

# ***Thinking Comprehensively: Some comparisons between the New Zealand Thomas Report (1944) and the New South Wales Wyndham Report (1958)***

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*For nearly half a century Australian and New Zealand historians of education have studied the Wyndham and Thomas Committees' recommendations on post-primary school 'reform' in their respective societies. To date, however, there has been little or no attempt to identify similarities and differences between the reports. This paper seeks to remedy this deficiency by examining the committees' philosophies about what form post-primary schooling should take and its relationship to the New South Wales and New Zealand societies. Both committees agreed, for example, that a compulsory common core (general education) curriculum should be introduced into all post-primary schools. Furthermore, they recommended that teachers should be able to modify the various syllabuses to suit their heterogeneous pupil populations, although they differed in their recommendations about the duration and scope of the core curriculum and the degree to which the School Certificate examination requirements should be prescribed.*

*In addition to these considerations, the paper examines the institutional setting within which the compulsory general education curriculum was to be delivered. The Wyndham Committee reported solely on secondary schools whereas the Thomas Committee sought to prescribe a compulsory core curriculum common to three types of post-primary institutions already in existence: secondary schools, technical high schools, and the secondary departments of the (mostly rural) district high schools. Notwithstanding this difference, both committees envisaged that the adoption of a new post-primary schooling policy would require a shift in attitude on the part of teachers, education officials, and other interested parties who had worked in, and identified with, a predominantly traditional academic model of post-primary education.*

### **Introduction**

Since the publication of the Thomas Report in 1944 and the Wyndham Report 14 years later, a variety of critics have discussed their philosophies and recommendations at length.<sup>1</sup> Interest in these reports is hardly surprising, given that both committees presented a variety of proposals for changes to the existing post-primary curriculum, the School Certificate examination, and the nature of post-primary schooling in general. The Thomas Committee, for example, recommended that a detailed compulsory common core curriculum be available to all Form 3 (Year 9) to Form 5 (Year 11) adolescent non-Maori boys and girls.<sup>2</sup> This curriculum was to apply to students irrespective of the type of post-primary school they attended: either a combined (amalgamated secondary and technical institution), technical high, secondary, or district high school. Native (Maori) district high school and denominational Maori secondary school students received no mention in the Thomas Report because the education of Maori did not form part of the Thomas Committee's terms of reference as determined by Rex Mason, the Minister of Education.<sup>3</sup> Students at these institutions were to be schooled separately from their non-Maori ('Paheka') counterparts in most cases, although in the larger centres of population Maori primary school leavers could attend, free of charge, 'any [available] secondary, combined, technical, or district high school'.<sup>4</sup>

The Thomas Committee issued curriculum proposals that made special provision for the wide range of differing abilities, interests, and vocational aspirations of non-Maori students who were to enrol in New Zealand post-primary schools in increasing numbers once the school leaving age was raised to 15 years as from 1 February 1944. Their recommendations were based on the philosophy that no post-primary school should continue to function as a selective institution, and that when more teachers understood this fundamental change they would see the pressing need to 'cater for pupils of widely differing abilities and interests'.<sup>5</sup> While the Committee envisaged that this shift in thinking and practice would not be achieved easily or unanimously, there is evidence to suggest that they underestimated the many difficulties associated with trying to 'modernise' or reform the New Zealand post-primary curriculum.<sup>6</sup> The Thomas Committee had assumed that curricular change could occur within the existing pattern of post-primary schools. To this end, they proudly declared that in formulating their compulsory common core curriculum the Committee had '[taken] account of the differing practices and circumstances of the various types of post-primary school (State secondary, registered [private] secondary, technical high, and district high), and of the differing needs of various groups of pupils'.<sup>7</sup> The Committee

concluded that post-primary schools must be able to design courses to suit their own requirements.

At no stage, however, did the Thomas Committee refer to the creation or development of a comprehensive, multilateral, or 'common' high school. Rex Mason's instructions to the Committee 'excluded consideration of many aspects of post-primary education'; for example, 'questions relating to the organisation of the post-primary system' and matters concerning teacher recruitment, education, and employment, and teaching methods.<sup>8</sup> In light of these limitations the subsequent specification of, and faith in, a general education curriculum—albeit with differences in curriculum content to cater for differences in abilities and interests between individual students, and with a range of 'optional studies and activities from which a choice could be made to suit individual needs'<sup>9</sup>—was scarcely surprising, even if the controversy surrounding its introduction could not have been fully anticipated.

### ***Defining schools comprehensively: A proliferation of terms***

When Frederick Wood, an Australian-born professor of history at Victoria University College (Wellington), wrote in 1944 that 'the pattern of New Zealand post-primary education is ... on the face of it exceedingly complex',<sup>10</sup> he was expressing an opinion familiar to many New Zealand and overseas educators.<sup>11</sup> For his part, Wood had presumed that a variety of institutions would continue to dominate the post-primary educational landscape throughout the 1940s, although he observed a general tendency for these schools to 'conform to a definite type' and to 'become more and more alike'<sup>12</sup>. What Wood was referring to was the emergence of a comprehensive schooling model, but he failed to acknowledge the fact that whenever New Zealand educators and policymakers had referred to 'omnibus', 'composite',<sup>13</sup> 'combined', 'multilateral', 'comprehensive', or 'common multi-purpose' schools, as they sometimes did, they generally used these terms interchangeably, as had English educators prior to 1947.<sup>14</sup> By comparison, American, Australian, and English educators were more precise in their use of terminology—post-1947 in the latter case. American academics Andreas Kazamias and Byron Massialas (1965) described comprehensive high schools as institutions with three identifiable curriculum 'tracks' (p.171) college/preparatory, commercial, and vocational/technical—through which 'pedagogical differentiation' took place.<sup>15</sup> The President of the Carnegie Corporation, John Gardner (1959), offered a similar definition of an American comprehensive school:

It is called comprehensive because it offers, under one administration and under one roof (or series of roofs), secondary education for almost all high school age

children of one town or neighborhood ... . It is responsible ... for providing good and appropriate education, both academic and vocational, for all young people within a democratic environment which the American people believe serves the principles they cherish.<sup>16</sup>

Some Australian educators were determined to achieve greater definitional clarity. Kenneth Cunningham and Dorothy Ross (1967) explained that combined institutions (often found in rural towns across Australia) provided only two courses—academic and technical—for a relatively small secondary school population. They suggested that because combined schools were erected solely 'for reasons of staffing and economy of buildings'<sup>17</sup> they could not be labelled comprehensive institutions. The distinction was straightforward: comprehensive schools were founded on a definite educational philosophy whereas combined schools were strictly utilitarian organisations. The former offered a wider variety of courses to meet students' interests and aptitudes than did combined schools, although in Cunningham and Ross' account comprehensives did not provide 'vocationally oriented 'streams' into which pupils are placed on entry or soon after'.<sup>18</sup> These streams or 'sides', it was noted, were to be found in multilateral schools. Because American comprehensive high schools streamed their students vocationally, Cunningham and Ross concluded that these schools should be properly renamed multilateral institutions.<sup>19</sup>

Writing in the 1960s Alan Barcan, a prominent historian of Australian education, revealed a willingness to achieve greater definitional precision in relation to the comprehensive and multilateral school labels. He sought initially to distinguish Australian comprehensive secondary schools from selective schools, and suggested that in England ambiguity surrounding the role of comprehensive institutions had dissipated somewhat after the Ministry of Education issued a circular in June 1947 stating that these schools were 'intended to cater for all the secondary education in a given area without an organisation in three sides [grammar, modern, and technical]'.<sup>20</sup> The result was the adoption of the multilateral label post-1947 to refer only to those English secondary schools that featured these three distinct streams.<sup>21</sup> The definitions were identical to those presented by Cunningham and Ross (1967), but they appear to have been at odds with the description of comprehensives provided by Kazamias and Massialas (1965).

There is clear evidence to suggest, however, that the comprehensive-multilateral distinction advanced by Cunningham and Ross and by the UK Ministry of Education had not been adopted universally by Australian historians of education in the 1970s. Some authors chose to employ the terms 'multilateral comprehensive'<sup>22</sup> and 'comprehensive'<sup>23</sup> alternately.

For Bernard Hyams and Bob Bessant, comprehensive and multilateral schools offered students a choice of three discrete courses—academic, commercial, and nonacademic/technical. In both instances it was thought that these institutions would '[cater] for a variety of student needs through differing courses and subjects'<sup>24</sup> in ways that the selective, 'unilateral', academic secondary schools were unable to emulate. Notwithstanding different assessments by educators of what comprehensive and multilateral secondary schools were or ought to be, there was general agreement that, as Freeman Butts of Columbia University had observed, the new type of nonselective, multipurpose secondary school had been created in the hope that students—independent of their course of study—would 'have a common social and community life'<sup>25</sup> resulting from 'the extension of social democracy'.<sup>26</sup> As the American educational historian David Nasaw (1979) shrewdly observed, the rhetoric was seldom evident in practice:

Comprehensive high schools differentiated students into curricular tracks, but then undid the damage to democratic pretensions by bringing them back together again into a microcosmic, quintessentially American, democratic community to eat lunch, take recess, learn their 'civics', and cheer their athletic teams to victory.<sup>27</sup>

### ***The Thomas and Wyndham Reports: Aims and objectives***

The terms of reference for the New South Wales Wyndham Committee (1953–1957) bore little resemblance to those prescribed for the Thomas Committee (1942–1943). The committee, chaired by Harry Wyndham, the Director-General of Education, was asked by R. J. Heffron, the Minister of Education,

[First, to] survey and to report upon the provision of full-time day education for adolescents in New South Wales ... [and, second, to] examine the objectives, organization and content of the courses provided for adolescent pupils in the public schools of the State, regard being had to the requirements of a good general education and to the desirability of providing a variety of curriculum adequate to meet the varying aptitudes and abilities of the pupils concerned.<sup>28</sup>

By comparison, the Thomas Committee's terms of reference required them to consider only the influence on post-primary curricula of the elevation of the University of New Zealand's Matriculation examination from Form 5 (Year 11) to Form 6 (Year 12) and the introduction of accrediting for this recently renamed Form 6 University Entrance examination, and to suggest new or revised subjects and syllabuses for the Department of Education's School Certificate examination,<sup>29</sup> first offered in 1934. Unlike the Wyndham Committee, the Thomas Committee knew

from the outset that they had *not* been instructed by a minister of education to conduct 'a complete review of post-primary education'.<sup>30</sup>

