

No hea koe

White people need not take offence at being called pakeha, says race relations conciliator Hiwi Tauroa.

Nor should the Samoan "palangi", upset them, he said in one of his office's explanatory pamphlets, "Let's Work Together — Kia Mahi Tahi Tatou." Neither word is or ever was, meant to be derogatory.

"Neither was meant to be insulting. Both served as a means of identification. Each, at the time it first came into use, was acceptable to the other. Both terms were honourable, and both, in general use, still are," Mr Tauroa wrote.

Mr Tauroa says his office has been receiving more and more complaints like:

"I know that pakeha means white pig. I would like you to tell me the word for brown or dappled pig. Until the word pakeha is banned, the Maori will be known to us as the Mongrel Mob."

And "keha is a flea, pa is a village. Maori call us pakehas to insult us, calling us fleas."

And "I had it on good authority that it started in the 1800s and was an adaptation of the word most used by early whalers and sealers — the word

being bastard."

"The three statements given seem to have been accepted merely to add fuel to hate justification..." Mr Tauroa said.

He said there were more plausible explanations for the word pakeha.

One was that it was derived from an ancient Pacific word, pakehakeha, describing a white object seeming to rise from the sea. So it could very logically be used to describe fair-skinned people on a white sailing ship coming over the horizon.

Mr Tauroa said that to arrive at the word pakeha from the Maori word for pig, poaka, "would require a complex linguistic ballet".

If it was derived from keha (flea), Mr Tauroa said a possible explanation was that to the Maori, pakeha appeared to pour off their ships like a myriad of fleas.

"They crowded churches and schools, seemed to crowd inside stockades and fences rather than holding meetings in the open marae space, as the Maori people did." In other words, they sought warm, enclosed places, just like fleas.

He pointed out that the Maori did not

have a term for themselves as a race, being unaware that there were any other races on Earth before the white man came. As a people, they called themselves tangata, and categorised themselves according to their family, tribal and canoe affiliations.

Captain Cook appears to have been the first white man to use the term Maori to describe the indigenous New Zealanders, spelling it Mayoore, as did early pakeha writers from New Zealand.

One theory Mr Tauroa wrote of, is that the term arose from the frequent use of and request for fresh water — wai maori — by the early pakeha arrivals.

● Footnote — as the previous paragraph suggests, the word maori in pre-European times appears to have the meaning, ordinary or common. Accordingly some scholars believe that when used of people, such as in tangata maori, it referred to commoners in Maori society, as opposed to Rangatira, ariki, tohunga or tumau and taurekareka (slaves). If so, it is easy to see how the first white men here found it the most appropriate word to represent the whole race.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

UNDER THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ACT
AND THE RACE RELATIONS ACT IT IS ILLEGAL
TO DISCRIMINATE BECAUSE OF

- RACE
- COLOUR
- SEX
- RELIGION
- MARITAL STATUS
- NATIONALITY

IN —

- EMPLOYMENT
 - ACCOMMODATION
 - LENDING OF MONEY
 - ACCESS TO PUBLIC PLACES
 - EDUCATION
 - SUPPLY OF GOODS & SERVICES
- AND IN THE ADVERTISING OF THESE.

There are some additions & exceptions to these
basic rules

For further advice on your RIGHTS and
OBLIGATIONS, contact —

Race Relations Office
First Floor
Norman Doo Arcade
295 Karangahape Road
PO Box 68-504
AUCKLAND
Tel. (09) 771-060

Human Rights Commission
First Floor
107 Custom House Quay
PO Box 5045
WELLINGTON
Tel. (04) 739-981

Human Rights Commission
181 Cashel St,
CHRISTCHURCH
Tel: (03) 60-998