

‘A Blank Page Approach’?

DIVERSE INFLUENCES ON NEW ZEALAND’S PICOT TASKFORCE DELIBERATIONS, 1987–1988



IN THE LATE 1980s the Picot Report, *Administering for Excellence*, and the Labour government’s official response, *Tomorrow’s Schools*, signalled the advent of devolutionary educational reforms. The Department of Education was replaced by a leaner ministry and regional education boards were abolished. Individual schools were to be managed by elected boards of trustees, accountable to their communities and responsible for school budgets, the employment of teachers, learning outcomes and the development of school charters.¹

These reforms were, and remain, highly controversial. Many critics within the education sector continue to agree with two seminal *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* articles in viewing the reforms as having been exclusively driven by neo-liberal ideology.² This paper, however, argues that the Picot Taskforce was no mere cipher for neo-liberalism, but instead possessed a dynamic of its own. Accordingly it attempted, with some success, to respond to the diversity of educational criticism that had manifested over the previous two decades. Whilst neo-liberalism was a significant strand in a complex matrix of critique, it was but one view amongst several that were to shape the deliberations of the Picot Taskforce during late 1987 and early 1988, and to subsequently influence *Tomorrow’s Schools*.

Recognition of this complexity will at least allow researchers to avoid the trap of single-cause explanations for complex education policy reform processes. Such a step on its own, however, goes but part of the way towards a necessary reinterpretation of the era that might more fully acknowledge the myriad reformist currents in play at the time. More specifically, it may be fruitful for researchers to more fully explore the proposition that, whilst those who advocated radical educational change indeed came from very different ideological positions, their eventual success came about not because of their diversity but rather because, despite their differences, they came to share a common, ultimately irresistible, discourse of reform that no contemporary taskforce or committee could ignore.

Before undertaking such a challenging task as this, it should be acknowledged that several previous studies have contributed a better understanding of the ways in which educational reformers elsewhere have come to develop a common discourse over time. Herbert M. Kliebard’s key research on the history of the American school curriculum during the twentieth century postulated the existence of several competing ideologies, whose adherents often shared a common goal of radical curriculum reform, leading them to form effective, if transitory, alliances.³ In turn, Kliebard drew upon several key studies of social movements to demonstrate the essential fluidity of educational policy

formation. These studies included that of Peter Filene on 'shifting coalitions' within social movements. Filene argued that the various interest groups that took similar stands on particular issues were often driven by opportunism and improvisation rather than by a common ideology.⁴ Daniel Rodgers took the notion of shifting coalitions a stage further by arguing that would-be reformers were often held together by a common faith in their ability to use particular languages in order to build a constituency,⁵ and Jeffrey E. Mirel⁶ examined so-called 'communities of discourse'.

Within education policy research, the complex educational reform process that led to the Picot Report has commonly been depicted as having been largely driven by an imported neo-liberal (often inappropriately labelled 'New Right') ideology. The adoption of neo-liberal ideology by Treasury, it is argued, enabled that agency to effectively 'capture' the state's decision-making apparatus at a relatively early stage in the process, resulting in the progressive dismantlement of the old social-democratic social service sector, including education.

Instrumental in promoting this view was a two-part *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* (NZJES) article published in 1988. This article highlighted the detrimental influence the New Zealand Treasury's *Government Management: Brief to the Incoming Government* (1987) had even then begun to have on education. Its authors contended that the Treasury document initiated a 'third wave' of key reforms that effectively reversed the century-old expansion of universal education.⁷ Some three years after the appearance of this influential critique, a collection of papers by key education policy researchers argued that the Picot Report and the subsequent implementation of *Tomorrow's Schools* had been largely engineered by Treasury neo-liberalism, a strategy that had been responsible for seriously damaging a hitherto widely respected public education system.⁸ This view effectively promoted the existence of a sharp break between pre- and post-reform periods, highlighting a supposed gap between 'introduced' New Right ideology and the 'indigenous' New Zealand liberal-democratic consensus that had underpinned the educational reforms of the first Labour government.⁹ Behind this dramatic reversal of traditional policy, it was argued, lay fundamental changes in the role of the state that were themselves a strategic response to the political and economic crises faced by 'Late Capitalism' during the mid-1980s.¹⁰ The view that the Picot Taskforce was simply responding to a largely imported neo-liberal ideology subsequently adopted by Treasury and imposed on Taskforce members in response to a crisis in global capitalism has been perpetuated in a number of theses. A 1992 study by Elfrida Harper claimed that the setting up of the Taskforce was an 'insider's game' in which members were selected according to an 'old boys' networking system' for their opposition to many aspects of the existing education system, particularly the Department of Education. Parents, on the other hand, were argued to have been largely satisfied with the education their children were receiving.¹¹ A 1990 thesis by Kenneth Wilson, supervised by John Codd and Liz Gordon, concluded that the Picot Report mirrored similar reforms in the United States and the United Kingdom in being an extrapolation of 'New Right' thinking that ushered in a new ideological settlement.¹² Subsequently,

the view that the Picot Report was instrumental in heralding an era of neo-liberal influences upon public education was to remain the dominant influence on education policy research.¹³

The continuing emphasis upon the educational reforms of the late 1980s as being a mere reflection of neo-liberal ideology has only occasionally been seriously challenged. John Barrington provides one outstanding early example, in arguing that those who placed such a heavy emphasis on the activities of the contemporary New Right were furnishing essentially inadequate critiques of what had actually been a longstanding process of reform agitation. By so doing they overlooked 'to an extraordinary degree the historical developments which influenced and helped create the pre-conditions for change'.¹⁴ Writing but a short time later, Gary McCulloch challenged the validity of tightly defined criteria in assessing complex political categories such as neo-liberalism. In McCulloch's view, overly theory-driven single-cause explanations centring exclusively on the impact of neo-liberal ideals allegedly 'imported' from outside New Zealand simply ignored the cumulative impact of indigenous historical factors.¹⁵

One reason for the relative paucity of research into the Picot era has been that challenges to the received view on the educational reforms are apt to be viewed with hostility in certain quarters. To take but one example: in 1998 a book commissioned by the New Zealand Ministry of Education written by independent historians Graham and Susan Butterworth characterised the reforms as having been the outcome of widespread pressure for educational decision-making to be wrested from an educational bureaucracy increasingly out of touch with the realities of contemporary New Zealand society.¹⁶ This conclusion subsequently provoked a hostile response from a number of education policy scholars who argued that, not only had the Butterworths deliberately chosen to ignore existing critiques of educational reform, but that they themselves had tacitly accepted the major tenets of neo-liberalism — a claim they were to vehemently deny.¹⁷

Another and rather more prosaic reason for the continued dominance of views that assign priority of place to neo-liberalism, however, has been the lack of readily assessable primary source material on the Picot Taskforce. Fortunately, from 1995 on, this last factor has become much less of an obstacle, with successive batches of files from the Departments of Education, Treasury, Māori Affairs and the State Services Commission (SSC), together with important recently released private accessions such as the David Lange papers, becoming available for consultation at Archives New Zealand. As a result, it is now possible to gain a better understanding of the entire reform process. For example, we now possess detailed minutes of successive Taskforce meetings. These reveal the stances adopted by its members both individually and collectively towards contemporary educational and social issues such as structural inequality, strategies for achieving equity, devolution of responsibility, and professional accountabilities throughout the life of the Taskforce. In addition, it is now possible to obtain a fairly clear idea of what reading was available to members, and even which documents they considered to be of particular importance. These include the papers subsequently presented

to the Taskforce from various sources and the ways in which all this may have influenced the final report.