Because the New South Wales Committee had been given comparatively broad terms of reference they had more opportunity, at least in theory, to reflect on the perceived and/or real deficiencies of existing secondary schooling provisions. The Wyndham Committee, for example, acknowledged that New South Wales secondary school teachers were finding it very difficult to 'provide a programme of education completely satisfactory for all types of adolescents'.<sup>31</sup> The influence of external examinations on school syllabuses, the provision of different types of secondary school—junior, home science, general, country, three-year intermediate, agricultural, selective, five-year comprehensive, district high schools, the Correspondence School but not technical colleges—and large projected enrolment increases in secondary schools was of sufficient magnitude for the Wyndham Committee to conclude that 'a decision as to the nature and structure of the secondary education to be provided in the years so close upon us'<sup>32</sup> was long overdue. When placed alongside the Committee's concerns about the limited 'holding power of [secondary] schools', whereby 'early abandonment of secondary school studies' leading to unnecessary 'pupil wastage' was commonplace on account of a buoyant job market, educationally unsympathetic parents, and curricula seldom being adjusted to suit the needs of a heterogeneous adolescent school population,<sup>33</sup> the Wyndham Committee concluded that making secondary education available to all youth was easier said than done. They described 'the central problem' in the following terms:

'The education of all adolescents' implies a proper provision for all types and levels of ability and for the wide variety of interest and need to be found in any entire school generation. What is sometimes overlooked is that this very definition of secondary education makes it obligatory for the community to provide suitable education, not only for the 'average' adolescent, but also, and on the same social and moral grounds, for the adolescent of talent and for the adolescent who is poorly endowed ... . Today's problem is that of meeting the needs of all adolescents without impairment to the potentialities of any.<sup>34</sup>

'[Exercising] ingenuity and imagination' on the part of New South Wales teachers and educational administrators was essential, it was thought, in order that 'the needs of the generality of adolescents' could be catered for more effectively without jeopardising the interests of academically minded boys and girls.<sup>35</sup> To retain the existing overly complex arrangement of different secondary schools without modification would militate against these objectives. Not surprisingly therefore, the Wyndham Committee recommended comprehensive secondary schools to ensure that 'a good

general education' was provided and that greater differentiation would be possible in the quest to provide 'secondary education for all adolescents'.<sup>36</sup>

Despite clear differences in the terms of reference of both committees, their reports revealed that similar problems had arisen from the desire to provide post-primary schooling for the whole youth population. The Thomas Committee, for their part, urged New Zealand post-primary school teachers to adopt 'a fairly general change in approach' so that students' 'common needs' as future citizens could be met through the compulsory general education curriculum, albeit not at the expense of satisfying their 'individual needs'.<sup>37</sup> The latter were to be addressed through variations in the core curriculum content and the provision of a wide range of optional subjects leading to the revised School Certificate examination.<sup>38</sup> A major challenge in the Committee's opinion was for post-primary institutions to be (re)organised so that teachers could start to 'tap more than a fraction of the creative powers of youth'.<sup>39</sup> Such a reorganisation would undoubtedly benefit the three types of student who needed definite but somewhat differentiated provision in the Committee's assessment: 'the less scholarly'; 'the ordinary pupil'; and 'the intellectually bright minority'.<sup>40</sup> These types, or 'intelligence categories', mirrored those presented by the Wyndham Committee, by Kenneth Cunningham and William Radford—the first and second Director respectively of the Australian Council for Educational Research—and by the English Spens (1938) and Norwood (1943) Committees.<sup>41</sup> In the latter instances these categories were invoked to justify the establishment of a *tripartite* secondary school structure in England—'an ugly phrase for an ugly arrangement', in Robin Pedley's opinion<sup>42</sup>—and the rejection of a comprehensive schooling model, in the mistaken belief that tripartition would promote 'parity of esteem' between all types of secondary school.<sup>43</sup>

Having asserted that a traditional academic approach to post-primary schooling was not suited to the great majority of adolescent boys and girls, the Thomas Committee sought to devise an extensive general education curriculum for all high school students. Boldly declaring that this curriculum would provide 'a richer and better balanced education' for every pupil—one that would serve as 'an aid to [personal] growth and as a general preparation for life in a modern democratic community'<sup>44</sup>—the Committee stressed that their proposed curriculum was not intended to constrain students' choice of subjects. Rather, it was intended to aid 'the full development of the adolescent as a person' and prepare boys and girls to assume 'an active place in our New Zealand society as worker, neighbour, homemaker, and citizen'.<sup>45</sup>

The Thomas Committee was confident that 'a democratic school system' would arise from their recommendations, one in which general education

and some specialised prevocational study would co-exist comfortably, not antagonistically.<sup>46</sup> This symbiotic relationship was necessary, Rex Mason believed, because modern high schools '[have] two functions—first, to prepare a minority of students for University education, and, second, to prepare the remainder for immediate participation in adult life and labour'.<sup>47</sup> In the Minister's opinion, the Thomas Committee had drafted a curriculum that would allow teachers in every type of post-primary school to fulfil these two roles more than adequately (p.43). But for this to happen, differences in aptitude and interests could not be ignored. As Mason explained:

There is at least full recognition of the fact that all children are not alike, that some can go further and faster than others, that lack of academic ability may be compensated for by some other kind of ability, that a child of no particular ability may make a worthy citizen.<sup>48</sup>

### ***Political Support for Comprehensive Schooling***

In the immediate post-World War 2 era it was expected that this work would be undertaken by technical high schools, combined schools, 'secondary schools proper', and district high school secondary departments.<sup>49</sup> Mason had hoped that the seven recently established combined or multilateral schools in some New Zealand provincial towns—institutions that were created from fusing together existing small secondary and technical schools in centres where the retention of separate schools had proven to be uneconomic<sup>50</sup>—could achieve a better balance between academic and practical instruction than had usually been the case in the post-primary sector. Such recognition of multipurpose secondary schooling was especially significant, given that this was the first occasion in which a New Zealand minister of education had voiced support for this type of schooling publicly, as opposed to simply acknowledging its presence in certain communities.<sup>51</sup> Conveniently ignoring the economic reasons behind their inception, Mason chose instead to emphasise the potential for these combined schools to advance a new philosophy of post-primary education as follows:

The combining of schools was intended primarily to do two things—to render impossible the social stratification that tended to develop between secondary and technical schools, and to enable the secondary schools to broaden their curricula by the inclusion of practical subjects.<sup>52</sup>

In expressing support for multilateral or combined schooling the Minister freely admitted that it would be difficult for any and every multilateral institution to 'perform all its many functions with equal



success'.<sup>53</sup> Mason appreciated that academic and practical studies were very seldom 'equally valued [publicly] as vehicles of culture'<sup>54</sup>—a reality conceded by few of his predecessors, with the notable exception of Peter Fraser, the Labour government's first Minister of Education (1935–1940).<sup>55</sup> This equality was achievable in the near future, Mason believed, but he understood that teachers' own academic or practical dispositions could hinder the process.<sup>56</sup> These dispositions were, nevertheless, not sufficient to stop the Minister from declaring that one of the Labour government's policies was to '[combine] secondary and technical schools outside the four main centres wherever this is possible'.<sup>57</sup> The policy of restricting 'multilateral schools' to the less populous areas of New Zealand was not immutable though, because Mason soon announced that to accommodate large enrolment increases in the North Island, especially in Auckland, new post-primary schools—'in general of the multilateral type'<sup>58</sup>—were already being built.

It will be recalled that the Thomas Committee had not contemplated the emergence of comprehensive schools in larger centres, if their report accurately captured their deliberations. The Committee's terms of reference appear to have excluded such a consideration but it is unlikely that individual committee members would have been unaware of the ongoing debate over comprehensive schooling.<sup>59</sup> A decade earlier, the Bodkin Committee (1930) had reported in favour of academic and technical education being offered in a 'single modern composite school' primarily for the reason that 'the last vestige of the objectionable social distinctions' between academic and non-academic students was expected to disappear with a new type of post-primary school in place.<sup>60</sup> The Headmaster of Wellington College, William Armour, readily endorsed the Bodkin Committee's proposal. He recommended that all secondary schools be translated into 'schools of a composite and exploratory type', in the belief that amalgamations between existing secondary and technical high schools were inherently desirable. Armour was confident that this move would compel staff at these institutions 'to widen their courses of instruction and enrich their curriculum'<sup>61</sup> in order to suit students' different requirements. This proposal had already found favour with Theo Strong, the Director of Education, who was convinced that because secondary and technical high schools were 'gradually drawing near[er]'<sup>62</sup> to each other, the evolution of one type of post-primary school was inevitable.

