



ROBIN MORRISON/NZ LISTENER

Harry Dansey's successor as Race Relations Conciliator is Edward Te Rangihwinui Tauroa. That's not all, of course. After coaching Counties to victory in the national championship last year Hiwi has also been much in the news as a strong possibility for All Black selector. The last Maori in that job was Pat Walsh, 1969-73. Hiwi does not regard race relations and rugby as mutually exclusive — on the contrary — but here we asked him to talk to us specifically about his appointment as Race Relations Conciliator.

"I was surprised when I was offered the job, I really was", he says. "After six years as Principal of Tuakau College I was ready to go back home to Kaeo. The people up there had told me it was time, and I had made plans."

But those plans will have to wait as Hiwi settles into and gets to grips with his demanding new post in Auckland. It is one for which he is admirably qualified. As he says himself, "You get to know and understand all kinds of people a little better as a teacher." He originally set out to be a vet, but ended up with a degree from Massey University in agriculture. After training college he taught in Taranaki before returning to Kaeo where he taught and farmed for two years. Then came years teaching at Hawera, Okaihau, Wesley College and, finally, Tuakau. He is a lay preacher in the Methodist Church and a Justice of the Peace. His sporting achievements are well known. "I've played rugby everywhere, including a grand total of one game for Auckland", he says with characteristic good-humoured modesty. He was a Maori All Black from 1951 to 1954 touring Fiji.

He has travelled all over New Zealand talking to school principals about the success with which Maori values have been promoted in Tuakau. "You can incorporate Maori values in a school without any trouble and it goes a little beyond the old game of having a Maori concert party. We talk about love and caring." Graham Latimer, chairman of the New Zealand Maori Council, summed it up: "He has had lots of experience in both worlds and I think he will make a very good job of it. He has tons of ability."

What are his intentions now? He is cagey about making blunt policy statements at the moment, and adopts a "let's wait and see" attitude. But in conversation it becomes clear that he has plans and recognises priorities. "Race relations must be promoted actively and not just maintained. It must be put to people that they can grow through living with other

HIWI TAUROA

cultural characteristics. It's not good enough for New Zealanders just to sit back, as they tend to do, and say, 'we're doing fine'." So Hiwi will further the education programmes, already extensive, which the Race Relations Office promotes.

He is keen to use the powers of the Human Rights Commission to the full also. "The Commission could have more influence than it has had so far. For example, it should see all new legislation before it is enacted to see if it conflicts. This is more important than trying to fix up strife afterwards. The powers of the Human Rights Commission are broader than most of us know — and it's *not* a servant of the government."

Hiwi obviously believes that prevention is better than cure. To this end, education is the key and conciliation takes second place. However, he thinks that race relations are not as bad as they are sometimes portrayed. "There has been too much emphasis on what's gone wrong, and far too little on what's gone right. It is time to be more positive." He acknowledges, nevertheless, sympathies with Maori spokesmen who have sometimes appeared "outlandish and outspoken". Talking of the leadership of Mana Motuhake in a *New Zealand Herald* interview, he commented: "Maybe people sometimes have to be more assertive and seemingly divisive to be heard . . . some of the things these intellectuals who are supporting Mat Rata say are right", though it would be "nice to think there are better ways of doing things".

His very title, "Conciliator", suggests that Hiwi is no extremist. Like his predecessor, he operates from a position of impartiality — and his conversation is punctuated by significant words such as "understanding", "caring" and "aroha". His determination to get things done is matched by his obvious amiability, humility and good humour. These qualities came out when we asked him for a photograph to accompany this article. He replied: "Do you have to print a picture of me? I hate to see people suffer."