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**THE CURRIE COMMISSION AND REPORT ON**  
**EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND**  
**1960-1962**

by

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*A Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates and analyses the Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand, 1962, also known as the 'Currie Report', paying particular attention to the policy process surrounding the written and oral submissions. Views expressed during the submissions and their ideological basis are related to wider power relationships within society. The submissions emanating from outside the Department of Education are revisited as well as the departmental submissions to establish whether there are any grounds to challenge the consensual, liberal interpretations that have been attached to this important New Zealand historical educational document.

The issues raised and avoided in the submissions coalesce around specific themes, which are related to the broader issues of the development of New Zealand educational history.

Attempts to counteract, mute and marginalise dissent and to encourage optimal social control are witnessed in the organizational structure of the commission and in its methods. The interaction and networking of key participants is studied and the important inter-relationship between central bureaucratic interventions and powerful educational pressure group activity points to the continuing operational success of central government processes.

The often competing forces of provincialism and centralism in New Zealand education underlie many of the conflicts surrounding educational change. Religion, race, gender and class are forces that continually interact to create legitimization crises. The governmental attempt to minimise or at least rationalize these socially contested differences in education from 1960-1962 is the subject of this thesis.

An analysis is made of the process by which public dissatisfaction regarding education in the fifties and sixties was mediated and largely marginalised by the educational bureaucracy. This is done by a thorough examination of the interaction of pressure groups, unions, media and governmental agencies during the two year submissions to the Commission on Education 1962.

The distinction between the commission's report and the submissions and interrogations leading up to the report is important, as the primary data extracted from the primary resource material in the submissions, at times, contradicts the departmental view as expressed in the report itself. In this way it is hoped to move beyond the rhetoric that informs previous commentaries and move closer to an interpretation based upon the primary data.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

The written submissions which number up to 409 are referred to in the text and footnotes by a capital S. followed by the number it was given in the original archival material (e.g. S. 263 would refer to the written submission of the Associated Chambers of Commerce). A letter after the number indicates further submissions. A capital letter after the S indicated a rebuttal. Hence SC 18 B would refer to the third rebuttal to the second submission numbered 18.

The oral verbatim submissions were called 'interrogations' in the archive retrieval system and are numbered 1 - 48, according to the day recorded. There were 119 oral submissions. In the text of this thesis they are referred to as Int. or Interros, with their sequential number. For example, an oral presentation at one of the hearings (which were held in the main population centres of New Zealand), would be recorded as Interro. 39 X 1. A full explanation of the coding in relation to the departmental content coding can be found in the National Archives (M, 1. 595/A)

AJHR. Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives.

ATL. Alexander Turnbull Library.

NZPD. New Zealand Parliamentary Debates.

PPTA New Zealand Post Primary Teachers Association and their Journal is abbreviated to P. J.

E1 Report of the Minister (Later Department) of Education, presented to the House of Representatives.

Com. on. Educ. - Commission on Education. 1960-1962. N.Z. more commonly known as 'The Currie Report'.

Interim Report. The Interim Report on Post-Primary Staffing and Recruitment Wellington. July 1960, conducted as part of the Commission on Education. No public who were not teachers or educationalists submitted to this report.

NZEI New Zealand Educational Institute. The Primary teachers professional association.

Education Bulletins, were departmental publications designed for distribution to teachers.

The Education Gazette is the official governmental publication on education matters, issued through the department (now the ministry). It is also primarily for the information of teachers.

The references to academic journals are standard.

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