Whilst this paper focuses on the deliberations of the Taskforce and their immediate aftermath, it is first necessary to review briefly the complex mixture of factors that led to the Taskforce being created. The early post-Second World War years brought increasing criticism of New Zealand's highly centralised public education system. Educational conservatives blamed the Department of Education for falling academic standards, leading to calls for an 'independent' inquiry.¹⁸ Liberal educators were likewise critical of the educational bureaucracy, pointing to its innate conservatism and failure to remedy structural inequities.¹⁹

By the 1970s, New Zealand was facing a dual economic and cultural crisis.²⁰ As far as education was concerned, devolutionary pressures were reflected in the publications emanating from the ambitious Educational Development Conference of the early 1970s, including the Nordmeyer Working Party, and the 1976 McCombs Report, *Towards Partnership*.²¹ In the following decade, a combination of economic difficulties, societal polarisation and the rise of a new post-war generation to political power saw the creation of a common discourse emanating from all parts of the political spectrum, demanding radical educational reform. Successive cuts in public expenditure focused press attention on financial ineptitude within the Department of Education.²² These developments served to further strengthen the dominance of neo-liberal thinking within Treasury and in SSC.²³

At much the same time, university-based neo-Marxist critics castigated the centralised bureaucracy as being a major impediment to change.²⁴ Feminists challenged its male-dominated, hierarchical structure whilst Māori activists blamed it for failing Māori students.²⁵ Māori activism in particular was to prove an extremely significant factor in creating a climate highly critical of existing educational structures. Particularly from the early 1970s on, the National Advisory Committee on Māori Education (NACME) advocated the creation of a bicultural society whereby much educational decision-making would be devolved from a largely Pākehā bureaucracy to Māori.²⁶ The decade immediately prior to the setting up of the Picot Taskforce also saw many Pākehā educators adopting bicultural perspectives that in turn made them vociferous educational critics.²⁷ Following an altercation in Auckland over a haka performed by Pākehā students, Hiwi Tauroa's report *Race Against Time* (1982) strongly criticised the mono-cultural nature of public education.²⁸ In March 1984, a major hui at the Turangawaewae Marae characterised schooling for Māori as 'a social disaster', prompting the Citizens Association for Racial Equality (CARE) to write to the Governor-General to demand an urgent public inquiry into education.²⁹

The rapid growth of grassroots initiatives such as Te Kohanga Reo during the 1980s further highlighted the case for educational reform along the lines of devolution and consumer choice, particularly in the eyes of those who furnished policy advice to governments.³⁰ Symptomatic of the new mood in Wellington was the reception accorded the Community Education Initiative Scheme's (CEIS) final report. Originating from concerns over Māori youth

gangs and the radical Left's new-found emphasis on the primacy of culture, CEIS was an innovative experiment in educational devolution that effectively devolved the funding and control of schooling to local Māori communities in selected underprivileged urban areas. Its findings were presented to key Cabinet ministers in the newly elected Labour government and to senior state servants, including Treasury and SSC. At this meeting, the Treasury representative praised the initiative as 'a new kind of social delivery that might well be emulated on a wider scale'.³¹

In fact, the entire New Zealand education policy environment was becoming radically transformed in the 1980s by a variety of initiatives informed by both radical-Left and neo-liberal concerns that provider-capture in the state sector had led to major inequities in the treatment of clients. In the health sector, the influential Cartwright Inquiry was initiated by feminist rather than neo-liberal concern over an alleged staff cover-up following the deaths of several female cancer patients at National Women's Hospital.³² The resulting report nevertheless criticised professional behaviour and recommended that public hospitals be made directly accountable to their clients as well as accepting a greater degree of community input as an antidote to provider-capture. These were the very concepts emphasised in the slightly later, more emphatically neo-liberal, Gibbs Report.

Given the publicity accorded to allegations of provider-capture by self-interested state sector professionals, it was hardly surprising that public opinion polls indicated that fewer than 25% of respondents believed that the education system was working well.³³ Devolution and choice were fast becoming key concepts accompanying the emergence of a common policy discourse centred on the need for radical structural reforms.³⁴

Symptomatic of this development was the Scott Report on the quality of teaching, calling for greater teacher accountability and parental involvement in teacher appraisal. This was followed by the Fargher-Probine Report on post-compulsory education and training, which saw the answer to youth alienation, gender inequity and Māori underachievement as lying in competitive, devolved learning institutions controlled by councils elected by the local community.³⁵ These reports not only blended radical left-wing and neo-liberal ideologies, but they also challenged the longstanding claims of the state and its agencies to be disinterested upholders of the public good. Inevitably, this new radicalised consensus amongst competing ideologies was to be reflected in the Picot Taskforce deliberations.³⁶

Influenced by gloomy economic and social predictions as well as by prevailing concern over provider-capture, the incoming Labour government concentrated on state sector reform during its first term in office. Education was not initially part of this agenda, but, with public dissatisfaction remaining high, it became clear prior to the general election in 1987 that the incoming government would face mounting pressure to radically reform education. Intense parliamentary debate over education was accompanied by an increasing number of articles highly critical of education that appeared both in the national press and in the new current affairs journals such as *Metro* and *North and South*. Hence, the creation of the Taskforce to Review Educational Administration announced on

21 July 1987 could be regarded as a form of damage control on the part of the Department of Education, with the support of embattled Minister of Education, Russell Marshall, as the Butterworths previously argued.³⁷ This conclusion is supported by the fact that the selection of a chairperson for the Taskforce appears to have been in part a response to a suggestion by Labour's openly neo-liberal Minister of Finance, Roger Douglas, that Douglas Myers (a prominent Auckland business man and CEO of Lion Breweries) be approached for the task.³⁸ Taskforce secretary and senior Department of Education officer Maurice Gianotti subsequently recalled that a list of around 30 potential Taskforce members, including Brian Picot, was compiled within Marshall's office.³⁹ Like Myers, Picot had a prominent background in the retail industry, a fact subsequently highlighted by opponents of the reforms as *prima facie* evidence of a neo-liberal conspiracy to privatise state education. Here the similarities ended, however, for in addition to being the director of several companies and a past-president of the Auckland Chamber of Commerce (1975), Picot possessed a considerable record of public service and commitment to various broadly liberal causes: factors that probably made him an acceptable compromise to the Labour Cabinet, senior education officials and to the government's own business supporters.⁴⁰

Picot's involvement with the Taskforce allegedly began with a call from Marshall's office, inviting him to chair the Taskforce. Picot agreed, subject to three conditions being met: being able to exercise some discretion in the choice of Taskforce members; receiving a promise that the necessary funding would be forthcoming for any recommendations the Taskforce might make; and gaining an assurance that he would first have to agree with the terms of reference.⁴¹

Picot's discretion in selecting members was effectively limited to exercising a veto, a power he apparently exercised only once, rejecting a proposed business representative on the Taskforce on the grounds that his views were too right-wing in favour of the more moderate Colin Wise. Wise, the managing director of Alliance Textiles, was a Briton, but he possessed recent New Zealand educational experience as a University of Otago Council member and as a past member of a secondary school board of governors. Of the other Taskforce members, Associate Professor Peter Ramsay was a prominent educational researcher and the author of several recent academic publications critical of bureaucratic conservatism.⁴² Margaret Rosemergy was a senior lecturer in early childhood and professional studies at Wellington Teachers' College who had been a lecturer in psychology at Victoria University and chair of the Onslow College Board of Governors. Whetu Wereta, from the Department of Māori Affairs, was a social researcher of Ngaiterangi-Ngatiranginui descent who had served on the Royal Commission on the Electoral System.⁴³ Thus the Taskforce membership could hardly be described as being doctrinaire neo-liberal, although it clearly shared some key reformist concerns.

