

**MERIMERI PENFOLD** (Ngāti Kuri) was born in the Far North. Despite the remoteness of her home from main centres or markets, isolation was not a term that had meaning for her. The seas and gardens provided everything her family needed and in the kūmara-planting season they moved from Te Hāpua to Kapowairua where spring water was plentiful. Her mother, who had eighteen pregnancies and eight surviving children, epitomised strength and courage – attributes Merimeri has demonstrated throughout her life.

Her move to Auckland as a young girl was a profound change. She attended Queen Victoria School for Māori girls and followed this with a short, but intense, education at Faigans College in preparation for university. Merimeri qualified as a teacher and taught in the Far North, the East Coast, central North Island, Rātana Pā and Poroporo. She once took ‘the system’ on, teaching in te reo Māori (the first language of her pupils), but the school inspectors saw an end to that. She returned to university to complete her B.A., was among the first Māori women to graduate in New Zealand, and lectured at the University of Auckland for many years.

Merimeri has led many endeavours. She was the first Māori woman elected to the University of Auckland Council, and a member of the advisory committee for the seventh edition of the Williams *Dictionary of the Māori Language*. She has also worked on the National Advisory Committee for Māori Education, the Broadcasting Commission, the Māori Unit of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, and the Māori Women’s Welfare League, on which she served as Dominion vice-president from 1970–78. She chaired the management committee of the Te Hapua 42 Land Incorporation from 1976–80 and was intimately involved in the Muriwhenua Land and Fisheries claims in the 1980s. She has translated nine of Shakespeare’s sonnets. In 2000 the University of Auckland awarded Merimeri an honorary doctorate.

## CHAPTER ONE

# KO TE RERE O TE REO

## MERIMERI PENFOLD

**M**EHMEA KA ORA TE REO MĀORI, KO TE KAWENGA, KEI MUA I te aroaro o ngā kaumātua me ngā whānau. He whakahira-hira ngā kōhanga reo, ngā kura Māori, ā, he whakatūnga tā te Pouaka Whakaata Māori, engari ko te take matua o tā tātou mahi ki te whakaora haere i te reo Māori, kei ngā ringaringa o ngā mātua me ngā kaumātua. Mō mātou, kei Te Hiku o Te Ika, kua mate pākaha haere te reo Māori me ōna tikanga mai i te wā e tamariki ana ahau. He tino pākaha tēnei, he mōrearea. Kua pēnei mō ngā tupuranga e toru, anga atu. Kua mātou e tawhiti te titiro i ō mātou marae ki te kite i ēnei nekeneketanga. Kāore he tino nui ngā whakamāramatanga. He māmā atu i tērā. Kei te whānau, kei te kāinga te tūmatanga me te otinga. Engari kāore ō mātou kāinga e whai tikanga ana ki te whakatinanatia i tētahi wāhi e tautoko ana ki te whakaora haere i te reo Māori, nā te mea kāore ngā

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This chapter is based on a filmed kōrero or interview that Michael Hennessy conducted at Pukenui in the Far North as part of the project Te Wehi Nui a Mamao. Merimeri spoke mainly in te reo. Prior to the kōrero, Merata Kawharu and Michael drafted discussion points relating to te reo, marae and Merimeri’s upbringing. After the kōrero, subsequent conversations occurred between Merimeri and Merata. Merata compiled the chapter from all of these discussions; Raaniera Te Whata and Mereana Te Whata undertook the English translation which follows.

mātua me ngā kaumātua e āta whai hua ana i te reo Māori me ōna tikanga mō āke tonu atu. Kei te tūmanako ahau, engari e rangirua ana, ā, e uaua ana te wā kei te heke mai.

### Ko te Tīmatatanga

Ko Kurahaupō te waka, ko Pōhurihanga te tangata. Ko mātou ngā uri o Pōhurihanga, ko ngā iwi tangata whenua o Tē Hiku o Tē Ika. He maha ngā kārangaranga maha i konei: Ngāti Murikahara, Puhitīare, Ngāi Takoto, Tē Rarawa, Ngāti Kahu, Tē Ringamaui, Tē Whānau Moana, Patukoraha, me te maha noa atu o ngā kārangaranga maha kei waenganui i a mātou. Koia tō mātou whakapapa i tīmata mai i a Kurahaupō rāua ko Pōhurihanga.

### Te Hāpua ki Tāmaki Makaurau

I whānau au ki Te Hāpua i te tau 1920. Iwa tekau mā whā aku tau ināianei! Nā, kei konei tonu au e kapekape ana, e kōrero ana, e aha ana. Heoi anō, e noho ana.

Ka moe tōku whaea i tōku matua i te matenga o tōna wahine tuatahi i te flu i te tau 1918. 26 ōna tau pea. Ko ngā tau o tāku matua, tata ki 40. Ka moe rāua, ka puta mātou. **E hia nei o mātou? 12. E waru o mātou** e puta ora mai. Nā, ko mātou katoa i eke ki te waru tau! Kei konei te toenga o mātou. Tē kaha o mātou i a mātou e tupu ana, nā te mea, he moumou kai ki konei. He pipi, he ika, he kūmara, koina o ō mātou kai, mō ā mātou orange. Kātahi te reka o te moana o Pārengarenga. Ko tāku matua, he tangata kaha ki te mahi kūmara. Kāore mātou i hiakai. Kāore mātou i noho pōhara i runga i tana nei mau i a mātou.

