

The 1988 Waitangi Day ceremonies at Waitangi were marked by a spirit of co-operation and compromise. In the days before, it had been announced that, at the suggestion of the Rangitahi, whose anger and protests had been so sharply felt in previous years, Shane Jones and Maori poet Hone Tuwhare were to be among the speakers at the ceremony.

It was not a large crowd which gathered under the stifling sun - perhaps 500 in all. Half were Maori and half were Pakeha, the latter mostly local people and tourists. No members of the diplomatic corps were present. The Government was represented by the Minister of Maori Affairs, Koro Wetere and Internal Affairs Minister Michael Bassett. Opposition leader Jim Bolger was accompanied by five National MPs, including Winston Peters and Bill Birch.

Few police were in evidence. We counted only six uniformed staff at most. A contingent of Maori wardens was on duty.

The day began with the canoe, Ngatokimatawhaorua, carrying dignitaries including Koro Wetere and Bishop Bruce Gilberd, from the beach opposite the Waitangi Marae to Hobson Bay.

On the Treaty House grounds, in front of the meeting house, it was clear that New Zealand Maori Council Chairman Sir Graham Latimer was in charge of preparations. It was he who invited people onto the paepae and who instructed the assembly. The ceremonies began with a church service.

As the service began we saw:

- *Kaumatua of Tai Tokerau on the paepae, including Dame Whina Cooper.
- *Waitangi Action Committee member Titewhai Harawira and Sir Graham Latimer side-by-side on the paepae.
- *Shane Jones, spokesperson for Te Kawiriki, seated with the elders, holding his carved speaking stick and wearing a T shirt with the words " 1990 - 150 years of opporession".
- * Rangitahi helping to bring additional seating and, later in the ceremonies, bringing orange juice to thirsty kaumatua.

The service was led by Rev Bill Law, Anglican vicar of the Bay of Islands. Other clergy taking part :

- * Rev Nuku Stewart, Anglican
- * Rev Fr Geboers, Catholic
- * Apostle Jo Everitt, Ratana
- * Rev and Mrs Hagar, Paihia Union Parish
- * Bishop Bruce Gilberd, Anglican.

Scripture readings used : Psalm 122 and Matthew 22 : 34 ff.

It was a service of hymns and prayers and included an address by Bill Law. In it he traced the history of Church and Pakeha community dishonouring or ignoring the Treaty, using several specific references from Pakeha speeches and letters. It was a frank acknowledgement of Pakeha injustices, which came as a preface to his plea that Maori and Pakeha should work together for the future ; and that the Maori should not be shut out of the decision-making processes. Twice he referred to the Treaty as a 'living document'. He said : "The Treaty of Waitangi not only belongs to the past , but it shapes our present and our future."

A jarring note in the service was that both Scripture readings were by North Americans, a husband and wife team currently doing an exchange at the Paihia Union Parish. There were visible ripples of discomfort at their accents. The first reading, referring to the Israelites creating Jerusalem as a city for all tribes, was greeted with murmurings from both Pakeha and Maori in the assembly. One comment heard was : Ask the Palestinians about that!" The service ended with a blessing from Bishop Gilberd.

The list of speakers included :

- * A Tai Tokerau elder, Simon Snowden
- * Shane Jones, spokesperson for the Rangitahi.
- * Michael Gross, chairman, Bay of Islands County Council
- * Dr Bruce Gregory MP
- * Hone Tuwhare

Shane Jones spoke of the solidarity we should feel with the Aboriginals of Australia, especially as they experience the current bicentennial celebrations in that country. He said that their struggle was something we should note and learn from. In his speech, strongly delivered, there were persistent calls for the Treaty to be vigorously worked at as the basis for laws and discussion. In his words there was implied warning that, if this did not happen, the 1990 commemorative events might become a focal point of distress and protest. Excerpts from his speech:

" Today we see the complete exhaustion of the Pakeha-dominated system and its continual rejection of the Treaty of Waitangi."

