

## MRA International Education Conference

Waipatu Marae, Hastings, New Zealand — August 1975

*Let the great canoe of the Spirit, Takitimu, sail again.  
 Let God lift the canoe and set it in the waters. The Navigator will point the  
 prow in sure direction and the oarsmen will feel the rhythmic breathing of  
 the Spirit.  
 There will be the oneness of the rhythm of the stroking of the oars, that is  
 perfect unison in matters spiritual and secular.  
 Let it sail safely through mounting waves of hate and violence, self-  
 absorption and complacency, of pride and greed.  
 Young people will learn to stroke their oars in time with the elders; people  
 of all races will learn from one another the art of keeping the great canoe  
 afloat in troubled waters.  
 In its wake will come courage and the healing of bitterness; love and the  
 expansion of the human heart; peace which is the gift of God Himself; and  
 the living hope of a world renewed.*

This was the challenge given on the Waipatu Marae, Hastings, at the traditional Maori welcome extended to all those arriving for the Moral Re-Armament Education Conference. Called by Elders and former officers of the Maori Battalion of the Ngati Kahungunu people, the four-day conference attracted 150 people from 10 nations. They came from as far afield as Japan, Sweden, South Africa and Britain, as well as Australia, Fiji, Tonga and Malaysia. From all parts of New Zealand came students, teachers, farmers, men of industry and whole families.

The Mayor of Hastings welcomed the visitors to his city and opened the conference at a Reception in the Cultural Centre.



**Mr Taanga Tomoana, Elder of Takitimu, Canon Rangiihu and Father Durning welcomed guests on to the Marae. Mr Taanga Tomoana is seen here with Miss Caroline Crosby from Western Australia.**



**Miss Joan Holland, Principal of St Cuthbert's College, Auckland.**



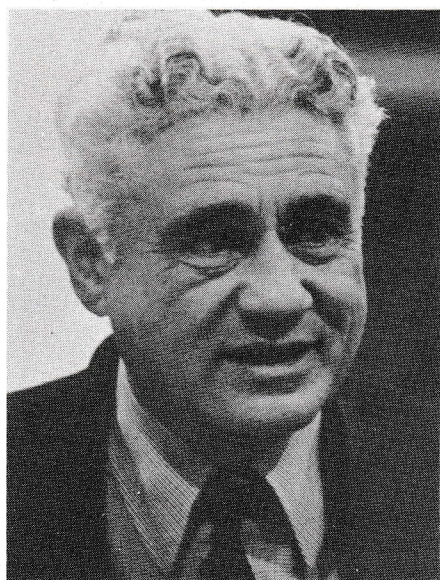
**Mr J R Harrison, MP for Hawkes Bay**



**Canon Huata and Canon Rangiihu**



**Mrs Waka Tipoki and Mrs Annette Porteous**



**Major Harry Lambert, MC**

**Miss Joan Holland**, Principal of St Cuthbert's College, Auckland, struck the keynote for the conference when she said, 'The real education that the world needs is the expansion of the human heart. Let there be frankness among us and open hearts to find the fullest meaning of education.'

**Father Mills**, Principal of St Patrick's College, Wellington, and President of the Association of Independent School Principals, spoke of education as an extension of the home, in developing the talents God has given to every child. 'As well as intellectual training, children also need the discipline of the will and a right motive for living. We must help them to grow, not as the Education Department expects them to grow, not as parents expect them to grow, but as God wants them to grow.'

**Mr J R Harrison**, MP for Hawkes Bay, addressing the conference on the Friday evening, expressed his joy in meeting with a group of people with faith in the future of New Zealand and determination to do something about it. 'Education has become too secular, too much involved with possessions,' he said, 'and not enough involved with the Spirit.'

**Mr Tom Ormond** from Mahia, a member of the New Zealand Maori Council, expressed his feeling that 'Education has neglected bringing God into the situation. Too often education's role seems to be to produce self-confident people. But there is very little difference between self-confident people and greedy selfish people. What we want is God-confident people.'

**Miss Louise Abraham**, a teacher from Cape Town, said, 'Thank you for your welcome to New Zealand. The Maori

people have received me with a very warm open heart. It is this that breaks down the fear in the hearts of white South Africans like me.

'The examples of change that I have seen here this weekend, if multiplied in my country and yours, will bring the change we all long for.'

**Miss Caroline Crosby**, a high school teacher from Western Australia, spoke of the action group of young people with whom she has been working. 'We have freed ourselves to go wherever we are invited. We aim to raise up a thousand families who would decide to give their lives to God. We also aim to meet and bring together those men who are seeking to find God's will in government, industry and education.'

'As a teacher I long to see students and teachers take on together the task of rebuilding the world. Education should not merely reflect the imperfect society we have but actually shape the course of events. Students need the challenge of something big enough to live for beyond merely earning a good salary. I realise that this can only come about in so far as we are willing to change on basic points in order to do it.'

'Change for me began with someone challenging me to measure my life against absolute moral standards, honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. I decided to listen to God and seek His will. I decided to stop blaming my parents for the division in our family and be absolutely honest with my mother about the things I had deliberately concealed from her — the things which had divided us. I apologised for my resentment and neglect and she in turn was honest with me about her deepest fears and longings. It built real trust and friendship and has since affected our whole family. I want to bring these experiences to every family I meet.'



*Miss Arerina Harawira, Mrs Ybelle Huata and Mrs Athol Williams*



*Mr Thomas Ormond, NZ Maori Council*

**Mr Graeme Cordiner**, a teacher from Sydney, said, 'As an Australian I want to apologise for taking little interest in this country. I look to new things in the future.'

