

A Vanished Race

"The Maoris, now unhappily a vanishing race in spite of the attempts at preserving them made by the New Zealand Government, came to that country some four or five centuries ago from Hawaii and Samoa. The women, often remarkably beautiful, retain many ancient customs, such as tattooing the lower lip and chin, and delight to wear their elaborate national costume . . ."

This extraordinary account appeared in an English magazine published in 1938. Called *Women of All Lands*, the magazine was subtitled "Their charm, culture and characteristics". The article continues:

In spite of the special districts in which they live being akin to the reserves of Africa and North America, this partial segregation has not had its usual paralysing effect.

The Maoris have inherited a higher courage than other Polynesian races. They live in a better climate. They do not have to struggle with either tropical inertia or with the sense of predestined doom which tortures the few remaining Hawaiians of pure blood. The tragic colour-bar has never been applied to Maoris, so they have none of the inverted pride or bitter inferiority complex which isolates so many Indian, African and island races . . . the women,

strong, slight and graceful, live very much the lives of the present-day Hebridean crofters.

They weave instead of knit. They bathe in the hot springs — where an egg boils as quickly as in a saucepan — rather than in the open sea.

Further on in the piece we learn that:

Though inclined to become plump early in life, the Maori girl possesses a fine physique, and keeps herself healthy by hard work and strenuous sport. Canoeing is a favourite exercise and all Maoris are excellent swimmers.

Of their cultural activities, we discover:

The happy Maori loves her traditional dances, and will seize any opportunity for displaying them to visitors . . .

Twirling tassels held in the hand seem to play an important part in these dances.

Another startling revelation:

It is not until about the age of eight, when she begins to wear clothing of any description, that she enters upon the more serious work of life.

And what of their future?

The Maoris are essentially an agricultural people, with no inclination towards or aptitude for commerce. In this sense they will never become brown-skinned "Europeans" as have the negroes of the United States, and there is no future for them except on the land . . .

This psychological or racial inadaptability is emphasised by the status of women. While all too often the women of a coloured race, living side by side with white people, have attempted to mould their charms upon those of their white sisters, the Maori women have built their lives upon the traditions of their ancestors. They live away from the towns and cities of modern New Zealand on their tribal compounds . . .

Naturally we were very excited when a copy of this magazine fell into our hands (it was sent to us from a second-hand

MAORI ON RADIO

Te Reo o Aotearoa is running regular Maori Language Lessons in the weekly "He Rerenga Korero" magazine programme from the National Programme. Lessons began on 15 August and will continue each week on Wednesdays at 7.30 p.m. until the end of the year. The complete set of lessons for beginners is available on cassette through Radio New Zealand Information Services, P.O. Box 2092, Wellington. The first seventeen lessons, written and produced by Haare Williams, have been recorded by Mrs Ao Biddle with children of Rongomai Primary School, Auckland.

FARMING TROPHY WON AGAIN

Ray and Jenny Apatu have won the 1979 sheep and cattle section of the Ahuwhenua Trophy, for the third time in ten years. The Apatu have a 300-hectare farm at Pukehamoamo. The trophy is identical to the one presented by Governor General Lord Bledisloe in 1932, and has been presented annually since 1954. The Ahuwhenua Trust Board administers the competition, which is open to any Maori farmer.



S.A. Hunt: going overseas.

TRADE TRAINING TEACHER OVERSEAS

Mr Stan Hunt a teacher at the Maori Trade Training Centre at Seaview, Lower Hutt, for seventeen years, has left for Britain and the U.S.A. to learn more about how best to teach skills to the unemployed. He is going on a McKenzie Foundation award to see new techniques in the training of unemployed youths.

MAORI INVOLVEMENT IN GAMES?

Dr Henare Broughton, of the Department of Community Health at Auckland School of Medicine, has recently returned from Suva, where he acted as a technical official for the South Pacific Games. Yet New Zealand as a nation is excluded from participation in the Games. He feels that there should be Maori participation, however, and put the idea to the South Pacific Games Council. They were sympathetic, and he has now approached the N.Z. Maori Council, the Maori Women's Welfare League and Te Huingarangatahi o Aotearoa to take up the idea.

Both Australia and New Zealand are excluded from the Games on the basis of their size and facilities, which would give them an unfair dominance over the eighteen Pacific territories involved. Dr Broughton considers that New Zealand Maoris should be eligible because of their common Polynesian heritage, and feels that inclusion would promote greater Maori representation at a competitive level in such sports as athletics, swimming, hockey, cricket and soccer. This year's Games were the sixth. The first were staged in 1963, also in Fiji.