

Maori book publishers

While on the subject of books for our kohanga reo, one publisher that's long been in the game is Maori Publications of Whakatane.

Set up some years ago to supply books in Maori to the bi-lingual school at Ruatoki, Maori Publications soon branched out with the establishment of further bi-lingual schools at Tawera, Hiruharema and Fernhill.

Maori Publications manager, Don Turnbull says the need for children's books in Maori is there, with sales averaging 200 books per week.

MP is a non-profit organisation and is not subsidised in any way. Money from the sale of one run of books is used to pay for the next production.

Latest titles as Tu Tangata went to press were a set of 10 books on Road Safety ranging from Ko Te Aapiha Tenei to Nga Atanga Arahi. Each book costs \$2. The set is written in basic Maori using simple sentence patterns for beginners of all ages. They can be used by teachers who have only a basic knowledge of the language.

Other titles are: He Pepeha Aroha — A love story related to the mountains of the central North Island. In colour and English and Maori suitable for 'shared book experience' with learners or independent reading at secondary school level. \$2.00.

Te Whakarapu Tuna — reprint — An experience story about seven and eight year old children catching eels in a swamp; Maori language only at about Intermediate level. \$2.00.

Te Ra Huritau O Wiremu — a birthday party for four year old William. Maori language only but it has two ability levels on each page, one with simple patterns, the other more suitable for secondary schools. Cartoon type illustrations. \$2.00.

Te Poaka Puihi — Pig hunting, in Maori language only. Captions are written in basic Maori patterns and use repetition. The book includes a more advanced story which can be cut and pasted under the pictures. \$2.00.

At the other end of the spectrum providing books for the city Maori, is the Hillary College Production Centre, Otara. The aim is to use Maori urban culture to spark adolescents into wanting to read. As such, the book concentrates on how life is lived in the city amidst space invader parlours and fast foods.

And newly arrived review copies show that books translated into Maori

are also available. One could find fault with the literal translations that have taken place, but then no two translations are ever the same.

From first reading there seems to be an obsession with violence in the stories, whether it's someone shouting abuse at a motorist, or else the hau by hau description of the teina protecting his tuakana from the street bully. Ah well, that's life in the suburbs and this reality should surely pull youngsters in to the joys of reading.

At a time when kohanga reo children are approaching school age in a mixture of two languages, it's important to make sure the resources are there for teachers and children to choose from. Both Maori Publications and Hillary School deserve support in their do-it-yourself efforts because of the contribution they're making for the future of our children.



With the growth of interest in learning the Maori language, a market for books in Maori is beginning to emerge — and three Waikato people have formed a publishing company to supply it.

Raglan-based Aharu Enterprises Ltd has been formed to publish children's picture books in Maori, for which

schools and libraries had been "crying out," said company secretary Erana Brewerton.

One of the company's books, Nga Maunga Toa, is already available in bookshops, as is its English version. The Warrior Mountains. It tells, in words and pictures, the old Maori story of how Taranaki (Mt Egmont) moved to its present location after a dispute with Tongariro over the latter's lover, Mt Pihanga.

The company expects to have two more available by November. One will be the story of the separation by their children of Rangī and Papa and the other will be the traditional Maori story of the birth of the Waikato River.

But not all the books will be about Maori myths, Mrs Brewerton said, although she said Maori mythology was a big resource available.

The first three books were written by another director, Katarina Nataira, who is well-known in Maori and educational circles for developing the "rakau" method of Maori language teaching, which uses no English language instruction.

Mrs Brewerton said the belief that there was a viable market for such books in Maori was supported by signs of interest in printing and publishing than by commercial publishers.

She said three or four years ago Mrs Mataira had tried to interest publishers in New Zealand and overseas in such material, but although they "pounced" on the English versions, no one was interested in the Maori ones.

"I think they are recognising that schools are crying out for Maori stuff like this, and I think they are realising there is a market they can tap into.

"People have just dived onto stuff like Nga Maunga Toa and Te Kuia me te Pungawerewere (The Old Woman and the Spider)," the latter being one of the first ever books in Maori to be commercially published.

Most of the available material in Maori has been published by the School publications branch of the Education Department.

Mrs Brewerton said a number of developments in recent years had encouraged a demand for children's books in Maori. They included the growth of Maori language programmes in schools, bi-lingual schools, kohanga reo, and hopefully a desire by Maori parents to provide their children with Maori reading material.

The third director of the company is Hamilton Teachers College lecturer Junior Mataira.

Charleton Clark.