" What has been achieved as we stand here today has to be seen as a reflection of what Maori people have been striving for. And we should not stop striving, being radical, or whatever other words they want to use."

" Although there have been some gains, and some people would call them dramatic, especially in recent months, we believe there is only one thing that endures and that is the land.....our position is quite straightforward on that, on fulfilling the Treaty of Waitangi ; and that is that it will never happen until the resources are gained - it is the land."

" At present we are surrounded by change and yet there is one institution in which we have yet to see change and that is the legislature, where the laws are made."

Northern Maori MP Bruce Gregory spoke at length of the need not to exclude Maori people from decision-making processes. He referred to the need to strengthen the resources and work of the Waitangi Tribunal ; that Maori representation in Parliament should be based on population proportions ; and that that Maori people should be consulted if there is any proposal that links with the Privy Council are to be severed, for he sees the Privy Council as an important avenue of appeal for the Maori.

" My concern is that there has been no consultation with the Maori people nor an independent investigative body set up to examine this issue..... a right has been taken away..... on behalf of my people I publicly request that the Minister of Justice delay implementation of the decision until there has been full consultation..."

He criticised the proposed Bill of Rights, because it does not take economic factors into account. He was critical of the actions of protestors in past years, claiming they had helped only to harden attitudes.

After some items from the Tai Tokerau cultural group, Hone Tuwhare read some poems. But he opened by acknowledging the importance of the occasion and that the "job of the Rangitahi, as watchdogs, is not over. There job is not finished." He suggested that in future ceremonies there should be fewer speeches, shorter political speeches and opportunity for Maori writers and artists to play a part, especially in 1990. He read about a dozen poems, only a few of which were his own.

The ceremonies ended with items from the Ngatihine cultural group from Auckland, led by Henare Mahanga. This group is made up entirely of descendants and relatives of the Henare family. Their items were later described as the most powerful protests of the day. In song and action they brought Maori concerns about the Treaty. They sang of their ancestors, including Hone Heke and his chopping of the flagpole. They issued challenges and demands, more powerfully than could have been done in speeches. In their songs they were confronting past injustices and making the triumphant claims of their tipuna. It brought gleeful and positive response from the Maori in the assembly. Most Pakeha, including ourselves, understood little of the significance of what was being said, though were left in little doubt about the spirit and triumph of the actions. Thus the messages the Maori wanted to deliver on that day were indeed delivered while the protocols of hospitality toward the Pakeha were not broken.

The items culminated in a startling haka which spoke of the lies spoken in the past so that it would be better if those heads were to fall off, before our eyes. Some Maori commentators later described this as the most powerful protest delivered at Waitangi.

"Honour the Treaty" was the theme of all the twenty or so banners which ringed the assembly. They were held silently but were prominent and accepted as part of the proceedings.

At the end of the ceremonies, Sir Graham Latimer reminded the assembly that no such occasion is complete without an opportunity for the manuhiri to respond. Koro Wetere and Jim Bolger did so briefly - the latter being the only person during the whole day , to refer to the proceedings as "celebrations".

While few new insights or feelings emerged during the day, there was an over-all spirit of co-operation. We felt as if 1988 had been planned as a year when all sides of Maoridom would exhibit their unity ; and that the unity could be achieved by frank acknowledgement of past injustices (a frequent reference in the speeches) and the need to change for the future. There was a general invitation for all to work together and not to be lulled into thinking that we have come a long way from the place we should have been in 1840.

Rev Joan Cook (on behalf of Unit One, CCA-NZ)

Rev Russ Cook (Anglican priest, Whangerei)

Rev Bob Scott (on behalf of the CCA-NZ Programme on Racism)

8th February 1988.

Waitangi. — If the partnership embodied in the Treaty of Waitangi is to grow, it needs to engender more than resentment and bitterness on one side and more tolerance on the other, Bay of Islands County Council chairman Mr Michael Gross said at Waitangi today.

