

"I was impressed with what I saw — and what I didn't see. Like the absence of Maori art and motifs in the hotels we stayed at," Heen said. "I mentioned this to the Maori artists and businessmen I met in Rotorua and expressed my interest in helping."

Training scheme

Heen recalls that it was Howard Morrison who suggested the possibility of sending young Maoris to Honolulu to learn the art of interior design as apprentices. "Howard told me that there could be a scheme developed whereby these young men would come here under a Department of Maori Affairs training scheme."

But nothing happened til February of this year when Heen returned to Auckland to attend the Maori Business Development Conference. While there, he met young Denis through his father who had served as a guide to Heen and the visiting Hawaiian businessmen. The elder Hansen mentioned that Denis was planning his world tour and would he look after him while in Hawaii.

Heen said yes and suggested that he might have something for young Denis. What he had in mind, but did not tell anyone at the time, was an apprenticeship at Kuilima where his company had just been awarded a multi-million dollar contract to redecorate the interior of the 500-room resort hotel.

Door knocking

Although he spent several days in Auckland and toured the North Island, he left the country before he could find out much more about Denis' work background. So when Denis arrived in Honolulu in April and knocked on Heen's door, the master teacher did not really know what his apprentice was going to be like.

What Charles did not know was that Denis had just the right combination of work experiences. He had worked as a painter, wallpaper hanger, carpenter and labourer. He had been a supervisor for a year in the Periodic Detention Center in Auckland. He had also worked for over a year in the accountancy department of a private company. And, while in school, he had taken up technical drawing.

"I couldn't have asked for anyone more suited for this project at Kuilima," Heen said.

Work related

What Denis is learning and doing relates to all of his past experiences and more: selecting colours, wallpaper, carpets; tearing down old materials and hauling the junk out; delivering new materials on schedule; supervising subcontractors, craftsmen and suppliers; planning; monitoring and reporting work results; reading drawings; and so on. Although an apprentice, he holds

the impressive title of "Project Coordinator."

Denis is now well into his apprenticeship and Heen is delighted. "Denis has great rapport with the people in the hotel — from the general manager down to the housekeepers and security guards. In a project like this where time is money, we have to get the cooperation of so many people so that we can do our work on schedule. It takes great PR and this young man has it," he stated.

All in the family

"This is an incredible experience for me," Denis said. "I love dealing with people. By now, I know all the staff and I've become part of the family."

Apparently, all the staff seems to know him, too. One of the reasons is his accent and command of English. Hawaiians speak a form of pidgin English and for them listening to someone who looks "local" but talks perfect English is fascinating. Incidentally, with his height, good looks and personality, Denis has also become an object of fascination for the young female staff.

Denis' duties include talking by phone with Charles Heen every morning and afternoon, going over the day's schedule. Sometimes he and his teacher are on the phone three or five times a day. Heen is headquartered in Honolulu about 45 miles away from the Kuilima Hyatt resort and visits the site only one or two days a week.

"I realize I have quite a responsibility," Denis said, "but I can always ask for help, and I know what I am capable of doing. Besides, I enjoy what I'm doing." He enjoys what he is going so much that he may be reconsidering his travel and career plans.

Closeness

Denis cannot help but compare his Maori background with his Hawaiian "cousins". "I feel a closeness with the Hawaiians I meet or work with which just makes it easier for me in my work." One thing has been driven home to him and that is when he returns home he will need to learn a great deal more of his own culture and language.

"Here I am traveling around the world to learn about people," he said, "yet I don't even know my own people."

He's got a lot to learn, but he has some clear purposes in mind one of which is to go back and help his people. "I want to make a contribution to my people and maybe what I'm learning here about the resort business is the field I can do it in."

Kuilima is a long way from Rutherford High School in Auckland, but for Denis Hansen, the apprentice, it really isn't — he's still in school, even if the classroom is a plush suite in "paradise".

Ngarimu scholars

Mr John Stephen Tawhana Hetet, of Wellington, has been awarded the Ngarimu and 28th (Maori) Battalion Memorial Post Graduate Scholarship.

Mr Hetet, who will hold the scholarship for two years, was born in Te Kuiti and is a former pupil of Te Kuiti High School and Kamo College.

He graduated Bachelor of Science from Auckland University in 1976 and Bachelor of Arts with First Class Honours in English from Victoria University of Wellington in 1979.

Mr Hetet hopes to work on a doctorate in historical bibliography at Cambridge University.

The Minister of Education, Mr Wellington, has also announced the holders of the new Ngarimu Scholarships for undergraduates.

Seven will be going to Auckland University. They are: Rawiri Meihana

He Kupu Whakamihi/profile



Twenty-four year old Matheus Vermunt was capped Bachelor of Technology and Industrial Engineering on 7th May 1982 at Palmerston North.

Matheus attended Primary School at St Patricks Convent, Taumaranui. He learned through Correspondence School in form one and two because of illness and attended secondary school at St Patricks College, Silverstream, with the financial help of the Maori Education Foundation. He later became head boy of St Patricks College.

He was honoured by members of Tai Tokerau in 1976 when the Maori Women's Welfare League met in Kaitiaki. Matheus's "Youth" award was announced and a presentation of mere, mania and puipui. Mrs Huia Makaraia presented him with his greenstone.

Matheus with another girl represented New Zealand in the World Youth Camp at Texas after winning the 1977 Lions-Bank of New South Wales "Youth of the Year" award in Wellington.

Before returning from his overseas trip he visited his family in Europe, his father being Dutch. Matheus found he had lost his bursary after returning