

Ruarangi training scheme underway

The Ruarangi Training Scheme originated through the Whangarei Youth Centre when the acting director, Mrs Druis Barrett and one or two members of the committee, became concerned that something positive should be done about skilled training for some of the regular users of the Centre.

There was a hard-core group of 10 ranging in age from 15 years to 20 years who were unemployed, had no educational qualifications, and lacked work skills.

The Youth Centre itself had run several short courses over the Christmas period in things like bone carving, upholstery, and wood carving, and also had set up a hire pool, but it was felt that this did not really fulfill the needs of these young people.

In partnership with the Labour Department, Maori Affairs, and the Whangarei Maori Women's Welfare League branch, a scheme was set up to provide skilled training for eight young people from the age of 15 years upwards. The group is at present made up of six males and two females.

Training will be given in the following areas: fencing, cultivation and soil management, growing of vegetables, raising of flowers and vegetable seedlings, propagation of fruit and native trees, aspects of site

shelter and drainage for horticulture and bee keeping.

Also taught will be basic pruning, marketing, basic gas and arc welding, machine knitting using Maori motif patterns, bone carving in traditional Maori designs, tukutuku, Kowhai-whai work, flax weaving and other craft work, opossum trapping and preparation of skins, basic forestry management. Budgeting and instruction in good work habits will also be undertaken.

The land related skills are to be based upon the Ruarangi block which is a block of Maori land situated some four kilometres from Whangarei city. Training in the other skills will initially be held at the Whangarei Youth Centre.

The Ruarangi block is held by the Maori Trustee for the benefit of six or seven sub-tribes from the Whangarei area. It has an historical background and contains an area of 16.1621 hectares, part of which is an old pa site. Permission to use part of this land has been given by the Maori Trustee.

The scheme got under way on 22 June 1981 and apart from welding and some craft instruction taking up to one day per week, most of the time has been spent on the land upgrading the access, building a culvert, and clearing the garden area.

It was hoped to have the cultivation completed by 7 August 1981 to enable the planting out of some 2 000 cabbage plants which are at present being held at one of the local nurseries.

There has been a tremendous response to the scheme from business people as well as from a number of skilled horticulturists.

A local building firm has made one of its lunchrooms available for use on the scheme and tools and other equipment have been donated. Skilled tutors have indicated that they will be available to teach bone carving and other craft skills when needed.

From the membership of the Whangarei Maori Women's Welfare League, people with skills in weaving, flower growing, machine knitting and other things will provide an input to the scheme.

Approval to fund the venture for two years has been given by the Labour Department under its work skills development programme. Profits from the sale of produce and other goods will be used by the Whangarei branch to extend the activities of the scheme and, hopefully, also to provide the initial back-up finance for similar programmes in the area.

Young Maoris wanted

The board of the Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand have expressed the need to have more Maori people on its staff, in radio, and/or television in all fields of work in broadcasting.

With this intention, they have appointed kaumatua, Wiremu Kingi Kerekere O.B.E., Maori consultant for the Broadcasting Corporation, to recruit suitable young Maori, having the qualifications and merits required, and possessing the bi-cultural attributes of both Maori and Pakeha values.

Concentration will be on secondary senior school leavers interested and keen to learn, but will include young adults of like suitability, and quality in both Maori and Pakeha terms.

Young Maori adults and students interested in broadcasting contact Wiremu Kerekere, Broadcasting Corporate Services, PO Box 2092, Wellington. Phone 721-777 ext. 478, Wellington.



Members of the Ruarangi training scheme getting down to the basics on the Ruarangi Maori block near Whangarei.