I tupu ake mātou i roto i a mātou reo. Engari, ka haere mātou ki te kura, paku noa iho mai te kōrero i a mātou e kōrerotia i te reo Māori. I mau mātou ki te ako i ērā atu momo mea. Ko tēnei ko te wero i aua wā. Ka hoki mātou ki te kāinga, ka puta mai te kōrero a tō mātou matua, 'Kaua koutou e kōrero i tēnā reo, i te reo Pākehā!' Otirā, he tikanga whakatoī mai ki a mātou. Kia mau mātou ki te ako i te reo Māori, ki te reo Pākehā.

I kura au ki te kura o Te Hāpua. Nā, i te wā ka puta mai māua ko Mira Szászy (Petricevich i tērā wā), ka puta māua i te tau 'standard' rima, ono

pea. Ka kī tētahi wahine māhita ki a māua, 'Me haere kōrua.' E hiahia ana ia ki te mau i a māua ko Mira ki Ākarana. Ka whakaaro au, 'E, me kite koe i āku mātua. Kāre tēnā whakaaro (kia haere) au; kāre e taea.' He kaha ia ki tana take, ā, me haere māua kura ai ki reira. Ka haere mai tōku whaea, ka mea mai ki ahau i tētahi rā, 'E haere ana koe ki Ākarana?' Ka mea ia, 'He pai koe ki te haere?' Ka kōrero au ki a ia, 'Kāore.' Ahakoa kāore hiahia haere, ka kī tōku whaea, 'E haere ana koe ki Ākarana. Kia kaha. He pai te take mōu.' Nā, ka riro māua ko Mira me te māhita. Engari, nā te māhita i whakahaere ki āna tuahine, tokorua, kua moe tāne, nā rāua māua ko Mira, i tiaki. Pēnā pai.

Ka kī mai te whanaunga o te māhita, 'Āe, mauria mai ngā kōtiro nei, ki a māua e noho ana.' Nā, ka haere māua. Kāore māua i haere ki Kaitiāia [ki te kura], i rere tonu māua (mā runga tereina) ki Ākarana. Kātahi anō māua ka noho i te taha o ngā Pākehā nei.

Nā, ko te tīmata tēnei o te Kirihimete. I noho māua ki Tāmaki mai i te Kirihimete atu ki te puarenga o te kura. Kei te mahi kaha tō māua māhita, e mau nei i a māua te rapu karahipi hei tukua māua ki a Kuīni Wikitoria, Queen Victoria School. Ka tata ki te puarenga o te kura ka puta mai te kōrero, 'Haere ki Queen Victoria.' Kua haere mai te karahipi mō māua. I haere mai i raro i te Mihingare, i te kura Mihingare.

Ko tēnei haerenga ki Tāmaki ko tā māua nei wā tuatahi. Pēhea tēnā mō māua? Pēnei ki te kiore! E oma ana, e tiroiro ana! He mea tauhou. He mea tino tauhou. Whitu tekau mā rima ngā tau pea i a au e ngaro atu, nā kua hoki mai au ki konei ki Te Hāpua.

I reira hoki i Tāmaki, ka whakaaro ngā wāhine e tiakina māua, ko wai rāua e pupuri i a māua, tō rāua kūare i te reo, tō rāua kūare i te tikanga Māori. Engari, he pai kē atu, me tukua māua ki Kuīni Wikitoria. Kei reira te reo, kei reira ngā tikanga o te ao, me te noho tahi me rātou, ngā kōtiro nō ērā atu rohe. Nō Tē Arawa, nō Waikato, nō Whānau a Apanui, nō Ngāpuhi me ērā atu, ngā kōtiro. Ka rongu māua i te reo ki Queen Victoria. Engari kāore te reo e aru mai ki Queen Victoria. Heoi anō, ko mātou katoa e mōhio ana ki te kōrero i te reo. Ka rongu mātou i te reo kē, o tēnā o tēnā.

I a māua e haere ana ki Kuīni Wikitoria, kei te āta take haerenga mai te āhuatanga o ngā tikanga e ako i a māua e ngā hunga Pākehā nei. E toru tau pea ka kitea mātou, ko ngā tikanga anō e whāia ana i roto i te kura kia

mōhio mātou ki te tiaki whare, ki te horoi kākahu, ki te mahi kai me ērā atu āhuatanga. Ko ērā āhuatanga kua oti mātou i a mātou taenga ki reira ki te kura. Ko ērā ngā tikanga i arumia i raro i te hāhi Mihingare.

