

# New Minister of Maori Affairs outlines plans

**K**oro Wetere, the new Minister of Maori Affairs, Lands and Forests has signalled a fresh direction and impetus for the maori people and government.

In a recent talk with the N.Z. Maori Council, the minister outlined directions the Government wishes to take over the next couple of years.

The first area of concern was the Maori Affairs Bill that was before Parliament at the time of the recent election. It dealt with maori land ownership and utilisation of that land.

The Minister said:

"The Bill will be introduced, maybe towards the end of this year, certainly next year, but we will then instruct the first committee to take that Bill throughout New Zealand I want to tell you now, my colleague for Northern Maori, Bruce Gregory, will be the Chairman of the

Maori Affairs Select Committee, and it will be his responsibility to take that committee throughout New Zealand with that Bill to fully consult with all of our people. He has a responsibility and, I can assure you, one that is not treated lightly. There will of course be other matters which he will be asked, and called upon to deal with, and I say to you that he will lead the delegation to New York, insofar as the Maori Arts Exhibition is concerned. Both he and Mrs Gregory will accompany the delegation to New York.

"I should also tell you I have invited the past Minister of Maori Affairs, the Honourable Mr Ben Couch and his wife to

join that delegation. You will appreciate that the past Minister did much insofar as the promotion of the exhibition is concerned and I felt that he should join and I am delighted that he will join the delegation along with my colleague. He will of course attend the Indigenous Peoples Conference while in the States. The other exhibitions that will follow next year, my colleague the Honourable Dr Tapsell will join the delegation from Mataatua and Te Arawa. The following delegation from Tairāwhiti and the South Island will be joined by my colleague the Honourable Whetu Tirikatene-Sullivan."

And the Minister had some strong words to say about maori people initiating their own development rather than waiting on government assistance.

"The question of employment, insofar as our people are concerned, is the number one priority. The government is committed to a policy of job security and full employment. There are examples of our people doing things of their own volition, if I can use the example of Maori International. It got off the ground not as a result of government policy or actions of one individual but rather by initiatives among ourselves. But a commitment is sought from all those people who see the need to advance in that area.

"It is that principle that I am talking about, the initiatives taken by our people in a number of areas and not as a result of government action. It was probably that they took those initiatives because of the lack of action and also to harness the resource as they saw it then and as they see it now. It is that sort of thing that the government is expressing right now; not the means of helping anyone but certainly making provisions so that people are able to help themselves."

The use of maori incorporations or authorities to generate this development outside of government legislation was also looked at.

"It was abundantly clear in 1974 as a result of the conference we held in Gisborne that there needed to be planning insofar as our authorities were concerned and are still concerned at the present time. I said before the election that the concept of Maori International insofar as this party is concerned is

**Continued on page 48**

Koro Wetere (right) with Te Arikini Dame Te Atairangikaahu and her husband.

