

SPEECH TO THE LOWER HUTT PROBUS CLUB - JUNE 1993

1. Firstly, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. Secondly, I would like to **PAY TRIBUTE TO DAVID WILLIAMS FOR HIS FOREBEARANCE** in view of the **TO-ING** and **FRO-ING** that went on before a final date for this engagement was settled upon. I would also like to **ACKNOWLEDGE HIS GIFT OF FORESIGHT.**

His invitation to speak on 'Race Relations' was made well before my own knowledge of appointment to this position of Race Relations Conciliator - it could be said that the Maori word for such a talent is **MATAKITE** and the closest **ENGLISH TRANSLATION IS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 'SEER' AND 'PUNTER'.**

As a lead in to the topic I thought that a very brief outline of the **ROLE OF THE RACE RELATIONS OFFICE** may be of some interest to you.

2. The Office has had a little MORE THAN 20 YEARS OF HISTORY. In the beginning SIR GUY POWLES WHO WAS THE OMBUDSMAN AT THE TIME was also appointed to carry out the function of Race Relations Conciliator. An OFFICE was set up IN AUCKLAND and later additional Offices set up in Wellington and Christchurch. The Race Relations Act 1971 provides the Office the authority to investigate complaints of discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic or national origin. There are specific areas of jurisdiction namely EMPLOYMENT, ACCOMMODATION, ADVERTISING and ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES. Unfortunately for many INTENDING COMPLAINANTS the ACT is SURPRISINGLY NARROW and excludes such areas as EDUCATION and some cases involving the media but basically the role of the office is to protect people from the adverse consequences of discrimination. The Race Relations Act will be harmonised with the HUMAN RIGHTS BILL which is expected to be enacted by the end of the year. These areas which are presently excluded will be incorporated into the Human Rights Act. Even though the Office does not have jurisdiction on complaints relating to Education it does in fact have an important role in helping to educate the public on various issues relating to race Relations. That gives you a thumb nail sketch of the Office.

3. While I was CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF MANATU MAORI (THE MINISTRY OF MAORI AFFAIRS) we undertook a series of HUI throughout the country TO IDENTIFY THE ETHOS OR DRIVING FORCE of Maori people as tangata whenua or the INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF THIS LAND.

THREE THINGS EMERGED - an ABSOLUTE ALLEGIANCE to the TREATY OF WAITANGI, an ABSOLUTE ADHERENCE to the CONCEPT OF TINO RANGATIRATANGA or SELF DETERMINATION, and an ABSOLUTE BELIEF in the RIGHT TO BE DIFFERENT.

THESE WERE NOT NEW IDEAS OF IDENTITY, BUT THEY EXERT A CERTAIN PRESSURE ON US AS NEW ZEALANDERS.

This PRESSURE can be labelled RACE RELATIONS.

Recent world trends, including a growing awareness of human and individual rights, have quite naturally focused New Zealanders more closely on the two races which signed the Treaty of Waitangi and also on the other ethnic minorities in our society.

4. The **TREATY** should be regarded as an **ENDURING OBLIGATION** to **FAIRNESS** and **EQUITY**, but it **CANNOT** be expected to **SOLVE ALL** the **PROBLEMS** we still face in the area of race relations. We've worked through the **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MODEL** where access to resources was the issue for Maori people. The equal opportunity model under pinned the philosophy on how we developed as a society. Prime Minister Fraser promoted it as the cornerstone of an educational system. For many it was seen as a fair and equitable way of helping people to grow and take a full part in the life of this land - not so for Maori. We've also worked through the **EQUITY MODEL** where returns to the Maori people, that is a return on an investment, was the issue.

And, it shouldn't be forgotten that the **TREATY ALSO LEGITIMISED THE SETTLEMENT** of this country by the **BRITISH FORBEARS OF MANY OF US**.

5. In the period before 1863, which marked the **ONSET OF THE LAND WARS, MAORI PEOPLE STILL HAD AN ECONOMIC BASE** - communally held land and tribal labour. They operated very successfully, adapting agricultural technology into their own context.
  
6. Since that time however, **THE BULK OF THE COUNTRY'S RESOURCES HAS BEEN DEVOTED TO NON-MAORI INTERESTS AND INSTITUTIONS.** But haven't the Maori gained more than they have lost, **I HEAR YOU ASK.** Well my response is, that signing the **TREATY WAS NOT A TRANSACTION** which had **GAINS** and **LOSSES** attached to it. Much of what the Maori lost - **LAND, LANGUAGE, CULTURE** and **SELF DETERMINATION** was **NEITHER INEVITABLE NOR A PRICE TAG** on development and technology.

I recently participated in a **UNITED NATIONS MEETING** of institutions and organisations promoting tolerance and harmony and combating racism and racial discrimination.

During the time I was there I heard many **IMPASSIONED** and **EMOTIONAL SPEECHES ON INDIGENOUS RIGHTS**. From the first point of contact indigenous colonised people suffered maltreatment, enslavement, introduced diseases, punishment for resisting, and over-exploitation or destruction of the natural resources on which they depended.

For example the **YANOMAMI** of the central American rainforests are still being forced away from their traditional homelands as resources and money pours in for **MINERAL EXPLORATION** and **EXTRACTION** and **FORESTS ARE TURNED INTO FARMS**.

7. **THE PRINCIPLE OF CONSENT OR CONSULTATION AND AGREEMENT** was cited as vital to the **EXERCISE OF SELF DETERMINATION** and to this end, New Zealand is doing much better. With the process of consultation enacted in the **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991** we have become a **WORLD LEADER IN CO-OPERATION** between the two cultures. The Act requires central and local government to seek input from Maori on matters relating to the management and protection of our waterways, shorelines and other areas of our environment.

