

the Maori homeland, Rangiatea. He likened our growth in speaking the maori language to seeds being sent forth from Rangiatea to take root in the whenua of Aotearoa.

It was a rich diet of korero that we got, that was leavened by our fellow students as we swapped songs, along with contacts and places of gossip. In fact it was here that the sticking to the ban on english really helped. By encouraging each other with aroha, we all made real progress. Some of us may have known many more words, but we had to be encouraged to use them in conversation.

Thus the structured sessions like whakawhitiwhiti korero were needed to make us respond spontaneously to conversation. Only then could we find out what phrases we had difficulty with, and work to correct them.

The widely differing levels that some students had on coming to the wananga meant the need for arranging of groupings. Some students whose competence was known beforehand to the committee through submitted work were put in a higher grouping. It was explained to them that the committee felt these students would be able to meet that challenge. A middle level grouping and a less adventuresome grouping took care of the remainder.

I felt although some students were known to the committee through previous hui or through having carried out the preparatory lessons, many could have done with more practice in speak-

"We can't afford to re-invent the wheel," says Rangi Nicholson. He's referring to efforts by the Raukawa Trustees to restore maori language fluency within the area from Bulls to Porirua.

The main thrust are the week-long language immersion hui held three times a year.

The Trustees acknowledge that language survival depends on a national response and commitment. They see their immersion hui as just one of the efforts being made around the country.

There's already been a good response from other tribal areas, partly because of kaumatua and tutors from other areas taking part in the hui, but also because of students who've taken the good word back to their marae outside of the rohe of Raukawa.

Takitimu and Te Arawa are two tribal areas looking at running their own immersion hui.

Rangi's keen that the people not see the immersion hui as exclusive, nor see himself as the guru.

He admits that coming into the co-ordina-

ting role some years back, there were many unknowns which he has worked at whittling down.

However a few still remain like the venue, the tutors or the students. He says the only thing you can do is let the people know what is happening.

At times this means a backup venue is needed. It's like the uncertainty over which particular kaumatua will turn up. The trustees have a list of around fifty tutors made up of kuia, koroua and trained teachers. There is a range of teaching styles from the stand-up-and-deliver style of Te Koroua Whakamoe, to the systematic approach of university tutor, Mere Poipoi.

As well there is the on-going training the trainees, kaiwhina, who attend the immersion hui to help the tutors.

"We will be re-tilling the soil in coming years, when we won't have the kaumatua we are blessed with now. But we will have their recordings and video.

"We are building up the kaiwhina to develop fuller teaching roles for that future."

ing the reo before coming. Because of this lack of competence in conversational maori, they lacked confidence and understanding and so couldn't take full advantage of the resources of the wananga.

How much this takes place is a decision of the committee, and where they draw the line with requirements to take part in the wananga is also up to them.

The presence of pakeha is also a policy decision of the committee. They believe that although the language resource is sparse, pakeha must share in

the responsibility for the revival of the reo. The committee hopes that pakeha who take the plunge will be committed enough to spread the kaupapa of the wananga in their own areas of influence be that in the education field or in the home.

The committee are also hard-headed enough to see that just as it was pakeha dominance that contributed to the demise of the maori language, pakeha education is vital in its revival.

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Kuia, Rangiamohia and Rongokino surrounded by students.