

THE MAORI & THE MEDIA

Two important hui reviewed
by Pakeha mediemen

RADIO

On Friday, 26 September 1980, some sixty-odd RNZ broadcasters from the central regions of New Zealand (all those stations with 2 in their call signs) and Head Office, together with their families, assembled at the Raukawa Marae at Otaki. Led by Beverley Wakem, RNZ Controller of Programmes, with Haare Williams and Wiremu Kerekere from RNZ's Te Reo O Aotearoa Unit, radio broadcasters experienced the effects of Maoritanga during the following two days and two nights. For most people it was their first time on a marae.

The main centre for our activities was in the whareniui, where we all slept, worked and debated. Whata Winiata (a board member of the Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand) introduced his fascinating "Whakatupuranga Rua Mano — Generation 2000", an experiment in tribal development, and a preparation for the 21st Century. Then there was Wiremu Parker, who kept us enthralled with his exposé on the Maori language: the uses and abuses it suffers; his concern for the declining standards in pronunciation and the too few of the younger generation who have an interest in keeping Maori as a living language.

And how did the weekend affect the broadcasters?

Lindsay Rogers from Special Projects: "What is lacking from our own culture from the Western materialist culture can be found there, and I think it's a great shame that both Maori and Pakeha young people don't see this."

David Somerset from Children's Programmes: "I suppose of all the tens of thousands of words that were spoken during the weekend, the one word that sticks in my mind like a fish hook was spoken by Whata Winiata. The word was "desperate". He used it to describe the position of the Ngati Raukawa, Te Atiawa and Ngati Toa tribes of that particular coast of Wellington. It's quite clearly going to take the kind of energy that Whata was putting into our weekend, from everybody, to alter things so that the Maori language and the Maori culture do not disappear over the horizon forever."

It is not the custom for women to speak on the Raukawa Marae, but so highly did the elders feel about the presence of Beverley Wakem as the manuhiri tuarangi, they honoured the occasion by allowing her to respond from the porch of the whareniui during the proporoaki.

In collecting her thoughts the following week, Beverley said: "I'd never actually lived on a marae on a weekend like this and become totally immersed in the Maori way, and I found it an incredibly moving experience. There was the order imposed on the weekend by the protocol and then the

immense spirituality that lay behind everything that was said and done right through to the end when we, as a gesture to the marae, presented and planted two totara trees as a lasting symbol of what we felt we had accomplished over the weekend.



Matenga Baker of Ngati Raukawa and Beverley Wakem of Radio New Zealand plant a totara tree at Raukawa Marae

"As the weekend progressed with the exchange of ideas and the exchange of concerns, we came a lot closer to an understanding of the Maori people, their culture, language and the respect that it should be accorded.

"For us as broadcasters, the insights that we got will help us in very many ways as we go about our work — certainly in terms of when we approach subjects of concern to the Maori people and when we come on to the marae in the course of our duties. A number of people have said to me in various ways, 'this weekend really has changed our lives'. I don't think that is an exaggeration to describe what I feel. I have gained a great deal from it in terms of knowledge and the wisdom that was shared with us and I know that it's certainly going to make me a great deal more sensitive to these matters in the future."

In honouring Beverley, one elder, with great feeling, gave her what he regarded as the ultimate compliment — "If only you were a man . . ."

As a direct result of RNZ's association, increasing care and attention is being paid to the pronunciation of Maori words and place names by announcers and air personalities — as well it has hastened the organisation of two half-day RNZ hui for those staff at the Dominion Weather Office who are concerned with the reading of the network weather forecasts on the National Programme. It is hoped they too main gain some of what we in Radio New Zealand gained.

JOHN JOYCE

TELEVISION

The feelings of the Pakeha at the welcome on to the marae are very muddled. At Ngatokowaru it's a cold Friday evening and the wooden seats are hard. The speeches are long and twice as long because every one from your side is matched by one from the other. You understand hardly a word — only gestures and moods. But you do understand that somewhere among all those foreign words you do feature.

From dusk through to black night time you sit there. The sun has long set behind the tangata whenua and has been replaced by the warm bright lights of the porch of the meeting