Ā muri i tēnā, ka kumea mai māua ki te ‘coaching college’. Ko te kaupapa o tērā coaching college, he whiriwhiri tangata e hiahia ana ki te haere ki te whare wānanga. Pēnei hoki ngā kōrero, ‘Me haere kōrua ki te kāreti nei. Anei ngā taonga mā kōrua: te reo Pākehā, history, Latin, maths, Māori. Ko ēnei mā kōrua e mau mō te kōtahi tau kia puta kōrua mō te “matric” [matriculation].’ Nā wai? Nā ngā rangatira Pākehā ēnei whakatau. ‘He iwi mōhio hoki te take haere ngā ahorei o te mātauranga o te whare wānanga.’ Heoi anō ka haere māua mō te kōtahi tau ki te coaching college i te ‘ferry buildings’. Mutu ake te tau, ka kōrero a Mira, ‘Kāre puta te reo Pākehā.’ Ka tino pōuri au nō te mea ko tāku wawata, pēnei te kōrero o tōku matua, me pēhea tāku haere kia whakatau. Nā ngā Pākehā nei kia whakatau.

Kātahi ka noho puku me taku pōuri. Ka whakaaro au kua hē aku rangatira ki au. Ka oti ahau, me tuhia au i tētahi reta ki te whare wānanga. I puta au i tāku reta, ka inoi ahau kia whakawātea mai kia tukuna. Nā, ka puta mai te whakaare ana. Kua riro mai taku matriculation. Nā, ka wātea kia haere ngā tauira te huarahi ki te whare wānanga, ki te teachers college, me ērā atu āhuatanga katoa. Pēnā te haere o te kiore o Te Hāpua!

### **Ko Te Reo Mihi te Marae**

Ko Te Reo Mihi o Te Hāpua tāku marae. Ko tērā ingoa ko te ingoa nā Rātana i hua. Ko te marae i mua i tēnā ko Te Hiku o Te Ika. Kāore au i kite i tērā marae. Ko Waiora he marae anō, kei konei kei Ngātaki. Ko Te Reo Mihi kei Te Hāpua. Nā, ko te marae tuatahi o Te Hāpua, ko Te Hiku o Te Ika. Ko Kenana kei raro nei.

I te wā i a au e tamariki ana, ka tupu takoto mai te Hāhi Rātana, i runga i te karanga o Piri Wiri Tua, te kaiwhakāū o te ao Rātana. Ko Piri Wiri Tua tētahi atu ingoa o Tahupōtiki Wiremu Rātana. Ka ngahoro te maha o te iwi Māori ki tana karanga. Ka noho te Hāhi Rātana i waenganui i tēnā marae, i tēnā marae, i tēnā iwi, i tēnā iwi. Nā, pēnā tā mātou nei noho ki konei ki Te Hāpua me te rohe nei.

I te wā ka tū te Hāhi Rātana (i te 1920s), i mua atu i tērā he tangata kaha a Rātana ki te whakapiki te ora ki te tangata. Ka mōhio ia ki te tiaki ki te hunga, ki te rawa kore, ki te māuiui. Koia tēnā te tino meia i a ia. Ka rongo te iwi Māori, ka ngahoro rātou ki a ia. Ka haere kia whakaorangia o rātou mate. E heke ana ngā tinana. He kaha a Rātana ki te whakapiki te ora. I runga i tērā āhuatanga, kātahi te iwi ka ruatia i a ia, ka kite ia. He tika ināianei, kua ū te rangatira mō te iwi Māori. Nā, ka pērā tana huarahi mai hei tumuaki mō te Hāhi Rātana. Nā, ka whakatūria tāna Hāhi. Ka arumia atu te nuinga o te iwi.

Ka karanga a Piri Wiri Tua, ‘Haere mai ki au, he mōrehu.’ Kaua e haere mai ki ahau hei Ngāti Kuri, hei Ngāti Porou, hei aha atu. Haere mai ki au he mōrehu.

### **Te Ao Hurihuri**

Ahakoia he whakahirahira te Hāhi Rātana, ki te iwi hei oranga mō te iwi, ka puta te ao hou hoki. He ao hurihuri mō mātou. Ka tahuri atu ngā tāngata i ngā tikanga o te ao tawhito. Ka kitea ahau ināianei i tā mātou nei noho pōhara i Te Hāpua. Ka noho ngoikore ngā āhuatanga ināianei i konei, i Te Hāpua.

Ko tā mātou nei marae ko Waiora, nā riro mai i Te Reo Mihi. Koia kē rā te marae tūturu i roto i Ngāti Kuri. Ehara i te tikanga karanga o te marae Te Reo Mihi o ngā tūpuna. Kāore ngā tūpuna i runga i tērā whare. Kāore he tūpuna.

I a au e tupu ake, kihai mātou i haere ki ngā marae ki ngā tangi. He mea tauhou tērā. Kihai mātou nei rā i tukuna haere ki ngā tangi maha. I haere ki ētahi. Engari, kei konā anō te whakaaro e mōhio ana ahau, ‘Kaua koutou e haere ki te marae. Hoki koe ki te kura. Hoki koe ki te kāinga.’ Ko ērā tū kōrero. Ko ngā tikanga ehara i te tikanga Māori tūturu. Engari e haere nei i raro i te ia o te Hāhi Rātana.

