



By HARRY HAWTHORN in the *Far Eastern Survey*, February 26, 1945

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THE NINETY thousand Polynesian Natives of New Zealand, brown-skinned though they are, have not slipped into a status of second-class citizenship. They vote on terms of full equality with the European-New-Zealand majority and in the last forty years a number of Cabinet Ministers and an Acting Prime Minister have been chosen from their representatives in Parliament. They were one of the first Native peoples of the Pacific to belie the myth of the "vanishing primitive"; their numbers have doubled in this century. In the two World Wars their soldiers have fought with the general New Zealand forces or in their own battalions, according to their preference, and have won honours as combat troops.

This situation poses a number of questions. The European-New-Zealanders are not an unprejudiced people. Their immigration policies discriminate against Chinese, Japanese, and British Indians. How, then, did this position of the Maori come about? Is it exceptional, or does it have meaning for other situations where peoples and cultures meet?

A brief review shows few basic elements of the situation to be exceptional. To be sure, the position of the Maori is in some ways unique because of his Poly-

nesian cultural heritage, and some distinctively Maori aspects of his personality, but beyond this it reveals elements of social development and of experimentation, the mistakes and successes of which are of wider application.

The bulk of the Maori population today is engaged in small-scale farming or in skilled and unskilled wage-labour. A small minority hold positions in the Civil service and in the professions, and some farm on a larger scale with sheep and cattle. Few are merchants, fewer are owners and executives of business and industry. The income of the majority of farmers and labourers is small, and without Government assistance it would be inadequate for the basic needs of a family. On the whole, the economic changes of the last twenty years have benefited the farmer and labourer; and the present adult generation has been engaged largely in the task of consolidating these gains and in pursuing the immediate improvement of farms, dwellings, and community services. But one of the most important keys to Maori personality and culture is the parents' interest in the child and his future. It needs no higher mathematics for the father than to look at his hundred-acre farm and at his ten children and decide that most of the boys will have to find some other livelihood.

In planning for their children, Maori parents look with greatest interest to the Government service and the professions. This preference reflects in part the