

Education is the key to any intervention programme here and will require detailed planning”.

He said education was also important in the campaign against smoking amongst young children and female adults, as well as any preventive programme dealing with alcohol and accidents.

Dr Pomare recommended the Medical Research Council consider setting up a working party or workshop to tackle some or all of the problem areas he had outlined.

Footnote: The Medical Research Council of New Zealand called a further seminar for Maori doctors on September 12 to seek further guidance on what should be done from here.

It had been suggested that Maori doctors speak to aspects of the report at maraes etc. throughout the country and solicit further ideas for discussion on how various problems can best be tackled.

Dr Pomare said there was widespread feeling that interest in health

matters should be generated at a community level and that the setting up of local health groups or programmes be fostered.

“Although the delivery of health care to most New Zealanders may be judged satisfactory at present, there would appear to be serious deficiencies with respect to our Maori people,” he said.

“This is the reason for suggesting a different approach and getting people within the community to take a greater interest in health matters.”

Pupils' hearing defects emerge during Rotorua school wananga

About 40 fourth formers from the Rotorua Boys High School attended a unique wananga at the Awahou marae, Rotorua earlier this year.

The wananga, jointly organised by the Rotorua Boys High School Principal and staff and the Maori Affairs Department's Rotorua office was different in two aspects.

It was the first time a local school had allowed its pupils to attend such a wananga during school hours.

Maori Affairs community officer, Mr Trevor Maxwell, said it was an important breakthrough for the department as all previous wananga were only possible during school holidays and weekends.

The wananga was held over four week days, and included regular school lessons by the high school staff, cultural activities, careers discussions, sport and a fishing trip.

MEDICAL EXAM

Probably the most interesting new addition to the wananga programme was a full medical examination conducted by Rotorua General Practitioner, Dr Bernard Sill; dental nurse and New Zealand Women's Health League president, Mrs Inez Kingi and Health Department audio and visual tester, Mrs V J Burton.

Mrs Burton makes regular visits to Intermediate and Primary schools in the area.

The pupils at the wananga were regarded as not making satisfactory advancement in the orthodox education system.

It was hoped that some of the reasons for poor progress would become manifest and any form of ill health could be contributory.

A physical examination, plus sight and hearing tests were done, with no significant health problems emerging. Only two students showed visual defects.

HEARING DEFECTS EMERGE

Hearing was a different matter. Out of 34 students, ten had hearing defects, five of moderate degree and five more seriously affected.

Mrs Kingi said the results were merely an indication that hearing defects are not uncommon and not too many conclusions should be drawn from them.

She said the results did, however, support other surveys which have incurred a similar state of affairs.

“Any student who is not progressing adequately should be checked to establish that hearing loss is not a factor contributing to inadequate educational attainment,” she said.

A survey on smoking and alcohol of the same 34 pupils showed that all except four had tried smoking but only half continued to smoke. All, except one, said they were aware smoking was dangerous to health. About 20 drank beer occasionally. Most were enrolled with, and were visiting the dentist.



Some of the fourth formers and staff from Rotorua Boys High School who attended a four day wananga at Awahou marae, Rotorua earlier this year.