'interference' were related to : the appointment of a teachers' aide; cancelling a shopping day; and involvement in the tasks of the Bus Controller.

When asked to indicate whether their school committee had ever procrastinated or failed to do the jobs considered to be their rightful function, 42.7% stated they considered this to be so. Most of these cases related to the area of ground and building development, and maintenance, e.g. hedge cutting, repairs, lawn mowing, cleaning of drains, spouting etc. Some concern was also expressed about : committee delays in communicating and corresponding with the Education Board; school cleaning; the raising of finance; lengthy periods and delays on larger projects such as adventure playgrounds; and failure to support the principal.

The respondents were asked to indicate on a five point scale (Very Good to Very Poor) the knowledge they considered their school committee had

of its role (figure 18). Results indicated most principals considered their school committees had a 'Fair' to 'Very Good' knowledge of their role.

figure 18 PRINCIPAL PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE KNOWLEDGE OF ROLE

| Rating Scale           | Very Good | Good  | Fair  | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|------|-----------|
| % Accorded Each Rating | 20.0%     | 38.7% | 32.0% | 8.0% | 1.3%      |

On the subject of teacher 'morale' in rural schools the principals were asked - "If you were given the opportunity to move out of your current position and retain your present salary would you do so?" - 52.7% of the respondents indicated they would do so.

The principals were furthermore asked to indicate on a five point scale (Very Good to Very Poor) "what they considered to be the 'morale' of rural teachers" (figure 19). Results indicated a slightly deflated curve with 34.7% of the respondents below 'Fair' as against 21.3% above.

figure 19 PRINCIPAL ASSESSMENT OF RURAL TEACHER MORALE

| Rating Scale           | Very Good | Good  | Fair  | Poor  | Very Poor |
|------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| % Accorded Each Rating | 1.3%      | 20.0% | 44.0% | 26.7% | 8.0%      |

A final request of the respondents was to "briefly state comments on any area of rural education you feel very strongly about." There was a strong impression of concern about five areas of rural education, and namely : that current "broadbanding" proposals would result in less suitable and well qualified applicants applying for rural schools, and furthermore acting to trap those in current positions from moving out to town positions; that increasing costs of living in rural areas necessitate incentives such as a substantial rural allowance; that housing conditions with regard to maintenance, storage, rental etc are often poor; that the current economic climate makes it difficult to save for one's own home, and also to obtain access to necessary finance;

and finally that current pre-service and continuing in-service training opportunities for rural teachers is inadequate.

In a number of areas cross tabulations were employed to determine whether relationships existed between selected items. Items selected particularly related to factors that might contribute to teachers wishing to 'opt out of their current positions' and indicating low 'morale'. No particular variable such as size of school, perceived status of teacher, location of school and pressure from parents, produced any relationship approaching a level of statistical significance.

In this chapter a largely quantitative, but at times qualitative assessment of the viewpoints of Wanganui Education Board rural principals on a range of matters related to 'living' and 'teaching' in rural communities have been elaborated.

Topics covered related to living in a rural community included : advantages and disadvantages; the wife's position; the 'status' of the rural teacher; and the availability of sporting, recreational and cultural clubs, organisations and pursuits.

Topics covered related to teaching in a rural school included : the satisfaction, difficulties and pressures; the communities involvement and participation in school activities and events; utilisation of school facilities; professional support and development opportunities; relationships with school committees; teacher morale; and general concerns.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RURAL EDUCATION - OBSERVATIONS OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

To ascertain the viewpoints of rural parents on a range of matters related to rural schooling, taped group interviews (see Appendix Va for discussion topics) and brief individual questionnaires (see Appendix Vb) were conducted with 17 school committees. The school committee views were considered to be representative of parents, and of the school committee of which individual members were part.

School committees interviewed and questioned were selected largely on the basis of geographical spread, that is at least one school in each of the 10 School Inservice Areas within the Wanganui Education Board district. The 17 school committees have 85 members (5 per committee) and 78 of these attended the interview and questionnaire sessions. Of these 78 school committee members, men outnumbered the women by exactly two to one.

The interviews took between 40 and 50 minutes to conduct and in no session was there any diffidence by members in discussing the topics in question. An awareness of the cassette recorder therefore did not appear to limit discussion. In some instances the interviewer asked supplementary questions to elicit clarification of points being made.

This section will attempt to give a careful, qualitative and, where possible, quantitative assessment of the views of rural parents on a range of topics related to the education of their primary aged children.

The main changes taking place in rural communities since World War II were seen in many areas to be the amalgamation of farms with consequent population decrease, centralisation of services, and the consolidation of schools. Representative comments from committee members as to the effects of such factors upon the country school and community were stated as : - "The population has decreased to the stage where our school now serves an area which once had seven schools." "Our school is all that is left of four school communities." "Farms are a lot bigger today as smaller lots are uneconomic." "Staff is too expensive and labour travels into the district when required." "There are fewer children of employees, most school children are those of farm owners." "With the closure of the dairy factory, only farm children now attend our



school." "The Maori community has dropped considerably over the years. Many would like to come back as they are not happy with city life. There is some difficulty however in Maoris getting title to small blocks of land and being able to build homes." "Rural services are decreasing as people move to the towns." "As a result of population decrease local money available to spend on the school goes down." "The school serves a wider area today which means longer bus runs."

In schools nearer to centres of population, farm accommodation is often rented to commuters who work in towns. Children of such families attending the local school often meant the difference in retaining a school's grade or preventing its closure. In one school district, ten acre blocks dominate and employment is found in the nearby centre. Children from these situations come from a range of occupational backgrounds.

When questioned as to their role as a school committee there was general consensus among the members on two broad areas. Firstly they generally considered they had a role in school administration, financial management and the maintenance and development of school amenities and grounds. Comments indicative of these viewpoints included: "Our role is basically the administration of the Board's concerns." "We are responsible for running school administration." "We pay the bills for the Education Board and balance the books." "Committees are the 'financiers' for the Government." "We are always worrying about money to pay for things - we always seem to be short and having to 'stretch' the money." "We are 'fundraisers' for the incidentals the Board won't pay for." "Committees tend to primarily be 'fundraisers' and 'working bees'." "We are bloody caretakers." "Committees attempt to use local expertise to reduce expenditure and to get some mileage out of people who are prepared to give their time." "Improving the facilities at the school is important."

Secondly, the school committees generally considered they had a function as 'representatives of the parents' in promoting liaison between the parents and the school. Comments indicative of this viewpoint included: "We help to maintain good relations between the parents and teachers." "The committee facilitates communication between the community and the teacher." "Parents tend to come to a member of the school committee with a problem, who pass it on or try to sort it out before going to the teacher."

There was however an expression of opinion, and largely that of women members, who questioned whether the role should be largely 'fundraising' and 'working bees.' These members considered : "There should be more backing up of staff with incidental activities - helping with school activities." "The school committee could do a lot more in involving parents in the school activities." "It should give support and encouragement to the teacher." "If the teacher is happy we have a stable teacher - we must try to keep the teacher happy and content, especially with requests." "We must support the teacher when he gets into strife."

Other members also considered the school committee was somewhat restricted in what they could do, as indicated by : "We are more and more becoming a 'rubber stamp' outfit." "The committee are told what we can do in pretty narrow terms." "We really only approve decisions made." "School committees are fairly handstrung in other directions - our hands are tied."

When asked if there were any powers not currently held which they would like, about half of the committees indicated a lack of knowledge of their current powers. Comments indicative of this included : "We are not conversant enough with our current powers." "It is not a lack of power but a lack of knowledge." "There are probably powers we've got that we are not aware of." "We don't know what we have." "There is the need for a Committee Rule Book."

There was a very strong expression of opinion, namely all but three of the committees, in desiring more say in the appointment of staff. This concern was expressed by such comments as : "The School Committee should have some say in the choice of staff - the current 'comment' situation is not good enough." "We don't think we should have the power to appoint but power to have more say." "We would like to have more say in the appointment procedure."

A number of committees, and no doubt motivated by specific past experiences, wished to have more say in a teacher's appointment being terminated. Comments with this view in mind included : "It was awkward, the trouble the Committee had to go to to get rid of a teacher. We would like to be able to influence or to direct the Education Board if the need arose." "The School Committee can see things that are

happening before real trouble breaks out, yet we, the parents, can't do anything about it." "We should have more say in getting rid of a teacher, instead of going 'cap-in-hand' to the Education Board then getting turned away."

The very strong viewpoints expressed by the school committees on the matter of staff appointment and termination are perhaps summed up by the comments: "We are responsible people, and more notice should be taken of what we say." "The Committee doesn't want too much power in 'hiring' and 'firing' but more say." "The community have put a lot of time, effort, and money into the school and notice should be taken of their viewpoint."

The Committees also indicated they wished for more say in a range of decisions related to their school. These included: "More say in what is done in the way of repairs or additions to school buildings." "Power to buy a lawnmower - we know of a mower suitable for our needs and one that can be repaired locally." "We apply for changes to bus routes, but no notice is taken of our local knowledge." "The Committee would like more control over the school bus so that it could be utilised for educational trips." One committee because of a local bussing situation would like to have their school district "zoned."

In response to "the qualities you would look for in an applicant for the principal's position" the committee members almost without exception made their priority an ability to fit into a country community and be able to communicate with its people. This viewpoint was expressed by such comments as: "He must be suited to a country environment because if he's not happy he can't do his job properly." "The applicant must have the ability to get along with, mix, and co-operate with the people." "It must be someone who could fit into the district and understand country ways." "Ability to get on with people is vital in close-knit communities."

The importance of a teacher's wife accepting country life and being able to communicate with its people was also mentioned by three of the groups.

The applicant's attitude to his school and community also received considerable attention.. Comments included: "He must be interested in the school - be proud of it - and not afraid to get the lawnmower out to mow a bit of lawn." "Someone who is prepared to be interested in

the country and the community." "He should be prepared to put himself out on occasions." "The principal needs to take an interest in the whole school."

Qualities related to the principal as a 'teacher' concerned the committees but not to the extent of those already mentioned. It could be assumed however that the respondents took for granted the ability to teach in an applicant. They did however discuss such areas as discipline, relationships with children and staff, and curriculum with such comments as : "Must be able to discipline children with fairness and justice." "Needs to have more than a degree - an understanding of children." "You need someone who would treat everyone fairly regardless of colour." "Must have the ability to establish good staff relationships." "Must have ability in all areas of the curriculum." "Ability and interest in sport is a must." "Should be able to teach a wide range of classes."

When asked to indicate on a questionnaire "the number of years on average they considered teachers should stay in a rural school" (figure 20) 78% suggested it be in the vicinity of 4 to 6 years.

figure 20 YEARS CONSIDERED TEACHERS SHOULD STAY IN A RURAL SCHOOL POSITION

| No. of years      | Doesn't Matter | 2   | 4   | 6   | 8 + |
|-------------------|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| No of Respondents | 4              | 10  | 38  | 23  | 3   |
| % of Respondents  | 5%             | 13% | 49% | 29% | 4%  |

When questioned as to "your attitude to having appointed to your school a female principal" the general reaction was : "It doesn't make any difference as long as the person is capable of doing the job properly." One lone voice furthermore suggested there would be "more men at the working-bees."

While most of the parents claimed the above, there was a strong feeling also against having a female principal. Comments included : "When there are difficult boys you need a man to cope." "It's much better having a man with the boys at the upper end of the school." "A male can control the children better." "There would be twice as much work with a woman principal for the school committee." "It would be more difficult for her living in our community - a lonely existence."

The parents generally were concerned at the suggestion of "a principal not wishing to live in the schoolhouse, but rather outside the community." Comments indicative of this included : "I would frown upon it. If he doesn't live in the area they are not interested in the area." "If he lives away he becomes an outsider - he's accepted much better if he's one of us - country people are pretty parochial - a principal ought to live in the schoolhouse." "We would be suspicious of his motives - it is important that he lives in the schoolhouse as he can act and look after the school - protect from vandals." "He might be cutting his own throat." "His heart wouldn't be in his job." "We would be dead against this - it is the unpaid part of the job."

The few comments approaching an appreciation of a principal's desire to live outside of the school community were : "Everyone else lives where he wants. If one has one's own house its better to be paying it off rather than paying rent." "If he had reasons that were acceptable to the community it would be fair enough." "I wouldn't worry much as long as he did a good job at school." "In some ways if they live outside they can bring in some fresh ideas."

