

on. The right to move with freedom in society is seriously eroded.

Police and traffic officers also have their own personal problems with being hassled by dedicated "cop-baiters". Being provoked unmercifully by resentful youths intent on trouble. Having to face a barrage of abuse from the anonymity of a crowd. Having to deal with the results of a crime on the victim. Having to weave a way to the truth through a field of lies, half-truths, evasions and all the trickery for deceit that human imagination can bestow on the "innocence" of youth. Thus the acts of a few are visited on the many.

It is a fact that most of the clients of law enforcement authorities are under the age of 30 years, are mainly non professional workers, poorly educated and tend to be aggressive in reacting to stressful situations.

PAYING THE PRICE

Maori youth make up a large proportion of this population. Social contact between law enforcement and Maori youth is inevitable be-

cause both sides live and work in close proximity to each other. Cop-baiting, confrontation by the young Maori to "save face" through peer group pressure, provocation motivated by the need to "even-the-score" and sheer mischief makes the Maori far from entirely blameless in hostile police, traffic officer/Maori youth relations. The end result is that the young Maori pays the price.

The tragedy is that the cycle of conflict goes on and on. Each side being reinforced by its own experiences and perceptions of the other. False though the perception of hate may be, it is real in its consequences to the holders.

Without appearing to make excuses for Maori youth, the greater responsibility for changing this situation must be with law enforcement authorities. Their training and selection procedures should equip the law enforcement officer with the understanding of Maori youth and the maturity to cope with situations before conflict arises. The greater maturity should accept the greater responsibility — even in

protecting others from themselves.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

All these things add up to a systematic disadvantage for Maori youth in the criminal justice — law enforcement system. At nearly every avenue of contact with the system, Maori youth are not able to cope with the unwritten rules and recognise the cues dictating how one should behave to gain most legal advantage from the system. It is a world of strange things. Ideas quite alien to their thinking. Outside their comprehension of the reality of their situation. Ignorant of the ramifications of the charges and penalties they face.

They react with the bravado of their peers. They turn off the advice of their elders, switch on the authority of the Courts. We spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in search and rescue for those lost in the bush and mountains. How well do we rescue those lost in the inbetween world of the lawless and the alienated?

Can we afford to?

Can we afford not to?

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