"All New Zealanders must search their conscience and acknowledge this, and we must all develop the partnership in concert and facing the same direction," Mr Gross told the 148th anniversary observance at the Treaty House grounds.

The treaty was not the "pure white document of our school days", but was a document of its time.

It made a radical attempt to acknowledge an indigenous people's rights, through a colonising nation of the old world.

Awakened

Subsequently there had been excesses and mistakes by both parties, again in the context of the age.

"It is only in recent years that New Zealanders have been awakened by the more outspoken advocates of Maori rights as to its significance and the need to gain a consensus of its meaning," Mr Gross said.

The current appeals to the Waitangi Tribunal highlighted the deep feelings held, and the tribunal required a "veritable judgment of Solomon" to bring down decisions that acknowledged contemporary society, yet came to terms with events over 100 years ago.

While there were major differences between Maori and non-Maori in their desires of the treaty, it was in that area agreement had to be reached and the rebuilding process started.

"Exchanges of insults via the media only highlight the differences, reopen wounds, and neither bring benefits nor do credit to any of us," Mr Gross said.

The civil rights of all New Zealanders needed to be secured, but with that needed to come an acknowledgement that also involved "civic duties".

Closer

In the past three years changes in society and the re-organisation of government had struck most harshly at the less advantaged — the jobless, untrained, the young and those lacking eloquence for their cause.

A disproportionate number were among the Maori people. Government plans for a devolution of Maori Affairs responsibilities to tribal authorities this year, coupled with proposals for broader roles for territorial and regional government, would spotlight the need for a very much closer relationship at ground level between local government and representatives of Maoridom.

"It is going to be traumatic for both of us. Neither is well prepared for the responsibilities to be thrust on us. This is a challenge we must share together, or the regions we represent will slide from the mainstream of New Zealand life.

"We are a partnership. The line between our people's aspirations has moved back and forth over 150 years and will continue to do so. But to be a nation with a nation's outlook we must learn to better accommodate our two people," Mr Gross said.

← Comments by Chairman of Bay of Islands County Council

It's time for recognition, Gregory calls

A call for recognition of the causes of division and peaceful resolution of problems was made by Northern Maori MP Dr Bruce Gregory in his Waitangi Day address today.



DR GREGORY

Dr Gregory blamed the "largely youthful protest" for present divisions of Waitangi Day, but gave them some credit for legislative changes regarding the Treaty of Waitangi.

"The nature of their protest has tended to harden the division between the two races," he said in his speech at Waitangi.

Dr Gregory said it was a time when the Maori wished to be recognised as people in a partnership.

"We must be careful that the exuberance of our youth does not blind us to the divisions that they create," he said.

"At the same time we should recognise the cause and with wisdom, honesty and discipline utilise peaceful mechanisms to resolve our problems."

Dr Gregory outlined Government moves to help resolve conflicts over treaty issues, but said there were future areas of conflict within Maoridom and the nation which needed to be addressed in the near future.

"There is an urgent need to increase the membership of the Waitangi Tribunal to allow it to process the large number of matters which come before it," he said.

"The question of Maori political representation is also critical."

Dr Gregory said it was essential to guarantee Maori representation based on total Maori population to represent Maori aspirations within the political system.

He criticised the royal commission on the electoral system for having

no Maori mandate for its recommendation to abolish the Maori seats.

Dr Gregory expressed his concern that the Minister of Justice, Mr Palmer, had proposed abolition of legal appeals to the Privy Council.

"My concern is that there has been no consultation with the Maori people nor an independent investigative body set up to examine this issue," Dr Gregory said.

"A right is being taken away."

"On behalf of my people I publicly request that the minister delay implementation of the deci-

sion until there has been full consultation."

Dr Gregory said access to the Privy Council derived from the Treaty of Waitangi.

• Today's Waitangi celebrations opened peacefully as planned with the giant war canoe Ngatokimatawaoa carrying visiting clergy and the Minister of Maori Affairs, Mr Wetere, from the Waitangi Marae to Hobson Bay.