The attitudes of the parents with regard "to having appointed to your school a principal with a lifestyle and values very different from your own" was solicited. Suggested examples of such lifestyles and values in a principal were : a women's 'libber'; a solo parent; living in a defacto relationship; closely associated with a commune; and having strong political or religious views.

The most common response to having a principal with different lifestyle and values is summed up by the following statements : "I don't think .. .... would fit into the community - we are very conservative." "One is entitled to one's own opinions and values, but only as long as they are kept out of the school." "As long as the person was a good teacher perhaps it wouldn't matter."

Specific comments to the suggested lifestyle and values of a principal will now be briefly elaborated -

A 'women's libber' as principal generally evoked the above statements. There were however a few groups who were adamantly opposed to such an appointment and stated : "No! A 'women's libber' is an unbalanced person - too regimented in views - a campaign for change." "I would not like such a person."



The 'solo-parent' as school principal similarly worried a number. Comments indicative of this concern included : "Depends on how she became solo." "An unmarried mother, no - a widow or widower, yes." "We don't want an unmarried person with children." "Would have considerable difficulty relating to the community socially."

A principal living in a 'defacto relationship' was generally unacceptable to those interviewed and largely on the grounds "it wouldn't be a very good example for the children."

A principal with a commune association created a split between those who didn't want him on any account, and those who would accept, somewhat apprehensively, subject to the children not being influenced in any way.

With regard to extreme political and religious views, the parents accepted the right of a principal to his own personal viewpoint, but would not tolerate any attempt to influence the political or religious thinking of the children in the course of his teaching. Many furthermore considered if his views were well known in the community "difficulty could be experienced in fitting in."

The appointment of "a new school principal having spent all his life living and teaching in Auckland City" provided the opportunity for the parents to give 'advice' in terms of living and teaching in a rural community for such a newcomer.

With regard to living in a rural community it was generally considered there were three factors a new principal with a city background must consider. Firstly, he must expect there to be differences. Comments illustrative of this included : "He must expect there to be differences - they may miss an active social life." "We've been upset when the teachers have come and said they didn't realise it was so isolated." "Come with a willingness to accept the changes a country life brings." "It's a new ball game - don't be set in your ways."

Secondly, the respondents considered they wanted the new principal to take the trouble of getting to know the community and endeavouring to fit in an involve himself in its activities. Comments indicative of this included : "Get to know the local people as quickly as you can - be involved." "We want the teacher to like all the community and be one of us." "Take time and trouble to understand the ways of life of the community."



Thirdly, the principal is seen as a 'transient' and hence rapid changes were not considered desirable. Comments with this in mind included : 'Need to be open minded - take things slowly.' "We have our ways of doing things and don't like being told we must change because its in the rule book." "Don't force changes upon the locals." "Don't try to change the rural way of life to a city style."

Other comments of interest were : "You must be sure you want to go into the country." "Attempt to learn something about country life before you come." "You should come and see the school and district before you decide to come." "Country life can be hard and lonely for the principal's wife." "Buy a pair of gumboots!" "Shut every gate you go through!" "You may need to change some of your ideas about farmers."

Discussion related to the school centred entirely upon the nature of the rural child which they considered different to the city counterpart. Comments illustrative of this were : "You will find the country child more naive in many respects as compared to city kids." "You will need to approach the country kids more gently." "The difference between town and country kids is like wolves and lambs." "Accept the children for what they are." "Teaching is more personal in rural areas - you know the child and parents more intimately - you know the personal feelings of - and need more care and patience towards." "Children in rural areas are close to nature, and they have better manners and are not as destructive as city children."

Discussion concerning the "teacher's role in the community" indicated that while they considered "his main task was to do a good job with his teaching," involvement as a community member was most desirable. The importance of involvement was indicated by such comments as : "Should try to take a part in some of the community activities." "Be a normal community minded person and fit in with the rest of the community." "You need to be involved if you want to enjoy rural living."

However, there was a general cautionary note related to teacher involvement. Comments indicative of this included : "Don't get too involved, yet be involved." "You should not become the 'mayor' and try to run the play." "Involvement can expose the teacher to criticism of his personal views."

Advantages for the teacher living in a rural community are summed up by the following statements : "The country way of life is more relaxed, there are less pressures." "You have a more personal and social relationship with the parents and children." "Sometimes there are perks like a piece of land for running the odd sheep or pig, bus driving, haymaking, and shooting." "Generally there is more co-operation and assistance from parents."

On the debit side, the disadvantages for the teacher living in a rural community were seen to be : "Travel to services and sporting and cultural activities can be extensive and is expensive." "The teacher needs to have a good quality car." "Can't communicate one's problems easily with colleagues." "Teaching in the country is a 24 hour job."

The parents in response to a questionnaire item requiring a five point rating as to "the opportunities provided to involve themselves in the activities of the school (figure 21 ), 79% considered it to be very good.

figure 21 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SCHOOL

| Rating Scale              | Very Good | Good | Fair | Poor | Very Poor |
|---------------------------|-----------|------|------|------|-----------|
| Number of Respondents     | 62        | 10   | 3    | 3    | 0         |
| Percentage of Respondents | 79%       | 13%  | 4%   | 4%   | 0         |

Comments in the discussion sessions, in all but one group, indicated satisfaction with the opportunities provided for parental involvement and visits to the school. Comments illustrative of this were : "You can cruise in at any time you like." "All the opportunities you want are there." "If you don't go its your own fault." "There is an open invitation at any time."

When asked if they wished to have greater involvement, once again except for one group, the answer was "We are fully involved now, there is no need for further involvement."

Three groups, however, spelt out two areas of concern. They hoped that school visits and involvement would clarify, firstly, what was happening in the school, e.g. the methods of teaching reading and mathematics, and secondly, to learn where their child stood academically in relation to other children.

It should be pointed out that as all the respondents were members of school committees they would have most likely been fully involved in their respective schools. One could assume however that the activities that were available to them would also be available to others.

When invited to indicate "some of the problems you have with the education of your children" five areas of concern were suggested.

Firstly, there was concern about current school programmes, especially in mathematics and reading. Comments included: "We have difficulty in keeping up with the modern trends in mathematics and reading." "The new maths is ridiculous, crazy - and not turning out kids that can add and subtract." "The newer method of teaching reading is not working. You can't read unless the words are sounded out."

A second area of concern related to the small numbers in rural schools. Comments included: "There is not enough competition to stimulate mental activity." "There is a lack of numbers for sporting and social contacts." "The children are not used to mixing and competing in large numbers." "Sometimes there is difficulty relating to other kids especially when going on to secondary schools."

The problem of a weak teacher and one unable to fit into a rural community was also emphasised. Comments included: "You are very dependent upon a good teacher." "A weak teacher can be devastating to the children." "There is difficulty having a teacher for a long period if there is a personality clash." "A good teacher is particularly important in the infant years."

A fourth area of concern to the rural parents was that of difficulties in obtaining specialised help for the atypical child and educational support services generally for the school. Comments included: "It is difficult to get help for children requiring speech therapy." "When money is short the rural schools are the first to lose advisory service visits." "Children don't have the same access to specialised help - e.g. Psychologists."

Finally, the parents indicated concern at 'bussing' and distances involved in providing their children with sporting, cultural and other educational contacts and visits. Comments included: "The school bus situation is screwed down unreasonably - not just for bringing children

to school, but for educational and sports trips." "I am concerned we cannot use the school bus for weekend sport." "It is very expensive getting children to clubs and music lessons." "For sport the school has to rely on parents for transport."

In response to a questionnaire item requiring an assessment of "the quality of rural education" 28% considered it to be 'very good', and 55% considered it to be 'good'. (figure 22)

figure 22 QUALITY OF RURAL EDUCATION

| Rating Scale       | Very Good | Good | Fair | Poor | Very poor |
|--------------------|-----------|------|------|------|-----------|
| No. of Respondents | 22        | 43   | 11   | 2    | 0         |
| % of Respondents   | 28%       | 55%  | 14%  | 2%   | 0         |

In this chapter a qualitative and, where possible quantitative assessment of the viewpoints of rural parents (all school committee members) on a range of matters related to rural schooling have been elaborated. Topics covered included : changes occurring in rural communities and consequent effects upon schools; the role and powers of school committees; qualities of a rural principalship applicant; attitudes to the appointment of a principal with an atypical lifestyle and values; considerations for the 'first time' rural principal; advantages and disadvantages of living and teaching in rural communities; teachers role and involvement in the community; problem areas in rural schooling; and the quality of rural education.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF RURAL SCHOOL - COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS

In 1969 the New Zealand Educational Institute formally established a counselling service to assist teachers (members) who encounter difficulties which affect their teaching (see Appendix 1 : The Function of NZEI Counsellors). Institute Counsellors as listed in the 9 February 1979 issue of National Education name 227 counsellors as holding office until 31 March 1981. Questionnaires (Appendix 6) were sent to these 227 counsellors to ascertain the nature and extent of rural school - community relationship difficulties for the period of 1978 and the first term of 1979.

On receiving the completed questionnaires it was apparent that a number of counsellors had only been appointed as from the beginning of 1979 and hence were unable to give data for the 1978 section of the period being considered. An examination of the Institute Counsellors as listed in the 7 February 1978 issue of National Education listed a further 41 counsellors holding office until 2 February 1979 and not included in the list of the 1979 year. Counsellors surveyed therefore do not represent all those in a position to respond.

The response rate of the counsellors surveyed is 82%. Counsellors who had been involved with cases 'related to' and 'affecting' school - community relationships in rural schools number 61. These counsellors have been involved with counselling in 132 situations.

An analysis of the 132 cases involving problems 'related to' and 'affecting' rural school - community relationships indicate they can be classified into five general categories with twelve more specific sub-headings. It should be pointed out that each of the specific categories refers to an alleged problem in the area of rural school - community relationships, and one in which an NZEI Counsellor was involved. In no case is there the suggestion of, or any evidence of guilt, in either a legal or moral sense on the part of a teacher.

### CATEGORIES OF PROBLEMS RELATED TO RURAL SCHOOL - COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

#### (A) THE SCHOOL PROGRAMME

- 1 Overall Teacher's Performance      These cases relate to alleged teacher inadequacy in the performance of his job. In most

cases the complaints relate to general dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of the teacher.

- 2 School Programme These cases relate to alleged programme deficiencies in a school. They generally relate to discontent with a specific aspect of the programme, e.g. sport, reading.
- 3 Standard of Child(rens) Performance These cases relate to alleged deficiency in the standard of education being achieved in the school. They relate either to progress of an 'individual child' or to the performance of the 'children' in the school generally.

(B) SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

- 1 Staff Relationships These cases relate to alleged staff relationship difficulties. They generally appear to spill over into the community and result in a widened conflict with much taking of sides.
- 2 School Organisation and Administration These cases relate to an alleged deficiency in the organisation and administration of the school. They include cases related to bus programming, changes to accepted organisation practice, and financial mismanagement.
- 3 Actions Beyond Teaching Role These cases relate to alleged teacher misuse of authority. They relate to discontent over teacher's actions with regard to such situations as out-of-school supervision of school property, trespassing upon the prerogatives of the school committee and excessive involvement in the affairs of the community.
- 4 Discontent with Teaching/Living Conditions These cases relate to alleged deficiencies in the conditions in which the teacher and/or family live and work. They include problems related to school cleaning and unsatisfactory housing and teaching conditions.

(C) ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS RELATED TO SCHOOL

- 1 Teaching Appointments These cases relate to the alleged inadequacy of a proposed teacher/principal appointment.
- 2 Closure of School These cases relate to alleged problems associated with the possible closure of a rural school. They include difficulties related to pressures to consolidate upon nearby larger schools.



(D) TEACHERS PRIVATE LIFE

- 1 Personal Behaviour of Teacher These cases relate to alleged personal behaviour problems of teachers and the possible effect of these upon children. They include alcohol, domestic and mental health problems.

(E) RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

- 1 Treatment of Child(ren) These cases relate to alleged mistreatment of a child or children and are characterised by 'excessive discipline', and largely physical in nature.
- 2 Sexual Misconduct These cases relate to alleged sexual misconduct on the part of the teacher in his relationships with pupils.