Not all New Zealand educators in the 1920s and 1930s wanted to support the introduction of composite schools, it must be noted.<sup>63</sup> John Howell, the Director of Wellington Technical College, for instance, was vehemently opposed to the establishment of these schools in larger

centres. His clear preference was to retain separate secondary and technical high schools as 'long-course' and 'short-course' institutions respectively, and to set up 'composite school[s] of the American kind'<sup>64</sup> only in smaller (predominantly rural) communities. Howell predicted that these composite institutions would be abandoned as the population increased, because he thought that a policy of differentiated high schools would be adopted in the future in preference to the composite ('American type') model. The wholesale, uncritical pursuit of an American form of schooling would have disastrous consequences for New Zealand schools and students, Howell boldly asserted:

It has been argued that schools of the composite American type should be established everywhere in New Zealand. It will be unnecessary to point out that this type is contrary to British tradition, and there are not wanting many acute American critics who maintain that the all-embracing school is a low-type school, and does not permit that differentiation which is needed to meet the requirements of first-class intellects.<sup>65</sup>

### ***Acting Comprehensively: Beeby and the Labour government***

C.E. Beeby, New Zealand's Director of Education (1940–1960), was plainly unsympathetic to this line of argument. In the belief that support for rigid, institutionally based curriculum differentiation was synonymous with the English tripartite schooling system of which he was so openly critical,<sup>66</sup> Beeby wished to see greater access by adolescents to post-primary institutions. This meant that he generally applauded the creation of a 'new type of multi-purpose school'<sup>67</sup> post-1944. The resulting 'corporate institution' or 'omnibus type of school'<sup>68</sup> was regarded by Beeby as being so well suited to the New Zealand environment that it was adopted as the general pattern for schools established from the mid to late-1940s onwards. This development can be attributed to the increasing course overlap between technical high and secondary schools—observed more frequently in and from the mid-1930s—with the result that these institutions were '[brought] nearer to a common multi-purpose type'.<sup>69</sup> In what appeared to be one indicator of forthcoming government and Department of Education policy concerning the direction of the New Zealand technical high school Beeby, then Assistant Director of Education, posed the following rhetorical question: 'Shall it seek to merge itself with the secondary school to form one multi-purpose, post-primary institution[?]'.<sup>70</sup>

To address some concerns that had arisen in the 1940s about the future direction of technical high schools, Beeby outlined the Labour government's intentions for these institutions in his May 1946 *Five-Year Plan for Education*.<sup>71</sup> The continuing movement of secondary and technical

high schools toward a similar organisational pattern—prompted by the Thomas Committee's curriculum proposals, increasing competition between schools for enrolments, and public pressure for greater curricular overlap between these institutions—persuaded Beeby to explain the government's thinking sooner rather than later. In so doing, he revealed what was unquestionably a major policy not only for technical schools but also for the entire post-primary sector. It was envisaged, for example, that by 1951 technical high schools would be converted into 'senior technical colleges',<sup>72</sup> whose staff would have sole responsibility for the daytime training of apprentices and young workers, and who would cease to provide post-primary instruction of the kind outlined in the Thomas Report and the subsequent 1945 Education (Post-Primary Instruction) Regulations.<sup>73</sup> With the relocation of technical high school students to secondary schools in the immediate neighbourhood the latter institutions would become 'multi-purpose schools catering for practical as well as for academic types of children'. Beeby suggested that this development amounted to the one 'major change of policy'<sup>74</sup> among those proposed in his *Five-Year Plan* (1946).

From the mid-1940s, there was little doubt in the New Zealand educational community that something approximating a comprehensive schooling model was gradually being adopted as part of the Labour government's social and educational policy.<sup>75</sup> Mason and Beeby had similar faith in the egalitarian nature of multipurpose institutions, although Mason's successor in October 1947, Terence McCombs, was more cautious in his endorsement. McCombs believed that a common type of high school, while worthwhile in and of itself, should not be promoted at the expense of special types of schools.<sup>76</sup> As a result, separate secondary and technical high schools were not about to be abandoned in the foreseeable future. This policy of institutional differentiation had immense appeal to Ronald Algie, Minister of Education in the December 1949–September 1957 Holland (National) Ministry, because it was entirely compatible with the notion that each institution had specialised functions that had to be preserved. It is likely that Algie got external validation for his beliefs from the British Attlee (Labour) Government's (1945–1951) affirmation of selective post-primary schooling, and from the English Board of Education's (1943) advocacy of a tripartite system of secondary schools and its formal adoption under the 1944 Education Act.<sup>77</sup> But by the end of the New Zealand Labour government's term of office (November 1949) the Department's Chief Inspector of Secondary Schools, Geoffrey Wild, saw no reason to support a selective, tripartite schooling policy. After declaring in 1949 that rural and urban high schools were 'somewhat different [institutions]' and were likely to remain so for many years,

Wild went on to assert that 'there are powerful arguments in favour of multilateral, comprehensive, or omnibus schools'<sup>78</sup> being introduced throughout New Zealand.

### ***Early Twentieth Century Antecedents to Comprehensive Schooling***

Wild's 1949 observations were instructive, since they were founded on the premise that in due course multipurpose high schools would become 'indistinguishable' from one another. What was left unsaid, however, was the fact that New Zealand's combined schools had *not* furnished the blueprint for a common post-primary schooling model. Instead, the (mostly rural) district high schools had laid the platform for this development earlier in the twentieth century, albeit on the grounds of fiscal expediency rather than educational philosophy per se. Mason, for instance, had reported that teachers in the secondary departments of district high schools had '[tried to] do things that are not always compatible in a small [institution]';<sup>79</sup> namely, educating a large number of adolescents who would be entering the workforce immediately upon leaving school and preparing a small minority of boys and girls for studying at a New Zealand university. Beeby, by comparison, understood that teachers in these secondary departments had to '[cater] for all types [of student] in the one school'<sup>80</sup> because rural communities expected equality of educational opportunity to be a reality, not a fiction, for all children. This concern with equality had also been identified by Noel Hogben, a member of the Thomas Committee and a Wellington secondary school principal. Hogben sought to label these schools 'comprehensive' institutions for the reason that '[they] had to be all things to all men, so to speak'.<sup>81</sup>

The observations of Mason, Beeby, and Hogben about the omnibus nature of district high schools added little however that was not already known. Nearly fifty years previously the Inspector-General of Schools, George Hogben (Noel Hogben's father), had reminded educators that these schools had no alternative but to serve as dual purpose institutions:

The district high school [secondary department] had to serve a double purpose in a great many places. It had to give the pupils all that it could give them of a secondary education as interpreted in the [academic] secondary schools, but it also had to be prepared to give a good many of them all the technical [manual, practical] education that some of them were likely to receive, or the beginnings of a technical education.<sup>82</sup>

This essentially mandatory dual role had also been identified by Josiah Hanan, Minister of Education in the Massey National Ministry (1915–1919). In 1916, Hanan referred to the district high schools' 'double purpose'—academic and manual/practical—as 'constitut[ing] the peculiar

difficulty of these schools'.<sup>83</sup> He acknowledged the problems that teachers in these schools faced when they were endeavouring to satisfy the widely varying needs, interests, and abilities of students within what were usually small secondary departments with minimal staffing and few resources. Consequently, while the Minister did not use the 'multilateral', 'comprehensive', or 'composite' labels for the district high schools he clearly believed that these were different institutions from the conservative or traditional secondary schools, and would remain so.<sup>84</sup> This emphasis on institutional difference delayed the introduction of an extensive general education curriculum, common to all New Zealand post-primary schools and students, for thirty years.

### ***A General Education Curriculum for New Zealand and New South Wales***

Like the Thomas Committee a decade earlier, the Wyndham Committee wanted to design a curriculum to meet the educational and vocational needs of the increasing number of students who were moving from primary to secondary school. To this end, the Wyndham Committee was adamant that introducing a compulsory core curriculum into the recently established New South Wales comprehensive secondary schools ensured that all students would receive 'a good general education'.<sup>85</sup> In a statement closely resembling the general education philosophy articulated by the Thomas Committee,<sup>86</sup> the Wyndham Committee declared:

Our recommendation that the curriculum of secondary pupils should include a core of subjects common to all, is based on the conviction that there are certain fields of thought and experience of which no adolescent should be ignorant as a person or as a citizen, irrespective of his [or her] level of ability and of the situation in life in which he [or she] may later find himself [or herself].<sup>87</sup>

The Wyndham Committee also stressed that their general education curriculum was *not* intended to be 'narrowly prescriptive', as had that of the Thomas Committee previously,<sup>88</sup> because teachers would have the authority to modify subject matter and programmes within the common core to suit students' different interests and talents. Having a range of optional subjects or 'electives' available to all post-primary students was favoured by both committees, so that New Zealand and New South Wales adolescents could pursue those studies and activities beyond the common core curriculum which matched their widely varying vocational requirements and concerns.<sup>89</sup> Both committees made recommendations about general education and optional subjects, and both were confident that the latter would not subsume the former. Nevertheless, the Thomas Committee allowed more time for optional studies in the curriculum than

did The Wyndham Committee. The former suggested a ratio of core to optional studies for first, second, third, and fourth year students—Forms 3, 4, 5, and 6—of approximately 60:40, 50:50, 40:60, and 40:60. The Thomas Committee was adamant though that these suggested ratios did not prevent schools from exercising 'as much freedom as they wish to claim'<sup>90</sup> in designing curricula. What was *not* mentioned in their report was the Committee's reluctance to be seen by post-primary teachers, principals, and other interest groups as dictatorial or inflexible in their curriculum and examination proposals.<sup>91</sup> This concern also applied to the Wyndham Committee.<sup>92</sup>

For their part, the Wyndham Committee wanted students to spend more time on compulsory studies and less on options in the first few years of secondary schooling—their suggested ratios were 'approximately' 100:0 in Year 1, 75:25 in Year 2, 65:35 in Year 3, and 60:40 in Year 4 when the New South Wales School Certificate examination was to be sat.<sup>93</sup> Both the Thomas and Wyndham Committees emphasised that these were only suggested ratios, and as such they should not be binding on schools or students. The Thomas Committee, for instance, had mentioned that the 'bedrock minima' core subject requirements would act as 'an essential safeguard of the whole scheme',<sup>94</sup> to prevent optional pursuits from jeopardizing the status (and time dedicated to) the mandatory general education curriculum. Authority to determine the extent to which students in all types of post-primary school had adhered to the general spirit of the core curriculum and School Certificate proposals ought to rest ultimately with the New Zealand Department of Education, the Thomas Committee concluded. An auditing process was also held by the Wyndham Committee to be vital: in this case, the New South Wales Department of Education was seen to be the appropriate body to conduct the School Certificate examination. Working in conjunction with the proposed new Secondary Schools Board, the Department could ensure all adolescents had studied 'a balanced curriculum' and received 'a sound education',<sup>95</sup> the Committee reported. But the question remained: To what type of student was the School Certificate examination and the common core curriculum directed? The response from the Thomas and Wyndham Committee was similar—both were adamant that the examination and the compulsory curriculum must be aimed primarily, but not solely, at 'the pupil of average ability'.<sup>96</sup> To this effect the Thomas Committee confidently asserted:

It should be noted ...that there is nothing in our recommendations to prevent the bright pupil being adequately extended. We assume that in the 'core' studies he [or she] will be actively encouraged to go beyond his [or her] fellows, and the options for the School Certificate make provision for all the main types of intellectual interest...In considering examination prescriptions we have kept

in mind the bulk of pupils who will not proceed to the University....therefore, our proposed School Certificate prescriptions reflect the outlook of the educated layman rather than that characteristic of the academic or technical specialist.<sup>97</sup>

### ***The School Certificate Examination***

Given the importance that both committees attached to the delivery in multipurpose post-primary schools of a general education curriculum and a range of electives chosen in accordance with students' particular interests and aptitudes, it was entirely predictable that an external examination would be seen as the most appropriate instrument to assess the efficiency or otherwise of teachers, students, and schools.<sup>98</sup> This examination, the School Certificate, had to be designed with a heterogeneous adolescent student population in mind. Comprehensive secondary schools—or, in New Zealand, something analogous to them<sup>99</sup>—could not function as unilateral institutions because the Committees knew that 'secondary education for all adolescents' was about to become a major plank in the education policy of the New South Wales and New Zealand governments.<sup>100</sup> Therefore, while it was presumed that the common educational needs of boys and girls would be addressed through a compulsory curriculum, both committees maintained that differences in academic and other aptitudes must be identified and nurtured for every student. Here the Thomas Committee was more willing to suggest detailed syllabuses for both core and optional subjects than was the Wyndham Committee, although both reported that teachers and not the respective Departments of Education should determine the actual subject matter based on students' abilities, interests, and vocational aspirations.<sup>101</sup> Nevertheless, from a literal reading of both reports, New South Wales secondary teachers probably had somewhat more scope to exercise professional autonomy than their New Zealand counterparts.

