

# Tama Verco off overseas



The farewell dinner for Tama Vercoe (l to r) Alan Hutchinson, Roz Agar, Tama (standing), Nancy Vercoe, Charlie Karekare, Elsie Edwards.

## Hiria Rakete

Scholarship winner, Tama Vercoe, who has left for the United World College in Vancouver, Canada hopes his success will encourage other young Maori people.

The 17 year old Head Prefect at Rotorua Boys' High School said before his recent departure that 'Maoritanga and education should really go hand in hand'. And this is what he is setting out to do.

"If I can do it, anybody can."

The principal, Mr G. Crammond says that Tama is an "excellent ambassador for his family, friends and New Zealand."

Te Teko people are proud of their latest success. About 250 people gathered at Tu-te-Ao marae to wish him luck and congratulate him on his acceptance.

Tama is the second person from Te Teko in eight years to represent New Zealand.

Tama was one of 21 applicants from New Zealand and three were chosen.

Tama will join 200 students from all over the world at Vancouver. A Dunedin girl will study at New Mexico and an Auckland Girls' Grammar student

will travel to Wales.

"For some reason, girls' applications outnumber the boys' applications 2:1 and in the past there have been more girls going," said Tama.

Mr Crammond says that Tama is well qualified for his position at the college.

Amongst his excellent academic record, Tama has won the Ngarimu Essay Competition in both Maori and Pakeha. His command of both oral languages is also commendable. But Tama is a very down to earth person who doesn't let these things get to his head, says Mr Crammond.

During the school holidays, Tama helped teach boys to use the taiaha at the wangana held on Mokoia Island. Most of these boys were the same age or younger.

The 17 year old is looking forward to the trip, but is looking more forward to coming back. Which is not at all surprising since he will be staying in Canada for two years.

Tama will be doing a mixed course at World College. His subjects are English, Spanish, Philosophy, Marine Science and Maths.

However, the college covers much more than academic studies. It caters

for activities such as land and sea rescues, diving, yachting, search rescues and learning how to make wet suits.

Tama feels he has a definite advantage being a Maori. He can share his own culture amongst all the other students as well as putting New Zealand on the map.

He dismisses the suggestion of being homesick.

"Sure, I'll miss my family and all my friends. But I think I'll have to grin and bear it."

His mother, Mrs Lin Vercoe, is "thrilled to bits" about Tama's success.

"They all have to leave home sometime — only some have better opportunities, she said.

Although the younger members of the family don't really understand, she said they will miss Tama very much.

She says that they have discussed this matter over the last few years and when Tama wasn't very successful on his first application, family influence helped him through the second application.

All expenses are paid for by the scholarship which is a great load off the family's shoulders because the expenses come to \$35,000.