As indicated in figure 23 the incidence of rural school - community relationship problems can be broadly classified into those related to : School Management - 36%; The School Programme - 35%; Administrative Decisions Related to the School - 10%; Teachers Private Life - 9%; and Relationships with Children - 8%. Problems related to the 'School Management' and 'School Programme' together make up nearly three quarters of the cases likely to contribute to rural school - community relationship difficulty.

figure 23 CATEGORIES OF RURAL SCHOOL - COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS AND THEIR INCIDENCE

| GENERAL CATEGORIES                 | SPECIFIC CATEGORIES           | No.of Cases | % of Total | Gen. Cat.% |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| School Management                  | Staff Relationships           | 19          | 14.3%      | 36.2%      |
|                                    | School Organ. & Admin.        | 13          | 9.8%       |            |
|                                    | Actions beyond Tchg. role     | 9           | 6.8%       |            |
|                                    | Discontent with Conditions    | 7           | 5.3%       |            |
| The School Programme               | Overall Teachers Performance  | 30          | 22.7%      | 35.5%      |
|                                    | School Programmes             | 11          | 8.3%       |            |
|                                    | Standard of Child(rens) Perf. | 6           | 4.5%       |            |
| Admin. Decisions Related to School | Teaching Appointments         | 9           | 6.8%       | 10.6%      |
|                                    | Closure of School             | 5           | 3.8%       |            |
| Teacher's Private Life             | Personal Behaviour of Tchr    | 12          | 9.0%       | 9.0%       |
| Relationships with Children        | Mistreatment of Children      | 6           | 4.5%       | 8.3%       |
|                                    | Sexual Misconduct             | 5           | 3.8%       |            |

The sources of alleged complaints against a rural principal or teacher resulting in NZEI Counsellor involvement have been classified into six categories.

- These are :
- (a) The Parent
  - (b) A Group of Parents
  - (c) The Community Generally
  - (d) The School Committee (or part of)
  - (e) Another Staff Member(s)
  - (f) Other Sources (e.g. from outside the school district such as a Departmental or Education Board Officer).

Figure 24 shows the order of incidence in which individuals or groups allege complains against principals and teachers in rural schools.

figure 24 SOURCES OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST RURAL PRINCIPALS/TEACHERS AND THEIR INCIDENCE

| SOURCES OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST TEACHERS | No. of Cases | % of Cases |
|--|--------------|------------|
| Community Generally                    | 44           | 33.3%      |
| Another Staff Member                   | 27           | 20.4%      |
| Group of Parents                       | 21           | 15.9%      |
| A Parent                               | 20           | 15.1%      |
| School Committee                       | 16           | 12.1%      |
| Other Sources                          | 4            | 3.0%       |

When sources of complaints against principals/teachers are matched against the specific categories of rural school - community relationship problems some patterns emerge. Problems in the area of the 'School Programme' are the concern of the community generally, a group of parents, or individual parents. 'School Management' problems either arise from within the staff itself or by the community or a parent. 'Administrative Decisions Related to the School' largely concern the community generally or the school committee. 'Teacher's Private Life' concerns have resulted in complaints largely from the community generally or groups of parents. 'Relationships With Children' have largely been from individual parents claiming mistreatment or misconduct.

The outcomes of the complaints brought against teachers can be classified into seven categories.

- These are :
- (a) The transfer to another position of the principal/ teacher
  - (b) The problem has been resolved largely to the satisfaction of those involved
  - (c) The problem is still unresolved and simmering
  - (d) The outcome of the problem is unknown
  - (e) A child or children have been removed from the school
  - (f) The teacher has resigned from the service
  - (g) The teacher has been appointed to another position

Figure 25 shows in order of incidence the outcomes of the complaints brought against teachers. Most significant of these findings is the fact that just over one quarter of the difficulties in rural school - community relationship problems are resolved by the transfer of the teacher.

figure 25 OUTCOMES OF COMPLAINTS BROUGHT AGAINST RURAL PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS IN ORDER OF INCIDENCE

| OUTCOMES OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST TEACHERS | Number of Cases | % of Cases |
|---|-----------------|------------|
| Transfer                                | 36              | 27.2%      |
| Resolved                                | 29              | 22.0%      |
| Unresolved/Simmering                    | 28              | 21.3%      |
| Unknown                                 | 17              | 13.0%      |
| Child(ren) Removed                      | 8               | 6.0%       |
| Resignation from Service                | 8               | 6.0%       |
| Appointment to New Position             | 6               | 4.5%       |

When the categories of rural school - community problems are related to their outcome a high percentage of cases involving the specific categories of 'Overall Teacher Performance', 'The School Programme', 'Staff Relationships', 'Teachers Personal Behaviour', and 'Sexual Misconduct' result in the transfer of the teacher concerned.

If one aggregates the number of cases leading to 'Teacher Transfer', 'Teacher Resignation' and 'Appointment to a New Position' it can be seen 38% of rural school - community relationship difficulties have an outcome which results in the teacher vacating his position.

As a result of counselling 21% of the cases have been resolved. It is in the general categories of 'the School Programme' and 'School

'Management' and the specific category of 'Teaching Appointments' that most success has been achieved in resolving problems.

Another outcome with an incidence of significance is that of unresolved problems which are still simmering. These make up 21% of cases and are of significance in the general categories of 'The School Programme' and 'School Management' and the specific categories of 'Closure of School' and that of 'Teachers Personal Behaviour'.

To what extent therefore are rural school - community relationships a cause for concern? There are in New Zealand 1002 State Rural Schools (namely 196 one, 479 two, 191 three, and 136 four teacher schools). If the 132 cases involving school community relationship difficulties are divided into the 1002 rural schools, on average one school in every 7.5 is experiencing a problem involving a counsellor during a four term period. However, the 132 cases represent 82% of counsellors responding, and on this basis one would expect a full response to yield 160 cases. A response of 160 cases would indicate one rural school in every 6.2 is experiencing a problem involving a counsellor during the four term period. One would expect the incidence to be even higher as the counsellors surveyed did not include all those active during the period of 1978 and the first term of 1979, and furthermore all such cases do not necessarily come to the attention of an NZEI Counsellor.

The NZEI Counsellors and Advisers to Rural Schools were both asked whether they "considered there was an increasing incidence of rural school - community relationship breakdowns". The responses of the 'Counsellors' having been involved with rural school - community relationship cases, and the 'Advisers' were solicited on the basis of a 'Yes', 'No', and 'Don't Know' response.

figure 26 NZEI COUNSELLOR AND ADVISER TO RURAL SCHOOLS CONSIDERED OPINIONS AS TO AN INCREASING INCIDENCE IN RURAL SCHOOL - COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS PROBLEMS

| RESPONDENTS INVOLVED      | YES    |     | NO     |     | DON'T KNOW |     |
|---------------------------|--------|-----|--------|-----|------------|-----|
|                           | Number | %   | Number | %   | Number     | %   |
| NZEI Counsellors          | 27     | 44% | 23     | 37% | 11         | 18% |
| Advisers to Rural Schools | 8      | 44% | 6      | 33% | 4          | 22% |

Results of the survey (figure 26) indicate that 44% of the Counsellors and 44% of the Advisers considered there to be an increasing incidence of rural school - community relationship difficulties. On the other hand 37% of the 'Counsellors' and 33% of the 'Advisers' considered there to be no increased incidence. Many of these respondents in fact indicated on their questionnaire "there has always been an incidence of such problems and they didn't consider their incidence to be increasing". With regard to the third category 18% of the 'Counsellors' and 22% of the 'Advisers' indicated they 'didn't know' if there was such an increase. The respondents in many cases indicated they had not had enough experience in which to judge such an issue. A number of the respondents in both the 'No' and 'Don't Know' categories furthermore indicated some difficulty with the question due to interpreting the degree of school - community relationship problems involved. Many indicated they didn't consider there to be an increase in complete rural school - community relationship breakdowns, but an increase in many 'petty' problems.

In this chapter the 'nature' of rural school - community relationship problems have been considered. An analysis of situations 'related to' and 'effecting' rural school - community relationships and involving NZEI Counsellors have been categorised into five general areas with twelve more specific subdivisions. 'Sources' of alleged complaints against rural principals or teachers, and 'outcomes' of such problems have been classified into six and seven categories respectively. Relationships between categories of rural school - community relationship problems, the 'source of complaint' and their 'outcomes' have been identified.

The 'extent' of rural school - community relationship problems has been considered on the basis of known cases of difficulty during a four term period and compared with the number of rural schools in the country. Whether there is an increasing incidence of such problems was gauged from the considered opinions of NZEI Counsellors and Advisers to Rural Schools.

## CHAPTER SIX

### NZEI COUNSELLOR AND ADVISER TO RURAL SCHOOLS OBSERVATIONS AS TO POSSIBLE 'REASONS FOR' AND 'ACTIONS TO HELP ALLEVIATE' RURAL SCHOOL - COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP DIFFICULTIES

In this section it is intended to elaborate the 'reasons for' and possible 'actions to help alleviate' rural school - community relationship problems as given by NZEI Counsellors and Adviser to Rural Schools in response to the same questionnaire items (see Appendix 6 Question 6 and Appendix 7 Question 1 )

The counsellors represented are the 61 who have been involved in counselling in rural school - community relationship problems. Of the 21 Adviser to Rural Schools positions in the country (one position currently vacant) 18 responded. As there were no significant differences to the responses made by the two groups to the same questions the following analysis is representative of 79 people who have been closely associated with rural schools and their committees.

An analysis of the 'Counsellor' and 'Adviser' responses of 'reasons for' breakdowns occurring in rural school - community relationships indicate they are many, varied and complex. However, the responses can be classified into a number of broad categories. Each category has an accompanying sample of 'Counsellor' and 'Adviser' responses seen as representative of the category in question.

No attempt has been made to quantify these categories as problems often span a number of them. The categories should therefore be seen as 'Counsellor' and 'Adviser' observations of areas of school and community behaviour that can provide 'reasons for' breakdowns in relationships occurring.

### SUGGESTED REASONS FOR BREAKDOWNS IN SCHOOL - COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS DRAWN FROM RESPONSES OF NZEI COUNSELLORS AND ADVISERS TO RURAL SCHOOLS

- 1 The School Effecting Rapid Educational and Organisational Change
  - . sudden changes can cause mistrust and tension
  - . there is slower acceptance of new ideas in rural communities
  - . the rural community is generally conservative, and needs time to adjust to change
  - . after a long staying teacher any new teacher introducing new methods is suspect



- . many rural communities have parochial and conservative attitudes - they object to change
- . some new principals want to make changes too quickly, without a background of local knowledge and without prior consultation with those involved.

## 2 Unrealistic Community Expectations of the Teacher and School

- . unrealistic expectations of the teacher on the part of the community
- . lack of understanding by the community of the role of the principal
- . archaic attitudes by public to education
- . parents expectations of new teacher too high - often unable to meet these
- . twenty-four hour 'exposure' makes it difficult for the weak teacher 'fronting up'
- . the rural community may expect the teacher to play, coach, select transport and administer sports teams in addition to professional duties

## 3 Teacher Difficulties in Dealing with Communities

- . lack of experience in dealing with community
- . failure to consider the feelings or concerns of their community
- . city born and prepared teachers experience difficulties in adjusting to a rural community
- . incompetence in the area of inter-personal relationships
- . use of 'bulldozer' tactics
- . failure to recognise the importance of the public relations role

## 4 Service in Rural Position Too Long

- . stayed too long - a comfortable rut is not good for the teacher or the community
- . lack of promotional opportunities has left teachers within one particular community for too long - the old adage 'familiarity breeds contempt'
- . principals have stayed too long and not moved with the times
- . if a teacher stays too long enthusiasm wanes, and parents become critical
- . a comfortable, financially favourable situation
- . teachers, by force of circumstance, have to stay longer than they wish

5 Insufficient Training for the Position

- . some young principals are not sure of regulations governing situations
- . not trained for the position of principal
- . some awareness training of how to handle problems that will arise from living and teaching in a closely-knit community required
- . 'greenhorns' need prior counselling
- . lack of background knowledge on the functions of the School Committee and Education Board
- . insufficient training on requirements for rural teaching, e.g. multi-class teaching

6 Insensitive, Uncompromising and Intolerant Attitudes of Teacher

- . principal feels superior to people in the community
- . intolerance of established country community norms and mores
- . too authoritarian and professionally calculating approach
- . failure to appreciate parents values and aims in education by teacher
- . teachers standing up too strongly for 'their' rights and what they think is right
- . an inflexible, domineering, know it all attitude by principal.

7 Insensitive, Uncompromising and Intolerant Attitudes of Communities

- . do not accept teachers as people but rather as 'the teacher'
- . teachers are just 'paid' servants - the servant of the community
- . inflated ideas of their own importance and role in the school
- . influence of groups wanting to 'run' the school
- . abuse of authority by school committees
- . lack of tolerance on the part of the community expressed by a rigid uncompromising stance on issues affecting the school.

