

TE WHENUA/Land

Taranaki takes claim to Waitangi Tribunal

The failure to properly control the discharge of sewage and industrial waste into the sea between New Plymouth and Waitara is inconsistent with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. This claim has been filed with the Waitangi Tribunal by Aila Taylor on behalf of Te Atiawa tribe of Taranaki.

In the February issue of "Te Kaea", a report was made on local opposition to the New Plymouth City Council's plans to dispose of the city's domestic and industrial waste through a long sea outfall over the Rewarewa reef at the mouth of the Waiwakaiho River. It was said this plan would affect several Maori fishing grounds along the Taranaki coast.

Now those same fishing grounds are said to be further threatened by major development proposals in the energy field, the subject of proceedings under the National Development Act including the proposed Methanol Plant on the Waitara River,

and the proposed \$750 million synthetic petrol plant along the nearby coast.

IRREVERSIBLE DAMAGE

In his claim, Mr Taylor alleges that the development "is causing and will continue to cause irreversible damage to a larger area of sea bed on which the Te Atiawa Tribe relies as a source of food thereby depriving the Te Atiawa Tribe of the full exclusive and undisturbed possession of fisheries which it desires to retain as confirmed and guaranteed to it by the Crown".

This is the sixth claim to have been filed with the Waitangi Tribunal although only two claims — by Joe Hawke and others in respect of the Fisheries Regulations and by T E Kirkwood and others relating to a proposed Thermal Power Station on Manukau Harbour — have proceeded to a full hearing.

The Waitangi Tribunal is required to inquire into any claims and to report to the Minister of Maori Af-

fairs and such other Ministers of the Crown as may have an interest.

HOPEFUL

The Chairman of the Waitangi Tribunal, Chief Judge E T Durie, is hopeful that the Te Atiawa proceedings "will at least open" at a marae of the Te Atiawa people and will be conducted with proper regard for Te Atiawa kawa. "I am hopeful that that will happen" he said "but it is not something that the Tribunal can direct. If there is to be a hearing at a marae then it is for the elders of the marae to invite the Tribunal to go there and the appropriate panui and powhiri should issue in their names."

The other members of the Tribunal are Sir Graham Latimer, President of the NZ Maori Council and Mr L H Southwick, a QC in Auckland.

Details of the hearing can be obtained from the Registrar, Waitangi Tribunal, Tribunals Division of the Justice Department, P. Bay, Postal Centre, Wellington.



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