Given that much criticism of education had focused on the alleged unresponsiveness of the Department of Education to the continuing marginalisation of local, ethnic and minority concerns, it was perhaps predictable that the Taskforce terms of reference would centre on the devolution of its

Wellington-based operation in particular, to the level of individual learning institutions deemed to be more in touch with the needs of their respective communities.⁴⁴ Any proposed new structure was also to be characterised by 'efficiency', although this ambitious goal remained unspecified.⁴⁵ By the late 1980s, however, such exhortations amounted to little more than a belated acknowledgement that public policy in general had been effectively reshaped by a radically new blended discourse, drawing on both radical-Left and neo-liberal critiques that were now driving public sector reform in New Zealand.

With a general election looming, the first full meeting of the Taskforce on 31 July 1987 was conducted in a climate of pre-election uncertainty, Picot emphasising that if there were to be a change of government, the Taskforce's work might well be discontinued. The timetable was tight, the aim being to complete the report by the end of March 1988.⁴⁶ From the outset it was agreed that the ensuing report would be a policy rather than a discussion document.⁴⁷ This was a clear indication that the broad tenor of its recommendations would be swiftly acted upon by the government.

A number of organisations were initially invited to meet with the Taskforce. Unsurprisingly, given the contemporary emphasis on biculturalism, these included the New Zealand Māori Council, the Kohanga Reo Trust and the Māori Women's Welfare League. Conversely, neo-liberal and business concerns over provider-capture along with Māori and feminist scepticism over the sincerity of both departmental and teacher commitment to biculturalism and gender equity, resulted in the teachers' unions being excluded from the consultative process. It was agreed that Treasury and SSC be invited early to make suggestions to the Taskforce, the chairman having invited their representatives to sit in on meetings as they saw fit.⁴⁸ It was not until the second meeting, however, that Simon Smelt and Marijke Robinson, representing Treasury and SSC respectively, were reportedly permitted to attend meetings by invitation, but without voting rights.⁴⁹

Picot appears to have felt that agreeing to the presence of Treasury and SSC representatives would avoid a situation whereby the Taskforce might reach a consensus only to have to argue its case subsequently with the two major regulatory departments of state. A similar invitation had apparently been issued to Sir Ivor Richardson, who chaired the near-contemporary Royal Commission on Social Policy, thus alleviating any concern amongst Commission members that the setting up of the new taskforce would cut across their own brief.⁵⁰

Given the concerns expressed over the previous two decades, it is hardly surprising that the consensus among Taskforce members was that the existing education system was 'too complex and too unresponsive'.⁵¹ Moreover, the material distributed to Taskforce members at the initial meeting included the recommendations of the Nordmeyer Educational Development Conference Working Party, and the Fargher-Probine Report, both of which had supported educational devolution.⁵² Recommendations 8.10 and 8.11 of the Nordmeyer Working Party argued that secondary school boards of governors should retain the power to appoint staff, whilst primary school committees should more closely participate in the appointment of staff, including the school principal.⁵³ Recommendation 8.49 advocated that the department's close control be reduced

by transferring the power of decision-making to local institutions.⁵⁴ There was also general support among Taskforce members for the recommendations of the Fargher-Probine Report, which had viewed devolution to individual learning institutions and competition between them as key measures in increasing youth participation in post-compulsory education and training, particularly for minorities.

It was in this context that Picot drew the attention of members to the currently poor coordination (termed interface) of secondary schooling with technical and continuing education. The highlighting of this particular issue as a major consideration for the Taskforce also represented a continuation of the reforms already set in motion by the slightly earlier Committee of Inquiry into Curriculum, Examinations and Qualifications (CICAQ), set up under Labour. CICAQ had recommended significant changes to senior secondary school assessment, including the abolition of the University Entrance examination and the introduction of modular assessment practices in order to ease the difficult transition of youth from school to employment — measures that were broadly in line with Labour’s education policy goals prior to 1984.⁵⁵

These key policy documents and recommendations provided further context for Picot’s initial remark to the Taskforce that ‘the presence of a serious disease [was] the justification for radical surgery’.⁵⁶ Certainly at this initial meeting members agreed on the necessity of radical change rather than any mere tinkering with the existing system. Accordingly, ‘the starting point of committee deliberations was a “blank page” approach on which an efficient and effective administrative structure [could] be erected’.⁵⁷

In a later interview, Picot recalled that this approach was adopted because of the difficulties inherent in trying to massage an outdated system to meet present and future demands. He rejected as ‘absolute rubbish’ any suggestion that the Taskforce was simply trying to save money or to create a competitive education system in which schools would be obliged to enter into league tables dominated by examination results.⁵⁸ In fact the Taskforce was influenced by the highly publicised poor exit qualifications of school leavers, particularly Māori school leavers. The 1986 statistics to which the Taskforce had access revealed that only one secondary school on Auckland’s wealthy North Shore had more than 25% of students leaving without gaining a single School Certificate subject, while in South Auckland, with its high Māori and Pasifika population, this was true for 13 out of 16 secondary schools.⁵⁹

With this in mind, Taskforce discussion soon focused on the role of the school principal and the need for effective quality control within the educational system. It was agreed that any proposed structure had to include accountability leading to ‘excellence of outcomes’.⁶⁰ Members quickly identified devolution of responsibilities and accountabilities to schools and communities as the preferred solution. Subsequently, discussion centred, not on the advisability or otherwise of devolution, but on how this goal could be best achieved, what safeguards would be required, and how it could be made most effective. Devolution, however, was to raise a number of concerns. Early in the process, Picot articulated a misgiving that was to surface on a number of occasions both prior to and after the release of the final document, namely ‘that devolution of power might lead to a “hijacking” of some institutions by particular groups

who had strong points of view and were sufficiently organised to gain control democratically'.⁶¹

Partly for this reason, the initial Taskforce meeting conceded that a newly created Ministry of Education should assume any national functions that could not be undertaken by devolved authorities. These included setting minimum standards and provisions, developing national curriculum guidelines, and performing accountability checks.⁶² Decisions on resource allocation, however, were to be made at the institutional level.⁶³

The second meeting of the Taskforce examined more closely the possible advantages and disadvantages of devolving authority. In many ways, the ensuing discussion centred on the inevitable tensions between central and local control that had been so astutely anticipated by New Zealand educational commentators such as Leicester Webb, some 50 years previously.⁶⁴ Like Webb, Taskforce members quickly identified the competing interests likely to be present in any devolved system. It was agreed while the devolution of authority and functions could make the system more flexible and responsive, there would also have to be controls specifically designed to overcome 'capricious or arbitrary action' on the part of newly created bodies. Opportunities for choice were to be maximised for all interested parties, especially those with particular beliefs who held strong views about what schools should provide.⁶⁵ This latter conviction stemmed directly from Māori demands for devolution, particularly as those were exemplified in the expansion of Te Kohanga Reo.