In both New Zealand and New South Wales the School Certificate examination structure had to be designed around the particular post-primary schooling format proposed by each committee—overtly and unapologetically comprehensive under the Wyndham scheme<sup>102</sup> and approximately comprehensive (having been somewhat constrained by the retention of separate post-primary institutions in both name and kind) under the Thomas model.<sup>103</sup> This was no easy task because, as Beeby freely admitted, 'no school system can easily match its courses and methods to the needs of every child; the most it can hope for is a rough approximation'.<sup>104</sup> One important issue for both the Thomas and Wyndham Committee was that this examination had to be 'terminal or retrospective', not preparatory, in kind. Their reasoning was that very few students would

remain at school beyond the school leaving age of 15 years; most would seek direct entry to the workforce.<sup>105</sup> If post-primary schools were to cater for all students then, as the Thomas Committee observed, 'a wide range of optional subjects'<sup>106</sup> would have to be offered. For the great majority of New South Wales and New Zealand adolescents the Committees assumed that the attainment of a School Certificate examination qualification would represent their full education quota. Only a small proportion of students would stay on beyond this examination. Those who did were generally regarded as academically gifted and/or university aspirants. Furthermore, both Committees assumed that these students would continue their advanced study along lines specified largely by universities.<sup>107</sup> The Wyndham Committee was alone in arguing that a general education philosophy should be extended to this group of students:

While the objectives of tertiary education will be clearer in the minds of these students because they have elected to remain at school beyond the School Certificate stage...[this extra] time should not be regarded simply as a period of preparation for matriculation...provision should be made for school activities which are essential to the education of adolescents but which do not involve preparation for examinations.<sup>108</sup>

The Thomas Committee, by comparison, offered no comment on studies undertaken in the post-School Certificate year(s) other than to say that long-stay students would probably '[be] given a systematic course specially directed towards University requirements'. For these boys and girls School Certificate was to be sat in Form 5 (rather than Form 6), prior to the Form 6 University Entrance examination. School Certificate would therefore be only preparatory to further schooling rather than terminal for a high achieving, academically oriented minority. The general education requirements for this select group would have been satisfied already as proven by the granting of the School Certificate, in the view of the Thomas Committee.<sup>109</sup> They wanted this qualification to be regarded publicly 'as a guarantee of general educational attainments', as testament that 'an active and realistic approach' to schooling had been adopted, and as an indicator that students possessed 'an adequate level of general intelligence'.<sup>110</sup> Similarly, The Wyndham Committee maintained that the New South Wales School Certificate qualification should be issued to students only upon 'the successful completion of a satisfactory course of secondary education' by about 16 years of age.<sup>111</sup> In the comprehensive schooling environment favoured by the Committee the provision of a wide range of electives for the School Certificate examination was deemed sufficient to satisfy students' diverse interests and requirements, along with the ability and encouragement for teachers to modify the content



of the examinable core subjects where appropriate. Echoing a view identical to that expressed by the Thomas Committee, the Wyndham Committee declared:

Freedom should thus remain with teachers to select topics and to organize their actual programmes of work, so as to adapt the [secondary school] syllabus to the needs and capacities of their pupils and to the conditions of a particular school.<sup>112</sup>

### ***The Thomas and Wyndham Reports: A lukewarm reception***

Twelve months after being convened the Thomas Committee released their report to Rex Mason, the Minister of Education. Within one month (in December 1943) Mason had authorized the publication of only 1500 copies of the document, which were distributed to high school teachers, principals, school administrators, and the general public from February 1944.<sup>113</sup> Declaring that he wanted the report to be 'read with care and fully and freely discussed', Mason allowed a formal consultation period for the publication to be given 'close attention'.<sup>114</sup>

By comparison, the production and endorsement of the Wyndham Report was a protracted affair. Established in September 1953, the Committee presented its report to the Minister of Education some four years later, in October 1957.<sup>115</sup> Nearly four more years were to elapse before the New South Wales Labour government adopted the Committee's recommendations (in June 1961). It was not until 1967—six years after the 1961 Education Act was passed, which authorised the creation of comprehensive secondary schools statewide—that the Wyndham Committee's recommendations were fully implemented.<sup>116</sup> Despite this delay Alan Barcan believed that the Wyndham scheme was introduced in the 1960s 'hurriedly and with little preparation' and that the new syllabuses were nothing other than 'hasty adaptations' of the existing ones.<sup>117</sup>

The move toward comprehensive post-primary schooling in New South Wales and New Zealand had several consequences, not all of which were (or could have been) foreseen. In New Zealand the raising of the school leaving age to 15-years from 1 February 1944 and the adoption of the Thomas Report's core curriculum and School Certificate recommendations in regulations which came into operation from 1 February 1946 together led to substantial enrolment increases across the post-primary sector.<sup>118</sup> Teachers were experiencing difficulties in accessing copies of the original Thomas Report because too few had been printed, and there were serious shortages of trained and experienced high school teachers, resources, equipment, and classrooms in post-war New Zealand.<sup>119</sup> Beeby, in his

capacity as Director of Education, promptly identified these factors as militating against the smooth introduction of the 1945 Education (Post-Primary Instruction) Regulations. He knew this legislation, which specified the compulsory core curriculum and outlined the requirements for the awarding of the revised School Certificate examination, could not be enforced rigidly in the short term. Too few teachers, Beeby later observed, were able to meet 'the heavy demands' associated with the new regulations.<sup>120</sup> Ten years after this legislation had been passed a large number of high school teachers were still uncertain about the new curriculum and changes to the nature of conventional academic post-primary schooling. In other words, many teachers had difficulty understanding that post-primary schools were no longer selective or unilateral (academic), and that they were being encouraged by the Department and Director of Education to teach new and old subjects in different ways to suit a heterogeneous student group.<sup>121</sup>

In New South Wales the adoption of the Wyndham scheme had led to the establishment of comprehensive schools statewide, but the familiar practice of streaming adolescents into various programmes was not abandoned. To this end Hyams and Bessant concluded that comprehensive secondary schooling did little to steer the public away from defining high quality education almost entirely in terms of schools' examination performance and the provision of academic curricula, toward other valuations.<sup>122</sup> As a result, the newly created schools may have *appeared* more democratic than the elite, selective secondary schools—thereby avoiding what Kazamias and Massialas had accurately described as 'institutional differentiation in terms of types of schools'<sup>123</sup>—but many operated in a conservative manner. Hyams and Bessant were satisfied that teachers' adherence to existing administrative hierarchies and traditional notions of classroom efficiency in New South Wales was partly to blame, for as a group they generally 'showed little interest in matters related to curricula, types of schools, and teaching methods'.<sup>124</sup> In reaching a similar conclusion, Cunningham stated that there was simply '[a] shortage of teachers qualified to handle the comprehensive system'. Of equal importance, however, was his observation that conformity and a 'consequent lack of experiment' by teachers prevented comprehensive secondary schools from being 'the most satisfactory solution'<sup>125</sup> for meeting the diverse educational and prevocational requirements of large numbers of adolescents.

Teacher conformity and a tendency not to experiment with curricula and teaching methods were also seen as features of New Zealand post-primary schooling in the immediate post-Thomas Report environment. The freedom available to teachers under the Thomas scheme and the

1945 regulations was seldom utilised in the decade 1946–1956, Beeby lamented, primarily because staff were struggling to cope with the 'new and complex task ... [of educating] a conglomeration of boys and girls of all types'.<sup>126</sup> There was no doubt that the Thomas philosophy involved substantial changes to the very nature and purpose of high schools, some of which were known not to be universally applauded by employers, teachers, university staff, Catholic school representatives<sup>127</sup> and communities throughout New Zealand.<sup>128</sup> Beeby readily admitted that the comprehensive schooling that was steadily developing under the Thomas scheme taxed teachers' energies and abilities considerably. They were now expected to teach children ranging from 'the brilliant to the dull' and to try to ensure that equality of educational opportunity was not mere rhetoric:

While we [in New Zealand] escape altogether the problems of selection that bedevil educationists in most European countries, we have had to face in an acute form the difficulties inherent in providing, *within one institution* [italics added], courses suited to the needs and abilities of a cross-section of the community.<sup>129</sup>

