

Broadcasting and the Modern Maori

Special to the "Radio Radio"

ON the night of November 1, at 10 o'clock, New Zealand is broadcasting a special international goodwill programme to the Empire. This programme will include messages by the Prime Minister (Rt. Hon. G. W. Forbes) and the Mayors of the four main centres and a first-class Maori concert by the Raukawa Maori Party, which numbers 25, and is under the direction of Pirimi Tahiwiri.

Apart from the general interest overseas and with the New Zealand pakehas, the Maoris throughout the Dominion will be taking a keen interest in this broadcast, because, as Mr. Tahiwiri said to a "Radio Record" representative the other day, "Since its inception in this country, radio has become a very important factor in the social fabric of Maori life." Mr. Tahiwiri is a master at the Otaki Maori College and comes from a very well-known and greatly-respected family, which has frequently been heard over the air from 2YA.

"Through its medium," continued Mr. Tahiwiri, "the Maori has become more alive to things around him, his interest in art, music and the broadcasting of Maori programmes has become apparent, and has, indeed, materially helped to stimulate among the Maori people the preservation of their ancient customs, songs (pateres), pastimes and war-dances.

"The Otaki Maoris had the honour of giving the first Maori concert over the air, and although it is now some years ago, I still think that it was the finest which has so far been broadcast by 2YA.

"Several pageants have been held in Wellington, and in most cases the Otaki Maoris have taken a very prominent part in them. A great deal of the success has been due to Mrs. Te Ao, Mrs. Te Hana, Mrs. Heperi, Rev. Te Muera, J. Rikihana and Puna Taipua, who have been the main-

stay in all the Otaki party's big shows. Of the Wanganui Maori party I know very little apart from what I have heard during their concert, from 2YA on several occasions.

"Many radio sets have found their way into Maori homes. Being a music-loving people, this is not to be wondered at. In spite of the depression, radio is being extensively used by Maoris, and this has been made possible by the efficient and inexpensive sets on the market, which makes it possible even for a relief worker to purchase a set at a rate of 2/- to 2/6 per week. No, I have not come across any communal sets in the pa or wharepunis, probably because, as a rule, owners of private sets invite their friends along to share their enjoyment of broadcasts of all descriptions."

Readers will probably recollect the reference made by our Auckland correspondent last week to "community" sets in Rotorua, where the Maoris regard their neighbours' sets as something to be shared.

Mr. Kingi Tahiwiri, translator for the Native Department, and interpreter of the House, is a brother of Mr. Pirimi Tahiwiri, and also gives some interesting opinions concerning the modern Maoris. Mr. Kingi Tahiwiri does not entirely agree with the statement made by Major-General Sir George Richardson in this year's "Radio Record Annual." Sir George, like many others, maintains that the influence of the white man on the Maoris has been definitely detrimental.

"The pakeha has been the means of placing the Maori on a higher plane of intellectualism by not only introducing Christianity, but by protecting him from his primitive customs, including cannibalism," says Mr. Kingi Tahiwiri. "The pakehas have given the Maori access to his literature, music and art in general. Maori music? It must also evolve as

the Empire's music has evolved from the plain songs and chants to the greatest masterpieces in operas and oratorios. The remarkable evolution of the Maori during the past 120 years has, of course, been somewhat artificial. The changes have been so sudden, whereas in other countries, England for instance, the evolution has been gradual and has taken many centuries. However, the Maori must adapt himself to his environments and continue in this process of his swift evolution. He cannot go back or stand still. That means stagnation, and if he stagnates he is lost. It is therefore the duty of those who have the welfare of the Maoris at heart to see that these fine people make a real and proper contribution to the future of the nation. But for the coming of the white man to New Zealand, and his culture, the Maori would still be primitive.

"It is not enough that the Maori should cultivate a fine body and intellect, because if the

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