



Maori media hui, Owata Marae, Feb 1986

Consumer affairs under the title of hokohoko, and ahuwenua, a farming programme along with te tai, a fishing report are all included in the ABS content.

ABS's chief executive says ABS with its already proven record in Maori news-gathering under Karere Publications Limited, will continue this critical assessment of how Maori people are shaping up.

Derek Fox says some hard questions have to be asked of the Maori people, by the Maori people. Questions also have to be directed to our own ministers regarding progress in Maori economics and what Maori institutions best met our needs. He says the honeymoon is now over for the Labour Government and Maori people must ask what has happened to the recommendations of the Hui Taumata. They also must look at the setting up of tribal runanga causing divisions with the existing NZ Maori Council.

Also he says in the wider New Zealand context, the recent voyage of Hawaikinui to this country was almost unnoticed by the public because of lack of knowledge of its significance by the media. In contrast the voyage from Hawaii was well reported partly because it was well-funded and could afford a press team.

But the differences between the two voyages were vast.

Hawaikinui was two totara logs felled in Aotearoa, transported to Tahiti, lashed to breadfruit trees, held together with coconut husk ropes and sails made from pandanus leaves. Five men sailed her to her landfall using traditional means such as ocean currents and stars as navigational aids.

In contrast the Houkulea was a fibre-

glass catamaran crewed by different teams and backed up by a multi-million dollar group.

That's the real story which only ABS could handle says Derek.

Another one is the view that we have just witnessed the last of the great royal tours. In future he believes the Queen of England or the King will visit but only as an English rangatira, and not as a New Zealand one.

But he says none of those stories will be told if Aotearoa Broadcasting Systems doesn't get past the hearings. He says with the guaranteed funding of the Broadcasting Corporation of eighty million dollars, ABS is short of around twenty four million dollars and it is currently negotiating with bankers.

Derek believes the Minister of Maori Affairs on behalf of the government could take out a government guarantee

of fifteen million dollars and so secure the twenty four million dollar loan for ABS. It would mean that if ABS went broke, the government would pay up to fifteen million dollars to whoever advanced the loan.

Meanwhile the future of broadcasting in New Zealand is being decided in bits and pieces says Derek. The Royal Commission into Broadcasting which was called to look into all related fields of telecommunications finishes long before the Broadcasting Tribunal decides who gets the third channel warrant. Derek says the Royal Commission's view is that the third channel business is being heard elsewhere whereas they maybe should be deciding if a third channel is needed.

He says the Broadcasting Tribunal third channel hearings will be lucky if they wind up by the end of the year and then up to six months should be allowed for a decision to be made. Counting appeals from unlucky applicants, he says it will be April '88 at the earliest before the successful third channel goes to air.

Because of this fragmented approach to planning the future of broadcasting in New Zealand, Derek says he has advocated an approach to the Royal Commission that includes a Maori programme production unit within the television structure. He says if ABS fails to win a warrant, there has to be recognition of the legitimate Maori input and shareholding in the broadcasting service of this country.

He sees in the operation of Television One, Two and a commercially operated Three, a production or commissioning house with guaranteed access to screening time on those channels. This production unit would be modelled in a similar way to ABS so that legitimate Maori presence would be acknowledged.

Derek confesses to being totally sold on ABS. It now remains to be seen if maoridom takes up this challenge.