### ***Schooling the Masses: A concern for equality and difference***

There is evidence to suggest throughout the 1940s and 1950s—up to the reprinting of the Thomas Report on 1 April 1959<sup>130</sup>—that the Director of Education and Departmental officers had little option but to allow high school teachers and other interest groups more time to adjust to the new curriculum, both philosophically and in the nation's classrooms. Preparing more trainees for teaching in the new environment, reducing class sizes, and planning for a further raising of the school leaving age to 16-years in the early 1960s remained priorities well beyond the release of the 1945 regulations, although it was thought that much of the work associated with the new type of post-primary schooling would have been 'consolidated' by 1949–1950.<sup>131</sup> Encouraged by Mason's assertion that 'true advances in education ... cannot be produced by regulations or administrative fiat',<sup>132</sup> Beeby wanted the Department of Education to avoid being seen as interventionist or inflexible in their work and interaction with teachers. The result, as Clive Whitehead has demonstrated convincingly, was considerable teacher confusion, close adherence by the Department of Education to the Thomas Committee's maxim of not '[imposing] a cut-and-dried philosophy on the schools or to control the curriculum in any detail', and the uncritical adoption of what the Committee had labelled 'the easy road' regarding curricular and wider institutional reform.<sup>133</sup> The latter involved making only minor adjustments to existing

courses in preference to a thorough re-examination of curricular theory and practice and 'act[ing] courageously' in the interests of all students.<sup>134</sup> Not surprisingly though, Mason's appeals for teachers to 'break new ground' and encourage 'more local initiative and variety in the [post-primary] schools' were greeted unsympathetically, mainly because the School Certificate examination had come to dominate the high school curriculum in the 1950s in much the same way as had the former University Matriculation examination.<sup>135</sup>

These observations were also applicable to New South Wales comprehensive secondary schools, as Christopher Peers has recently argued. It was well known that success in high status examinations invariably gave 'academic kudos and social privilege'<sup>136</sup> to both schools and students, but there was a reluctance to admit that not every girl and boy could gain school qualifications. A proportion would leave school at 15-years of age, thereby disqualifying themselves from candidature, while others simply lacked the ability to pass examinations. The question began to be asked in New South Wales increasingly during the 1950s: Would students, regardless of their academic and other aptitudes, be disadvantaged in any way by attending a comprehensive as opposed to another kind of post-primary institution? There was no clear-cut answer, as Butts (1970) and Barcan (1965) explained. For his part Freeman Butts, a prominent American educational historian and comparative educationist, believed that comprehensive schools were vastly preferable to the 'accepted hierarchy of institutions'<sup>137</sup> he witnessed operating throughout Australia in 1954. His chief complaints were that early course and subject differentiation, early specialisation, and an overemphasis on academic definitions of knowledge was antithetical to the pursuit of equality of educational opportunity which, in turn, was seen to underpin every modern democratic education system. Butts was satisfied that while comprehensive schools were not free from controversy,<sup>138</sup> they certainly offered a better solution to the many complex problems associated with mass post-primary education than did other schooling arrangements:

I assume that in a democratic and complex society education should be available freely and equally to all people...the educational base of a democratic society should be broad and generous...[There should be] equality of educational opportunity rather than a stratified dual system of education whether that dualism be along lines of race, religion, economic status, social class, or sheer intellectual ability.<sup>139</sup>

Barcan's contribution to the growing debate over comprehensive schools was equally informative. He summarised several arguments for and against establishing these institutions throughout New South Wales, which

were expressed during and beyond the period in which the Wyndham Committee was deliberating. Comprehensive schools were regarded in some quarters as inherently democratic, egalitarian institutions—they minimized social class differences, emphasised *education* rather than *instruction*, and encouraged adolescents from different family backgrounds to mix with one another.<sup>140</sup> Critics alleged, however, that these schools tended to be large, impersonal places within which academically minded students were seldom stimulated and extended, where intellectual study was often devalued and 'average' students received more attention than was their due, and where youth from different social strata rarely intermingled. In short, there was some public concern that the omnibus character of comprehensives made it harder for high(er) academic standards to be achieved and maintained than was the case with selective secondary schools.<sup>141</sup> Predictably therefore, attempts to foster 'parity of esteem between subjects as well as between pupils' and to avoid distinctions based on school curricula and organization were not resoundingly successful.<sup>142</sup>

### ***Comprehensive Schooling in the Post-Thomas and Wyndham Era***

With the introduction of the 1945 Regulations in New Zealand and the 1961 Education Act in New South Wales parents, teachers, and students were left in no doubt about the intentions of their respective governments concerning post-primary education. Some criticisms of the comprehensive schooling movement began to diminish as opponents came to understand the philosophy underpinning this movement and sought assurances from education officials that no adolescent would be marginalised or disadvantaged in such an environment. Nevertheless, those people closely associated with the Thomas Report were not willing to claim that comprehensive schooling and a revised curriculum constituted an educational nirvana.<sup>143</sup> The chairman of the Thomas Committee, for example, was one of two Committee members prepared to state that their report was not cast in stone:

We [the Committee] do not think the Report is perfect. We have worked hard and have pointed out something that we think is really an attempt to mark another milestone in post-primary education in New Zealand. We realise that there will be implications we could not foresee and that adjustments will need to be made.<sup>144</sup>

Reflecting on the significance of the Thomas Report some 30 years later, Noel Hogben reached a similar conclusion. He freely admitted that 'It would be a great mistake to regard the Report as suggesting that we [the Committee members] had found the final answer for all time'

to problems concerning post-primary schooling.<sup>145</sup>

The Wyndham Committee, by comparison, appeared to be more confident about the longevity of their recommendations. They suggested from the outset that although their survey of secondary education throughout New South Wales was not exhaustive their report ought to serve as 'a prelude to action' in the 'not distant future'.<sup>146</sup> Critics generally viewed the document less optimistically though, as Barcan (1965, 1971) has explained. With the adoption of the Wyndham scheme the selection of students within institutions did not cease. Instead, they were sorted into academic and nonacademic groups based on differences in abilities, interests, and vocational expectations, and with some regard to gender-appropriate curricular offerings. The selection criteria for adolescents, according to Peers, were based on 'prevailing assumptions about a direct relation between sex and intelligence' and on a presumed strong correlation between perceived types of intelligence and post-school occupations.<sup>147</sup> One predictable outcome was that academic courses in comprehensive schools would assume prominence, despite the Wyndham Committee's plea for curricular differentiation to be minimized, for student 'segregation' to be delayed, and for all subjects and courses to 'enjoy a parity of esteem'.<sup>148</sup>

Put simply, the selection that had once occurred *between* post-primary institutions was now taking place *within* the allegedly democratic comprehensive secondary school. The retention of this practice was, and is, of course ultimately dependent on the rationale behind it being relayed convincingly to the public. In this regard, the Thomas Committee suggested that differentiation between academic and practical studies could be achieved more easily and effectively when a variety of teaching methods were used to deliver the 'new' curriculum to students rather than encouraging teachers to make modifications only to the curriculum content. Moreover, the Committee firmly believed that their curricular and examination recommendations would help to eliminate the long-standing tension between general and vocational (manual and technical) education in the nation's high schools.<sup>149</sup> These assumptions were problematic however, as Roger Openshaw has argued. He noted, for example, that in the early 1960s the Department of Education was aware that urban multi-course schools were tending to promote academic programmes to the detriment of other offerings in an effort to 'raise the grade of the school' and to '[enhance] pupil regard' for a particular school. On balance though, the Department was satisfied that 'the basic idea of the community school'<sup>150</sup> was sound, mainly because it was thought comprehensive institutions had the capacity to eliminate some serious problems concerning pupil selection. This assessment—and others like it<sup>151</sup>—of the

merits of the post-war comprehensive school 'settlement' led Openshaw to remark:

Essentially...[the mass post-primary education settlement] substituted the multi-lateral (comprehensive) school, with its hierarchical division of subject-disciplines, for the various models of differentiated schooling then on offer. But it accomplished this task unevenly, leaving in place many of the features that had characterised the elitist pre-[second world] war secondary schools.<sup>152</sup>

Openshaw's thesis serves as a valuable reminder that in the difficult business of reforming high schools and their curricula, rhetoric and reality did not always correspond in the manner officials and practitioners had intended.<sup>153</sup> In New Zealand and New South Wales, comprehensive schooling had been adopted chiefly as a mechanism to make post-primary schooling more readily accessible to the adolescent population. Firm opposition to the retention of a selective post-primary schooling system was still being expressed some 20 years after the Thomas Report had been released, most notably in the Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand. The Commissioners claimed they knew 'how powerfully New Zealand opinion expresses itself' on the matter of selective schools. Consequently, they argued that '[a] common basis of secondary schooling' was essential in order to 'meet the wishes of the people of New Zealand'.<sup>154</sup>

Predictably perhaps, egalitarianism, social cohesion, and national integration were seen by the Commissioners as important values. These were comparatively easy to promote, it was thought, since by the early-1960s post-primary schools tended to closely resemble one another.<sup>155</sup> Yet egalitarianism did *not* mean that students' schooling was to be *identical*. In this regard the Commissioners agreed with the Thomas Committee that equality of educational opportunity had to involve the provision of different subjects and/or courses to different types of students, based on the belief that their varying needs and interests could be catered for only through a policy of (some) differentiation. They concluded: 'The Commission, however, would not be so unrealistic as to imagine that all courses should be regarded as of the same academic value'.<sup>156</sup>

Despite the Currie Commission's spirited defence of the comprehensive schooling model, some commentators were not convinced that it could satisfy every educational demand. Kenneth Melvin was one of several critics willing to assert that a policy of post-primary schooling for all youth promised more than it could possibly deliver and that it involved too many compromises:

For all their innovation, modernity, freedom and widening functions, New Zealand schools cannot escape the built-in limitations of democratic education.