A crowd estimated at around 500 gathered at the treaty grounds as the official observances started.

Other reports: P.20.

Protest spectre haunts Waitangi despite accord

Waitangi. — After years of mounting controversy and tumult, the bans have finally been posted for a return to the peace, dignity and order of Waitangi Day observances of old.

By RICK McCALL

But even with an accord among the principal players, Waitangi has still managed to draw the attention of groups determined to make protest capital out of the political stage Waitangi has become.

For 10 years they have come — predominantly Maori activists seeking political adjustments and carrying both real and imaginary injustices.

And on the platform created have been the fringe elements — everything from the gay liberation and homosexual law reform movements to the anti-nuclear and even Save-the-Whale protest groups.

Cracks appear

In the community at large there was a clear sign of relief when the northern youth movement, Te Kawariki, and even the vociferous Waitangi Action movement, gave undertakings that this year's observances would be free of derisive, chanting protests of earlier years.

It seemed that finally peace had been reinstated.

But even as the day of observance dawned today, cracks began to appear in the peaceful resolve.

A decision by the Ohaeawai-Waimate North Federated Farmers to use the occasion for a protest parade over grievances related to the rural economy and the Government's general performance posed the potential catalyst for further trouble as the day unfolded.

The move has made the Maori protest movement edgy, and threatened to tip the uneasy balance in the ranks back to a more radical approach to get the message of Maoridom across.

The focus at Waitangi has

always been on the treaty, and the dispute between the Crown and the Maori people, and the involvement of others seeking a political platform for some other cause would be seen as an intrusion.

That, coupled with an uneasy feeling that the Tai Tokerau elders may have had second thoughts on the invitation to include a Te Kawariki speaker in the formal anniversary observances, could be sufficient to stimulate a further outburst in the protest ranks.

Te Kawariki leader Haami Piripi re-affirmed last night that the protest intention was to avoid a repetition of the verbal abuse and disorder of previous years, particularly as it related to the interaction between the protest movement and the Maori community at large.

That did not, however, mean there would not be protest.

"We are not going to back-track on our message or our approach. We will continue to march and carry our banners. But we are not going to get into a situation of verbal abuse," Mr Piripi said.

The protest in the main would be carried through Te Kawariki's nominee to join the formal speaking platform, Shane Jones, coupled with a booth to disseminate pamphlets and information.

Te Kawariki's involvement in the cultural festival to follow would probably be by way of a speaking forum, with the "contemporary" cultural element conveyed through Maori poet and writer and special Tai Tokerau guest Hone Tuwhare.

However, Mr Piripi made it clear he could not speak for other protest movements, although it

was hoped his group's approach would be accepted.

He also made it clear the balance could be tipped if the Tai Tokerau District Maori Council's arrangements for the day did not follow the promises made at a January meeting of the council to include a nominated speaker from Te Kawariki in the speaking forum.

The unease in the protest movement has been stimulated by the fact Mr Jones' name failed to appear on the early programme of speakers, and at apparent confusion as to whether Tuwhare's involvement would be as a formal speaker or to augment the cultural activities to follow.

Those matters were expected to be resolved later today.

In the meantime, the 148th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi at Waitangi was lining up on the premise of a peaceful format.

Programme

Following an early church service, which was to include Maori and Pakeha clergy, formal speakers were to be Tai Tokerau kaumata Simon Snowden, of Kaitiaki, Bay of Islands County Council chairman Michael Gross, Northern Maori MP Dr Bruce Gregory, and, once the confusion was resolved, either Te Kawariki spokesman Shane Jones and/or Tai Tokerau guest Hone Tuwhare.

Then the Tai Tokerau cultural group and Auckland's Ngatihine cultural group were to present items.

Expected to be present were the Minister of Maori Affairs, Koru Wetere, Local Government Minister Dr Michael Bassett, and the Minister of Police, Mr Tapsell.

Clippings from the Northern Advocate 6/2/88

Obviously written before the Waitangi ceremonies had taken place.