

Hone Apanui no Te Whanau a Tuwhakairiora

na Michelle Huria

"I still believe education is the salvation," says Hone Apanui, of the Ngati Porou, former chief editor of the Maori Publications unit Dept of Education. A former pupil of St Stephens, he has been teaching for seventeen years. Hone has taught town and country New Zealanders, Aborigines and Italians in Australia, and Pakistanis and West Indians in London.

"All that experience," he says, "opens up the mind to the possibilities of education." Such opportunities have been sadly ignored when it comes to NZ and te reo Maori.

Hone was chief editor responsible for all Maori publications in the education department. The range stretches from pre-school (He Purapura) to secondary school (Te Rangatahi). Hone did all the work on his own, with a tiny budget, now there is a team of five. "It was a difficult task," he says, "as there is only so much one person can do and Maori people are crying out for resources."

The Maori language has not been given a high profile in education. Hone refers to the Education Act of 1877. The act made education by the state available to all people, before this, it had been left in the hands of the churches. The language of instruction, however, was English, and Maori was ignored. After 110 years less than 1% of people coming out of school can speak Maori. Can the state claim to have successfully taught the language to children?

"The Kohanga Reo movement has put the state to shame," says Hone. "It has proved that Maori can be taught to fluency in 1-3 years. Put that up against the state system's efforts and imagine what the effects would have been if the language had been implemented 110 years ago." Hone levels the finger at the Education Department for not pushing hard enough to sustain the language and have policies put into action.

Education needs a solid resource base. "We need a lot more books published in Maori to provide a base for the language to survive." Hone would like to see thousands of books in Maori on the market. He wants to see bilingual signs in the streets and be able to walk into any bookshop and see a quarter of the shelves with books written in Maori.

Hone doesn't really believe Maori people who say that our language is oral. "All languages are oral," he says.

There are few Maori people with a comprehensive oral base. As a result the Western world, media and books have taken over the language role, and

Maori people have been ignored or presented in a negative fashion. Hone feels there is a definite need to introduce the Maori language in every field going, from the arts to computer science. What exists now in terms of Maori literature, "will not provide a base for any language to survive," says Hone. He challenges commercial people to publish more books in Maori with a Maori emphasis, not the token bilingual texts such as Dr Zeus that have no relation to the Maori spirit.

Hone has also been helping Hori Ngata of the Ngati Porou with the publication of the first major Maori dictionary since Williams. It has 16½ thousand separate word situations. Ngata's sources include the bible, legal document and records from the land courts. The dictionary is a major step forward in the creation of a solid resource base.

Hone Apanui has travelled the country going quietly into Maori communities and gathering tribal stories for educational kits that complement the other Maori publications like He Purapura. "There is an enormous amount of power in words and pictures" says Hone. These kits not only teach people the language but also give an insight into the total Maori view of life.

The links Hone has made with Maori people around N.Z. will be carried

with him into his new job. He has taken up the sole position as Inspector of Schools, co-ordinating Maori language programmes for the whole South Island.

The job will be based in Christchurch. In a sense going south to the people of Ngai Tahu is like going home to the Ngati Porou, as the tribes founding ancestors were brothers.

The job has been created under the new education curriculum. It is a natural development from Hone's former job because he is taking his knowledge to the grass roots level. He will be able to show teachers how to put current policies into practice. His major aim is to make both Maori and Pakeha more aware of the Maori language and to see how precious it is that we retain it.

The new curriculum aims to see Maori included in more school subjects. "Te Aitanga a Pepeke" package ranges from primary to secondary schools and amongst other things gives a Maori view of nature and the laws of conservation. The package can be used in English, Music or Social Studies as well as Maori. Hone's new position will enable him to advise on how the new policies are working in the schools and what further policies should be made.

"Everyone would consider education as the main criteria for a harmonious society," and Hone is doing his part to achieve this. When asked what prompted him to work in this field, Hone pays tribute to Hoani Waititi, author of Te Rangatahi and Hone's former teacher. "He did more for the Maori language than any person I know. He was the only one of his time," says Hone, "and I'm following on in a small way."