Conversely, the Taskforce considered a national curriculum to be essential. The 1987 *Curriculum Review*, itself a liberal reaction to the more conservative *Review of the Core Curriculum* instigated by a National government early in 1984, was seen as a good starting point for discussion. The Taskforce readily accepted that one outcome of devolution would be increased diversity, which might in turn ensure better educational outcomes for all.⁶⁶ Thus the Taskforce was brought face-to-face with the central, perhaps ultimately unresolvable, paradox faced by proponents of educational devolution, namely that decentralisation frequently creates pressures from both the left and the right of the political spectrum for a centralised audit, justified on the grounds of equity and social efficiency respectively.⁶⁷

Having examined the major Taskforce decisions made during the first two meetings, it is appropriate to examine the papers available to the Taskforce as it continued deliberating during the second half of 1987. Of these, the Treasury Briefing Papers were to become the most controversial, with many education policy commentators subsequently singling them out as virtually the only influence on the Taskforce. Entitled *Government Management* and released in late August, the Treasury Briefing Papers actually consisted of two substantial volumes. The 471-page first volume dealt with the broader issues that would face the incoming government after the forthcoming general election.⁶⁸ This argued that high inflation and trade deficits threatened to blunt the gains from the market liberalisation introduced under Labour.⁶⁹ A brief education section contended that government intervention in education raised four significant issues: who pays; who chooses; who benefits; and who was accountable.⁷⁰

These issues were taken up in more detail in the second volume, devoted

entirely to education, prepared by Simon Smelt and Michael Irwin.⁷¹ New Zealand, it was pointed out, possessed an overwhelmingly state education system with a small private sector and hence little consumer choice apart from the ‘vigorous and fast growing Kohanga Reo movement for preschoolers’. According to the authors, both the recently introduced ACCESS programme for school leavers seeking job skills and Te Kohanga Reo could ‘be seen as ways of by-passing a system that had failed to react sufficiently to the needs of disadvantaged groups’.⁷²

In its critique of public education, Treasury drew upon a wealth of recent academic research both in New Zealand and elsewhere. This included Richard Harker’s work on social control, hegemony and cultural capital; Ranginui Walker’s work, together with that of Linda and Graham Smith, on Pākehā capture of the Taha Māori programme in schools; Judith Simon’s revelations of how teachers’ practices contributed to the denigration of Māori culture in classrooms; Richard Benton’s advocacy of a separate Māori-controlled system; and the research of Roy Nash on inequality. Treasury was also able to point to increasingly urgent calls for education to be held to account for failing to acknowledge the special place of Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi, exemplified in *Race Against Time*, and in the conclusions of the newly established Waitangi Tribunal. There were also numerous citations of overseas research: by Bernstein on language codes, Bourdieu on habitus, and Boudon on secondary effects. Smelt was later to claim that it was research evidence such as this rather than the example of Thatcher’s government in the United Kingdom that fuelled Treasury’s concern.⁷³

Certainly, in arguing that education was not just a public but also an individual good, Treasury drew on longstanding charges from across the political spectrum that educational providers often acted to defend their own interests. As a result, schools had produced neither equity nor equality of outcome. Deeply embedded structural and cultural inequalities meant that many families were unable to take advantage of the education offered by the state, with Māori in particular bearing the brunt of systemic failure. As professionals, many teachers were unresponsive to the needs of consumers. Pākehā bureaucrats had effectively captured the system for their own ends, with consumers often unable to hold them to satisfactory account. Solutions, however, could be glimpsed in promising new initiatives towards devolution.⁷⁴

In direct contrast to Treasury, Department of Education spokespeople do not appear to have grasped the degree to which the major concepts underlying devolution had become interwoven into a new policy discourse. An undated Draft Departmental submission to the Taskforce prepared for its late October meeting warned that all attempts to reform the education system had ended in failure.⁷⁵ Hence, ‘arguments for consumer sovereignty [were] symptoms of a sense of dissatisfaction that some members of the public [had] about public education [but did] not offer the basis for a solution to the concerns they reflect[ed]’.⁷⁶ In the department’s view, the role of a centralised bureaucracy remained one of providing ‘disinterested’ policy advice to ministers.⁷⁷ This, however, was a view that a generation of radical left-wing scholars and neo-liberals alike had effectively debunked over the previous decade.

Considerably more radical solutions to the current educational crisis were being predicted in the national press. It has been argued that Lange did not attempt to influence the views of the Taskforce, and that the only concession made to the Prime Minister was that he was to receive an advance copy of the final report prior to its being published.⁷⁸ Indirect pressure, however, was another matter. In early November, a front page leader in the *Evening Post* featured a speech delivered by Lange to a Labour Party meeting which contended that the Department of Education as an educational institution was fundamentally biased in the advice it gave to governments. Hence 'if the Government asks the department for advice about funding, it [was] like asking a child how much it wants for pocket money'.⁷⁹

According to the *Post*, Lange had already foreshadowed his intention to dismantle the Education Department and to establish a new ministry separate from the organisations which delivered public education, and with sharply curtailed functions.⁸⁰ Moreover, and apparently unknown to the national press at the time, by early November the Picot Taskforce had received a series of short but pointed Treasury papers outlining the details of radical reform. A four-page document listed what was described as a number of efficiency considerations, including the problems of government intervention, central control, management and accountability.⁸¹ A further Treasury paper included an appendix significantly labelled 'The Education Industry: a possible model'.⁸² In addition a paper by Simon Smelt, dated 9 November, discussed the question of educational accountability.⁸³ The Taskforce had also received copies of a series of working papers specifically commissioned to assess the functions of the existing Department of Education, prepared by the management consultancy firm W.D. Scott Deloitte Ltd.⁸⁴ These papers charged the department with a lack of accountability, a high level of inefficiency stemming from over-bureaucratisation, financial irresponsibility and a 'reactive and stultifying' internal culture.⁸⁵

By late November an extensive list of abstracts featuring 131 relevant papers and commentaries supporting radical educational change was available to Taskforce members. These were drawn mainly from academic and professional publications, magazine articles, parliamentary debates and newspaper features from Australia, North America and the United Kingdom as well as New Zealand.⁸⁶ The voucher issue featured strongly in the list, with the first 17 items dealing either wholly or in part with educational vouchers. Of these a paper entitled 'Education Vouchers' dated 2 February 1987, produced by the New Zealand Government Research Unit, is particularly revealing. The paper argued that while there were no explicit tests of the voucher concept immediately available, the Youth Training Scheme in Britain and Te Kohanga Reo in New Zealand permitted some useful conclusions to be drawn. The paper emphasised that Te Kohanga Reo had emerged as a Māori educational initiative against initial objections from the Department of Education. Its apparent success, therefore, suggested that, 'provided they ha[d] access to financial resources, and the freedom to design or demand programmes which they believe met their needs, then even disadvantaged groups [were] capable of putting very effective programmes into action'.⁸⁷

Given the pervasiveness of radical advocacy throughout the previous two decades, the two-volume Report of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) published in November 1987 was to have a particular impact upon Taskforce deliberations. The first paragraph of the first volume of the NZCER report offered a highly critical analysis of New Zealand's educational achievements over the first one hundred years of its existence in relation to seven groups identified as likely to be disadvantaged. These groups were: 'those from low socio-economic status homes; girls and women; Māori, Pacific Island groups; the disabled; ethnic migrant groups; and rural dwellers. *Allowing for overlap between these categories, this accounts in fact for at least three fifths of the population included broadly within the education system*' (italics mine).⁸⁸

Given the alleged extent of structurally imposed disadvantage, it was concluded that 'the situation of disadvantaged groups will only improve if there [were] major changes in our education system'.⁸⁹ A similar degree of social pessimism was evident in the second volume of the report, prepared by NZCER's researcher on Māori education, Richard Benton.⁹⁰ Benton believed that the high failure rate of Māori children in an essentially Pākehā state education system indicated that it was closed and self-perpetuating.⁹¹ Drawing upon Karl Polanyi's 1944 analysis of Western societies, Benton argued that a closed educational market was 'essentially totalitarian in nature, absorbing, and where possible destroying, alternative structures, even alternatives which it has generated itself'.⁹² Hence:

