

of ten persons are invited as this is a comfortable number. From the first meeting which was two hours long, the time period now is likely to be six or seven hours.

The topics dealt with to date include general directions, aspects of social change as it affects the Maori, employment, justice, land use, education, the role of women and youth in

No Cause To Grumble continued.

... Is to be a university educated, hard-working, tax-paying, law-abiding citizen with a good military record, a better-than-average vocabulary, a reasonably high IQ, a lovely family, a good home and still be legally defined as a "ward of the Government".

... Is to come back from the barber-shop and have your senses assaulted by at least one of the following bon mots:

"Hey! Didya get scalped or sump'ping? haw haw ..."

"Oh Oh, somebody's going on the warpath now. hee hee ..."

... Is to be introduced to someone and have their first question be: "Say, where kin I git a nice pair of moc-assins cheap?"

... Is to pick up any Canadian daily newspaper and find: Every Indian movement, political or otherwise, labelled as "going on the warpath"; any Indian celebration and storm that happens to coincide attributed to "Indians dancing up a storm" and legislation that expressly forbids identifying criminals or their victims by racial origin neatly circumvented by the white press, pointing out that so-and-so resides on the so-and-so Indian Reserve.

... Is to have people endlessly commiserate with you over "the plight of your people." Other races have predicaments, quandaries, dilemmas, problems and troubles. Indians invariably have plights. Our foremost plight is having to listen to lines like this:

"Youse guys wuz here first, you know, dis is all yer lan."

"I was brought up right beside a reservation. Hell, some of my best friends is Injuns."

... Is to wonder when religious orders like the Jesuits and the Oblates, who have had "missions" in Indian Country for at least 400 years, will decide we have been sufficiently christianized for them to move on to greater things.

Like I said, if you catch me on a bad day ...

Maori development, and Maori participation in the decision making process.

In most cases the topics have been so broad that quite often only the surface has been scratched. Nevertheless, it is only a matter of narrowing the focus to cause some surprising insights and initiatives to emerge from people who may not normally have access to the higher realms of policy making.

For example, Kingi Houkamou, who is a bulldozer contractor from Hicks Bay, brought to the Table his idea of an internal sabbatical for school teachers; Mike Kitchen outlined his freezing workers-forestry venture; Dennis Hanson outlined what the John Waititi Marae is doing to overcome the juvenile offending rate; Jenny Wilson from Kaikoura outlined the Honorary Probation Officer scheme that she worked with in Australia and Georgina Kirby explained initiatives being taken in Freemans Bay to overcome the unemployment problem.

In terms of the kaupapa of the Round Table, selection of participants was aimed at bringing in as wide a coverage as possible in terms of age, sex, occupation and income, geographic location and general life experience.

Some of those who have attended are: Tahu Asher, a marae worker; Lorna Dyal, a researcher; Claude Edwards, a farmer from Opotiki; Pauline Kingi, a solicitor from Auckland; Ruka Broughton, from Wellington; Yvonne Nicholas, a Wellington taxi driver; Api Mahuika, a farmer from Tikitiki; Hori Tamihana, a marae worker and Tumanako Wereta who until recently was the president of the Southland Meatworkers Union. The younger generation has been present in the form of Phillip Marshall, Alison Green and Penny Poutu.

FURTHER DEPARTURE

Some 19 women have attended and in a further departure from the previous format, non-Maori participation has been sought where there is a special 'Maori' contribution to be offered.

Hence, Paul Green an American sociologist with in-depth race relations experience has attended as has the Secretary of Justice Mr John Robertson, and the Mayor of Wellington, Sir Michael Fowler. Each had a particular dimension to add to the matter under discussion.

Two people in particular have attended most Round Table meetings

— John Tahuparae because of his marae skills is the 'resident' kaumataua and Iri Tawhiwhirangi injects a Tu Tangata component into most of the meetings.

DIVERSITY

Each Round Table meeting is opened with karakia and it matters not which religious denomination conducts the prayer.

Religious lines and political affiliations are of no consequence for Round Table purposes. Accordingly the participants tend to come from right across the spiritual and political spectrum. The strength of the Round Table lies in its diversity.

Only a minimum of information is given in advance so that the participants while being able to do some preparation are able to remain flexible.

The meetings are structured only loosely so as to remove the idea of a 'chat' session, a basic framework is established and a strong informality is maintained.

Apart from the karakia, powhiri and replies, most of the meeting is conducted in English. Many participants do not have a strong command of the Maori language and in ordinary circumstances, would feel constrained from speaking in a marae situation.

This constraint is overcome at the Round Table although it is from time to time necessary to coax the fullest out of participants, quite often because they do not realise how much they know and how much others would value it.

At the end of each meeting a draft of discussions is sent to the participants involved and they are invited to add or extract.

All members of the Planning Council, which is chaired by Sir Frank Holmes, are given a copy of the transcript and as one of the members is Cabinet Minister, Mr Bill Birch, there is potentially a direct route from the Round Table to the top level of policy consideration.

Members of the council and its secretariat customarily attend Round Table meetings, to get a first-hand insight into Maori opinions; and some of the future Round Tables will be specifically related to Planning Council projects e.g. on developments in the rural areas.

That then is the Round Table. It is hoped that in future issues of Tu Tangata some of the discussion that have emerged will be presented.