



Barna Heremia leads his class in a Maori song.

Certainly, the children hear plenty of Maori language. Chris and Barna almost always give them instructions in Maori — and the response usually indicates that the children know what's being said.

Chris admits it's probably too late to make Maori equal to English in the present pupils' minds.

But at least they will grow up with a working knowledge of Maori which they can use if they want to. Many of them have parents and grandparents at home who speak Maori — and Chris said many of them were using it more as a result of the school's programme.

Principal Francis Charleton says the bi-lingual programme has 100 per cent support from the children's parents — pakeha included.

One pakeha woman at least is known to speak to her children in Maori at home. She is a teachers aid at the school, has picked the language up in the course of her work, and supports the programme in this way.

In fact, the request for official bi-lingual status could not have happened without parents' support. All of the handful of bi-lingual schools in the country, except Ruatoki, exist thanks to requests from the parents. Ruatoki was established as an experiment by the Education Department.

By all accounts, the bi-lingual programme has benefits besides passing on the Maori language. It also involves cultural activities — visitors to the school are welcomed with a traditional powhiri ceremony, with speeches of welcome in Maori and most of the pupils singing Maori songs.

Teachers say the programme has

engendered a sense of community on the pupils — because their Maoriness receives attention and status, they develop a sense of self-worth which shows in their behaviour.

Teachers say they can only recall one playground fight all this year —

which may surprise people who think of Huntly West as a "tough" area.

And Francis says the local community feels it is important that school become officially bi-lingual. It is, after all, the home territory of Te Ariki Nui, Dame Te Atairangikaahu.

## Nga waariu Maori e pa ana ki te kaupapa o te wharekura

### The place of Maori values in the school

"Enhancing the learning through enhancing the environment," is how Wellington High School principal, Turoa Royal described maoritanga to the school-teachers gathered on the marae. Pointing out that the ideal set-up is for a school to be centred on the children, not the staff, school buildings or curriculum. In that way, he said, the children get a lot more benefit from school and the sharing of knowledge became easier all round.

Another principal, Dick Grace of Titahi Bay Intermediate, said incorporating values such as whanaungatanga and aroha not only gave a big lift to the successful running of the school, but also were the values New Zealand society was acknowledged as needing most. By instilling those values in the education system, schools would be backing up the base of society, the family.

Dick pointed out that Maori people didn't have the copyright on those

values, as love respect and compassion were universal values. Values, he said, which are sometimes overlooked in the rush and bustle to educate our young.

He had many interesting slides and charts showing how Titahi Bay Intermediate was organised to give teachers a greater chance to realise their potential and for pupils to share in the decision-making and sense of family.

Just how the teachers gathered on the marae, took the input wasn't obvious, apart from the uncharacteristic silence which greeted the speakers.

Days like this of in-service training for teachers may bear fruit later in the season, but the value to our children is great, because the custodians of our children see and feel first-hand what a living marae is about and what it has to offer. They then have a base on which to decide the extent of any changes they wish to make in their own school.

Ki nga hoa ma e mau tonu i tenei mahi, tena koutou.