



minority. Too often, ignorance has been perpetuated by the numerically superior in voting procedures.

3. "Beauty of difference" is an aphorism which sums up the Race Relations Office's main thought. A garden is made all the more beautiful with diversity and variety. We should learn to accept the differences between people as natural and very necessary.

Tolerance and sensitivity were a major step in the understanding of any culture. As people of some influence they should have the sense to seek alternatives and have the courage to try them out. The judges replied in part by saying that they were bound by the legislation, and that they have indeed already been mindful of certain changes that must be made to effect fairness in judgement.

The weekend was a success on many fronts. The elders of the marae, Mac Taylor, Joe Korewha and others, were able to have heartfelt and open discussions with the judges, and lodge their own criticisms and objections against a system often seen as unfair and unreasonable.

The question was asked why a person who received a traffic offence fine of \$20.00 was liable to lawyers' fees of up to \$100.00. Maori people did not understand it. The law works better for Europeans who do understand it. One need merely look at prison population statistics to obtain some crude verification of the maxim that "The law favours the Pakeha". A good example which is confusing, but which does engender differing punishments, is the difference between *car theft* and *car conversion*. Intrinsically they are the same, but in the eyes of justice they are not.

The frequent use of the Maori language too, surprised the visitors. It was yet another experience which proved to them the value, and the worth of the retention of the language as a living means of communication. Their ignorance of the Maori language was easily paralleled with the incomprehension experienced by many of courtroom language and procedures.

For most of the judges and their families, this was their first chance to experience marae life. The time spent at Te Whaiora was certainly enjoyable and many important insights into the Maori and Polynesian psyche were experienced. However, whether this visit will be valuable in the long term in reassessing the alternatives open to, and the attitudes of, judges remains to be seen. During the poro-poroaki the stipendary with the penchant for shorty pyjamas, Judge Aubin, said, "My eyes have been opened. Our eyes have been, and will stay opened. There will be not one judge who is the same judge when he sits in his court on Monday,

Above Mick Brown shows magisterial fair play in his overarm bowling technique! He is one of only two Maori district judges

Above left Hiwi Tauroa and daughter do justice to their lunch

Opposite Judges off the bench, into shorts and on to the marae

as the judge who sat in court last Friday." Another Judge Nicholson said, "I wish the weekend could go on forever."

There is no doubt that everyone enjoyed themselves and found the weekend an experience to remember. But it is not enough, and one kaumatua in particular expressed a "let's wait and see" opinion - a sentiment probably born from many years of hopes being raised fruitlessly.

It is to be sincerely hoped that the Race Relations Conciliator's move will serve as a catalyst for further steps in this direction, steps which could see a dramatic decline in incidents of unconscious racism or intolerance amongst the decision makers in our community. There will be much by way of follow-up work, including a similar hui for district court judges of the Wellington area at Otaki in June. The onus is now on the judges. They need not wait to be invited.

Heoi ano tenei korero. Ki a koutou nga kai whakawa i whakaeke ki Te Whai ora, tena ra koutou. Tena ra koutou i whai kaupapa, i whai tikanga hoki, kia mohio ai ki te huiengaro Maori, kia whawha ai hoki ki te hohonutanga o te wairua Maori.
Naku te rourou
Nau te rourou
Ka ki te kete