

# Sir James Henare

Sir James Henare has walked and talked with those great maori statesmen and knights of the past, Maui Pomare, James Carroll, Te Rangi Hiroa, Apirana Ngata and Eruera Tirikatene. "They were the heroes I worshipped as a young man. The mere fact that I am a knight does not prevent me paying them and all my seniors my respect even to this day."

It is this link with time past that gives Sir James an aura that envelopes a lifetime of service to the maori people both in war and peace. As he puts it, "I was brought up in an age when our tupuna and elders demanded instant obedience and respect for authority. Whakaiti, or humility, ethics and good manners were part also of our training. For example, out of respect for visitors in the homes and on the marae, the tangata whenua and certainly the children were not permitted to eat until the visitors had eaten. As children and later as young people we were not allowed to speak in front of our elders in a hui. Indeed we were to be seen, and not heard and to use our listening powers. I was taught

that service to one's fellow man was the greatest reward in life."

Sir James says he was probably old before his time, for generally speaking, he did not play much with other children. He preferred listening to the elders. "My love of my culture was instilled in me at an early age, cultivated in my attending the last where wananga of my subtribe Ngatihine. All my cultural background and tuition was eagerly sought by me and freely given by my tutors."

As a boy he lived with Sir Maui and Lady Pomare at their home at Melling and with Sir James and Lady Carroll in Hill Street, handy to the Catholic Basilica.



"Nothing gave me greater pleasure than listening to my father, who was Member of Parliament for Taitokerau and Sir Apirana Ngata, Sir Maui Pomare, Sir Peter Buck and Sir James Carroll discussing matters of great importance to the maori people."

So it was quite natural to move into the role of service to his people.

"Those of us who were literate in European terms became mouthpieces and channels of communication between our people and the pakeha."

His own grandparents, and later his father on his death bed, exhorted him never to leave his people and the marae. "I went back to the marae, doing all the usual chores, such as working at the back, looking after toilets and later taking my place on the paepae. Some of my brothers who were not very interested in these things and thought I was mad dubbed me the tohunga and the bishop, because of my deep interest in church matters as well. My grandfather, who was an Anglican minister, once said to me, no man can be a balanced person without a spiritual and religious background. With experience I concur wholeheartedly."

It was his loyalty to his elders and people that prevented Sir James from accepting overseas appointments. He remembered Sir Apirana saying "only a shag fly off leaving behind his droppings".

It was this same loyalty and obedience that saw the young Jim Henare being told by his father and grand uncle it was time he was married and his future wife had already been selected.

"My wife and I were betrothed (Puh) to each other when we were both round about three years of age. Two weeks after I was informed, that it was time to get married, we were wed."

Sir James spoke highly of his wife and the lifetime of service and support she has given him. She was the one that kept the home fire burning, enabling him to give of himself to the maori people.

The mantle of leadership bestowed upon him by his elders and the people, rests naturally on his shoulders, taking over from where his heroes of the past left off.

And he has definite ideas where the future lies for the maori people.

"We have got to meet the modern world and its technology head on. The only way to do it is by way of the secondary and technical schools, the univer-