Nā, ka māuiui tētahi o mātou. Kua haere mai ngā āpotoro ki te whakapiki te ora ki a mātou. Nā mātou te haerenga, kua huri mai te pātai ki tōku matua, ‘He aha ngā tekoteko kei a koe?’ Nō te mea, ka whakaaro ētahi, ‘Kei konā te mate o ngā tamariki nei.’

Ka mea atu tōku Pāpā, ‘Āe, kei a au. Tukuna ngā taonga ki Rātana Pā.

Whakawāteangia. Ko ēnei ngā mea e pā ana ki te māuiui o ngā tamariki.’  
He maha ngā taonga nā tāku matua i heke pērā.

I te noho noa iho mātou i ngā tikanga Māori, ngā waiata o ngā kaumātua kuia, ngā tikanga poroporoaki, me te karanga ki te manuhiri. Kua whakakore te reo. Kāore he tangata kaha ki te whaikōrero. Kāore he tino kaha te mau i ngā tikanga i waenganui i ngā tāngata ināianei. Ka noho pōhēhē nei. Koia tēnei tētahi o ngā take, e arumia e ahau ināianei. Nā, ka noho pōhara mātou. Kūare mutunga nei.

Nā, ka hua ki waho atu o tēnei rohe, ka kite, ka rongo i te whakahaere o ngā iwi i runga i ngā marae. Ko ngā whaikōrero, ngā poroporoaki me ērā atu āhuatanga i roto i ngā iwi Māori tūturu, kei te haere tonu. Ka rongo au i te tino rangatira o ngā whaikōrero i waenganui i ētahi atu iwi. Ko ngā whaikōrero kei konei he poto. I ngā rā o mua, he roa ake ngā whaikōrero. Ka huri te ao Māori, te ao o Ngāti Kurī mai rānō, mai i te wā i a au e tamariki ana.

I ngā rā o mua (me ināianei) he rangatira tēnei mea te whaikōrero i roto i ngā hapori Māori. Kei te ora tonu i te rohe o Tūhoe. He reo ātaahua tā rātou me ngā kōrerotanga me ngā whakataukī. Mā ēnei momo āhuatanga kei te tino ātaahua tō rātou reo. Tē āhua o te tū o te tangata, te āhua o tō rātou mau kākahu, he āta kitea hoki. Kāore rātou i haere mai i roto i ngā hū omaoma. E mau huiti ana rātou. I whakatūpatongia ngā kaumātua o Te Arawa i ngā rangatahi, ‘Me pēnei tō tū i runga i te marae’. Taea e koe te kite i ō rātou hū ātaahua e papai ana. Kāore mātou e tino mahi ana i ēnei mea ki konei. Kāore mātou e tino mōhio ana i ēnei tikanga o te ‘tū marae’. Ko te kaupapa, me mau atu te mana kei a koe i te wā ka tū koe ki te kōrero i runga i te marae.

Ahakoia he wā uaua i ēnei wā, ka rapurapu ngā tāngata ki te whaikōrero. Ko tāku manawanui tēnei ināianei kia āta whāngai atu, kia whakaoho ake atu ngā pakeke rā! Me whakaae rātou he tikanga hei aru mā rātou. Engari i a ētahi o rātou e noho nei, pai noa iho te noho kore take. Kāre atu he wawata i tua atu i tēnei i ā rātou ināianei nei. He uaua, he uaua te arumia ngā tikanga e kōrerotia nei e ahau. Tē wawata tērā pea. Tērā pea, ka oho ake tāku iwi.

## Te Reo

Ko te rere o te reo mai i a au e tamariki ana ki inaianei: i takoto ngā āhuatanga i waenga i ngā whānau Māori o te motu, ā, ko te haere o te tikanga o ngā kura kia whakakāhore te reo i roto i ngā kura. I reira hoki mātou i whakataetae ana. Ko ngā ture i roto i ngā kura, ‘kaua e kōrero i te reo, nā kua arumia, kua tukitukia e ngā māhita. Heoi ano, ko mātou ngā tamariki, ka mau mātou ki te kōrero i te reo. ‘Catch us!’ Kare mātou i kino. He whakataetae noa iho. Na, kei to mātou kāinga, ko te karanga i reira, ‘kaua kōrero i te reo Pākehā’. Kāre mātou i kawa, kāre mātou i pukuriri. Ko mātou e peke ana, ā, ka patua atu, ā, ka peke ngā kōrero, nā ka puta ‘people like me!’

He pai noa iho te karanga o te kōhanga reo me te kura kaupapa Māori. Engari, me tūpatou mātou. Me kore e waihotia te ako i te reo ki ngā māhita anake. Ko te mea nui, ka kōrerotia te reo, kia mōhio tātou katoa.

Ko tōku matua, whakakāhore te reo Pākehā i tō mātou kāinga. E kore ia e mōhio ki te kōrero Pākehā. Ko tā mātou (ko ngā tamariki) whakarongo i tana reo Pākehā he kata mō mātou! Engari he tangata mōhio ki te kaute kapira i a ia e hoko ana i ana kapia (kauri gum). Tē mōhio ki te reo Pākehā (mō tēnā), arā ko ngā kupu ‘pounds’, ‘shillings’ me ērā atu tū momo kupu. Ka noho tokomaha o ngā ‘Dallies’ (Dalmatians) i waenga i a mātou. He tino mōhio rātou ki te mahi. He kaha hoki ki te ako i te reo Māori. He kata mā mātou nā te mea he pukukata tā rātou whakamātau!

