

Mana Motuhake — Still in a holding pattern.



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Mat Rata. He has become the Elder Statesman of Protest. The issue now is: how long will it take this voice from the Outside to return once more to the Inside of political life? Mana Motuhake Maori came second in all four Maori seats, ahead of both National and Social Credit. The power base is there. The issue now is to develop the party's own structure.

"The issue now is development," emphasises Rangi Walker, a founder of Mana Motuhake and today very much the keeper of the spiritual flame. "We must expand our toehold." In effect Walker sees the objective as a mass communications operation. "What is the point of being on the side of the angels if we cannot get our message through to them?" he notes.

Nowadays Mana Motuhake appears to be in a holding pattern. A round of strategy meetings is scheduled, though, to discuss intensively the most profitable way in which to use the handfull of power among voters so graphically illustrated by the general election results.

There is still no sign of a reconciliation between Mat Rata and the Labour Party. Even though Mana Motuhake and the Labour Party did unite in their condemnation of the Prime Minister's comments on anti Games protesters being inherently violent. Mana Motuhake remains and will remain a political force. The

results of the last election were at once encouraging and disappointing. Certainly the party had reasonably hoped for a seat. But on the other hand, in the words of Mat Rata, the party can't expect "miracles."

Fourth powerful

Today, Mana Motuhake has the fourth most powerful political organisation. There is a permanent office with a secretariat. There are 100 active branches and around 15,000 members. The only direction now is a forward one. Few things fall away more quickly than support for a political party which does not look as if it wants to win.

Mat Rata meanwhile continues to busy himself with Maori causes, this time as an independent consultant. He acts for Maori landowners affected by the Paeroa flood works, and he consults on land ownership schemes. His work as a freelance consultant keeps him constantly in touch with events in Maoridom.

The more he sees, the more con-

vinced he is that the only answer to widespread commercial development is the cooperative movement. It is a notion he wishes to instill in Maoris too. "Why didn't the Wellington dustmen use their redundancy pay to start their own contracting company, and then tender for the city council work?"

People first

According to Rangi Walker the central aspect of Mana Motuhake is its "humanism." People come first, the profit/loss side of life second.

Rata believes that this solidarity with ordinary people gives it an important transcendence over Labour, a party which he claims is "abandoning" the Maori people. It is, he claims, "a party devoid of ideology" and because of this absence of philosophical base will "always founder."

Both Walker and Rata emphasise that Mana Motuhake is open to people from varied backgrounds. Ten per cent of the members have no Maori blood. In the next election they hope to sprinkle a few Mana Motuhake candidates around the general seats. "We are determined to put the best people in the right places."

The essential Mana Motuhake demand is that you recognise that there is a "social alternative." That you realise that the Maori culture has made no im-