8 Teacher Inadequacy for the Demands of the Position

- . an inadequate principal trying very hard at the less important things
- . low calibre of many appointees to rural positions
- . lack of understanding by rural principals of junior school curriculum
- . poor professional performance
- . many teachers have little knowledge of curriculum or the principles of multi-class teaching

- . some of the more remote positions have been filled by quite weak teachers.

#### 9 Pressures in Rural Positions

- . the widening scope of school programmes
- . greater parental involvement in schools has resulted in increased pressures
- . young couples while adjusting to married life, at the same time have to cope with increasing classroom stress situations
- . there are considerable pressures in running a rural school
- . stress can be caused by overcommitment of school to participate in a range of sporting, recreational and cultural functions and activities - many such commitments inherited
- . dealing with problems of today's children, often without the full support of the parents.

#### 10 Inadequate Communication between School and Community

- . parents don't understand current methods - the school needs to communicate these to the community
- . lack of background knowledge and expertise in communicating with the community
- . lack of consultation with parents
- . intolerant teachers who do not communicate effectively with the community
- . non-preparedness to have parents to school to explain the school programme
- . not informing parents regularly of their child's progress

In the next section it is intended to elaborate possible 'actions to help alleviate' rural school - community relationship problems as given by NZEI Counsellors and Advisers to Rural Schools in response to the same questionnaire items (see Appendix 6 Question 7 and Appendix 7 Question 1 ).

An analysis of these responses indicates a number of suggestions seen as possible 'actions to help alleviate' rural school - community relationship difficulties. These suggestions should be seen as 'Counsellor' and 'Adviser' observations of possible courses of action, a number of which may need to be effected if rural school - community relationships are to be improved.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS TO HELP ALLEVIATE RURAL SCHOOL - COMMUNITY  
RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWNS DRAWN FROM RESPONSES OF NZEI COUNSELLORS  
AND ADVISERS TO RURAL SCHOOLS

- 1 Incentives to Attract Suitable Applicants to Rural Schools
  - . upgrade status and desirability of rural schools so that the best teachers apply for them
  - . remote allowance should be worthwhile
  - . salary incentive should be offered as extra payment for rural principals to attract better applicants
  - . teachers should get shift paid after three years irrespective of where they are going
  - . provision of adequate housing, also for assistants.
  
- 2 Appointment Procedures Designed to Ensure Quality Staffing
  - . strict adherence to suitability
  - . selection of principal on a wider basis than teaching ability e.g. sensitivity to influences beyond the classroom
  - . consultation by Appointment Committee with Adviser to Rural Schools if any doubts
  - . selection of principal and teachers who will fit into the 'particular' community
  - . no new principal to accept position before visiting new school and meeting either the committee or committee representative in an informal way to discuss matters of mutual interest
  
- 3 Pre-Service Training for Position (If First Rural Appointment)
  - . pre-service induction for teachers e.g. as for Island Education
  - . more recognition be given in Teachers Colleges to the cultural differences likely to be experienced, and the stress factors of the country school
  - . I.P.C. (Inter-personal Communication) type courses - often rural appointment is the first experience of responsibility for other adults e.g. other teacher(s), teachers aide
  - . pre-service course on public relations, administration, role of principal and school committee, etc.
  
- 4 Continuing Inservice Education and Provision of Support Services
  - . courses which encourage the development of better communication between school and community
  - . inservice courses on multi-class management and development of

- appropriate programmes etc
  - . professional contacts from the various services
  - . day 'seminars' once per term on 'rural matters'
  - . an advisory group of experienced principals to assist rural principals
  - . regular contacts with other schools should be maintained
  - . adoption of a country school by a larger school
  - . rural school associations should be encouraged
- 5 Community Education
- . seminars for school committees organised by Education Boards on aspects of committee work
  - . guidelines for school committees in ensuring good school - community relationships
  - . training of key school committee members to give some insight into the difficulties faced by newly appointed principals
  - . training for 'parent helper' groups
  - . regular addresses by experienced teachers to rural communities on changing patterns in education
  - . broadening the horizons of rural parents by arranging visits to local schools where different things are happening
- 6 School Communication and Involvement with Community
- . greater school efforts to inform parents of planned programme objectives, outcomes etc, and how assistance can be given at home
  - . frank discussions and interchange of school and district philosophy
  - . full, sincere communication through regular and clearly understood channels - to communicate is the beginning of understanding
  - . involve the community more in matters concerning the school but maintain the areas which are the domain of principal and staff
  - . sincere involvement of teachers in the community with a recognisable interest and input
  - . teachers should be prepared to play a part in the whole community - in all factors
- 7 Provision for Relinquishment of Position
- . provision for teachers to 'get out' to a new position after 4 years service if unable to win a position
  - . revision of procedures for the removal of incompetent teachers

- . right of transfer out after two years if the teacher feels uncomfortable in the position

In this chapter the observation of NZEI Counsellors and Advisers to Rural Schools were utilised to indicate possible 'reasons for' and 'actions to help alleviate' rural school - community relationship problems.

The analysis of possible 'reasons for' rural school - community relationship problems indicate they were many, varied and complex. However, ten categories were identified as areas of school and community behaviours that can provide 'reasons for' breakdowns in relationships occurring.

The analysis of suggested 'actions to help alleviate' rural school - community relationship problems suggested seven areas, a number of which may need to be effected, if there is to be an improvement.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to discuss rural school - community relationships it is necessary to elaborate upon the climate of which rural schools and their community are a part. To this end this section will commence by considering the current social forces operating in rural New Zealand and their implications for those living in such areas.

In recent years many social changes have occurred within the rural community. These social changes include : farm amalgamation; decline in males, and an increase in females (particularly farm wives) involved in agriculture and livestock production; an increasing number involved in farming living in urban areas and commuting to farms daily; consolidation and centralisation of educational and medical services and consequent location of services and personnel involved in towns and provincial cities; and office closures associated with the centralisation policies of Central Government, local authorities and nationally and regionally organised businesses. These changes in both the farm and non-farm sectors of the rural economy have led to an accelerated movement of family units out of the rural environment. Moreover, as Lloyd ( 11 ) describes :

"The closure of one particular service unit and the transfer from the area of the personnel associated with that unit, can tend to put further pressure on another service unit, and thus help to lead to the closure of that unit, and so on."

The cumulative nature of the social costs associated with rural depopulation are seen by Robinson ( 12 ) to be adversely affecting community activities, functions or amenities. These he lists as : variety and standard of social and recreational facilities; rural educational facilities; service provisions e.g. public transport and service outlets; quality of housing, provision of sewage disposal, electricity and water; community spirit and cultural life; and productivity, especially agricultural.

( 11 ) Lloyd D.W. Preliminary Review of Rural Social Conditions with Particular Reference to the Manpower Position on Farms Agricultural Production Council, Wellington (1974) p 92

( 12 ) Robinson, J. : An Analysis of Rural Depopulation and Its Associated Causes and Effect..... Unpublished M.Phil. Thesis, University of Waikato (1975)

With regard to the position of New Zealand's rural population, Ross ( 13 ) notes that rural residents see :

"In the closing of shops and garages, the departure of doctors and the reduction in the size of schools which accompany population decline, there is the beginning of a real reduction in the standard of social services available to rural dwellers in this country."

Work undertaken by an Inter-departmental Rural Development Working Party ( 14 ) when discussing rural depopulation stated that :

"The net result is that the farm and non-farm rural populations face increased isolation and greater difficulties in obtaining services , higher costs of most commodities because of increased costs of cartage over longer distances and low community morale."

The intangible factors such as loss of community pride and feelings of stress, cannot be quantified, but can be seen in the attitude of the farm and agricultural servicing communities. These are expressed as an increasing sense of frustration ( 15 ) and less concern in increasing agricultural production ( 16 ). This last aspect is of importance in that New Zealand is still highly dependent on export earnings from agricultural produce to pay for the imports necessary to maintain its present standard of living.

Rural social development is a process aimed at people. It has been defined by Ball ( 17 ) as :

"The process of improving the level and distribution of opportunities among rural residents for achieving adequate income, physical environment, services, facilities and participation in collective decision making."

Rural development policies should therefore be comprehensive in scope and aimed at improving the social situation of New Zealand's rural population. This is essential not only in the interests of the rural community but also in the interests of the national community because of :

- ( 13 ) Ross, B : 'A Case for Agriculture' in Regional Development in New Zealand The 1978 Regional Development Seminar, Dunedin, March 14-15 p 53
- ( 14 ) Inter-departmental Rural Development Working Party, unpublished minutes. Commission for the Environment, Wellington (1978)
- ( 15 ) Joint Working Groups on Rural Development, unpublished minutes. Federated Farmers, Wellington (1978)
- ( 16 ) Maughan, C.W. and Ward, A.B. : Farm Production in New Zealand - An Analysis of Incentives and Disincentives. Agricultural Policy Papers No 2, Massey University, 1978
- ( 17 ) Ball, A.G. Nature of Rural Development in Blackburn, D.J. (ed) Proceedings Priorities in Rural Development April 15-17, 1974. University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada. p 1.

"the profound influence farming exerts upon the export trade and hence the growth and stability of the whole economy." (18 )

A recent study by the Sociology Department of Massey University for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries had these sentiments in mind when it sought an answer, or set of answers to the question : "Do social conditions have a bearing on farm production?" For the purpose of the study, the Mangamahu Valley (North east of Wanganui City) was chosen because of its 'mini - New Zealand' character. The research (19 ), one of the very few in depth studies of farming life in New Zealand, in its conclusions stated :

"The terms of trade set the stage for production decline and then population decline and declining rural services form a deteriorating spiral or 'whirlpool effect.' Telephones, roads, schooling, mail service, places to have social life with others, stores, cartage, agricultural extension services etc all deteriorate and the distances people must travel to fulfil their family and farm needs increase greatly.

All of this is summarised in a lack of short term confidence.... with this model it becomes possible to understand why production is not increasing and why many farmers are not maximising the potential of their farms."

Against this background of rural social change, what do rural principals in the Wanganui Education Board feel about living in rural areas? In response to questionnaire items about living in rural communities there was a strong feeling of being 'significantly disadvantaged' with regard to : distances from medical and commercial services; restricted contacts with people of similar interests; high cost of travel; limited educational opportunities for their own children; limited sporting, cultural and recreational contacts without long distances involved, and high cost of living.

To a lesser extent, and no doubt due to isolation or specific circumstances there was concern over : quality of roading; inadequate housing; poor telephone services and weak radio and television reception.

With regard to the feelings of the school principal's wife, well over a half (61.5%) do not feel personal fulfilment with the relationships the

( 18 ) Franklin, S.H. : Trade, Growth and Anxiety : New Zealand Beyond the Welfare State Methuen, New Zealand, 1978 p 135

( 19 ) Massey University of Sociology : Social Aspects of Productivity : Hill Country Sheep - Beef Farms in the Mangamahu Valley (1973) p 3

school - community provides. Furthermore, nearly a third (31.3%) do not feel fully accepted as a member of the community.

With regard to the availability and opportunity to participate in recreational, cultural and sports pursuits, 60% of the Wanganui rural principals indicated there were such clubs and organisations in their school district. Only 48% however participated in them and 76% took part in clubs and organisations outside their school district.

On the other hand over half of the respondents considered significant advantages of living in rural areas to be : a feeling of being part of a community; the quiet and peacefulness of rural countryside; and small school educational opportunities for their own children.

When comparing the feelings of Wanganui Education Board rural principals on living in rural areas with the national picture of rural social change and its implications outlined earlier, there are many striking similarities. The similarities of concern about rural living include : the variety and standard of social and recreational facilities and opportunities; higher costs for commodities and services; rural educational facilities and opportunities; and low community spirit and cultural life.

On the basis of these similarities, and accepting there will be some areas where they would not apply, it would seem reasonable to conclude that the Wanganui Education Board rural principals have expressed an opinion about living in rural areas that can be generalised to the national scene.

The rural school principal, staff and families can therefore find themselves, with their community members, and especially if living at a distance from urban growth centres, less able to acquire and maintain living conditions whether economic, social or environmental as in the past. Furthermore, their conditions may not compare favourably with those in the urban sector.