Ka hoki āku mahara ki te huarahi i ahau mai ahau mai i āku tamarikitanga ki inaianei. I toa ahau, i puta ahau ki te ao mārama, nā te mea, ahakoia kāre ōku mātua i mōhio ki te huarahi o te mātauranga, kuare mai ngā matimati, ka tautoko rāua i tāku haerenga ki tāku huarahi. I puta mai māua ko Mira, nā te āwhina o te hunga Pākehā, āta poi poi i a māua e tamariki ana, puta noa. Ehara i te mea he wahine mōhio māua, kao. Nā te tikanga tiaki a te hunga wahine nei, āta titiro i te huarahi tika, ka whai mātauranga māua. Ko tāku mōhio pērā, mō ngā tamariki katoa o te ao. Mehemea ka tūmata mai te manaaki mai i te tamarikitanga, ā, pakeke noa, ka puta. Koia tēnei tāku karanga ki tāku iwi. Kei roto i ō tātou ringaringa te ora me te mate o tā tātou tamariki. Mehemea kāore tātou ngā mātua e pā ana ki a tātou tamariki mai i te tamarikitanga, kāore ngā tamariki e

puta he rangatira. Heoi ano, ka noho. He iwi koretake. Pēnā nō te reo. Pēnā nō te reo.

Me ako ki te kāinga. Kaua e tukuna atu ma wai i kē atu. Mā ngā māhita, mā wai atu, ma wai atu. Tūatahi, koutou me hoki ki te kāinga. Akona te reo, kōrerotia i te reo e koutou ki ngā tamariki. Mā koutou e ako. Pēnei tāku hakahau ki te hunga e aki nei, kia mau i te reo, kia mau i te reo. Kāore anō au kia rongō i a rātou e mea ana, koutou ngā kaumātua, ngā whaea, ngā mātua. Puritia te reo i roto i te kāinga. Akona mai i reira. Moumou taima engari kāore tēnā.

Me tīni / whakarerekē ngā whakaaro. E mōhio ana au he pakeke, engari kei te mōhio koe, me mahia kia tika. Kāore noa iho ngā kupu nahe, engari ko te āhua. He reo rangatira. Me whakaaturia tātou i ētahi o ngā kōrero tawhito o neherā, ngā kōrero i kōrerotia e ngā tūpuna o mua i runga i te marae. Me rongō tātou i ērā. He nui ngā mahi o ngā kaikōrero Māori, kei roto i te reo, kei reirā. Me whakarongo ki ētahi atu o ērā tāngata, ki ērā atu tāonga. Me whakaaturia te hunga e ako tonu ana ki ēnei momo reo kia mahia ai rātou kia whakamaioha rātou, ā, kia matatau, me te ngākau nui ki tā tātou reo. Ehara tēnei te tākoro noiho i ngā māpere. He nui rawa atu i tērā. He wairua kei roto i te whakaakoranga me te reo hoki. Ko te wero mō tātou, mō te Pouaka Whakaata Māori me ētahi atu, kia maumahara i ērā atu mea.

Me whai tangata nō kōnei ki te haere atu ki ētahi atu wāhi ki te ako, e mea nei ahau, ko ngā ‘whakakitenga’. Me whakaako i reirā, engari mā tātou e whakakorikori. Ko te kaupapa, me whakamātau atu i tēnei mea te whaikōrero me ētahi atu mea i tērā taumata, whakaakongia, ā, whakahoki mai i ērā mahi ki te kāinga. He rerekē ngā tikanga o tēnā takiwā, o tēnā takiwā. Hei tauira, i roto i Ngāpuhi, e kore koe e mōhio ko wai ngā kaikōrero. Ka noho ngā kaikōrero i waenganui i te iwi. I te wā e rārangitia ana te noho o ngā tangata o tērā tahi ka taea e te tangata ki te mea atu, ‘Āe rā, e mōhio ana ahau ki a ia, e mōhio ana ahau ki a ia, e mōhio ana ahau ki a ia’. E taea ana te tiro tiro i ēnei kaikōrero, engari kāore e taea i te wā i haere mai a Ngāpuhi. He tākoro tōrangapū i mahia e rātou. He kamakama rātou mō tērā. Kīhai rātou i whakaatungia ko wai ngā kaikōrero, nā reirā ka pupuri tonu ake rātou i tō rātou huanga. He whakangaio katoa hoki ēnei.

He nui te mātauranga kei ngā pukapuka meneti o te Kooti Whenua. He tino nui hoki kia whai huarahi ki ngā wharepukapuka ki te wāhi kei reira ngā meneti mō ngā take whenua. Ahakoa e hopohopo ana ngā kai pānui Māori, me tohutohu te tangata ki tēnā huarahi. Me whakaaturia rātou ki ngā māiatanga. Me whakamahia kia hiahia rātou. He maha hoki ngā huarahi he whakapakari haere i te reo me ōna tikanga. Ehara i te mahi māmā. Engari me mahia.