A highway open to all and without tolls is likely to be over-crowded, unruly, its pace unaccommodating to faster traffic, its control complicated and any changes of direction hazardous.<sup>157</sup>

Such criticisms have not been confined to New Zealand, as Catharine Lumby (2000) has recently demonstrated. She explained that during the mid-1980s New South Wales comprehensive high schools were placed increasingly under the educational microscope, resulting in unfavourable comparisons being made between them and existing high status private and selective public schools. One unfortunate outcome was that comprehensives were regarded sometimes as 'a dumping ground for those who can't afford a private school or can't get into a selective high'.<sup>158</sup> The omnibus nature of comprehensive institutions—catering for academically talented adolescents alongside the less academically inclined boys and girls—has placed them in an invidious position, both educationally and socially, Lumby reported. An additional complication noted by Geoffrey Sherington of the University of Sydney has been the increasing pupil retention in comprehensives which, in turn, led to more students becoming candidates for the senior Higher School Certificate qualification than was envisaged by the architects of comprehensive schooling.<sup>159</sup> Having observed the considerable weight placed on secondary school examination league table comparisons publicly, Craig Campbell of the University of Sydney has argued that a cardinal principle behind comprehensive institutions is under threat. These schools, he asserted, were created originally as 'places where the different sectors of the community met'.<sup>160</sup> Campbell rightly concluded:

One of the ideas the comprehensive school was based on was the notion that our schools should contribute to a civil society. They weren't just places for getting credentials and passing exams.<sup>161</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In reviewing 45 years of comprehensive schooling in New Zealand, Clarence Beeby reminded readers that the transformation of high schools from selective to nonselective organizations was invariably a long-term project. Although he knew from personal experience that this reform took decades if not generations, Beeby remained convinced that 'no workable alternative to the policy we followed'<sup>162</sup> existed, for practical purposes. The absence of a viable alternative to comprehensive schools for mass post-primary education has *not* meant that these institutions were uncontroversial however, as this paper has demonstrated. In this context Beeby declared:



A school system that is to give every child even an approximately equal chance to develop the powers he [or she] happens to possess must be very varied in its offerings....The fact remains that any instrument, from a tin-opener to a college, tends to do a more efficient job if it has only one function to perform. If it has to do a multitude of jobs of different types, there have to be compromises in its structure that may reduce its efficiency in any one narrow sense.<sup>163</sup>

These observations are just as pertinent to secondary schools in the twenty-first century as they were to post-primary institutions nearly 50 years ago.

#### NOTES

1. Anderson, W. (1944). *The flight from reason in New Zealand education*. Auckland: Catholic Teachers' Association of Auckland; Barcan, A. (1965). *A short history of education in New South Wales: A survey of opinion, policy and practice in N.S.W. education from 1788 to 1965*. Sydney: Martindale; Beeby, C.E. (1956). New Zealand—An example of secondary education without selection. *International Review of Education*, 2 (4), 396–407; Hyams, B. K., & Bessant, B. (1972). *Schools for the people? An introduction to the history of state education in Australia*. Melbourne: Longman; McKenzie, D. (1983). Politics and school curricula, in W. J. D. Minogue (Ed.), *Adventures in curriculum* (pp.20–34). Sydney: Allen & Unwin; and Whitehead, C. (1974). The Thomas report—A study in educational reform. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 9, 52–64.
2. New Zealand Department of Education. (1944). *The Post-Primary Curriculum: Report of the Committee appointed by the Minister of Education in November, 1942* (Thomas Report). Wellington: Government Printer, pp.12–13.
3. While the terms of reference specifically excluded Maori education, the Thomas Committee dedicated one paragraph at the end of their report to post-primary schooling for Maori. The Committee noted that few Maori entered high schools, acknowledged that 'the education offered has not always been well adapted to their requirements', and concluded that efforts to provide Maori with post-primary and higher education 'should be very vigorously pressed forward'. Nevertheless, the paragraph relating to Maori schooling was deleted from the 1959 reprint of the Thomas Report, with no accompanying explanation. The Thomas Report (1944), p.94.
4. Mason, H. G. R. (1945). *Education today and tomorrow* (2nd ed.). Wellington: Government Printer, p.54. Notwithstanding this provision, the Minister of Education firmly believed that only a small minority of Maori youth were 'fitted for academic studies'. Official encouragement for actively recruiting Maori students into technical, trade, and domestic courses on account of their perceived 'natural manual aptitude', and away from academic programmes, was readily discernible. In other words, Maori youth were seen as having a narrower range of abilities and interests to cater for by comparison with that of their non-Maori counterparts. With this perception firmly in place—wherein people of different ethnicity were thought deserving of different educational provision—the education 'reforms' that were planned for non-Maori were not about to be extended to Maori. See Beeby, C. E. (1946, May 28). *Five-year plan*

- for education. Wellington, p.8; Beeby, C. E. (1992). *The biography of an idea: Beeby on education*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, pp.205–210; and McLaren, I. A. (1974). *Education in a small democracy: New Zealand*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp.72–92.
5. The Education (School Age) Regulations 1943. (1944, April 1). *The Education Gazette*, 23(4), 76–77; The Thomas Report (1944), pp.5–7.
  6. Beeby (1956, 1992); McKenzie (1983); Openshaw, R. (1995). *Unresolved struggle: Consensus and conflict in New Zealand state post-primary education* (Academic Monograph No.18). Palmerston North: Dunmore Press; and Whitehead (1974).
  7. The Thomas Report (1944), p.13.
  8. The Thomas Report (1944), p.1.
  9. The Thomas Report (1944), p.12.
  10. Wood, F. L. W. (1944). *Understanding New Zealand*. New York: Coward-McCann, p.144.
  11. See, for example, Boyd, W. (1938). A Scotsman looks at New Zealand schools. In A. E. Campbell (Ed.), *Modern trends in education: Proceedings of the New Education Fellowship Conference held in New Zealand in July 1937* (pp.469–487). Wellington: Whitcombe & Tombs; and Kandel, I. (1938). Impressions of education in New Zealand. In A. E. Campbell (Ed.), *Modern trends in education: Proceedings of the New Education Fellowship Conference held in New Zealand in July 1937* (pp.462–469). Wellington: Whitcombe & Tombs.
  12. Wood (1944), p.145.
  13. In more recent years the term 'composite school' has been used to refer to those institutions covering Years 1–15 (often area schools—the former district high schools—in rural communities). The 'restricted composite school' label applies only to Year 9 and 10 middle schools or junior high schools. See New Zealand Education Review Office. (2001, Autumn). *Students in years 7 and 8*. Wellington: Author, p.4.
  14. 171 See, for example, Barcan (1965), p.277; Beeby (1956), pp.396, 406; Beeby, C. E. (1984). A problem of education unsolved worldwide. In G. McDonald & A. Campbell (Eds.), *Looking forward: Essays on the future of education in New Zealand* (pp.89–111). Wellington: Te Aro Press; Commission on Education in New Zealand. (1962). *Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand* (Currie Report). Wellington: Government Printer, pp.216, 219; and Kazamias, A. M., & Massialas, B. G. (1965). *Tradition and change in education: A comparative study*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, pp.171–172.
  15. Kazamias & Massialas (1965), p.171. See also Beeby (1984), pp.97–98.
  16. Passow, A. H. (1980). Secondary education. In H. J. Walberg (Ed.), *American education: Diversity and research*. Washington, DC: Forum Series of the Voice of America, p.174.
  17. Cunningham, K. C., & Ross, D. (1967). *An Australian school at work*, Hawthorn: VIC: Australian Council for Educational Research, p.17.
  18. Cunningham & Ross (1967), p.5.
  19. Cunningham & Ross (1967), p.4.
  20. Barcan (1965), p.277.
  21. The English New Education Fellowship Ottaway Committee in 1942 had concluded that *multilateral schooling* involved nothing less than 'the [total] reconstruction of post-primary education'. It meant that 'the various types

of secondary education would be provided either in the different departments of the same school, or by means of grouping together different schools with some form of common direction to ensure ease of transfer'. This arrangement was seen as transitional, however. Once established, the new high schools were expected to provide a compulsory core curriculum and optional academic and technical subjects (organised in courses to suit students' dissimilar abilities and interests). The Ottawa Committee envisaged that less time would be devoted to core studies and more to electives once students entered the more senior classes. For multilateral schooling to work effectively the Committee suggested that the school leaving age be raised to 16-years. See Ottawa, A. K. C. (1942, September/ October). The school child—post-primary. *The New Era in Home and School*, 23 (7), 153.

22. Barcan, A. (1971). *Social science, history and the new curriculum*. Sydney: Hicks Smith/Workers' Educational Association of New South Wales, pp.92–93.
23. Butts, R. F. (1970). *Assumptions underlying Australian education*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research (Original work published 1955), p.38; and Hyams & Bessant (1972), p.174.
24. Hyams & Bessant (1972), p.174.
25. Butts, R. F. (1955). *A cultural history of Western education: Its social and intellectual foundations*. New York: McGraw-Hill, p.415. See also Hyams & Bessant (1972), p.174. See also Cunningham & Ross (1967), pp.7, 13, 20–21, 83–84.
26. Barcan, A. (1996). Attempts to reform Australian state schools, 1979–1996. *Education Research & Perspectives*, 23, p.1.
27. Nasaw, D. (1979). *Schooled to order: A social history of public schooling in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, p.157.
28. Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Education in New South Wales. (1958). *Report of the Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Education In New South Wales* (Wyndham Report). Sydney: Government Printer, p.5.
29. The Thomas Report (1944), p.v.
30. The Thomas Report (1944), p.1; and New Zealand Department of Education. (1959). *The Post-Primary Curriculum: Report of the Committee appointed by the Minister of Education in November, 1942*. (Thomas Report) [Reprint]. Wellington: Government Printer, p.ii.
31. The Wyndham Report (1958), p.54.
32. *Ibid.*, p.42.
33. *Ibid.*, pp.45, 54.
34. *Ibid.*, p.63.
35. *Ibid.*, pp.42, 47.
36. *Ibid.*, pp.69, 79.
37. The Thomas Report (1959), p.7.
38. *Ibid.*, pp.7–8.
39. *Ibid.*, pp.4, 7–8.
40. Peers, C. (2002). Mapping art as a matriculation subject in New South Wales. *History of Education Review*, 31, 59.
41. Raphael, D. D. (1946, October). New lamps and old. Paper presented at a special meeting of post-primary and university teachers, The University of Otago, Dunedin, pp.2–9; The Wyndham Report (1958), p.116; and Turney, C. (1975). *Sources in the history of Australian education: A book of readings*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, pp.347–348.