According to Polanyi's analysis, the community can recreate itself by a process of social restoration involving what would in Māori terms be called *manamotuhake*. This is just what the *kohanga reo* and many other Māori social initiatives are aimed at. It cannot be said, therefore, that Māori people must inevitably be victims in the market place. On the contrary, they may well be able to exploit some of the new market forces to their own educational and social advantage, and use this advantage to defend themselves and their institutions from further erosion. *It is because of this that some of the ideas contained in the 1987 Treasury analysis of the management of the education system (1987) are, in my opinion, to be welcomed* (italics mine).⁹³

Polanyi's attractiveness to an Antipodean policy environment that had become as iconoclastic and eclectic as New Zealand's during the 1980s can best be understood in the context of Polanyi's highly individualistic and radical approach to societal reform. In his best-known work, *The Great Transformation* (1944), Polanyi drew upon an idealised view of non-Western tribal societies to advocate the creation of self-governing and independent communities.⁹⁴ Thus, he particularly appealed to those who advocated Māori self-determination in education during the mid-1980s.⁹⁵ Moreover, it might also be claimed that, in its frequent use of the word 'community', the Picot Taskforce was consciously invoking a parallel legend common to many European societies: that of an idealised collection of small, cohesive communities beset and finally reduced to servitude by a malevolent outside force — in this case, a highly centralised education system.⁹⁶

Be this as it may, parental choice was a major theme in the abstracts of

articles presented to Taskforce members. An abstract of an article in the *New Zealand Listener* of 11 July 1987 cited business leader Hugh Fletcher's view that education had been omitted from the reform process to date. Whilst the state should provide families with the resources to pay for education, Fletcher argued that parents should have the right to choose their preferred school. Another abstract outlined a study by Richard Elsmore of Michigan State University. Writing for the Rand Corporation, Elsmore believed that there were good grounds for increasing client choice in education, whilst avoiding the extremes of centralisation or devolution.⁹⁷

Despite the availability of such material, however, the Taskforce did not uncritically accept neo-liberal arguments for devolution. Rather, there are indications that Treasury and SSC pressure, far from unduly influencing the report writing process, may have served to arouse the collective ire of the Taskforce. Both Robinson and Smelt reportedly had input into Taskforce discussions, with the former being sufficiently vocal in her opinions for some members to demand that she be toned down.⁹⁸ A report to the Prime Minister's office in February 1988 conceded that there were still major areas of disagreement particularly between SSC and Treasury and the rest of the Taskforce. Hence, it was 'possible that there may be a minority report, although the group has so far been able to accommodate most of the concerns'.⁹⁹ In the event Treasury and SSC were excluded from the final meeting of the Taskforce, and it has been claimed that the final drafting saw some of the recommendations their representatives had advocated being effectively reversed.¹⁰⁰

During the latter stages of its deliberations, however, the receipt of two further reports probably served to convince the Taskforce that their own document was at least proceeding along the right lines. In late February the Taskforce received an advance copy of the Watts Report critique, written by SSC commissioner and deputy chairperson, Margaret Bazley. In her critique of existing university governmental structures, Bazley observed that the government was now concerned to off-set provider-capture with greater consumer sovereignty, using market mechanisms to improve efficiency and accountability in its social delivery systems.¹⁰¹

The Victoria Ministry of Education's Structures Project Team's series of booklets produced in 1986–1987 was likewise of considerable interest to the Taskforce in that they appeared to share a similar objective of 'self-governing schools'.¹⁰² Early in March 1988, a more finely detailed SSC report on the recent Victorian educational reforms came to hand.¹⁰³ Written by the senior management officer for SSC, Dr R.J.S. Macpherson, this report castigated the Australian teacher unions for their opposition to devolution, terming it little more than 'self-interested centralism'.¹⁰⁴

It is in the Bazley and Macpherson documents available to the Taskforce rather late in its deliberations, rather than in the Treasury Briefing Papers and its subsequent somewhat *ad hoc* series of short papers, that charges of neoliberal influence on its deliberations would seem to have more justification. By this stage, however, the receipt of these documents seems to have merely confirmed the existing feeling of Taskforce members that their report was in tune with contemporary thinking regarding educational reform. Moreover,

the Taskforce report as finally released to the public in April 1988 tended to embed its recommendations in the general dissatisfaction with existing educational structures and outcomes being expressed across the community. Thus, in emphatically rejecting minor adjustments to the existing structure, the committee emphasised that ‘the comments made to us in submissions and our own inquiries convinced us that the time has come for radical change’.¹⁰⁵ These had clearly indicated ‘an overly high degree of centralization in our education system’, to the effect that ‘virtually all power and decision making comes from the centre’.¹⁰⁶ The result was that professional and bureaucratic interests had tended to predominate over the interests of educational consumers, particularly minority groups.¹⁰⁷

Anti-provider/anti-dominant group sentiment was further reflected in the key Picot Report recommendation that individual learning institutions were to constitute the basic unit of educational administration, because these were where there was ‘the strongest direct interest in educational outcomes and the best information about local circumstances’. The notion that individual learning institutions could be effectively run by ‘a partnership between the teaching staff (the professionals), and the community’,¹⁰⁸ can be traced not only to concerns about provider-capture, but also to North-Western European industrial precedents about which Picot had previously written with approval. Even the school charter which, as the contract between institution, community and state, was to be the ‘linchpin’ of the new structure, was grounded in a number of earlier precedents of decidedly mixed ideological parentage. Taskforce member Wereta later claimed that the charter concept came from Peter Ramsay.¹⁰⁹ The concept, however, was not unknown in educational policy circles by this time, being clearly articulated in the left-leaning Citizens’ Association for Racial Equality’s 1984 submission to CICAQ, set up by Marshall. This submission had persuasively argued that the existing education system was not only over-centralised, it was also the case that middle-class Pākehā capture of its decision-making processes could largely be curtailed by radical devolutionary reform. The dominant role biculturalism had gained within the policy environment as a result of Māori agitation, supported by an increasing number of Pākehā educators, was strongly reflected in the devolutionary tenor of the Picot Report, with the Taskforce clearly believing that the new structure it recommended would help achieve Māori aspirations.¹¹⁰

Education boards were to be abolished, leaving learning institutions free to choose their own services.¹¹¹ For decades, however, education boards had been the subjects of controversy, with successive calls for their abolition coming to nothing. A number of ministers of education had criticised them for blocking policy initiatives, and Marshall himself experienced periodically difficult relationships with education boards. Their removal, therefore, was not surprising.

The Picot Report’s recommendations for improved coordination between primary and secondary institutions were likewise an acknowledgement of the longstanding concerns expressed by radical academics, teachers’ unions, business organisations, politicians, traditional conservatives and neo-liberals alike about the inadequacies of existing assessment regimes and the consequent

wastage of young people, finally culminating in the Fargher-Probine Report. Arguing that 'too many people leave school disaffected and with no formal qualification', the Picot Report proposed the establishment of a single state authority which would be responsible for developing a single coordinated system of course offerings and credits to be available, full-time or part-time, from any learning institution.¹¹² This recommendation was later to lead to the National Qualifications Framework.

The published report was now a public document. Inevitably, given the intense educational debate of the previous decade, and the undeniably radical tenor of its recommendations, it was subjected to intense public and political scrutiny prior to the publication of the government's official response, *Tomorrow's Schools*. Far from tamely endorsing neo-liberal sentiment, however, *Tomorrow's Schools* was to tighten further the equity and bicultural concerns of the Picot Taskforce. Hence, it largely accepted the criticisms raised by several petitioners, including a combined Māori submission presented by Department of Education advisor Wiremu Kaa and subsequently endorsed by Labour's Cabinet Equity Committee. As a result, *Tomorrow's Schools* gave the Treaty of Waitangi more formal acknowledgement, school charters were to be structured to more clearly address equity issues, and newly created boards of trustees were given powers to co-opt Māori and female members where these groups were under-represented. It is noteworthy that National, which supplanted Labour in power in 1990, took the position that equity principles centring on equal opportunity and Treaty obligations had sufficiently compromised the educational reforms to necessitate correction in favour of market principles, competition and academic excellence.¹¹³ Thus the stage was set for a lengthy debate over the true legacy of the Picot Taskforce that has continued into our own times.