E tino pono ana tēnei mea te wairua kei roto i te reo, hei tauira, tēnā pea e taea ana ngā ākongia ki te whakatakina tētahi pepeha nō tō rātou kāinga engari kāore rātou i noho ki te kāinga. Nā reirā i ērā atu āhuatanga kei te takiwā noa iho te kōrero. Mēnā ka taea koe te whakamahia te tangata ki te mōhio i ngā waitohu (icons) o ngā takotoranga papa (geography) o ia wāhi, kātahi koe ka whai māramatanga me te mōhio. Kātahi koe ka taea te whakarārangitia haere i ngā kōrero. Hei tauira, e whai tikanga ana i te wā e kōrero atu ana ki tētahi puke. Taea e koe te whakahua hei waitohu, taea e te tangata ki te whakamahia ki roto te whaikōrero me ērā atu āhuatanga o te reo Māori. He tāonga ērā, e whai take ana ki te pupuri, i ngā kōrero Māori kua ākona koe i te takiwā noa iho, kāore e whai kiko, kāore hoki e tino whai māramatanga. Engari he maha hoki ngā huarahi hei whakarangatira i te reo kia ākona e ngā tamariki. He kaha rātou ngā wāhi reke ki te patapatai. I te wā ka mea atu koe, ‘he waitohu tēnei’, ka mōhio rātou katoa. Horekau e whakauru ana ngā waitohu ki roto i te akomangatanga o te reo Māori o konei, kāore hoki i waenganui i ngā mea pakeke. He maha hoki ngā wāhi i waenganui i a tātou engari kei te arakore ēnei wāhi. E whai tikanga ēnei tāonga, nā reirā me hāngai tonu ki ēnei kaupapa i te wā e ako ana i te reo.

I tata ake nei i tuhi ahau i tētahi ūpoko kōrero e pā ana ki te mahinga o ngā waka pūhoro o ēnei aka pupuri waka i waho i te ture. I whakaatungia ahau, ‘. . . tērā ngā tai o Muriwhenua te hora nei – Te Kokotahi Pārengarenga, Tokerau ki Houhora. He tāonga tuku iho nā ngā tūpuna’. Ohotata ka taea koe te whakamahia i ēnei wāhi, he wāhi whai tikanga ake. Mā tēnei kātahi ka ohore te tangata ki te mahi i tētahi kaupapa hei tiaki i ēnei wāhi, pērā i ō tātou aka pupuri waka, i ngā wāhi e hao ika ana, ā, ngā wāhi anō kua murua. He huarahi tino rawe ēnei momo kōrero hei whakamahia i te reo. He maha ngā take ka puta mai pērā i ngā āhuatanga tauhokohoko hī ika, te papātanga kai mau ika a rohe, te papa atawhai,

te kaupapa here me ētahi atu. E kore koe e taea te whakahāweatia i te kaupapa o te reo mō te whakahua me te whakatika i ngā kaupapa here mai i te ao o te Māori.

Ko tēnei te take me tū tonu ētahi kaupapa i roto i te reo Māori kaua i roto i te reo Pākehā, nā te mea ka ngaro te tino take e whai tikanga ana tētahi kaupapa me te tō rātou wāriu hoki. Taea e te tangata te whakahāweatia i tēnei. I te wā ka mea ahau, ‘ngā tai o Muriwhenua’, kei te mōhio ngā tāngata i ērā?

Ahakoia he aha te aha me whakatāia ngā kōrero Māori hoki. He tauira anō, ‘e hora nei ki Kokotahi Pārengarenga’. Me mōhio te hunga kāinga, ngā kai mau ika me ētahi atu, he aha hoki ērā. ‘Ki Tokerau’, ko te takutai o Tokerau tata ake ki Houhora. Ko ēnā ngā wāhi e rua. Ko ēnei ngā tai e hora nei i waenganui i a tātou e tūkinu ana, e whakakino ana. Ko ēnei ngā tū kupu i roto i te reo Māori. Ko te reo Māori anake e taea ana te hopu i te hā o te ao Māori. Mēnā kei te mōhio ngā tāngata, ko tēnā pū te pātai. Me mahi tātou i tētahi mea mō te mātauranga kore, a, me whakahauhautia ki te ako i ngā wāriu. He huarahi pai te reo Māori ki te mahi i tērā.

### Ngā Kōrero o te Whenua

Ka hoki mai ki te kāinga, ka ako i ngā kōrero, i te whakapapa. Kāore i ako ki tētahi atu wāhi. I rongo au i tēnā kōrero mō mātou, mō taku iwi. Nā, i runga i te marae, ka tae mai te manuhiri, ka pātai, ‘Ko wai koe?’ Nā, ‘Ko Kurahaupō, ko Pōhūhūhū.’ Koia te wā i karawhiu ai i tēnei tū kōrero. Kāhore atu. Kei te matakū Ngāti Kurī ki te kī i tēnā kōrero, engari, he ritenga tūturu. Ka kōrerotia ngā manuhiri ko wai rātou kia mārāma ai ngā tāngata katoa te mana o ia ope, o ia ope, ā, kia mōhio anō hoki he aha te whanaungatanga tōrangapū. Engari kei te matakū a Ngāti Kurī ki te whakaatu ko wai rātou mai ngā ritenga tūturu. Kua ngaro te wairua Māori i waenganui i a mātou. He roa te wā kua tīnei tātou i te ao Māori.