**Mrs Waka Tipoki and Mrs Annette Porteous** spoke of their journey to Canada to attend the MRA conference in Banff and of the opportunities they had to meet Canadian Indians both at the conference and on their reservations.

Mrs Porteous told of her conviction to go overseas because of Mrs Tipoki's apology to end the generations of bitterness in her family towards the Pakeha. She spoke of her own situation where three generations ago her family had settled on land confiscated from the Maori people. She humbly apologised for the mistakes of the past. 'I cannot ask you to forget but I do ask you to forgive.'

The two ladies had found on their journey of reconciliation that those who had suffered the most had the most to give.

Mrs Tipoki also told of the young Maoris who are part of the cast of *Song of Asia*. She met the group of 45 from 14 different nations in Switzerland. 'The trust placed in these young Maoris by their Elders is being fully justified,' she said, 'and they are carrying forward the traditions of the great canoe.'

**Mr Garfield Hayes**, a farmer, spoke of his concern that selfish demand had led to the serious balance of payments deficit which New Zealand faced. 'This country cannot go on spending the way we are. Do we waste food? Do we need luxuries like Colour TV? And now our demand for higher export prices means someone else has to pay more for our produce. I want to leave here

determined to fight that things change.'

**Mr Rongo Tomoana**, who had just arrived back from Europe, told of his experiences there and in Rhodesia, where he had represented New Zealand at the MRA International Conference in Salisbury in June. He spoke of the spirit which had been kindled, not only in the Maori Battalion, but in so many of the allied forces he had fought with during the War 'to preserve a way of life that you and I believe in'. And he said of MRA, 'This to me is the same sort of thing in another sort of way.'

**Rev. Maori Marsden** of the Ngapuhi people, a chaplain with the New Zealand Navy, said, 'The Maori Battalion will march again — not in confrontation, but for peace — so that the nations will be united; not by might nor by power, but by His Spirit. The Maoris will carry the torch to the rest of the world.'

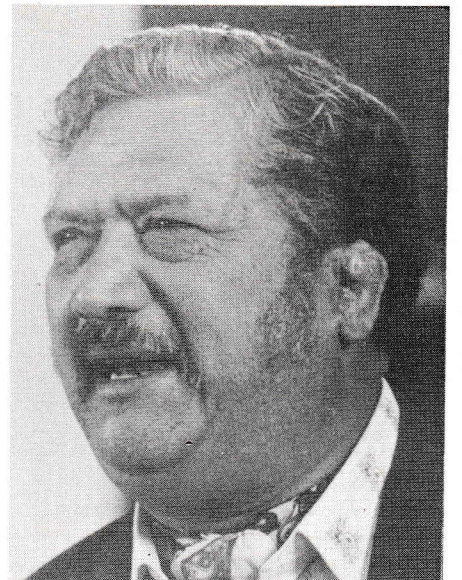
**Mr Harry Lambert**, a former Major in the Maori Battalion, who has spent his life in education, said he was delighted with the idea of the Takitimu Canoe being launched again with the principles of MRA, and spoke of the big job to be done in New Zealand, uniting the many races, and bringing spiritual values to the forefront in education.

**Canon Wi Te Tau Huata** of Wairoa put the issue clearly when he said, 'The challenge to each one of us here is to start with ourselves. We do practise our prejudices. What others have done to us. Now we have to get this out of our system — this history of blame. I hope and pray that we will be big enough to accept this.'

'MRA is the challenge of the Taiaha to put Christianity into action.'



*Miss Ailsa Blakey, Principal of Epsom Girls' Grammar School, Auckland.*



*Major Rongo Tomoana, MC*



**Mr Madho Prasad from Fiji** read out a message of support signed by a number of people in education and national life in Fiji.



**The international chorus, drawn from Australia, New Zealand and Sweden, who spoke and sang at the New Zealand premiere of the film Cross Road. Some of them plan to take this vivid account of the life and thinking of Dr Frank Buchman through the country.**

**Miss Ailsa Blakey**, Principal of Epsom Girls' Grammar School, Auckland, and **Mrs Patricia Maude**, a member of the Auckland Grammar Schools' Board were among those who contributed at the seminar sessions. Two of the folios from *Creating a New Society*, a study course based on *The Black and White Book* were used in discussion groups.

**Miss Gillian Mellisop**, a former head girl of St Cuthbert's College, Auckland, and President of International House, spoke of her recent visit to

China. She had been struck by the way the Chinese used Art and Drama to further their ideals and said she felt it was time that New Zealand gave up the negative approach of portraying the problem and used the Arts to give positive thinking.

A demonstration of what could be done was given by senior girls from St Cuthbert's College. They staged a creative dance depicting the Maori story of the Creation, leading on to the Takitimu Canoe of the Spirit paddled by people of all nations.

Other delegates took part in creative workshops when songs, poems and

articles were written and presented.

A cast from Hamilton gave a dramatised reading of the play *Return Trip* by Alan Thornhill and Hugh Williams, and a group of children performed the play *Tackit the Tailor* by Janet Mace.

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A further conference in this series will be held in Dunedin, 21-24 November. Details are available from Mr J S Dennison, Warden, Arana Hall, 110 Clyde Street, Dunedin.

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**Mr Garfield Hayes, farmer, South Canterbury**



**Mr Jack Dennison, Warden, Arana Hall, Otago University.**



**Mr Witurora Duff, Dunedin, NZ Maori Council.**