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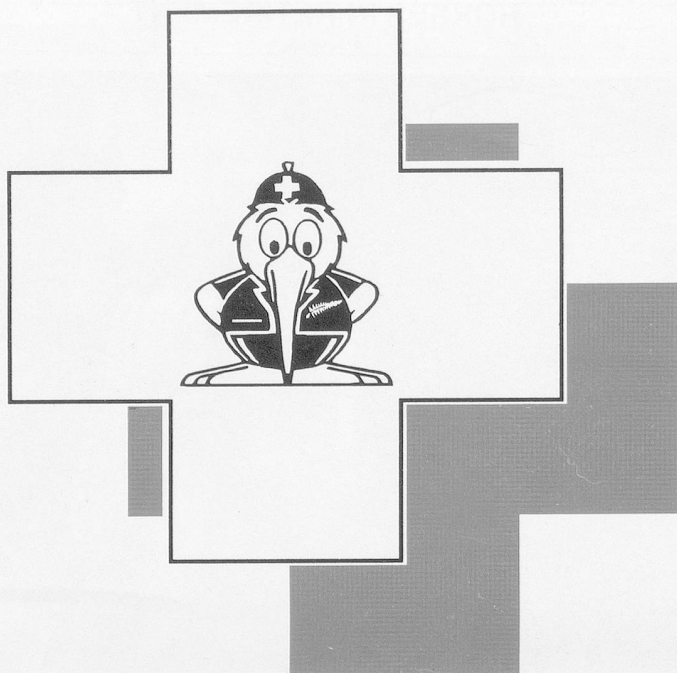
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ALIVE



EDITORIAL

Somehow, today's education system does not seem to prepare the new generations very well for the complexity of life. Today the schooling system allows students to graduate in only 2 or 3 subjects of their own choice whilst in the old days, the rules required you to work yourself through at least 10 different subjects whether you liked them or not.

Today you can move up from one class to another whether you learnt anything or not whilst previously you had to prove that you had mastered the various subjects before you were allowed to pass up to the next level. If your results during the year were below a certain minimum, you had to do the class again, a situation which many students, and their parents, considered as very shameful. So students had a moral incentive, often with the assistance of their parents, to study in order to avoid having to do the same class twice.

Nowadays, it seems that students can get up to university level without being able to read or write properly, a situation which would have been unthinkable and almost impossible in the past.

Admittedly, quite a few subjects we were forced to learn in the old days such as Greek mythology, Latin, the history of the Roman Empire, trigonometry, algebra, etc., where of little use to us in the course of our lives, but at least they forced and thought us to work hard, to concentrate on our studies, to use our brains and to think the problems through in a logical way.

Today, it seems that the thinking has largely gone out of the modern education system. Whilst the kids have become wizards in manipulating computers, calculators and any other type of electronic equipment, they have largely lost the faculty of assessing a problem and to think it through in all its details.

Phonetic reading was meant to al-

low today's students, in theory at least, to read much faster, but this was achieved at the expense of the orthography. As a result, few students are able to write any text without spelling mistakes. Many cannot put together sentences that make sense and which are grammatically correct. And the situation will get worse since their teachers, having gone through the same schooling process, find themselves in the same predicament. They cannot teach their students what they have not learnt themselves. And so, from generation to generation, the standard of education will drop.

In New Zealand the schooling system is failing the students in many respects. Apart from reading and writing, geography and history are another two subjects which remain almost totally foreign to most students. Whilst we knew at least where most countries were situated in the world and what their capitals were, many New Zealand