### Ka Tū ngā Wāhine i Runga i te Marae

Taea e ahau te kite ka pana ngā wāhine i ngā tāne i roto i ngā tūnga whaikōrero i runga i te marae. Engari i ngā wā o mua, kāore e whaka-

mātou te kōrero i runga i te marae. Engari ki a ahau kei te haere mai te wā mō ngā wāhine kia whai tūnga kōrero. Ki tāku nei titiro, kei te pai ake te haere o ngā wāhine i ngā tāne i roto ngā āhuatanga maha! Ka tū tonu ai ngā wāhine i roto i ngā mahi mō te kaikaranga.

### Te Wero

I tīmata te ngoikore haere o te marae mō mātou i te kōtahi rau tau ki muri i te wā e tupu ana te mana o te Hāhi Rātana i roto i o mātou hapori. I haria mai te Hāhi Rātana i te tūmanako hou me te whakapono i te wā e pakeke ana te noho o te iwi Māori mō o tātou whenua, mō o tātou hauora hoki. He maha hoki i roto i tā tātou hapori i mate i te wā o te rewharewha i te tau kōtahi mano, iwa rau, kōtahi tekau mā waru. Engari i mau mai te whakapono hou i ngā wāriu hou. I whakaawe pū ake te reo Māori me ngā tikanga o te marae. Kāore tātou kua ora mai i tērā wā. E tukaunga tonu ana mātou i te rangatira kaha i roto i ngā whaikōrero, i ngā waiata, i ngā karanga hoki. Neke atu i te iwa tekau tau kua ngaro haere te reo me ngā mātauranga tawhito.

Ko ēnei āhuatanga, arā ko te tikanga o te marae, kua pōwhiwhi haere. He kuare ētahi o mātou ki te aru i ēnei āhuatanga, ki te whakaputa i ēnei whakaaro i roto i te reo. Kāore whānui te titiro.

Ahakoia koinei āku hakahau, he mahi nui. He wero nui. Ko te wero kia tau ki runga ki ngā pakeke. I te āhua nei, kāore anō kia tau. Kei konā ngā pakeke e titiro ana ki a wai kē atu; teachers, me ā wai atu. He ngāngāra kino tena i waenganui i roto i te iwi Māori. Kāhore ngā pakeke Māori kia kapo kita ai i te take. Ko tāku kōrero ki ngā kaumātua nei, e ngaro ana te whaikōrero me te tikanga o te whaikōrero. Kei hea koutou?

Ko ēnei ōku whakaaro me tōku āhua mō te whakaako i te reo Māori. Me whakamōhio atu i te rangatiratanga o te reo Māori. Kaua e whakataha i ngā kaumātua, he mahi tā rātou. Pērā hoki mō ngā mātua. Ko te āhua, ‘Mā tētahi atu e mahi’, kāore kei te tika. E whai tikanga ana te kōhanga reo, te rura me te Pouaka Whakaata Māori. Engari e kore e taea ki te whakaneke te kāinga hei rito mō te whakaako i te reo Māori.

## THE DECLINE OF THE LANGUAGE

If te reo is to have a future, the responsibility to provide the environment for Māori to thrive in lies squarely at the foot of elders and families. Kōhanga reo (Māori language pre-school learning nests) and Māori schooling are important, and Māori Television also has a role, but the primary responsibility for reviving and rejuvenating the language is with parents and elders. For us in the Far North, te reo (the Māori language) and tikanga [customs] have declined severely ever since I was young. We have a crisis. Over three generations, or more, we have seen an ever increasing deterioration of our language and our customs. We need look no further than our marae to witness the changes. The solutions are not about proposing great or radical interventions. It is more simple than that. They start and end with whānau [family] and the home. But often our homes are not sufficiently equipped to provide the kind of learning and supportive environment that is needed, because parents and elders do not properly value (or are not proficient in) te reo and tikanga in ways that will ensure the sustainability of these things. I do hold out hope but we face an uncertain and difficult future.

### Beginnings

Kurahaupō is the canoe. Pōhurihanga is the ancestor. We are the descendants of Pōhurihanga, the people of Te Hiku o te Hika. There are many genealogical connections here: Ngāti Murikahara, Puhitiare, Ngāi Takoto, Te Rarawa, Ngāti Kahu, Te Ringamaui, Te Whānau Moana, Patukoraha, and many other genealogical connections amidst us. Our genealogical connections begin from Kurahaupō and Pōhurihanga.

### From Te Hāpua to Auckland

I was born in Te Hāpua in 1920. I am 94 years old now! I am here getting on with things, discussing things, doing what is necessary, living here.

My mother married my father following the death of his first wife

who died of influenza in 1918. She was 26 years old and my father was nearly 40. They married and had us. How many of us? Twelve. Eight of us survived. All of us reached eighty years old. Those remaining live here. As we were growing up we grew up strong because of the variety of food here. Pipi, fish, kūmara were our food, for our wellbeing. The seafood from Pārengarenga was delicious. My father worked very hard planting kūmara. We did not want to eat kūmara though! However, through our father's efforts we were not poor.