More than 20 years after New Zealand's educational reforms were implemented, there exists a widespread view that the Picot Taskforce was little more than a passive vehicle for Treasury and SSC neo-liberalism.¹¹⁴ Although there have been attempts by educational historians to modify this view, it nevertheless remains dominant, particularly within the education sector.¹¹⁵ In arguing that the Picot Taskforce retained an integrity of its own despite the pressures placed upon it, however, this paper has attempted to illustrate how its members strove, with some success, to balance the diverse, sometimes contradictory, forces that existed in favour of radical educational change by the late 1980s. These forces certainly included the doctrinaire neo-liberalism of Treasury and SSC. However, they also included government and opposition demands for accountability and efficiency; trenchant critiques of education inequality emanating from Māori, feminist, liberal and neo-Marxist educators, not to mention the longstanding calls from various sections of the community for more democratic participation in educational decision-making.

The reality was, therefore, that no Wellington-based taskforce or committee charged with making recommendations for public sector reform at this particular time could have realistically opted to retain the status quo. It was also largely inevitable that the Taskforce would draw much of its inspiration from increasingly devolutionary rhetoric of contemporary pressure groups, from

many previous reports and recommendations from professional bodies, and a growing body of research evidence over the previous two decades. Moreover, as Bryce Edwards and John Moore have recently pointed out, the reformist-minded fourth Labour government was at this time actively seeking to establish a modern, socially liberal state ideology that removed discriminatory laws against gay males, made the country nuclear free and attempted to address indigenous Māori land grievances at the same time as it implemented its much-criticised neo-liberal economic agenda.

Ideologically speaking, of course, this was a decidedly mixed bag of goals. It has been suggested that this heterogeneous mix of left and right-wing ideas was no accident.¹¹⁶ This need not be taken to imply that there was some sort of sinister conspiracy between the diverse forces and groupings that were in favour of radical change. Rather, it acknowledges the reality of shifting coalitions made up of ideologically diverse groupings that have been identified by several previous researchers as occasionally forming around prominent issues in education, at particular times.¹¹⁷ In the case of New Zealand's educational reforms, this situation was itself the product of longstanding and deep-seated cultural, economic and political currents that had come to be expressed as a common discourse. It was the very pervasiveness of this discourse throughout the wider community that made it virtually impossible for contemporary policymakers or report writers to ignore. Here lies the essential correctness of the Butterworths' verdict on the era — 'the lights', they said, 'had turned green' for radical change.¹¹⁸ From the vantage-point of the early twenty-first century, the limitations of this fragile alliance of reformers can be more readily discerned. Thus, whilst it might be conceded that the discourse emanating from the 1980s reforms largely continues to underpin educational policy assumptions, increasingly embattled policymakers in the current recession remain dependent on a precarious balancing of seemingly incompatible goals such as choice and equity, local decision-making and social justice, whilst keeping the tensions between them in check.

ROGER OPENSHAW

Massey University, Palmerston North

NOTES

1 Roger Openshaw, *Reforming New Zealand Secondary Education. The Picot Report and the Road to Radical Reform*, New York, 2009, p.4; Graham Butterworth and Susan Butterworth, *Reforming Education. The New Zealand Experience, 1984–1996*, Palmerston North, 1998.

2 See Hugh Lauder, Sue Middleton, Jonathan Boston and Cathy Wylie, 'The Third Wave: A Critique of the New Zealand Treasury's Report on Education, Part 1', *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* (NZJES), 23, 1 (1988), pp.15–43; Jonathan Boston, Brian Haig and Hugh Lauder, 'The Third Wave: A Critique of the New Zealand Treasury's Report on Education, Part 11', *NZJES*, 23, 2 (1988), pp.115–44.

3 See particularly the afterword to Herbert M. Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893–1958*, 3rd edn, New York, 2004, pp.271–91.

4 Peter G. Filene, 'Obituary for the "Progressive" Movement', *American Quarterly*, 22 (1970), pp.20–34.

5 Daniel T. Rodgers, 'In Search of Progressivism', *Reviews in American History*, Vol 10, No.4 (December 1982), pp.113–32.

6 Jeffrey E. Mirel, 'Progressive School Reform in Comparative Perspective', in David N. Plank and Rick Ginsberg, eds, *Southern Cities, Southern Schools: Public Education in the Urban South*, New York, 1990.

7 Lauder, et al., 'The Third Wave'; Boston, et al., 'The Third Wave, Part 11'.

8 Liz Gordon and John Codd, eds, *Education Policy and the Changing Role of the State: Proceedings of the New Zealand Association for Research in Education Seminar on Education Policy*, Massey University, July 1990, Palmerston North, 1991.

9 Liz Gordon, 'Picot and the Disempowerment of Teachers', *Delta*, 41 (May 1989), pp.23–32; Gerald Grace, 'Labour and Education: The Crisis and Settlements of Education Policy', in Martin Holland and Jonathan Boston, eds, *The Fourth Labour Government: Radical Policies in New Zealand*, Second edition, Auckland, 1990, pp.165–91; Gerald Grace, 'The New Zealand Treasury and the Commodification of Education', in Sue Middleton, John Codd and Alison Jones, eds, *New Zealand Education Policy Today: Critical Perspectives*, Wellington, 1990, pp.27–39; John Codd, 'Educational Reform and the Culture of Distrust', *NZJES*, 34, 1 (1999), pp.48, 52.

10 John Codd, Richard Harker and Roy Nash, 'Introduction: Education, Politics and the Economic Crisis', in John Codd, Richard Harker and Roy Nash, eds, *Political Issues in New Zealand Education*, 2nd edn, Palmerston North, 1990, pp.7–22; Roger Dale, 'Regulation Theory, Settlement and Education Policy', in Gordon and Codd, eds, *Education Policy and the Changing Role of the State*, pp.33–44; Michael Apple, 'Ideology, Equality and the New Right', in Gordon and Codd, eds, *Education Policy and the Changing Role of the State*, p.8; Michael Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*, 3rd edn, New York & London, 2004.

11 E.S. Harper, 'The Theory and the Reality of the Picot Report: A Case Study in the Formulation and Implementation of Education Policy', MEd. dissertation, Victoria University of Wellington, 1992, pp.31, 131.

12 K.J. Wilson, 'The Picot Report and the Legitimation of Education Policy', MEd. Admin. dissertation, Massey University, 1990.

13 See, for instance: Mark Olssen, John Codd and Anne-Marie O'Neill, *Education Policy: Globalization, Citizenship and Democracy*, London, 2003; Gay Simpkin, 'Review of "Another Decade of New Zealand Education Policy: Where To Now?" Martin Thrupp and Ruth Irwin, eds', *NZJES*, 46 2 (2011), pp.104–107.

14 John Barrington, 'Historical Factors for Change in Education', in Peter McKinlay, ed., *Redistribution of Power? Devolution in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1990, p.191.

15 Gary McCulloch, 'Serpent in the Garden: Conservative Protest, the "New Right" and New Zealand Educational History', *History of Education Review*, 20, 1 (1991), pp.73–97.

