

# Who qualifies to be a New Zealander?

Sir Graham Latimer, chairman of the New Zealand Maori Council, played around with an explosive mixture when he questioned whether pakehas can truly claim to be New Zealanders. According to Sir Graham in his award-winning speech to Toastmasters, there is no doubt that Maoris qualify as New Zealanders, but pakeha claims to that status are suspect, partly on the grounds of social transience. Many pakehas, he said, have not yet developed a real sense of attachment. For Maoris it was different. They had a sense of belonging, "of being part of the land."

Before any well-meaning patriotic Kiwi starts jumping up and down in protest he would be well advised to sit back and give the matter more than a passing angry thought. For their part, Maoris will do themselves no good by swallowing their eminent leader's comments whole and interpreting them as defining the pakeha as an alien invader. We have enough trouble as it is.

Whatever claims are made, or challenged, about anyone's right to class himself as a New Zealander, Sir Graham touched on the fringe of a continuing process of social change when he contended that many pakehas are "still moving, passing through one part of New Zealand to another part, or even to another country if the weather seems to be brighter there." This he believed marked a very real difference between Maoris and other New Zealanders.

A lot of "other New Zealanders," and a lot of Australians too, will think otherwise. They will be galloping away from reality if they assume that the Maori, along with the pakeha, has not been affected by the itchy feet syndrome in the processes of social change, and by the pressures generated by change itself.

Within our job-short-job-hunting society, both Maori and pakehas follow the same well-worn paths that lead to the cities and towns where they believe the lights are brighter in every material respect. A generation ago when the Maori drift from the land began it was a traumatic experience that called for massive and often bewildering changes in social attitudes. Since then a new generation of young Maoris has grown up in an urban setting, which raises questions about whether *turangawaewae* is really part of a deep-rooted Maori heritage or a learned response within a 20th-century framework.

It is all too easy to be simplistic about this, bearing in mind that, along with pakehas, Maoris drive cars, watch television, use public services, pay taxes and move from job to job and from place to place from choice when that suits them. Their mobility, no less than that of the pakeha, has helped to keep the pot of social change bubbling away. Maori and

pakeha differences are today much less place-related than they were even a decade ago.

This does not dispose of the complex issues relating to tribal lands which continue to create tensions, misunderstandings and all too often, deep frustrations.

But is, as Sir Graham suggests, the Maori's deep feeling for the land any stronger than that of the pakeha? There are undoubtedly differences in attitude, but for both, New Zealand is "home" and the social mobility of the individual in response to industrial change in no way diminishes the pakeha's sense of belonging — or his right to belong.

In essence, it seems that Sir Graham's concern about who has the right to designate himself as a real New Zealander centres on an overall ability to accept and live with the pressures of changes which, unfortunately, tend to fall unevenly on different groups. Too often, it seems, one result is that the Maori finds himself disadvantaged and a bomb of resentment starts ticking away.

It is precisely this situation that led the Minister of Maori Affairs, Mr Couch, to comment that we are now witnessing a trend among Maori intellectuals to apply racial discrimination in reverse.

We are stuck with the fact that we have not travelled far enough down the multi-racial road in the last century and a half, but we have reached a point at which, despite Sir Graham's reservations, pakehas have earned the right to regard themselves as New Zealanders in every sense of the term. If we imprison ourselves in the niches of the past and nurse old prejudices and grievances at the expense of looking to the future, we shall spawn new antagonisms to block the way.

— Hawkes Bay Herald Tribune.

## Maori leaders sought

The Maori Leadership Awards function sponsored annually by Rothmans will be held this year in Masterton 16 to 18 October. Colonel Frank Rennie of Rothman's organisation has agreed to be in attendance to present the awards which give public recognition of outstanding service to the Maori people.

As the New Zealand Maori Council has now been enlarged by the creation of two new Maori District Councils, Nga Tai e Wha (South Auckland) and Tauranga-Moewa, the number of recipients will be increased to eleven couples. District Maori Councils are asked to send particulars of their respective representatives as soon as possible to Mr Eric Tamepo, 19 Rugby Street, Masterton.

## Hardship grants allowed

Last year, when the new study grant system was established, a great deal of confusion was caused by the Education Department criteria for the award of hardship grants. In particular, this affected special awards made by the Maori Education Foundation and/or Maori Trust Boards and Incorporations to Maori students as these accounts were deducted from students' hardship totals.

As a result of strong representations made to the Minister of Education by the New Zealand Maori Council, new regulations have been passed which allow grants by M.E.F. and/or recognised trusts both Pakeha and Maori to make awards to tertiary students of up to \$750 without being taken into consideration in departmental assessment of the hardship allowance. This gives recognition to the original principles under which trust educational grants were established.

## Ikaroa or Takitimu?

The differences of opinion generated by the old Ikaroa Land District change of name to Takitimu and the relocation of the Maori Affairs Office in Hastings has been partly resolved. At the last N.Z.M.C. meeting, formal approval was sought and granted that the Ikaroa Maori District Council change its name to Takitimu Maori District Council. This course of action was dictated by an upsurge in the belief of the officary of tribal unity and also to alleviate possible confusion over a conflict of name with the new Takitimu Maori Land Court district centred in Hastings.

It was made clear that this was the only change to be made. A redefinition of boundaries was not considered and would have to involve much further discussion with all parties as it is an entirely separate issue of deep concern.

## More seats wanted

At the latest meeting of the New Zealand Maori Council, it was resolved "that the New Zealand Maori Council re-affirms its stance that Maori representation in Parliament should be increased, the number of seats to be based on total Maori population figures as revealed in the 1981 census. For the purposes of this resolution the definition of a Maori shall be that contained in the 1974 Maori Affairs Amendment Act".

At present there are four Maori seats in Parliament based on an arbitrary demarcation into four segments North, South, East, West. N.Z.M.C. is now seeking electoral representation calculated in exactly the same manner as for general seats, that is, total population figures.