

A blueprint for the future of the Maori people

The recent Hui Taumata at Parliament bringing together hundreds of Maori people to look at Maori economic development has defined a blueprint for the future of the Maori people according to the Minister of Maori Affairs, Koro Wetere.

Tu Tangata Magazine features the recommendations of that hui and the wairua that drew the people together to whakatakoto their take.

Maori people are not without ideas on how they can take their rightful place in New Zealand life. But those ideas are as varified as the tribal groupings themselves.

This year's Hui Taumata, called by the Labour government to sample Maori opinion, certainly heard many different ideas put forward, from advancing millions of government funds to rehabilitate the Maori prison population to a Maori marathon next September aimed at putting the ora back into the wai.

The key topic was economic development and predictably much of the eight minute addresses to the hui were either aimed at suggestions or recommendations where money could be used in new ways or else ways of freeing legislation to enable Maori authorities to use their land assets for commercial benefit of the people.

In his summing up the Minister of Maori Affairs Koro Wetere said a task force would now be formed to look at the establishment of a Maori Economic Development Commission. This commission would consider the recommendations from the Hui Taumata and progressively work to implement them.

Koro Wetere said later at a press conference that the Maori people would be consulted in the Maori way, district by district and kept informed of developments.

In his closing remarks, the Minister spoke of feeling buoyed up by the positive recommendations of the hui that were innovative, realistic proposals.

"The development bank idea from Denese Henare, the community health initiator of the waiora project, the various suggestions to combat unemployment and create meaningful jobs for our people, the broadcasting initiatives of Merata Mita and Donna Awatere.

"In addition we have had many papers from the various hui held around the country before this Hui Taumata, as well as papers from observers suggesting work cooperatives and a Maori economic development commission.

"We have generated ideas, unity and I give you a pledge as the Minister of Maori Affairs that I will not let the momentum of this Hui Taumata drift away."

However the Minister cautioned about thinking it was just the Government's job to do something.

"It is on each and every one of you when you go back to your marae, your trusts, incorporations, unions, health and women's groups and youth groups to take up the initiatives and put them into action....

"Make the idle land productive, care nature and listen to the young people."

Maori Economic Development Summit Conference: Hui Taumata

In calling the Maori Economic Development Summit Conference the Minister of Maori Affairs set the following objectives:

- to examine the economic situation of New Zealand as it affects Maori people;
- to assess the economic strengths and weaknesses of Maori people in New Zealand;

— to obtain a commitment from those attending the Conference;

— to support policy changes necessary to obtain socio-economic parity between Maori and non-Maori.

The Conference endorses these objectives and pledges support to achieve them.

The Conference recognises that pursuit of these and the other objectives identified at the Conference need clear priorities, bold actions and appropriate resources to achieve them.

The Current Situation:

Maori economic development is inter-twined with the economic development of New Zealand. If there is no growth in the New Zealand economy, Maori standards of living in comparison with the non-Maori will slip even further behind. Consequently there is a fundamental and urgent requirement to devise policies which will ensure growth by the use of all possible resources. The consequence of delay and inaction will inevitably lead to racial violence.

The Conference endorses clauses 17 and 18 of the Economic Summit Conference. Clause 17 provides for mechanisms to protect low income groups through a combination of wages, taxes and Government expenditure. Clause 18 identified the gap between Maori and pakeha and states that to deal with Maori unemployment