Intimately **RELATED TO SELF DETERMINATION IS THE PRINCIPLE OF DETERMINING ONE'S OWN PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT**. This has been happening more and more frequently of late as **CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO DEVOLVE** more of its functions to the community. A good example of this is the kohanga reo (Maori language nests) programme which is funded by Vote Education, although solely a Maori initiative from the beginning.

**SOME TRIBAL** groups have set up **LEGAL** and **MEDICAL CLINICS** for their own people, have contracted with Housing Corporation to build homes for families and the elderly around their marae on land which they own.

8. DEVELOPMENT was perceived as a VERY NEGATIVE CONCEPT by speakers on indigenous rights at the conference. This is because the indigenous people have SUFFERED THE CONSEQUENCES RATHER THAN ENJOYED THE BENEFITS OF DEVELOPMENT, they said.

I feel we are DOING RATHER WELL in this regard too, not only because of the Resource Management Act but where development WAS ONCE CAPITALISTIC and STATUS DRIVEN we NOW have a PHILOSOPHY OF SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT. The 'Greens' and the country's many conservation groups attest to that.

Maori people view themselves, LIKE THE FLORA AND FAUNA, as part and parcel of the ECOSYSTEM - not outside it and certainly not a force that can control or manipulate it. Indigenous people have BASED THEIR LIVES, SPIRITUALITY and CULTURAL IDENTITY on their relationship WITH THE LAND. There is still some way to go, but if past experience means anything, Maori will again more than CONTRIBUTE TO THE ECONOMIC WELL BEING of our country. I am referring to the RETURN OF ASSETS AND RESOURCES through the Waitangi Tribunal.

9. By showing goodwill and a sense of fairness - attributes which you all have displayed whether it be in a business or a social context -New Zealand is **CONFRONTING ITS HISTORY AND PUTTING THINGS RIGHT.**

The truth about land and asset misappropriation is now only beginning to be learnt, the truth about the settler government which set about dismantling Maori land ownership against the wishes of the Crown has come to light.

With this enlightenment of our history, has come a new willingness to **DEBATE, NOT JUST THE POLICIES OF THE PAST BUT ALSO RESPONSIBILITIES.**

Maori must be looked after **FIRST AS THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE** but we also have to be aware of other immigrants to New Zealand. We need to get a **SOUND FOUNDATION OF MAORI AND NON-MAORI**, and we are definitely moving in the right direction.

10. The most obvious feature of ASIAN IMMIGRATION is of course THEIR ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION to the country's wellbeing. But just as IMPORTANT is the CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION they make with THEIR DISTINCTIVE foods, arts, languages and ideas.

NEW ZEALAND'S ECONOMIC FUTURE IS TIED TO THAT OF ASIA, particularly South East Asia as the country's leaders have recently pointed out.

There is every intention of taking full advantage of the SHIFT OF ECONOMIC POWER from the Northern Hemisphere to the high consumer markets of the South.

THE MYTH OF 'ONE PEOPLE, ONE NATION' HAS BEEN DISMANTLED. New Zealand has never been one people - except at the higher level of nationhood. Beneath that we are Maori, Pakeha, Samoan, Chinese, Thai or Cambodian.

WHAT WE ARE THOUGH IS ONE NATION UNDER ONE FLAG AND WITH ONE SET OF LAWS FOR EVERYBODY. The problem seems to be THE TROUBLE A LOT ARE HAVING IN ADJUSTING TO THE NOTION OF 'DIFFERENT-NESS: the right of minorities to be different.

11. As Race Relations Conciliator I was in CHRISTCHURCH RECENTLY TO TALK TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS. I was very IMPRESSED AND HEARTENED to find that group of people had the WELFARE OF NEW ZEALAND'S FUTURE in their hearts and minds - without exception. Their students were as racially diverse as any cosmopolitan city in the world.

So, let us TAKE PLEASURE in the cultural diversity we have in New Zealand and REJOICE IN OUR DIFFERENT-NESS.

12. Recently both H.A.R.T. and C.A.R.E. the anti-racist organisations have decided to call it "quits". H.A.R.T. was the watchdog group on sporting contact between countries - particularly South Africa, while C.A.R.E. on the other hand kept a wider vigilance of things. **MASSIVE REFORMS** in South Africa was the principal reason for H.A.R.T. disbanding, while in the case of C.A.R.E. there was a feeling that **NEW ZEALAND HAD ACQUIRED A MORE POSITIVE OUTLOOK TOWARD RACE RELATIONS**; people had become more tolerant and respectful of each other. As **TOM NEWNHAM** of C.A.R.E. said "**EVEN BANKS EMPLOY MAORI AND OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS** - which wasn't quite the case 20 plus years ago".
13. It would be quite **NAIVE** and in fact **FOOLISH** to believe that all is well in our little corner of the **WORLD** - the "**TARRANGOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL**" **DISPUTE BETWEEN A GROUP OF MAORI PARENTS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS** and the Principal along with the Board of Trustees, the reaction of Asian Communities to what they claim to be **UNFAIR AND UNBALANCED REPORTING** by the **MEDIA** and other complaints that come across my table suggests that some people continue to struggle to understand and appreciate each others' "different-ness".

14. Finally, I am a great believer in the saying that "The WORLD BELONGS TO THOSE WHO PREPARE FOR IT." In that respect I would believe your COLLECTIVE CONTRIBUTION to the PROFESSIONAL and BUSINESS WORLD has been IMMENSE. The same may also be said about your contribution to the SOCIAL NEEDS OF YOUR COMMUNITY. We need to continue with our efforts in developing a SUPPORTIVE AND TOLERANT ENVIRONMENT for our children and grandchildren.

Kia ora.

John Clarke

Race Relations Office