Small rural schools have special features which make them distinctive within the educational system. The Rural School Handbook (20) lists these special features as : few pupils and staff; children of widely

(20) Department of Education : The Rural School - A Handbook for Principals & Staff Wellington (1977) p 7

varying ages, abilities, interests, backgrounds and experience drawn together in each classroom; very informal schools - a family atmosphere; and a teaching role requiring a wide range of professional and administrative duties.

Rural principals in the Wanganui Education Board in response to questionnaire items expressed their 'satisfactions' at teaching in rural schools. Well over three quarters of the respondents claimed the advantages of rural teaching to be : flexible programme opportunities (53.2%); close personal contacts with parents and children (89.3%); a school climate which presents few discipline problems (89.3%); community involvement (86.3%); the feeling of having an all-round education effect upon pupils (83.3%); ready access to audio-visual and other teaching resources (82.7%); being able to enrich and use the environmental experiences of pupils (80.3%); independent pursuit of interests (78.1%); and a classroom environment conducive to innovative techniques (73.2%).

There was also a strong expression of satisfaction in being one's own boss. Other satisfactions included : intimate pupil knowledge and hence early identification of individual learning needs; knowing what's going on in 'education' through contacts established with educational officers, and seeing the growth of a child from entry through to F 2 and then into secondary school.

In response to listing aspects of the rural position which cause 'significant difficulty,' over half of the respondents indicated difficulty with : the stimulus that is to be gained from contact with a variety of teachers (69.3%); catering for all areas of the curriculum (61.3%); and catering for older children in the more specialised areas (53.3%). Difficulty was also experienced by a good number in the areas of : the development of classroom management strategies suitable to multi-class teaching (32.0%); catering for the slow learner (46.7%); and lack of keenness in children that comes from competing against children found in numbers in large schools (30.7%). Relationships with the School Committee only concerned 10.7% and inadequate financial support 24.0%.

The respondents also indicated a strong expression of difficulty in coping with the twin demands of school administration and the preparation and implementation of programmes for the multi-class teaching



situation within the time available to do so. There was also a moderate expression of difficulty in the areas of : convincing the conservative by nature rural parents of current educational practices and the difficulty in the small school situation of having unco-operative staff members - and often local farmers' wives.

When questioned as to 'pressures' applying to their work and life in rural communities, 60.8% considered pressure from various sources requiring administrative action was their main concern. Almost half of the respondents also considered there was pressure from Departmental Officers in promoting curriculum change and developments (49.3%) and pressure to gain academic qualifications (48.6%). Over one third considered there was pressure from parents in the area of pupil achievement and promotion (37.8%) and in the vicinity of a quarter considered there was pressure from community groups to take up positions of responsibility in clubs (25.7%) and pressures from community groups in endeavouring to raise standards in basic subjects (20.3%). Many other individual expressions were listed.

Rural teaching can be seen to be a challenging and rewarding occupation. The Wanganui Education Board rural principals experience many satisfactions in the course of their teaching. On the other hand the position as indicated has its frustrations, difficulties and pressures. Because New Zealand's educational system both administratively and professionally tends towards uniformity throughout the country there is no reason to believe that rural teachers nationally don't experience similar satisfactions, difficulties and pressures.

It is against the background of rural social change where rural teachers, their families and community members find themselves less able to acquire and maintain living conditions, whether economic, social or environmental as in the past, and the satisfactions, difficulties and pressures experienced by rural teachers, that rural school - community relationship difficulties will now be discussed.

School - community relationship problems as outlined in this study have a frequency of one in every 7.5 schools during the four term period in question. It should be reiterated that these figures represent known cases, and ones where an NZEI Counsellor has been involved. One could expect the actual frequency to be higher because the one problem in 7.5 schools is representative of an 82% Counsellor questionnaire response rate.



Some cases may not even come to the attention of a Counsellor but be dealt with by a friendly nearby principal of a large school or another agency. For example at the Rangitikei Rural Development Seminar (Friday 13 July 1979) a Parish Priest castigated the large number present for the way they treated teachers. He indicated he spent considerable amounts of time counselling teachers who were unhappy in their rural communities.

The specific distribution of school - community relationship problem cases throughout New Zealand for reasons of anonymity have not been included in the study. Distribution determined on the location of NZEI Counsellors responding would suggest however a general spread of odd cases throughout New Zealand. In some areas very few difficulties appeared to be experienced, while in others many schools and their communities were at 'loggerheads'. There appeared to be no pattern as to the areas experiencing or not experiencing school - community relationship difficulties - some were close to provincial centres, others very remote; some would be regarded as socio-economically advantaged while others would not. For some reading this document therefore, the incidence of school - community relationship problems would come as a surprise and for others it would confirm suspicions held.

NZEI Counsellors and Advisers to Rural Schools indicated there were many instances of a petty nature which were causing periodic ripples in school - community relationships. These instances are not included in this study as an NZEI Counsellor wasn't involved. Such situations however would all tend to increase the pressure and anxiety levels of rural principals, their staff and families.

That rural school - community relationships is an area of concern was stated at the recent Adviser to Rural Schools Conference (Hamilton Teachers College : 12-23 November 1979). In an initial exercise to identify and rank three areas of concern facing Advisers in their work, school - community relationships headed the list.

The 'nature' of rural school relationship problems in this study have been broadly classified into areas related to : School Management - 36%; The School Programme - 35%; Administrative Decisions Related to the School - 10%; Teachers Private Life - 9%; and Relationships with Children - 8%. Problems related to 'School Management' and the 'School

Programme' make up nearly three-quarters of the cases likely to contribute to rural school - community relationship difficulty.

The outcomes of rural school - community relationship problems have been classified into seven categories. Most significant of these findings is the fact that just over a quarter (27.2%) of the difficulties in rural school - community relationships are resolved by the transfer of the teacher. Furthermore, if one aggregates the number of cases leading to 'Teacher Transfer', 'Teacher Resignation' and 'Appointment to a New Position', 38% of rural school - community relationship difficulties have an outcome which results in the teacher vacating his position. It should be pointed out that in no instance in the data utilised for this study was disciplinary action or compulsory transfer in terms of the Education Act called for.

This raises the question as to why so many rural school communities and their teaching staff are having relationship problems? Obviously, there will be no simple answer, the complexity of human nature and the variables operating in each situation complicating the issues.

Related to the situation of rural school - community relationships, is undoubtedly the unique nature of both the school and its community. The special features which make the rural school distinctive within the educational system have already been outlined. In terms of the school community the Report on Educational Standards in State Schools (21) suggests :

"A better educated public also expects more from the formal educational system, and is more aware of its shortcomings, and more critical of them."

And as quoted earlier the Commission on Education, 1962, stated :

"For the man and his wife living in any rural environment the education of their children is a major pre-occupation."

A feature of rural schooling is the involvement of the community in the school and its activities. The range and extent of such involvement in the Wanganui Education Board rural schools have been elaborated. Furthermore, 86.3% of the principals see such involvement as a

(21) Educational Standards in State Schools : A Report to the Minister of Education : Department of Education, Wellington (1978) p 8

'significant advantage' of the rural teaching situation. Current levels of community involvement in rural schools, while most desirable, can tend to expose the teacher to criticism of his actions. Many rural teachers are in fact very conscious that they have a 24 hour a day job, and the continual 'fronting up' to the community and its expectations can cause anxiety and pressure.

An analysis of possible reasons for rural school - community relationship difficulties from observational data supplied by NZEI Counsellors and Advisers to Rural Schools indicate they are many, varied and complex. Categories of 'possible reasons' and specific cases that would no doubt span a number of them, were : The school effecting rapid educational and organisational change; Unrealistic community expectations of the teacher and the school; Teacher difficulties in dealing with communities; Service in rural position too long; Insufficient training for the position; Insensitive, uncompromising and intolerant attitudes of the teacher and the community; Teacher inadequacy for the demands of the position; Pressures in rural positions; and Inadequate communication between school and community.

To help alleviate such difficulties in rural school - community relationships, the NZEI Counsellors and Advisers to Rural Schools suggested the following as possible remedial actions that could be taken : Incentives to attract suitable applicants to rural schools; Appointment procedures designed to ensure quality staffing; Pre-service training for position (if first rural appointment); Continuing inservice education and provision of support services; Community education; School communication and involvement with community; and Provision for relinquishment of position.

In order to provide for the educational interests of today's rural primary children the following recommendations are considered to be supportive of good school - community relationships, and the interests of both parties.

RECOMMENDATION 1 : INCENTIVES TO ATTRACT SUITABLE APPLICANTS  
TO RURAL SCHOOLS

The importance of quality staffing in rural schools is well documented in official publications. The 1962 Commission on Education ( 22 ) stated :

"As with many other parts of the educational system, rural primary education depends ultimately for its improvement upon a larger supply of better qualified teachers."

Of more recent times the 1974 Educational Development Conference Report ( 23 ) indicated :

"The quality of teaching staff is of course vitally important and country people are entitled to expect their schools to be staffed with teachers as able and well qualified as those in urban areas."

As indicated earlier rural social changes have created a situation, and especially if living at a distance from urban growth centres, whereby the rural school principal, staff and families are less able to acquire and maintain living conditions, whether economic, social or environmental as in the past.

While the claim cannot be substantiated by hard data, it is common knowledge to those closely involved with rural schools that over the past year the number of applicants for rural school positions (and especially Grade II and III) has dropped off considerably. The gradings of new appointees have also been lower than in recent years. A number of the more remote rural schools furthermore have only been staffed after their position being advertised a number of times.

The current 'morale' of rural teachers is also a cause for concern. Wanganui Education Board principals indicating on a five point scale (Very Good to Very Poor) indicated what they considered to be the 'morale' of rural teachers (figure 19). Results showed a slightly deflated curve with 34.7% of the respondents below the mid point (Fair) as against 21.3% above. In response to the question "If you were given the opportunity to move out of your current position and retain your present

( 22 ) Commission on Education (1962) p 443

( 23 ) Educational Development Conference : Directions for Educational Development : A Report Prepared by the Advisory Council on Educational Planning, Wellington. (1974) p 59-60

salary would you do so?" - 52.7% of the respondents indicated they would. This figure gains added significance when one considers that 68% of the principals responding are in their first two years of service in their present position.

At the recent Advisers to Rural Schools Conference (Hamilton Teachers College, 12-23 November, 1979) a paper presented by A.K. Blair (Special and Advisory Services - Department of Education) as a result of a survey of the rural advisory service (24) stated :

"While most rural principals with whom advisers work are able teachers with a strong sense of vocation and get satisfaction from their teaching, it appears that dissatisfaction among rural teachers may be growing and morale decreasing, in spite of and to the detriment of work of rural advisers. The chief reason for this is teachers' diminishing chances of moving from country positions on promotion - a situation that is worsened rather than helped by the broadbanding provisions. As well, other factors, mainly social, appear to be reducing the appeal of country teaching."

At the same Conference and in the initial exercise recounted earlier to ascertain the three areas of concern facing rural advisers in their work 'Teacher and Family Morale' was ranked second to 'School - Community Relationship Concerns'.

Current incentives to attract suitable applicants to rural positions include : country service promotion bar; remote allowance of \$125 per annum; rental housing accommodation; and provision for removal expenses. It is suggested that these incentives are totally inadequate in terms of current economic and social conditions.

The Educational Development Conference Report on Improving Learning and Teaching (25) in discussing the need for adequate teachers for the demanding assignment that rural primary education offers, suggested :

"It must be recognised that to many teachers country service is a period of exile from the social, cultural, and professional amenities of metropolitan life. Furthermore, the rural teacher finds it difficult to enter upon the purchase of a permanent house in town, and may in other ways suffer economic loss. It follows then, that if skilled teachers are to be attracted to and retained in rural schools, these disincentives must be counter-balanced by other forms of incentive."