42. Pedley, R. (1969). *The comprehensive school* (Rev. ed.). Middlesex: Penguin, p.219.
43. Kazamias & Massialas (1965), p.58.
44. The Thomas Report (1959), p.6.
45. *Ibid.*, p.5.
46. *Ibid.*, pp.5, 9.
47. Mason (1945), p.43.
48. *Ibid.*, p.11.
49. *Ibid.*, pp.33-34, 39, 52.
50. Murdoch, J. H. (1944). *The high schools of New Zealand: A critical survey*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, p.328; and Nicol, J. (1940). *The technical schools of New Zealand*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, p.159.
51. See Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives [AJHR]. (1916). Educational progress: Memorandum by the Minister [of Education] dealing with some phases of educational progress and renewing existing conditions in the light of national requirements. E-1A, p.7.
52. Mason (1945), pp.33-34.
53. *Ibid.*, p.38.
54. *Ibid.*, p.34.
55. McKenzie, D., Lee, G., & Lee, H. (1990). *The transformation of the New Zealand technical high school* (Delta Research Monograph No. 10). Palmerston North: Massey University, Faculty of Education, pp.21-22, 34.
56. Mason (1945), pp.34-38. See also Murdoch (1944), pp.324, 327, 333, 410; and Nicol (1940), p.165. The Ottaway Committee had concluded that 'even in a multilateral school it was possible for distinction to become attached to the academic side', although they predicted that this was more likely to occur in a unilateral school. See Ottaway (1942), p.153.
57. Mason (1945), p.38.
58. *Ibid.*, p.46. When Mason referred to 'multilateral' schools he was thinking of something closer to the American school, albeit smaller in size.
59. Lee, G. D., & Lee, H. F. (2002, December). *Making Milner matter: Some comparisons between the Milner (1933-1936), Thomas (1944), and subsequent New Zealand secondary school curriculum reports and developments*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the New Zealand Association for Research in Education, Palmerston North, p.19.
60. AJHR, I-8A, 1930, p.14. Report of the Recess Education Committee on Educational Reorganization in New Zealand (Bodkin Report).
61. The Bodkin Report (1930), p.21.
62. Strong, T. B. (1928). Present trend of education. In I. Davey (Ed.), *Fifty years of national education in New Zealand, 1878-1928*. Auckland: Whitcombe & Tombs, p.151.
63. Murdoch (1944), pp.328-329; and Openshaw (1995), pp.35-41, 48-49.
64. The Bodkin Report (1930), pp.21-22.
65. *Ibid.*, p.22.
66. Beeby, C. E. (1957, June). Education today. *Education: A Magazine for Teachers*, 6, p.7; and AJHR, E-1, 1958, p.5. Report of the Director of Education. See also Boyd (1938), p.476; and Openshaw (1995), p.50.
67. Beeby (1957), p.4.

68. AJHR, E-1, 1956, p.7. Report of the Director of Education; and Beeby (1956), p.407.
69. Beeby, C. E. (1937). The education of the adolescent. In H. V. Usill (Ed.), *The Year Book of Education*. London: University of London Institute of Education, pp.225-226.
70. Beeby, C. E. (1939). Technical education in New Zealand. In H. V. Usill (Ed.), *The Year Book of Education*. London: University of London Institute of Education, p.702.
71. Beeby (1946), pp.5-6. See also McKenzie, Lee, & Lee (1990), pp.36-41.
72. Beeby (1946), p.5.
73. The Thomas Report (1959), pp.79, 82-85.
74. Beeby (1946), pp.5-6.
75. McKenzie, Lee, & Lee (1990), p.41; and Openshaw (1995), pp.48-57.
76. McKenzie, Lee, & Lee (1990), p.41.
77. Kazamias & Massialas (1965), pp.38, 58; McKenzie, Lee, & Lee (1990), pp.40-41; and Pedley (1969), pp.33-36.
78. AJHR, E-2, 1949, pp.11-12. Report of the Chief Inspector of Secondary Schools.
79. Mason (1945), p.52.
80. Beeby (1957), p.7.
81. Hogben, E. N. (1976a). [Personal reflections on the Thomas Committee]. Interview by Professor George W. Parkyn, November 16, London, England; and Hogben, E. N. (1976b). [Personal reflections on the Thomas Committee]. Interview by Professor George W. Parkyn, November 23, London, England.
82. AJHR, E-10, 1910, p.18. Report of the General Education Conference.
83. AJHR, E-1, 1916, p.30. Report of the Minister of Education. See also Thom, A. H. (1950). *The district high schools of New Zealand*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, pp.30-31.
84. AJHR, E-1A, 1916, pp.3, 7.
85. The Wyndham Report (1958), p.69.
86. Lee & Lee (2002), pp.7-8.
87. The Wyndham Report (1958), p.82. The Wyndham Committee's four-year common core curriculum included the following 'subject fields': English, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, Music, Art, Crafts, Physical and Health Education, and Religious Education. However, there were three key differences between this curriculum and that outlined in the Thomas Report. The Thomas Committee excluded religious education, and they recommended the compulsory study of 'a Craft or one of the Fine Arts', but not both—as had the Wyndham Committee. The latter voiced strong opposition to the 'General Science' term, on the grounds that syllabuses in this subject area lacked 'coherence and any evidence of integrating principles'. By comparison, the Thomas Committee valued General Science because '[it] has its roots in the common experience of children'. Students could choose from sciences such as Biology; Chemistry; Electricity & Magnetism; General Science; and Heat, Light, & Sound for the New Zealand Department of Education School Certificate examination. See The Thomas Report (1959), pp.12, 14, 35; The Wyndham Report (1958), pp.82-83.
88. The Thomas Report (1959), pp.1, 7, 13, 17-18; and The Wyndham Report (1958), p.84.
89. The Thomas Report (1959), p.7.
90. *Ibid.*, p.13.

91. Lee & Lee (2002), pp.30-32; Openshaw, R., Lee, G., & Lee, H. (1993). *Challenging the myths: Rethinking New Zealand's educational history*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, pp.170-176; and Whitehead (1974), pp.59-61.
92. The Wyndham Report (1958), pp.82, 84.
93. *Ibid.*, p.87. The Thomas and Wyndham Committees devoted most of their energy to formulating curriculum recommendations covering the first four years of post-primary schooling. Fifth and sixth-year work was considered only by the latter Committee. The six years of secondary schooling outlined in the Wyndham scheme did not correspond, however, with the New Zealand four-year post-primary schooling format. From 1962 the Wyndham Committee's new six-year scheme acquired the Form 1-6 nomenclature, although secondary schooling still commenced at age 12. By comparison, the median age for New Zealand students who began their post-primary schooling (in Form 3) in 1945 was 14.125 years. The first two years of secondary education under the Wyndham plan seemed to partly coincide with the New Zealand Form 1 and 2 classes, but this two-year Form 1 and 2 model was rejected outright by the Wyndham Committee. See AJHR, E-1, 1946, p.19; Barcan (1965), pp.300-301; Barcan (1971), pp.95-96; Mason (1945), p.6; The Wyndham Report (1958), pp.71-72, 108-109.
94. The Thomas Report (1959), p.13.
95. The Wyndham Report (1958), p.95.
96. *Ibid.*, p.95.
97. The Thomas Report (1959), p.9.
98. Openshaw, Lee, & Lee (1993), pp.215-222.
99. Beeby (1956), p.396; and Beeby (1957), pp.4-7.
100. The Thomas Report (1959), pp.7, 11-12; and The Wyndham Report (1958), p.79.
101. The Thomas Report (1959), pp.7-11, 18-78; and The Wyndham Report (1958), pp.65-66, 72, 82-95.
102. Although the Wyndham Committee used the terms 'multi-lateral', 'omnibus', and 'comprehensive' interchangeably on one occasion, the great majority of references they made were to comprehensive schools. In the Committee's opinion the comprehensive school discouraged the selection and segregation of students on entry to secondary school, and permitted 'a progressive determination of the shape of a pupil's course' throughout his or her school career. Teachers in these institutions were able to organise pupils subsequently into separate courses, albeit with some subjects in common between them. Nevertheless, the actual content of these compulsory subjects would differ depending on students' abilities and needs. See The Wyndham Report (1958), pp.79-80, 82, 84.
103. New Zealand educationists and politicians had often employed terms such as 'omnibus', 'multi-lateral', 'multi-purpose', and 'multiple-bias' to describe post-primary institutions that were, as Beeby later stated, 'not in the strict sense comprehensive'. The Thomas Committee was obliged to adhere to government-prescribed terms of reference which did not allow consideration of only one type of high school that would subsume or embrace the existing technical high, district high, and secondary schools. Nevertheless, a decade after the Thomas Committee's key curriculum and examination recommendations had been translated into legislation, Beeby admitted there were many problems associated with trying to school all adolescents within the one type of institution. He had earlier signalled that technical high schools would be translated into senior

- technical colleges, that district high schools would not be disestablished, and that contemporary and future secondary schools would become 'multi-purpose' institutions. See Beeby (1946), pp.5-6; Beeby (1956), p.396, Mason (1945), pp.34, 46.
104. Beeby (1957), p.4.
  105. AJHR, E-2, 1949, p.14; The Thomas Report (1959), pp.9-10; and The Wyndham Report (1958), pp.96-97, 106.
  106. The Thomas Report (1959), p.10.
  107. The Thomas Report (1959), pp.9-10; and the Wyndham Report (1958), pp.67-69, 72, 97-98, 108.
  108. The Wyndham Report (1958), p.98.
  109. The Thomas Report (1959), pp.9-10.
  110. *Ibid.*, pp.7, 10.
  111. The Wyndham Report (1958), pp.106-107.
  112. *Ibid.*, p.84.
  113. The Thomas Report (1944), p.94; The Thomas Report (1959), p.79.
  114. The Thomas Report (1944), p.ii. Although the 1959 reprint of the Thomas Report stated that extensive consultation and discussion had occurred for nearly two years after the document was published early in 1944, within only five months of its release Mason had announced his intention to translate the Committee's recommendations into legislation. As David McKenzie has explained, consultation over the Report was not wide-ranging because the Committee was operating under constraints imposed by World War 2. See Lee, G., & Lee, H. (1992). *Examinations and the New Zealand school curriculum: Past and present* (Delta Research Monograph No. 12). Palmerston North: Massey University, Faculty of Education, p.16; McKenzie, D. (1992). Ideas are necessary but not sufficient. In G. McDonald & R. Benton (Eds.), *The Beeby fascicles* (Vol. 5). Wellington: Te Aro Press, p.60; and The Thomas Report (1959), p.79.
  115. The Wyndham Report (1958), p.3.
  116. Barcan claimed that the New South Wales government 'procrastinated' over the introduction of the Wyndham scheme, with the result that the sixth and final year was not established until 1967. He noted that comprehensive schools were set up between 1962 and 1967, after the 1961 Education Act was passed. This statute also created the Secondary Schools Board, to control Year 1-4 courses and the Year 4 School Certificate examination, and a Board of Senior Schools Studies with authority over Year 5 and 6 secondary school work and the Year 6 Higher School Certificate examination. These two Boards had been proposed by the Wyndham Committee. New South Wales secondary students were to sit the first School Certificate examination at the end of 1965, and the year 6 examination at the end of 1967. Barcan later argued that the period from the late-1950s coincided with the first of four 'waves of reform' that affected Australian state schools. Its key features were an extension of social democracy, the creation of state comprehensive secondary schools, and the widening of the secondary curriculum to suit a less homogeneous student population. See Barcan (1965), pp.285, 302; Barcan (1971), pp.92-93; Barcan (1996), p.1; The Wyndham Report (1958), p.108.
  117. Barcan (1971), pp.95-96.
  118. New Zealand Department of Education. (1945). *The Education (Post-Primary Instruction) Regulations, 1945 and Syllabuses of Instruction and School Certificate Prescriptions*. Wellington: Government Printer, p.1; and Whitehead