16 Butterworth and Butterworth, *Reforming Education*, esp. pp.9–32.

17 See, for instance: J.D.S. McKenzie, 'Final Fulfilment in Managerial Nirvana. A Review of *Reforming Education: The New Zealand Experience, 1984–1996*', *New Zealand Education Review*, 26 March 1999, p.10; Greg Lee and Howard Lee, 'Education Policy Dynamics Ignored', *New Zealand Education Review*, 27 August 1999, p.8. See also the response, Graham Butterworth and Susan Butterworth, 'Bad Review Reply', *New Zealand Education Review*, 30 July 1999, p.8.

18 Roger Openshaw and Margaret Walshaw, *Are Our Standards Slipping? Debates over Literacy and Numeracy in New Zealand Since 1945*, Wellington, 2010.

19 Roger Openshaw, *Unresolved Struggle: Consensus and Conflict in New Zealand State Post-Primary Education*, Palmerston North, 1995; David McKenzie, Howard Lee and Greg Lee, *Scholars or Dollars? Selected Historical Case Studies of Opportunity Costs in New Zealand Education*, Palmerston North, 1996.

20 S. Harvey Franklin, *Trade, Growth and Anxiety: New Zealand Beyond the Welfare State*, Wellington, 1978.

21 John Barrington, 'Historical Factors for Change in Education', in McKinlay, ed., *Redistribution of Power? Devolution in New Zealand*, p.191. See also, Arnold Nordmeyer, *Report on the Reorganisation and Administration of Education*, 1974; *Towards Partnership*, Wellington, 1976 (The McCombs Report).

22 Roger Openshaw, 'Preparing for Picot: Revisiting the "Neoliberal" Education Reforms', *NZJES*, 38, 2 (2003), pp.135–50.

23 Malcolm McKinnon, *Treasury: The New Zealand Treasury, 1840–2000*, Auckland, 2003.

24 Openshaw, *Reforming New Zealand Secondary Education*, pp.59–74.

25 Roger Openshaw, "'Disadvantaged by a Pākehā based Education System": The Impact of Biculturalism on Radical Educational Reforms in New Zealand', *Pacific-Asian Education*, 22, 2 (2010), pp.5–20.

26 The transition of NACME from an agency generally supportive of gradual and incremental educational change to one that advocated much more rapid structural change can be discerned from documents within files such as ABEP, W4262, Box 2898, 46/3/14, National Advisory Committee on Māori Education, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

27 For a succinct account of this process see Elizabeth Rata, "'Goodness and Power": The Sociology of Liberal Guilt', *New Zealand Sociology*, 11, 2 (1996), pp.223–76. See also Openshaw, *Reforming New Zealand Secondary Education*, pp.61–71.

28 See Hiwi Tauroa, *Race Against Time*, Wellington, 1982.

29 For a brief summary, note 'CARE Asks for Commission on Māori Schooling', *Auckland Star*, 14 April 1984, p.A3. See also, J. Ennis, 'Why Do Our Schools Fail the Majority of Māori Children?', *Tu Tangata*, 36 (June/July 1987), pp.21–22. Ennis had been an inspector of schools for 17 years. His was a trenchant critique of educational structures mounted from within the educational bureaucracy.

30 See, for instance, Government Research Unit, 'Education Vouchers', 4 February 1987, AAZY, W3901, Box 181, Folder 15, Picot-General, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

31 Report of the Committee on Gangs, Government Response, 1984, AALR, Series 873, W444, Box 247, 52/479/1, part 2, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

32 *The Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Allegations concerning the Treatment of Cervical Cancer at National Women's Hospital and Other Related Matters*, Auckland, 1988. The findings of the Cartwright Inquiry influenced the tenor of the later Gibbs Report, often regarded as having introduced neo-liberalism into the health sector.

33 Openshaw, *Reforming New Zealand Secondary Education*. Although the 1982 OECD report stood out in alleging that public satisfaction with education was high, it should be noted that the OECD commissioners made only a fleeting visit to New Zealand. Their report was largely drafted by senior officers in the Department of Education.

34 A broadly analogous process in curriculum reform is succinctly described in the United States context by Kliebard, pp.271–91.

35 See, for instance, Education and Science Select Committee, *Report of the Inquiry into the Quality of Teaching*, Wellington, 1986; Ray Fargher and Mervyn Probine, *The Report of a Ministerial Working Party. The Management, Funding and Organisation of Continuing Education and Training*, Wellington, March, 1987.

36 See, for instance, Foreign Affairs and Defence Select Committee, *Report of the Inquiry into Disarmament and Arms Control*, Wellington, 1985; *Report of the Royal Commission to Inquire into the Crash of a DC10 Aircraft operated by Air New Zealand Limited*, Wellington, 1981. There were also several widely publicised reports and inquiries questioning the professional integrity of the police and the legal profession during the first half of the 1980s.

37 See Butterworth and Butterworth, especially pp.65–68.

38 R.O. Douglas, Minister of Finance, to Russell Marshall, Minister of Education, 9 June 1987. Memo entitled 'Review of the State Education Service', ABEP, W4262, Box 923, 17/5/5, part 1, Review of Educational Administration, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

39 Transcript of interview 33 with Maurice Gianotti, 10 September 1996, Wellington, Graham

Butterworth and Susan Butterworth, Ministry of Education Oral History Project, Education Reform 1987–1995. The author wishes to acknowledge the kind assistance of Graham and Sue Butterworth in granting access to their interview transcripts. All interviews cited are from transcripts in this collection.

40 Openshaw, *Reforming New Zealand Secondary Education*. p.99. Picot had worked for the National Development Conference and the New Zealand Planning Council as well as having been a University of Auckland Council member. In addition he had authored several papers on contemporary industrial and social concerns, expressing admiration for the Scandinavian consensus model of industrial conciliation along with concern over what he regarded as the unhealthy social divisiveness that had characterised the tenure of the previous National government led by R.D. (later Sir Robert) Muldoon.

41 Transcript of interview 29 with Brian Picot, 1 November 1995, Auckland, Graham Butterworth and Susan Butterworth, Ministry of Education Oral History Project, Education Reform 1987–1995.

42 See, for instance, Peter Ramsay, 'The Domestication of Teachers. A Case of Social Control', in Codd, Harker and Nash, eds, *Political Issues in New Zealand Education*, pp.103–22.

43 Picot Video Script, c.1987, AAWW, Series 7112, W4262, Box 5, National Library, Picot, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

44 Report of the Taskforce to Review Education, *Administering for Excellence. Effective Administration in Education*, Wellington, 1988, p.ix. Hereafter cited as the Picot Report.

45 *ibid.*

46 M. Gianotti, Notes of a Meeting of the First Meeting of the Taskforce held in Wellington, 1987 (31 July), p.3, AAZY, series 3901, W3901, Box 181, Picot-General, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

47 Butterworth and Butterworth, *Reforming Education*, pp.71–76.

48 Gianotti, Notes of a Meeting of the First Meeting of the Taskforce held in Wellington, 1987 (31 July), p.3, AAZY, series 3901, W3901, Box 181, Picot-General, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

49 Taskforce to Review Educational Administration, Record of Policy Points Made and Tasks to be Undertaken from Meeting Number Two, 1987 (17 August), AAZY, W3901, Box 181, Picot-General, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

50 Transcript of interview 33 with Maurice Gianotti.

51 Taskforce to Review Educational Administration, Education including Picot Taskforce, November, AAWW, Series 7112, Box 9, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

52 *ibid.*

53 *ibid.*

54 *ibid.*

55 See particularly, New Zealand Department of Education (1984), Letters of invitation between the Committee of Inquiry into Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications and the Post-Primary Teachers' Association, ABEP, Series 7749, W4262, Box 2065, 34/1/66/1, Secondary Education-Committee of Inquiry-Policy, Part 1, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

56 Taskforce to Review Educational Administration, AAWW, Series 7112, Box 9, Education including Picot Taskforce, p.7.

57 *ibid.*, p.2.