( 24) Blair, A.K. : Survey of Rural Advisory Service November (1979) p 2

( 25) Educational Development Conference : Improving Learning and Teaching Wellington (1974) p 211

To this end therefore this study recommends the following incentives to attract suitable applicants to rural schools :

- 1.1 That there be A COUNTRY SERVICE INCENTIVE ALLOWANCE TO REPLACE THE PRESENT COUNTRY SERVICE SALARY BAR. In the current situation of less rapid promotional opportunities for teachers, the present country service salary bar has become less meaningful, and especially for the two income family in the urban situation where it would pay to wait to overcome the salary bar. Furthermore, it is at best a very negative incentive to attract teachers to rural schools. It is suggested therefore that a country service incentive allowance be paid to not only attract teachers to rural schools but to enable the current economic disadvantages of rural teaching to be offset, such an allowance would need to be of substantial proportions to be meaningful.
- 1.2 That there be AN INCREASED REMOTE ALLOWANCE. The current \$125 per annum (taxable) remote allowance is totally inadequate. Many of the teachers in such schools would, with current petrol prices, incur costs in the vicinity of \$25 per trip to their nearest shopping centre.
- 1.3 That WHERE NECESSARY HOUSING FOR RURAL TEACHERS BE PROVIDED AND UPGRADED. While most of the housing for rural principals would be adequate there are still many houses which leave much to be desired. In the same way that houses are provided for rural principals, housing should be provided where needed for assistant teachers.
- 1.4 That RENTALS OF SCHOOL HOUSES BE KEPT AT A MINIMAL LEVEL. Current proposals to again increase house rentals will, as in other Governmental Services and Agencies, act as a disincentive to teachers considering rural service. Teachers will consider paying off their own home rather than paying high rents in the country a more attractive prospect. 'The ownership of a house acts as a hedge against inflation.'



RECOMMENDATION 2 : APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES DESIGNED TO ENSURE QUALITY STAFFING

The importance of quality staffing in rural schools has been well documented in this study. School committees interviewed in the Wanganui Education Board when discussing the qualities of a rural principal made their priority an ability to fit into the country community and be able to communicate with its people. The importance of a prospective appointee's attitude to his school and community also received considerable attention.

The conservative nature of rural communities was very evident in the school committee interviews when responses to attitudes towards having a female principal, a solo parent, or one with very different values and life styles was solicited. While the writer does not suggest such applicants should not be considered for appointment, perhaps in some instances it would not be as easy fitting into the rural community and at least the prospective appointee could be informed of the situation before accepting the position. This situation would usually only come about because of a recent staff - community difficulty.

The current appointment procedure is largely on the basis of a grading, the assessment for which can be made in a situation far removed from those likely to be experienced in a rural school. School committees are notified of the Appointment Committee's recommendation and are asked to 'comment' if they so desire within a stated time, after which the appointment becomes official.

The school committees interviewed in the Wanganui Education Board were very strong in their condemnation of the system. While they did not advocate a desire to make the appointments, they did wish to have 'more say'. It would appear that the desire for committees to have more say in the appointment procedure is motivated by the need to avoid situations experienced in the past.

To ensure appointment procedures are designed to facilitate quality staffing being appointed to rural schools the following are recommended :

- 2.1 That STRICT ADHERANCE BE ACCORDED THE CRITERION OF SUITABILITY FOR A RURAL APPOINTMENT. A rural principal to be successful requires qualities other than teaching ability. The ability to

fit into the country community, to be able to mix with its people, and to have an attitude of interest and enthusiasm for the school and community would seem to be imperative. Special features of a rural community should also be considered by the Appointment Committee before making a decision on an appointment.

- 2.2 That NEW PRINCIPALS BEFORE ACCEPTING A RURAL POSITION SHOULD VISIT THE SCHOOL. Where practical, and especially in the case of a first appointment to a rural school, it would seem desirable that the appointee (and wife if possible) visit the school to meet either the School Committee or their representatives in an informal way to discuss matters of mutual interest. The prospective appointee would then be in an informed position in which to make a decision regarding the acceptance or otherwise of the position.
- 2.3 That A COPY OF 'THE RURAL SCHOOL' - A HANDBOOK FOR PRINCIPALS AND STAFF : BE SENT ON CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENT TO AN APPOINTEE OF A FIRST PRINCIPALSHIP. In the current situation the appointee may or may not find the 'Handbook' on arriving at the new school. The booklet contains much valuable information which would be useful to have before turning up at the school, e.g. arrival procedures.

RECOMMENDATION 3 : THE PROVISION OF 'INSERVICE' TRAINING AND 'SUPPORT SERVICE' ASSISTANCE

The Educational Development Conference in Directions for Educational Development (26) stated :

"Teachers in rural schools should have as much professional help and advice as is possible. To overcome professional isolation it is important for them to have regular contacts with inspectors, advisers and other specialists, as well as for discussions with colleagues and participation in inservice courses."

Only 40.5% of the rural principals in the Wanganui Education Board considered they had 'ample opportunities for inservice education', even though 40% had attended a single refresher or inservice course of a week's duration (5 days) and 70.7% had attended inservice courses adding up to at least 5 days absence from teaching during a one year period. Other

- (26) Educational Development Conference : Directions for Educational Development : A report Prepared by the Advising Council on Educational Planning, Wellington (1974) p 60

avenues for promoting professional development included : regular attendance at Country Teachers Group meetings (71.6%); regular attendance at NZEI meetings (50.7%); extra-mural university studies (22.7%) and Diploma in Teaching Courses (9.5%). One might add that many current principals of large schools would claim the rural principalship itself to be one of the best inservice courses they have ever participated in.

Many support services are available to assist rural schools. The Wanganui Education Board principals when asked to indicate whether specific 'support and related services responded and make themselves available when required' a response indicative of general satisfaction was expressed.

The opportunities for inservice training and the provision of support services available to rural schools will no doubt vary throughout the country from Education Board to Board. To ensure that rural school principals and their staff receive adequate training for their position, and receive the necessary support services, the following are recommended :

- 3.1 That INDUCTION TRAINING BE ACCORDED THE APPOINTEE TO A FIRST PRINCIPALSHIP. The first appointment is commonly to a smaller rural school, and so most such courses would have this rural orientation. A report prepared by the NZEI's Consultation Committee on Educational Administration, titled Training for Educational Administration : Policy Guidelines (27), outlines a five point proposal which would provide an admirable basis for such induction.

With regard to "possible pre-service training before taking up a rural principalship" well over three quarters of Wanganui Education Board principals on hindsight considered they would like covered : classroom management strategies to cater for the multi-class teaching situation (82.2%); administrative guidance appropriate to the position (91.9%); programme planning for the multi-class teaching situation (93.2%); relationships with the school committee (78.1%); and school - community relationships (81.1%). Catering for the slow learner was desired by 41.7%.

- (27) A Report Prepared by the NZEI Consultation Committee on Educational Administration : Training for Educational Administration : Policy Guidelines, Palmerston North (1978) p 4

Other areas suggested by NZEI Counsellors and Advisers to Rural Schools for induction courses, included : recognition of the cultural differences likely to be experienced; stress factors in the country school; leadership; and relationships with regard to other staff; public relations and the role of the principal and school committee.

The school committees indicated a number of areas of advice pertinent to a newcomer to rural teaching and life, and hence relevant to induction training. These items included : recognition of differences in rural living; the importance of the new principal taking the trouble of getting to know the community and endeavouring to fit in and involve himself in its activities, yet without becoming too involved; as a 'transient' rapid changes were not considered desirable; and the nature of the rural child which they considered different to the city counterpart and hence required different treatment.

- 3.2 That INSERVICE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES BE CONTINUED AND STRENGTHENED. For the rural principal and his staff inservice courses provide very necessary professional assistance as well as social contacts with colleagues. While the 'needs' for such courses will vary from time to time and from area to area the following topics would appear to be worthy of consideration in light of the data given in this study : the development of communication skills; catering for all areas of the curriculum; the development of inter-personal relationships; classroom management strategies suitable for multi-class teaching; assistance for the slow or bright child; catering for the older children in the more specialised areas; coping with the twin demands of school administration and preparation and implementation of programmes within a reasonable allocation of one's time; and community involvement.
- 3.3 That WHERE APPROPRIATE MORE EDUCATION CENTRES IN RURAL AREAS BE ESTABLISHED. Such 'education' or 'teacher' centres would become the focus for inservice training and for teachers from all schools in the local area. The centre could provide a higher level of resources and facilities than is possible within a single rural school, and be able to produce curriculum resources appropriate

for local needs. In some areas a vacant classroom could be set aside as an Education Centre.

- 3.4 That SUPPORT SERVICES BE READILY AVAILABLE TO RURAL TEACHERS, CHILDREN AND PARENTS. To meet adequately the varied needs of young children, teachers should be able to draw upon the support and guidance of a variety of specialist services. For the remote rural teacher 'professional isolation' is keenly felt if support and guidance is not readily available.

#### RECOMMENDATION 4 : COMMUNITY EDUCATION

In speaking of the educational level of parents, the Report on Educational Standards in State Schools (28) commented :

"Better educated parents support their children's educational efforts, particularly in practical ways, for they understand the education system and how to succeed in it."

While rural parents are well known for their concern about the education of their children, their attendance in numbers at school functions (figure 13) and involvement in many aspects of the schools activities and programmes (figure 14) it would appear that their knowledge of the educational system and current educational thinking and practice is limited in some areas.

The school committee members interviewed in this study indicated a very superficial understanding of their duties and responsibilities as school committee members, and furthermore of the educational system generally. They also expressed considerable concern about current teaching methods, and especially in reading and mathematics, yet they obviously had little knowledge of what they entailed.

Interestingly, the Wanganui Education Board rural principals assessment of the school committee's knowledge of their role expressed on a five point scale indicated a generally satisfactory situation (figure 18).

(28) Educational Standards in State Schools : A Report to the Minister of Education, Department of Education, Wellington (1978) p 8

The same principals however when asked to express on a three point scale their community's understanding of current educational practice, 36% indicated they were inadequately informed (figure 15).

It seems important therefore that if rural parents and school committees are to work harmoniously with their school teachers in supporting their children's educational efforts, that knowledge of the respective roles and the responsibilities of involvement be well understood and appreciated. To this end it is recommended :

- 4.1 That RURAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS BE GIVEN TRAINING ON THEIR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. It is suggested this training take two forms :
- (i) That school committee members each be supplied with a 'handbook' setting out their duties and responsibilities. These used to be supplied to all members but appear to have gone out of print and favour. The Wanganui Education Board has produced such a handbook and hopes to issue it to all committee members and principals shortly.
  - (ii) That Education Boards organise periodic seminars in rural areas on aspects of committee work. Some Education Boards already do this.
- 4.2 That VARIOUS MATERIALS BE AVAILABLE FOR THE RURAL PRINCIPAL TO HELP INFORM PARENTS OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS. Public relations aimed at ensuring that what is happening in schools is understood by the community is a very important aspect of a rural school's task. Such understanding is currently brought about by various means and by utilising various materials. Some excellent material is of course already readily available. The Department of Education's pamphlets on "Play" is an example of a simple yet valuable set of resources for parents of young children. It is suggested that such materials be varied in form such as pamphlets, booklets, sound-slide sequences and movie films, and be readily available either within the school or on a request basis.

#### RECOMMENDATION 5 : RELINQUISHMENT OF POSITION

The current 'morale' of rural teachers, and especially principals, has been documented in this study. Main reasons for the situation are given by the principals in the Wanganui Education Board as the increasing costs



of living (also concerns that in the current economic climate, saving for home ownership is difficult), and current 'broadbanding' proposals. Foremost of their concern related to the broadbanding proposal (and of the proposed abolition of the current Appointment and Promotion Scheme and its grading system) is the fear of being trapped in their current rural position. This situation would not appear to exist to any great extent in the Wanganui Education Board at present as 68% of the principals are in the first two years of service in their current position, with a range of less than a year to 17 years, and with the mean 3 years.

School committees in the Wanganui Education Board when asked to indicate on a questionnaire "the number of years on average they considered teachers should stay in a rural school 78% suggested it be in the vicinity of 4 - 6 years.

The NZEI Counsellors and Advisers to Rural Schools see long service in rural schools as a factor that can contribute to school - community relationships difficulties.

To ensure that rural teachers, irrespective of reason, don't find themselves 'trapped' in a rural school against their own wish for an excessive period, it is recommended :

- 5.1 That PROCEDURES FACILITATING RELINQUISHMENT OF POSITION WITH FULL RIGHTS OF TRANSFER BE INVESTIGATED. Currently staff in schools termed 'remote' are entitled to transfer after a specified period. This situation could be extended to other rural schools. It would also seem desirable that the area of 'reasons' for relinquishing a position be examined as in the case of the teacher inadequate to the demands of a rural principalship.

RECOMMENDATION 6 : DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

When one seeks to look into the area of rural education in New Zealand you are faced with an almost lack of information and research materials. This is perhaps surprising considering rural education is supposed to be one of New Zealand's 'notable achievements'. To ensure that the data contained in this study can have a productive outcome it is recommended :

- 6.1 That APPROPRIATE DATA OR COPIES BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THOSE MOST CONCERNED WITH RURAL EDUCATION. It would seem appropriate that those most closely connected with rural education, namely rural

principals, Advisers to Rural Schools, and NZEI Counsellors (particularly in areas serving rural areas) would find the material contained therein both useful and thought provoking. Such knowledge furthermore if acted upon could do much to reduce the incidence of school - community relationship difficulties that occur.

