

## The Education Department's Response

"Our first three hearings took place in the weeks beginning June 24, October 8 and November 19, 1985. (The last week began on November 26). During the third week Mr James Alexander Ross, Deputy Director-General of Education produced evidence for the Department. He was accompanied by two other senior officers, Mr Cyril Peter Bryce, Assistant Secretary for Schools and Development and Mr Wiremu Kaa, Director of Maori and Pacific Islands Education. The evidence for the claimants had been completed by October 12.

"Mr Ross presented to us a carefully prepared document running into almost twenty pages of typescript which set out the Department's policies and philosophy on maori language, taha Maori (culture), bilingual education, syllabus development, advisory services, Teachers' College maori language lecture courses and related matters. The impression we gathered from all this was that at the topmost levels in the Education Department there is an acute awareness of the complaints that we had heard, and administratively at the least, a genuine desire to remedy them. We rather gathered that since an important education hui in 1984 there have been a number of significant changes in the Education Department's attitudes.

"For example we were told that at Teachers' Colleges there is a compulsory course for all primary teachers in maori language and Maori culture occupying 100 hours per annum, and for secondary teachers a similar course of 50 hours per annum. (Other optional courses are available in addition to these). The lack of written resources was acknowledged and we were told of four books in maori that are now available in the schools, while more are being written, illustrated or edited in preparation for printing. Mr Ross gave us a schedule of the written texts now published and he added that the Education Department is the biggest publisher of maori language books in the country, although the total production seems to be distressingly small.

"He also told us that since 1955 the Department has been aware that

"... an understanding of maori language and culture was necessary not only to develop the full personal development of Maori children but also to assist the pakeha to fully appreciate the history, achievements and character of Maori society."

"This statement accords so closely with the position of the claimants on this topic that it might almost have come out of the mouths of the claimants' own witnesses. We revert to this curious feature later.

"After summarising very briefly the history of Maori education for the first

half of this century (in which no mention was made of any departmental practice or policy prohibiting the use of maori in the school or its playground) Mr Ross went on to record:

"... The change to english as the vernacular for the younger Maori generation has been accompanied by a strong and growing demand for maori to be taught more extensively in the schools. One of the resolutions of the 1955 committee read:

"The Committee supports the teaching of the maori language and it recommends that everything possible be done to implement it."

"He then went on to recount that in 1955 maori was taught as a subject to about 1000 pupils through the Correspondence School, Maori district high schools and denominational Maori colleges. In 1974 Advisers in Maori Education were appointed together with itinerant teachers of maori. By the same year 94 secondary schools were offering maori to 9,111 pupils of Maori descent and 3,535 pupils of non-Maori descent. By 1984 the number of schools offering a course in maori had increased to 179 with 14,950 maori pupils taking the subject and 5,399 non-Maori pupils studying it. (By comparison from 1982 to 1985 the number of Te Kohanga Reo centres expanded from 1 to 416, and the number of children from about 10 to start with to a latest total of over 6000).

"Mr Ross also explained that the Department encourages programmes in Maori culture (referred to as taha Maori) because respect for the Maori dimension has been officially acknowledged. He went on to add:

"... It is recognised by the Department however that a key element in all taha Maori programmes is the maori language..."

"Again, we observed, the Department's view of the importance of the language coincided with that of the claimants, of the State Services Commission, of the Maori Affairs Department and other parties represented at the hearing.

"A number of other departmental policies were detailed designed to demonstrate that the Education Department was sensitive to Maori needs and actively responded to them to the best of its ability. Then Mr Ross produced an extract from the Department's Annual Report to Parliament for the year ending March 31, 1984 in which we read and considered the following passage in the Maori Education section:

"... *Educational Attainment.* The main policies for raising educational attainments were put in place during the 1960's and early 1970's. They sought to increase the participation of Maori students at all levels of the system, from pre-school to university; to improve the quality of the teaching of English to Maori children; and to provide additional staffing and other

