

over a bilingual television channel, a bilingual national radio network and some newspapers and magazines".

The list of lobbyists goes on and on.

In March this year the subject of Maori on television was raised at the South Island Maori Women's Welfare League conference at Ashburton. The editing of T.V. programmes concerning Maori interests was called "inadequate" and it was suggested that a "fuller coverage and a higher standard on matters of interest to Polynesian ethnic and minority groups" was needed.

Perhaps it was because of all this pressure that TV1 ran programme summaries in Maori during Maori Language Week.

Reaction to that little bit of Maori may be indicative of public tolerance to more Maori on television. T.V. 1's head of presentation and promotions, Chris Bourn, said most callers commented favourably on the summaries. But some callers were strongly antagonistic and calls were received such as the one saying, "This is a white country, the Maoris have nothing for it and they have no right to monopolise time on T.V."

This is just the sort of silly comment that Pakehas who learn Maori have to put up with. Here are some more examples from my own experience: "The Maori language died out in the 1920s." "It would take you only a few weeks to learn Maori." "Mr MacIntyre (MP) speaks Maori better than the Maoris do." "You can't say much in Maori, it has such a limited vocab."

Such views are of course based on ignorance. But similar misconceptions prop up the antagonistic stance many New Zealanders seem to have towards the language — and the fate of Maori is now in the hands of Pakehas too.

Defenders of Maori face a formidable line-up. Politicians and the media reinforce the public stereotype of Maori being useless. And Mr Muldoon has said in public that he would

prefer to see Japanese taught in schools instead of Maori.

There is little chance of the Japanese or Welsh peoples letting their national languages die. But New Zealand has yet to take a pride in Maori — we have yet to recognise it as our national language. If Maori is to remain a living phenomenon it needs to be cherished as the most important symbol of our national identity. Government must accept that New Zealand is the *turangawaewae* of the Maori language and the language should be allowed a place in every area of New Zealand life (including television). Decisive and farsighted action is needed, and quickly. If Maori is left to die New Zealand's dream of good race relations is likely to be buried along with it.

Bilingual smiles from Ruatoki schoolchildren.



SANDRA MORRIS

A WEEK OF IT

Paul Bensemenn commends the special efforts of the broadcasting media during this year's Maori Language Week. For five days at the Kaitaia school canteen orders had to be made in Maori, otherwise Kaitaia children would be faced with a hungry lunch hour. During the same period, in Invercargill a Maori carver, Bernard de Hair, worked in the foyer of Radio Southland with a week-long display of his craft.

It was Maori Language Week again, and in every little town between Kaitaia and Invercargill, language week activities brought life into schools, shops and offices, newspapers and service clubs.

But the big difference in Maori Language Week this year was the amount of radio and television coverage. Most controversial were the programme summaries in Maori on TV1. Head of presentation Chris Bourn reported being swamped during the week with calls, mostly in favour of the summaries.

The programme summaries were TV1 transcripts translated by Tilly Reedy, who now works with the New Zealand Planning Council. The readers were Teresa Hughes, a pakeha who speaks Maori, Tom Roa, a student at Victoria

University, and Mei Taare, a data controller in Wellington.

A variety of television programmes featured Maori content. "Of Course You Can Do It" showed how to make a hangi. "Country Calendar" followed a traditional Maori fishing trip off the Taranaki coast, and there was a screening of Rowley Habib's play *Death of the Land*.

Te Reo o Aotearoa's Auckland studios, managed by Haare Williams, were turned into a "radio marae" for the week, and every other radio station in New Zealand included something Maori in its programme content. Henare Te Ua related Maori myths and legends, Sydney Melbourne sang songs and read poetry, Marama Martin gave us legends from the Taupo area and Selwyn Muru explained the meanings of Maori place names.

All items were well prepared and presented in the week-long feast of Maori language and culture. The special efforts of the broadcasting people were commendable. They gave Maori Language Week an importance and an impact it's never had before, and they encouraged the kind of national pride which only comes with recognition of new Zealand's Maori identity.