In his opening address to the Rangitikei Rural Development Seminar (Huntermville, Friday 13 July, 1979) Dr Paul Kaplan of Massey University stated :

"I think if New Zealanders, especially rural New Zealanders do not take notice of what is occurring in rural areas, not only will life in these areas deteriorate but if rural life is the pride of national life, then national life will deteriorate as well."

New Zealand has applied much ingenuity and substantial resources to ensure that the country child receives a level of educational opportunity equal to his urban counterpart. In the current social climate new measures of support to the rural school staff and its community are needed.

S U M M A R Y    O F    R E C O M M E N D A T I O N SRECOMMENDATION 1 :    INCENTIVES TO ATTRACT APPLICANTS TO RURAL SCHOOLS

- 1.1    That There Be a Country Service Incentive Allowance to Replace the Present Country Service Salary Bar.
- 1.2    That There Be an Increased Remote Allowance.
- 1.3    That Where Necessary Housing for Rural Teachers be Provided and Upgraded.
- 1.4    That Rentals of School Houses be Kept at a Minimal Level.

RECOMMENDATION 2 :    APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES DESIGNED TO ENSURE QUALITY STAFFING

- 2.1    That Strict Adherence be Accorded the Criterion of Suitability for a Rural Appointment.
- 2.2    That New Principals Before Accepting a Rural Position Should Visit the School.
- 2.3    That a Copy of 'The Rural School' - A Handbook for Principals and Staff : Be Sent on Confirmation of Appointment to An Appointee of a First Principalship.

RECOMMENDATION 3 :    THE PROVISION OF 'INSERVICE' TRAINING AND 'SUPPORT SERVICE' ASSISTANCE

- 3.1    That Induction Training be Accorded the Appointee to a First Principalship.
- 3.2    That Inservice Education Opportunities be Continued and Strengthened.
- 3.3    That Where Appropriate More Education Centres in Rural Areas be Established.
- 3.4    That Support Services be Readily Available to Rural Teachers, Children and Parents.

RECOMMENDATION 4 : COMMUNITY EDUCATION

- 4.1 That Rural School Committee Members be Given Training on Their Duties and Responsibilities.
- 4.2 That Various Materials be Available for the Rural Principal to Help Inform Parents of Educational Developments.

RECOMMENDATION 5 : RELINQUISHMENT OF POSITION

- 5.1 That Procedures Facilitating Relinquishment of Position With Full Rights of Transfer be Investigated.

RECOMMENDATION 6 : DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

- 6.1 That Appropriate Data or Copies be Made Available to Those Most Concerned With Rural Education.

APPENDIX 1THE APPOINTMENT, FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF NEW ZEALAND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE COUNSELLORS

## 10 INSTITUTE COUNSELLORS

## 10.1 APPOINTMENT

- 10.1.1 The National Executive shall appoint as Institute counsellors for each education board district such number of full members of the Institute as the National Executive thinks fit from among such members as may be recommended from time to time by the committee of branches for that district from nominations from branches in that district.

## 10.2 FUNCTIONS

Institute counsellors shall have the following functions which may be exercised in any education board district :-

- 10.2.1 To provide help guidance and rehabilitation to members seeking or requiring such assistance.
- 10.2.2 To represent and uphold the rights of members seeking or requiring such assistance.
- 10.2.3 To help resolve differences between members or between members and other persons having complaints about those members.
- 10.2.4 To exercise any or all of the foregoing functions on their own initiative or at the request of a member or other person or at the direction of the ethics panel or disciplinary committee.

## 10.3 POWERS

- 10.3.1 In carrying out any of their functions and powers counsellors shall have regard to such matters as they may think fit and in particular shall have regard to the general education and welfare of the children in the school or schools that are or may be involved and to the Teachers' Code of Ethics.
- 10.3.2 Counsellors may exercise their functions singly or with another or others of them and may recommend to any member or other person concerned that he undertake such action or actions that will in the opinion of the counsellor or counsellors be of greatest help to resolve the differences or complaints between the parties.
- 10.3.3 Counsellors shall advise the ethics panel or disciplinary

committee as they may request the result of and the further need (if any) of counselling in any particular case but shall not divulge to either of them or any member of them any information received in the course of counselling.

- 10.3.4 Counsellors may meet together and may make recommendations to the National Executive as they may consider necessary but shall not make any such recommendations on any individual case if the National Executive is exercising or may exercise an appellate function thereon.

from THE NEW ZEALAND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE MANUAL FOR COUNSELLORS,  
January 1978, p 9



## APPENDIX 2

### THE ROLE OF THE ADVISER TO RURAL SCHOOLS

The Adviser to Rural Schools gives professional advice, guidance and assistance to teachers in rural schools to help ensure that country children obtain the best possible education. In seeking children's optimum development he/she works with teachers as a "friend", to develop and implement programmes of work, and management strategies appropriate to all children in the multi-class teaching situation.

Assistance is given in :

#### School Programmes

- . assist with planning, preparation and implementation of realistic and appropriate school programmes
- . help with evaluating procedures to monitor the progress of all pupils
- . lead teachers to appreciate and understand the importance of environment and background in the rural child's development
- . advise on the problems of specific children
- . help with the introduction of new curriculum developments;
- . assist with planning educational trips and camps

#### School Management

- . assistance with aspects of administration, e.g. records and correspondence
- . guidance and assistance with purchasing books and equipment
- . aiding and supporting principals in guiding staff
- . advice with regard to relationships with individuals, groups and services with which the school has contact
- . assist the rural teacher communicate curriculum developments to parents and communities

#### In-service Education

- . undertake "in-school" or "area based" in-service work as required
- . introduce new or useful publications, resources and materials
- . work with other members of the advisory and support services in helping meet the needs of rural teachers and children

Relationships

- . advise on committee, staff and parent relationships
- . facilitate communication between education board, other educational services and the rural teacher
- . foster communication between rural teachers through rural group meetings, NZEI, newsletters, tape and correspondence services
- . help the new rural teacher develop sensitivity to and an appreciation of the rural school in the community.

from A PROPOSED WORK DESCRIPTION FOR INFORMATION OF ADVISERS,  
INSPECTORS, AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL.

APPENDIX 3THE ROLE OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

2.2.3 School Committees Each primary school has a school committee which is elected by local householders. The school committee is a statutory body charged with the management of property and certain other matters on behalf of the local education board, but purely professional matters connected with the internal running of the school are not the responsibility of the school committee although they will be interested in them. School committee members elect the education board members.

2.2.4 Duties of School Committees The duties of the school committee include the care of buildings, grounds and equipment and a decision on religious instruction within the school.

from SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION : A GUIDE FOR PRIMARY AND INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, WELLINGTON, 1975

APPENDIX 4RURAL SCHOOL - COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPSQUESTIONNAIRE TO PRINCIPALS OF SCHOOLS UP TO GRADE 4B (INCLUSIVE)

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

(1, 2)

Instructions: Please give the response you consider most appropriate to each question by circling, giving brief written comments, or in the manner indicated

Please complete the following statistical data related to your school, its district and your position as principal

- 1 Indicate by circling the number of teachers at your school

1                      2                      3                      4

(3)

- 2 Indicate the 'Inservice Group' to which your school belongs by placing a cross in the appropriate box

|                  |   |  |
|------------------|---|--|
| Palm.Nth Country | 1 |  |
| Foxton/Te Kawau  | 2 |  |
| Oroua            | 3 |  |
| Feilding         | 4 |  |
| Wanganui Country | 5 |  |

|                             |    |  |
|-----------------------------|----|--|
| Patea/Waverley              | 6  |  |
| Rangitikei/<br>Hunternville | 7  |  |
| Taihape                     | 8  |  |
| Ruapehu                     | 9  |  |
| Manunui                     | 10 |  |

(4, 5)

- 3 Do you reside in your school district?                      Yes    No

(6)

- 4 Is a school-house provided in your school district?

Yes    No

(7)

- 5 How many years teaching service do you have

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

(1)    (2)

(8, 9)

- 6 How many years have you been in your current position?

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

(1)    (2)

(10, 11)

- 7 Prior to taking up your current position how many years have you spent in rural teaching situations?

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

(1)    (2)

(12, 13)

8

The following are claimed to be 'advantages' of living in rural communities. Do you consider them to be significant advantages of living in a rural community?

- |  |     |    |      |
|--|-----|----|------|
| (a) the provision of cheap housing                               | Yes | No | (14) |
| (b) a feeling of being part of a community                       | Yes | No | (15) |
| (c) the quiet and peacefulness of rural countryside              | Yes | No | (16) |
| (d) small school educational opportunities for your own children | Yes | No | (17) |
| (e) rural recreational opportunities                             | Yes | No | (18) |

Please list what you consider to be any other 'significant advantages' of living in a rural community

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9

The following are claimed to be 'disadvantages' of living in rural communities. Do you consider them to be significant disadvantages of living in a rural community?

- |   |     |    |      |
|---|-----|----|------|
| (a) restricted contacts with people of similar interests    | Yes | No | (19) |
| (b) distance from medical services                          | Yes | No | (20) |
| (c) poor quality roading                                    | Yes | No | (21) |
| (d) distance from commercial services                       | Yes | No | (22) |
| (e) inadequate housing                                      | Yes | No | (23) |
| (f) being seen as representative of interfering officialdom | Yes | No | (24) |
| (g) high cost of living                                     | Yes | No | (25) |
| (h) limited educational opportunities for your own children | Yes | No | (26) |

Please list what you consider to be any other  
'significant disadvantages' of living in a rural  
community

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10

If you are a married male principal and live in your  
school community, does your wife feel...

- |     |  |     |    |      |
|-----|--|-----|----|------|
| (a) | personal fulfilment with the relationships that<br>the school community provides       | Yes | No | (27) |
| (b) | she is fully accepted as a member of the<br>community                                  | Yes | No | (28) |
| (c) | obligated to attend local women's<br>organisations of which she has little<br>interest | Yes | No | (29) |
| (d) | she is used to convey 'individual' or<br>'community' feelings to the school            | Yes | No | (30) |

Please note any other areas of 'difficulty' your  
wife experiences living in a rural community

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11

On the scale given indicate what you consider to be  
the 'respect' or 'status' accorded the rural teacher  
by the community

- |           |      |          |     |          |      |
|-----------|------|----------|-----|----------|------|
| Very High | High | Moderate | Low | Very Low |      |
| (1)       | (2)  | (3)      | (4) | (5)      | (31) |



12

The following questions relate to the availability and opportunity to participate in recreational, cultural and sporting clubs and organisations

- (a) are there any clubs and organisations in which you could participate in your school district? Yes No (32)
- (b) do you participate in any club or organisation in your school district? Yes No (33)
- (c) do you take an active leadership role in any of these school district clubs and organisations? Yes No (34)
- (d) do you feel any pressure by the members of such clubs and organisations to take leadership roles? Yes No (35)
- (e) do you take part in clubs and organisations outside your school district? Yes No (36)

13

Some school districts have 'sectional interests' or 'groups' which tend to divide the community

Are you aware of any 'sectional interests' or 'groups' in your school district which tend to divide the community? Yes No (37)

If your answer was 'Yes' please state the 'sectional interests' or 'groups' which tend to divide the community

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14

Principals in rural schools find 'satisfaction' in many aspects of their job. Do you derive 'significant satisfaction' in the following aspects of rural teaching?