58 Transcript of interview 33 with Maurice Gianotti.

59 Transcript of interview 29 with Brian Picot.

60 Meeting 8.00am to 4.30pm, 31 July 1987, AAZY, W3901, Box 181, Picot General, Archives New Zealand, Wellington, pp.3–4.

61 *ibid.*, p.4.

62 *ibid.*, pp.6–7.

63 *ibid.*, p.6. The middle tier of the existing structure, represented since 1877 by the regional education boards was thus left with no particular function.

64 Leicester Webb, *The Control of Education in New Zealand*, Auckland: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1937.

65 Task Force to Review Education Administration, Record of Policy Points Made and Tasks to be Undertaken, AAZY, W3901, Box 181, Picot General, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

66 *ibid.*

67 *ibid.*

68 The Treasury, *Government Management: Brief to the Incoming Government 1987*, Vol.1, Wellington, 1987.

69 *ibid.*, pp.358–59, 368.

70 *ibid.*, pp.132–34.

71 The Treasury, *Government Management. Brief to the Incoming Government 1987*, Vol.11, Education Issues, Wellington, 1987, preface.

72 *ibid.*, p.10.

73 Transcript of interview 5 with Simon Smelt, 23 March 1994, Wellington, Graham Butterworth and Susan Butterworth, Ministry of Education Oral History Project, Education Reform 1987–1995.

74 *Government Management*, Vol.11, p. 272. In making these claims, Treasury drew on the views put forward by sociologists, feminists, radical Māori, NACME, CARE, CEIS and Te Kohanga Reo, as well as works including *Race Against Time*, the Benton research, the Gibbs Report, the Scott Report and the Cartwright Report.

75 Draft Department of Education Submission to Taskforce on Education Administration, [Undated but c.October 1987], AAWW, Series 7112, W4640, Box 9, Education including Picot Taskforce, Archives New Zealand, Wellington, p.7.

76 *ibid.*, p.13.

77 *ibid.*, p. 23.

78 Transcript of Interview 29 with Brian Picot. See also transcript of interview 33 with Maurice Gianotti.

79 'PM Wants to Axe Dept of Education', *Evening Post*, 7 November 1987, p.1.

80 *ibid.*

81 Administration of Education, Underlying Efficiency Considerations, Outline Note by Treasury [n.p.], AAWW, Series 7112, W4640, Box 9, Education including Picot Taskforce, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

82 Taskforce to Review Education Administration, Possible Organisational Models, Note by Treasury [undated, no author supplied], AAWW, Series 7112, W4640, Box 9, Education including Picot Taskforce, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

83 S.J. Smelt, Accountability in Education, Note by Secretariat to Taskforce to Review Education Administration, 9 November 1987, AAWW, Series 7112, W4640, Box 9, Education including Picot Taskforce, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

84 W.D. Scott Deloitte Ltd, *Report to the Taskforce to Review Education Administration. Initial Assessment of the Functions of the Department of Education*, 1987, introduction, p.1.

85 *ibid.*, Executive Summary, pp.1, 55.

86 See Government Research Unit, 'Education Vouchers', 4 February 1987, AAWW, Series 7112, W4640, Box 9, Folder 15, Education including Picot Taskforce, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

87 *ibid.* These examples notwithstanding, vouchers do not appear to have been seriously entertained by the Taskforce. However, the Te Kohanga Reo example was to provide further justification for the Committee's decision to provide a mechanism through which parents could choose to either withdraw their children from mainstream schools, create schools within existing schools, set up their own schools, or home school.

88 New Zealand Council for Educational Research, *How Fair is New Zealand Education? Part I*, Wellington, 1987, p.1. The accompanying footnote explained that this breakdown was based on 50% girls and women, 30–35% low socio-economic status, 15% Māori, 5% disabled and 13% rural, which was claimed to be 'a very conservative view of the degree of overlap between these groups'.

89 *ibid.*, p. 5.

90 Richard Benton, *How Fair is New Zealand Education? Part II. Fairness in Māori Education. A Review of Research and Information*, Wellington, 1987.

91 *ibid.*, p.69.

92 *ibid.*, p.71.

93 *ibid.*

94 Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, New York and Toronto, 1944, pp.3–4.

95 See, for instance, Roger Sandall, *The Culture Cult: Designer Tribalism and Other Essays*, Boulder, 2001, pp.ix, 88. Sandall's critique of Polanyi's ideas describes how Polanyi delusions of romantic primitivism and suspicion of Western-style democracies led him into an 'obsessive search for an idealised pre-capitalist culture' that never actually existed.

96 Logan Moss, 'Picot as Myth', in Middleton, Codd and Jones, eds, *New Zealand Education Policy Today: Critical Perspectives*, p.145.

97 Roger Openshaw, *Reforming New Zealand Secondary Education: The Picot Report and the Road to Radical Reform*, New York, 2009, p. 116.

98 Transcript of interview 33 with Maurice Gianotti.

99 A. Dixon to PM, Memo dated 15 February 1988, Picot Taskforce — Progress Report, AAZY, W3901, Box 181, Picot-General, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

100 Transcript of interview 33 with Maurice Gianotti.

101 Margaret Bazley, 'The Watts Report on New Zealand Universities and Post-Compulsory Education and Training', Wellington, 1988, p.3, AAZY, W3901, Box 181, Picot-General, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

102 Government Research Unit, Education Vouchers, 1987, item 29, p.8, AAZY, W3904, Box 181, Picot General, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

103 R.J.S. Macpherson, Report on Structural Changes in Victoria's Education, State Services Commission, 2 March 1988, AAZY, W3901, Box 181, Picot-General, Archives New Zealand, Wellington. Copies of this report were also sent to the Prime Minister's Office, SSC, Treasury, the Department of Labour and the Assistant Minister of Education.

104 *ibid.*

105 Picot Report, p.6.

106 *ibid.*, p.22.

107 *ibid.*, pp.23–24.

108 *ibid.*, p. xi.

109 Transcript of interview 20 with Whetu Wereta, 20 June 1994, Wellington, Graham Butterworth and Susan Butterworth, Ministry of Education Oral History Project, Education Reform 1987–1995.

110 Picot Report, p.xiii.

111 *ibid.*, p.xii.

112 *ibid.*, p.xiii.

113 Note, for instance, the sustained but ultimately unsuccessful attempt by National's Minister of Education, Lockwood Smith, to encourage the widespread adoption of total bulk funding through legislation. Note also National's introduction of an Educational Reform Bill designed to restore 'flexibility' to what the government regarded as the social agenda of the previous Labour government, and the promulgation of new educational guidelines acknowledging the importance of competition, academic excellence and relevant workplace skills.

114 Gordon and Codd, eds, *Education Policy and the Changing Role of the State*; Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*; Olssen, Codd and O'Neill.

115 See, for instance, Barrington, 'Historical Factors for Change in Education'; McCulloch, 'Serpent in the Garden'; Butterworth and Butterworth, *Reforming Education*, especially chs 3 and 4.

116 Bryce Edwards and John Moore, 'Hegemony and the Culturalist State Ideology in New Zealand', in Roger Openshaw and Elizabeth Rata, eds, *The Politics of Conformity in New Zealand*, Auckland, 2009, p.45.

117 Kliebard, pp.271–91.

118 Butterworth and Butterworth, *Reforming Education*, p.104.