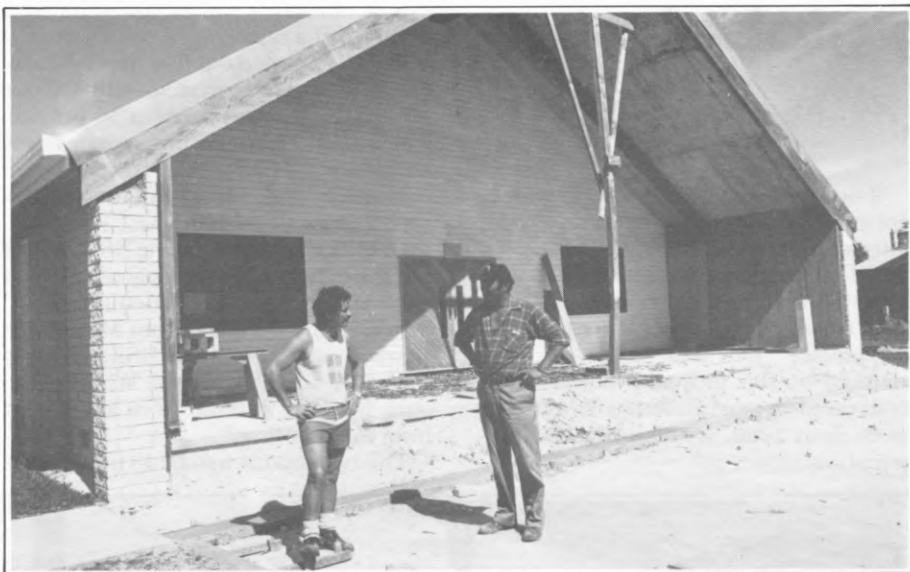




ABOVE: Mr Sam Papa (in cap and check shirt) with the society's vice-president Mr Pae Lloyd, in front of the new meeting house.



ABOVE: One of the younger voluntary workers on the Tokoroa marae project ... William Iorangi.

RIGHT: Two of the women on weekend kitchen duty. Mrs Edith Henry (in background) and Mrs Helen Gillies (in front).

BELOW RIGHT: Tokoroa's new meeting house and dining hall taking shape on a 3-acre site next door to the Catholic Church.

ject. "I did have last Christmas Day and Boxing Day," he admits almost guiltily. "But I worked right through Easter."

Fortunately his five children are grown-up now, but he confesses that he hasn't seen much of his four grandchildren in the past couple of years.

However, there's never a shortage of young children on the site at weekends ... they love to play there while their parents are working.

Women from the Catholic Maori Society take it in turns to provide meals for the weekend workers ... morning tea and a cooked lunch.

The working bees are happy, family affairs and everyone looks upon their voluntary labour as a gift of love. Especially Sam Papa.

As a child in the Hokianga area he used to spend a lot of time on the local marae there, and he's missed that association in the thirty years he's lived in Tokoroa.

He believes the new marae will have a big impact, both spiritually and culturally, on the people of the timber town.

And what's the 48-year-old compulsive worker going to do with himself once the construction work is finished?

"I think I'll take a BIG holiday," he says with a grin. "And then I'll have to start chopping again. That's my form of relaxation."

Sam Papa is modest too. It's left to someone else to point out that he was in fact amongst the top ten axemen in New Zealand last year!