- (a) close personal contacts with children and parents Yes No (38)

|  |     |    |      |
|--|-----|----|------|
| (b) the feeling of having an all-round educative affect upon pupils      | Yes | No | (39) |
| (c) a school climate which presents few discipline problems              | Yes | No | (40) |
| (d) being able to enrich and use the environmental experiences of pupils | Yes | No | (41) |
| (e) ready access to audio-visual and other teaching resources            | Yes | No | (42) |
| (f) a classroom environment conducive to innovative techniques           | Yes | No | (43) |
| (g) community involvement  | Yes | No | (44) |
| (h) ample opportunities for inservice education                          | Yes | No | (45) |
| (i) flexible programme opportunities                                     | Yes | No | (46) |
| (j) independent pursuit of interests                                     | Yes | No | (47) |

Please list any other aspects of your job as rural principal that give you 'significant satisfaction

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15

Principals in rural schools experience 'difficulties' in many aspects of their job. Do you experience 'significant difficulty' with the following aspects of a rural principal's job?

|   |     |    |      |
|---|-----|----|------|
| (a) the development of classroom management strategies suitable to multi-class teaching                             | Yes | No | (48) |
| (b) catering for the slow learner   | Yes | No | (49) |
| (c) relationships with the school committee   | Yes | No | (50) |
| (d) the stimulus that is to be gained from contact with a variety of teachers                                       | Yes | No | (51) |
| (e) catering for all areas of the curriculum  | Yes | No | (52) |
| (f) lack of keenness in children that comes from competing against able children found in numbers in larger schools | Yes | No | (53) |
| (g) catering for older children in the more specialised areas   | Yes | No | (54) |
| (h) inadequate financial support  | Yes | No | (55) |

Please list any other 'significant difficulties' you experience in the course of your job as a rural principal

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16

Rural principals today experience many 'pressures' in the course of their work and life in rural communities. Do you consider the following to be 'pressures' that apply to you in your work and life as a rural principal?

- |     |   |     |    |      |
|-----|---|-----|----|------|
| (a) | pressure from Departmental officers in promoting curriculum change and developments   | Yes | No | (56) |
| (b) | pressure from parents in the area of pupil achievement and promotion                  | Yes | No | (57) |
| (c) | pressure from various sources requiring administrative action                         | Yes | No | (58) |
| (d) | pressure from community groups to take up positions of responsibility in clubs        | Yes | No | (59) |
| (e) | pressure to gain academic qualifications  | Yes | No | (60) |
| (f) | pressure from community groups in endeavouring to raise standards in 'basic' subjects | Yes | No | (61) |

Please list any other 'significant pressure' you feel is being exerted upon you. Also state the source of such pressure

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17

If opportunity was given for pre-service training before taking up a rural principalship, on hindsight, would you consider the following to be areas you would like covered?

- |   |     |    |      |
|---|-----|----|------|
| (a) classroom management strategies to cater for the multi-class teaching situation | Yes | No | (62) |
| (b) administrative guidance appropriate to the position                             | Yes | No | (63) |
| (c) programme planning for the multi-class teaching situation                       | Yes | No | (64) |
| (d) catering for the slow learner   | Yes | No | (65) |
| (e) relationships with the school committee   | Yes | No | (66) |
| (f) school - community relationships  | Yes | No | (67) |

Please list any other areas you consider would be valuable pre-service training topics

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18

Do you provide the following opportunities for parents to inform themselves of the work and progress of their children?

- |  |     |    |      |
|--|-----|----|------|
| (a) the issue of written reports             | Yes | No | (68) |
| (b) formal interviews with parents           | Yes | No | (69) |
| (c) PTA type meetings                        | Yes | No | (70) |
| (d) open days where parents visit classrooms | Yes | No | (72) |

Please list any other opportunities you provide to inform parents of the work and progress of their children

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19

Do you have in any one year the following functions to which parents and community are invited?

- (a) agricultural day Yes No (73)
- (b) school concert Yes No (74)
- (c) folk dancing evening Yes No (75)
- (d) inter-school sports days Yes No (76)
- (e) open days to allow parents and community to see the school programme in action Yes No (77)
- (f) school picnic Yes No (78)

Please list any other functions you have to which parents and community are invited

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20

Do parents and members of your community involve themselves in the life of your school in the following ways?

- (a) by providing transport for educational trips and sporting contacts Yes No (79)
- (b) by assisting in hobbies clubs Yes No (80)
- (c) by providing expertise in cultural areas of the school curriculum Yes No (81)
- (d) by acting as resource persons for various specialised programmes Yes No (82)
- (e) by coaching sports Yes No (83)
- (f) by assisting with library work Yes No (84)

Please list any other areas where parents and community involve themselves in the programme of the school

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- 21 On the scale given, indicate by circling what you consider to be your community's understanding of current educational practice

Very Well  
Informed  
(1)

Adequately  
Informed  
(2)

Inadequately  
Informed  
(3)

(85)

- 22 In some areas school facilities are utilised by the community for such purposes as sporting, recreational, and cultural activities

Are your school facilities utilised on a regular basis by any community group(s)

Yes No

(86)

If your answer was 'Yes' please state the group(s) using the facilities

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- 23 Many support services are available to assist rural schools. Do you consider the following support and related services respond and make themselves available when you need them?

- |                                   |        |      |
|-----------------------------------|--------|------|
| (a) rural school advisory service | Yes No | (87) |
| (b) curriculum area advisers      | Yes No | (88) |
| (c) psychological service         | Yes No | (89) |
| (d) inspectorate                  | Yes No | (90) |
| (e) education board officers      | Yes No | (91) |
| (f) social welfare officers       | Yes No | (92) |
| (g) health department officers    | Yes No | (93) |
| (h) road traffic instructors      | Yes No | (94) |



24

Opportunity for professional development can be obtained from many quarters. During the last year (1978) did you attend or undertake any of the following avenues for promoting your personal professional development?

- |   |        |       |
|---|--------|-------|
| (a) regular attendance at NZEI meetings   | Yes No | (95)  |
| (b) regular attendance at Country Teachers Group meetings                       | Yes No | (96)  |
| (c) undertake a Diploma in Teaching Correspondence School Course                | Yes No | (97)  |
| (d) undertake extra-mural university work                                       | Yes No | (98)  |
| (e) attend a single refresher or inservice course of a week's duration (5 days) | Yes No | (99)  |
| (f) attend inservice courses adding up to at least 5 days absence from teaching | Yes No | (100) |

Please list any other avenues you have utilised to promote your own professional development

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25

School committees play an important part in the life and smooth functioning of a rural school

- |  |        |       |
|--|--------|-------|
| (a) Has the school committee in your opinion ever 'interfered' in what could be called your 'professional domain'? | Yes No | (101) |
|--|--------|-------|

If your answer was 'Yes' please give examples

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- (b) Has the school committee in your opinion ever procrastinated or failed to do the jobs which you consider to be their rightful function? Yes No (102)

If your answer was 'Yes' please give examples

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- (c) On the scale given, indicate by circling, what you consider the knowledge your school committee has of its role?

|                     |             |             |             |                     |       |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|-------|
| Very<br>Good<br>(1) | Good<br>(2) | Fair<br>(3) | Poor<br>(4) | Very<br>Poor<br>(5) | (103) |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|-------|

26

There has recently been considerable discussion on the subject of teacher 'morals'. Rural teachers furthermore have been to the forefront in expressing their concerns

- (a) If you were given the opportunity to move out of your current position and retain your present salary would you do so? Yes No (104)
- (b) On the scale given, indicate by circling, what you consider to be the 'morale' of rural teachers

|                     |             |             |             |                     |       |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|-------|
| Very<br>Good<br>(1) | Good<br>(2) | Fair<br>(3) | Poor<br>(4) | Very<br>Poor<br>(5) | (105) |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|-------|

FINALLY

In the space provided, briefly state comments on any area of rural education you feel very strongly about

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APPENDIX 5 (a)RURAL SCHOOL - COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPSDISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL COMMITTEES

- 1 What changes have taken place in your rural community since World War II?  
Have these changes in any way affected the school?
- 2 What do you see as your 'role' as a school committee?
- 3 Are there any powers as a school committee you currently do not have which you would like?
- 4 If you had the power to appoint a principal, what qualities would you look for in an applicant?
- 5 What would be your attitude to having appointed to your school :
  - (i) a female principal;
  - (ii) a principal not wishing to live in the school-house, but rather outside your community;
  - (iii) a principal with a life-style (to be elaborated) and values very different from your own.
- 6 Your school has just been appointed a new school principal. He/she has spent all his/her life living and teaching in Auckland city. What advice would you consider helpful to someone coming to your school and community from such a background?
- 7 What role do you consider the teacher should play in your community?
- 8 What do you consider to be the (a) advantages, and (b) the disadvantages, for the school teacher living in a rural community?
- 9 What opportunities do you have as parents to visit the school and learn of its functions?
- 10 Do you wish to have greater involvement in the life of your school?  
If so, in what areas?
- 11 What are some of the problems you have with the education of your children?

APPENDIX 5 (b)RURAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE QUESTIONNAIRES

(TO INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS)

Please indicate your response by circling the alternative you consider most appropriate

- 1 Do you consider the opportunities provided to involve yourself in the activities of the school are -

Very Good      Good      Fair      Poor      Very Poor

- 2 How many years on average do you consider teachers should stay in a rural school?

Doesn't Matter      2      4      6      8 or more

- 3 What do you consider to be the quality of rural education?

Very Good      Good      Fair      Poor      Very Poor

APPENDIX 6RURAL SCHOOL - COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPSQUESTIONNAIRE FOR NZEI COUNSELLORS

Please respond to the questions in the manner indicated

- 1 In the box provided give the number of cases in which you were involved as an NZEI Counsellor during Term 1, 1979
- 2 In the box provided give the number of cases in which you were involved as an NZEI Counsellor during the 1978 school year
- 3 Of these cases (total of questions 1 and 2), give the number which involved teachers or principals in schools up to and including Grade IVb (that is up to 4 teacher schools)

If you have not been involved with any cases involving teachers or principals in schools up to and including Grade IVb (as in question 3), you need proceed no further. Please place the questionnaire in the provided envelope and return.

NOTE The remaining questions all relate to counselling cases you have been involved in from schools up to Grade IVb (that is up to 4 teacher schools)

- 4 With regard to cases involving teachers or principals in schools up to and including Grade IVb, how many of these cases involved problems 'related to' and 'affecting school - community relationships'

(Note The relationships problem may involve a teacher and a parent or community member. Other problems will be more extensive and involve parental and community groups)

If you have not been involved with any cases involving teachers and principals in schools of up to and including Grade IVb on matters related to and affecting school - community relationships (as in question 4) you need proceed no further. Please place the questionnaire in the envelope provided and return.

As you have been involved in counselling cases involving :

- (1) rural teachers and principals in schools up to and including Grade IVb; and
- (2) cases related to and affecting school - community relationships, you are invited to give data on these cases.

The data required for each case relates to the nature of the problem and its outcome. Each case should be written up as briefly as possible as given in the three following examples.

Case 1 (example)

Personality clash between principal and staff member - spreads to community with much taking of sides. Counselling intervention results in transfer of teacher. Problem still simmering.

Case 2 (example)

Pressure group within community and spear-headed by local ex-teacher has continually complained about standards at local school - finally letter of complaint reaches education board. Subsequent enquiry reveals no grounds for complaint. Dissatisfaction still apparent.

Case 3 (example)

New principal decides school grounds must be cleared by 3.30 pm. Chairman of school committee takes exception to decision as he often doesn't pick up children until 4 pm. Situation gets out of hand with shouting match in front of children in school time. Complaint sent to education board. Counselling eventually produces compromise.

- 5 Please briefly comment on the cases you have been involved in related to, and affecting school - community relationships. Cases should tally with the number given in question 4, and be briefly outlined in the manner of the above examples.

CASE NO 1



6 Please briefly give your opinions as to reasons for breakdowns occurring in rural school - community relationships

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- 7 Please give briefly your opinion as to possible actions which could be taken to help alleviate some of the problem areas in rural school - community relationships

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- 8 Do you consider there has been an increasing incidence of rural school - community relationship breakdown?

| YES | NO | DON'T KNOW |
|-----|----|------------|
|     |    |            |

Please indicate by a tick in the appropriate box

Elaborate if you wish

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|   |
|---|
| <p>Thank you for your co-operation.<br/>Please place the questionnaire in the envelope provided and return.</p> |
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APPENDIX 7

RURAL SCHOOL - COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ADVISERS TO RURAL SCHOOLS

Serial Number

As you have been involved with teachers or principals (in schools up to and including Grade IVb) with problems related to and affecting school - community relationships, in the space provided briefly outline:-

- 1 Your opinions as to reasons for breakdowns occurring in rural school - community relationships

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- 2 Your opinions as to possible actions which could be taken to help alleviate the incidence of rural school - community relationship breakdowns

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- 3 Do you consider there is an increasing incidence of school - community breakdown?

| YES | NO | DON'T KNOW |
|-----|----|------------|
|     |    |            |

Tick in appropriate box

Elaborate if you wish :

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- 4 In the space provided feel free to write any other thoughts you may have on 'rural education' which appear to be affecting the 'morale' of rural teachers

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Thank you for your co-operation. Please place the questionnaire in the envelope provided and return

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