- (1974), pp.57–58. Rex Mason reported that between 1944 and 1945 post-primary rolls increased by 23 percent. See AJHR, E-1, 1946, p.8.
119. It was necessary for post-primary school teachers to have ready access to the Thomas Report in order for them to understand the educational philosophy that underpinned the Thomas Committee's recommendations rather than only becoming familiar with the minutiae of the Department of Education's 1945 Education (Post-Primary Instruction) Regulations. See Buli, M. A. (1959, May). The Thomas report—A retrospective. *New Zealand Post-Primary Teachers' Association Journal*, 5(4), 9–10; Stroobant, R. E. (1957, November). The Thomas report—Endorsed or confounded? *New Zealand Post-Primary Teachers' Association Journal*, 3(10), 16–18; and Whitehead (1974), p.58.
  120. Beeby (1956), p.402.
  121. Beeby (1956), pp.396–403; and Stroobant (1957), pp.16–18. In 1935, only 35 percent of primary and intermediate school leavers proceeded directly to a New Zealand post-primary school. By 1944 the figure was 77 percent, rising to 82 percent the following year. In 1956, 95 percent of primary and intermediate school leavers were enrolled at a post-primary institution. See AJHR, E-1, 1946, p.7; and Beeby (1956), p.405.
  122. Hyams & Bessant (1972), p.178. See also Peers (2002), pp.57–58.
  123. Kazamias & Massialas (1965), p.171.
  124. Hyams & Bessant (1972), p.185.
  125. Cunningham & Ross (1967), pp.17–18.
  126. Beeby (1956), pp.403–404. The task of educating a heterogeneous school population was made easier, Beeby claimed, because the Department of Education had gained 'real control' over high school curricula under the 1945 Education (Post-Primary Instruction) Regulations. He knew, nevertheless, that the University of New Zealand could not be excluded from curriculum decisions, given that the University Entrance examination had been retained as a senior post-primary qualification post-1944. To those critics of the Thomas Report and the 1945 Regulations Beeby replied: 'Large sections of the community ... [have failed] to realize that the very nature and purpose of the secondary school have radically changed within one generation. See Beeby (1956), pp.405–406.
  127. Spokespersons for the Catholic Teachers' Association of Auckland were highly critical of the introduction of the 'hotch-potch' subject called 'Social Studies' into the new compulsory curriculum. They attacked the 'progressive and revolutionary [philosophy]' adopted by the Thomas Committee which allegedly represented 'a sabotage of educational standards in the name of democratization', and amounted to 'totalitarianism pure and simple'. Further criticism was directed at both the Department of Education and the Fraser Labour Government for dictating a curriculum that purportedly overemphasised the importance of aesthetic education, excluded religious instruction from the list of compulsory subjects, and gave 'utterly illusory assurances of freedom' to both students and teachers. Perhaps not surprisingly, the compulsory curriculum was seen by these commentators as an overtly political instrument designed to force 'growing minds into a ready-made mould'. See Callaghan, C. J. (1944). *The teaching of English: A criticism*. Auckland: Catholic Teachers' Association of Auckland, p.4; Loughnan, D. (1944). *Report on post-primary education: A criticism*. Auckland: Catholic Teachers' Association of Auckland, pp.11, 22, 27, 37; and Reid, J. C. (1944). *Educational change in Soviet Russia: Some lessons*



- for New Zealand. Auckland: Catholic Teachers' Association of Auckland, pp.3-4.
128. Beeby (1956), pp.403-406; McKenzie (1992), pp.61-63; Murdoch, J. H. (1946). *Education in transition: A short study of educational trends in New Zealand*. Auckland: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, pp.10-20; and Raphael (1946), pp.2-8.
  129. Beeby (1956), p.396.
  130. Peter Morris, Editor of the New Zealand Post-Primary Teachers' Association Journal, was critical of the lengthy (fifteen-year) delay by government in republishing the Thomas Report. He claimed that it was an 'extraordinary situation where for a decade it was impossible to obtain a copy of the document which contained the attitudes and thinking behind the [Thomas Committee's] recommendations'. See Morris, P. G. (1959, April). A notable reprint. *New Zealand Post-Primary Teachers' Association Journal*, 5, 1.
  131. Beeby (1946), p.9; and Mason (1945), p.45.
  132. Mason (1945), p.91.
  133. Whitehead (1974), pp.60-62.
  134. The Thomas Report (1959), p.4.
  135. Mason (1945), p.91; McKenzie, D., Lee, H., & Lee, G. (1996). *Scholars or dollars? Selected historical case studies of opportunity costs in New Zealand education*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, pp.160-180; Openshaw, Lee, & Lee (1993), pp.215-222; and Whitehead (1974), p.62.
  136. Peers (2002), p.59.
  137. Butts (1970), p.39.
  138. Butts (1970), p.38. Freeman Butts concluded that in Australia the educational and social benefits associated with comprehensive schooling could be secured *only* when parents, teachers, and the public agreed to 'a fundamental reorientation of assumptions' concerning post-primary education. He predicted that this reorientation would not occur overnight, given the extent to which subject, course, and institutional hierarchies were taken for granted by teachers and other groups. See Butts (1970), pp.44, 54.
  139. Butts (1970), p.4.
  140. Barcan (1965), pp.281, 306-307; and The Wyndham Report (1958), p.9.
  141. Barcan (1965), pp.281-283, 306-308.
  142. Press, p.249 Barcan (1965), p.311. See also Hyams & Bessant (1972), p.178; Peers (2002), p.58; and Ulich (1961), p.249. Robert Ulich, a prominent Harvard University educational historian, declared that the philosophies of 'unity' and 'diversity' in curricula were not always compatible within the comprehensive schooling environment, although he believed that every gifted, average and below average child could (and should) derive the same 'dignity, humaneness, and satisfaction' from his or her studies. See Ulich, R. (1961). *The education of nations: A comparison in historical perspective*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.
  143. See, for example, McKenzie (1992), p.62.
  144. Thomas, W. (1944, December 1). The post-primary school curriculum. *National Education*, 26(285), pp.361-362.
  145. Hogben (1976a, 1976b).
  146. The Wyndham Report (1958), p.9.
  147. Peers (2002), pp.57, 59.
  148. The Wyndham Report (1958), pp.63-66, 87.

149. The Thomas Report (1959), pp.6–7. The Thomas Committee's assumption that parity of esteem existed between different high school subjects was re-examined in the mid-1950s by a Working Committee set up by Ronald Algie, the Minister of Education. Convened in March 1956, this Committee reaffirmed the Thomas Committee's thesis that all studies, core and elective, should have equal status in the post-primary curriculum. The Wallis House Committee defined equality to mean that adolescents had 'the equal right...to develop best their own capacities', and that all studies have 'equal educational worth'—but not necessarily 'equal cultural value'. See the Wallis House Committee, quoted in The Thomas Report (1959), pp.82–90.
150. Openshaw (1995), p.87.
151. Beeby (1992), pp.178–179.
152. Openshaw (1995), pp.128–129.
153. William Sutch, a leading New Zealand economic, social, and political historian, noted for example that 'the social class differentiation that had [previously] separated the technical colleges from the other secondary schools' did not diminish with the introduction of 'multi-course schools' post-1945. Sutch also observed differences in the choice of courses by low and high-income families—the former tended to opt for technical and domestic science programmes whereas children from middle-class families usually enrolled in academic courses. See Sutch, W. B. (1969). *Poverty and progress in New Zealand: A re-assessment* (Rev. ed.). Wellington: A. H. & A. W. Reed, p.323.
154. The Currie Report (1962), pp.161, 217. The stimulus given to comprehensive schooling development by the Currie Commission and Clarence Beeby led, among other reforms, to the translation of technical high schools into tertiary-level polytechnics during the 1970s and the relocation of technical high school students to new or existing secondary schools. From 1965 onwards, all New Zealand technical high schools, secondary schools proper, and combined schools were labelled 'secondary schools' under Clause 82 of the 1964 Education Act. By the mid-1970s the technical high schools had ceased to operate. See Cumming, I., & Cumming, A. (1978). *History of state education in New Zealand: 1840–1975*. Wellington: Pitman Pacific, p.367; and McKenzie, Lee, & Lee (1990). p.41.
155. The Currie Report (1962), pp.161, 216, 218, 220.
156. *Ibid.*, p.307. Although the Currie Commission labelled New Zealand secondary, technical high, and combined schools 'multilateral' institutions, in one instance they declared that multilateral institutions were 'sometimes called comprehensive schools'. See The Currie Report (1962), pp.168, 216–219, 305.
157. Melvin, K. (1962). New Zealand: 'The small utopia'. Auckland: Collins, p.50.
158. Lumby, C. (2000, August 22). Class distinction. *The Bulletin* [with *Newsweek*, New South Wales], p.34.
159. G. Sherington, quoted in Lumby (2000), p.34.
160. C. Campbell, quoted in Lumby (2000), p.36.
161. Lumby (2000), p.36.
162. Beeby (1992), p.179.
163. Beeby (1957), pp.4, 6–7.