We were brought up with our Māori language. However, when we went to school we spoke very little Māori. Instead we learnt other, different things. This was the challenge in those days. When we returned home our father said to us, 'Do not speak that language, the English language!' But he was teasing us. He wanted us to learn the Māori language and the English language.

I was educated at Te Hāpua school. When Mira Szászy (known as Petricevich back then) and I completed standard 5 or 6 one female teacher said to us, 'You two should go' [further afield and obtain a good education]. She wanted to take Mira and me to Auckland. I thought, 'You should really see my parents. It's not something that I really want to do; I cannot.' Our teacher was adamant that we should go to Auckland to school. One day my mother came to me and said, 'Are you going to Auckland?' She then asked, 'Is it not good that you go?' I replied, 'No.' Even though I did not want to go, my mother said, 'You are going to Auckland. Be strong. This is a good thing for you.' So Mira, myself and the teacher went to Auckland. The teacher took us to her two sisters, who were married, and they looked after us.

The teacher's sisters said, 'Yes, bring the girls to stay with us.' So then we left. We did not go to Kaitiāia [to school], we went straight to Auckland (by train). Both of us stayed with these Pākehā.

This was at the beginning of Christmas. We stayed in Auckland from Christmas through to the beginning of school. Our teacher worked hard to take us around to look for a scholarship so that we may enter Queen Victoria School. Just before school started we received confirmation that we could attend Queen Victoria as scholarships for us had come through. We came under the Anglican school.

This was our first time in Auckland. How was it for us? We were like mice! We were running around looking at everything because everything was new to us. Very new. I was 75 years away from home. I have now returned to Te Hāpua.

When in Auckland, the women who were caring for us pondered which of them would be responsible for us because the women did not speak Māori or know our customs. They decided that it would be better to let us go to Queen Victoria because the Māori language was there, the wisdom of the world was there and the ability to live together with other Māori girls from other areas: from Te Arawa, Waikato, Whānau a Apanui, Ngāpuhi and girls from other places. We heard the Māori language at Queen Victoria but it was not the language that came with us to Queen Victoria. Nevertheless all of us knew how to speak the Māori language. We heard the dialects of different areas.

There was a good reason why we came to Queen Victoria to be taught by these Pākehā. After three years, we realised what the school wanted us to learn – how to keep house, how to wash clothes, how to cook food and those sorts of things; things we already knew how to do before going there. Those were the reasons we came, under the auspices of the Anglican church.

After this we were taken to the ‘coaching college’. The purpose of that coaching college was to select those who wanted to go to university. This is what was said, ‘Both of you must go to this college. These are the things of value for you both: the English language, history, Latin, maths and Māori. This is what you will both do for one year to enable you both to come through “matric” [matriculation].’ Who arranged this? The Pākehā carers [who were looking after us] arranged this. ‘Only knowledgeable ones go to university.’ Thus both of us went to coaching college at the Ferry Buildings for one year. When that year ended Mira said that she did not pass English. I was very unhappy because my dreams and aspirations, which were the same as my parents [were in question], and I wondered ‘How would I get to university? These Pākehā will help us to gain entrance into university.’

I sat alone in my sadness. I thought that those responsible for us were in the wrong [and that I would not be prepared enough for university

either]. I decided that I would write a letter to the University. I sent my letter asking that I be allowed to enter into University. They agreed to it. I got my matriculation, which then makes it possible for students to enter university, to enter teachers training college and all those types of places. That is how it was for the mice of Te Hāpua!

### **Te Reo Mihi is the Marae**

Te Reo Mihi of Te Hāpua is my marae. That name was given by Rātana. The marae before that was Te Hiku o Te Ika. I did not see that marae. Waiora is another marae altogether, here in Ngātaki. Te Reo Mihi is in Te Hāpua. Now the first marae of Te Hāpua was Hiku o Te Ika. Kenana [another marae] is down here.

When I was growing up I was brought up in the Rātana Church at the invitation of Piri Wiri Tua, the person who brought the Rātana Church here. Piri Wiri Tua was also known as Tahupōtiki Wiremu Rātana. Many Māori fell under the influence of the Rātana Church. The Rātana Church became established in this marae and in that marae, and in these people and those people. That is how we live here in Te Hāpua and in this district.

Well before the Rātana Church was established (in the 1920s), Rātana was well known for healing people. He knew how to look after people – the poor and the sick. This is what he was well known for. When the Māori people heard about him they fell under his influence. They went to him to be healed. Their bodies were deteriorating or were sick, but Rātana was able to heal them. In the light of these circumstances, people were drawn to him. It is right that today this learned man has remained strong for the Māori people, hence his calling as leader for the Rātana Church. Thus his Church was established. Many of our people followed him.

Piri Wiri Tua called out, ‘Come to me, remnants.’ Do not come to me as Ngāti Kurī, as Ngāti Porou or anything else. Come to me as remnants.

### **The World of Constant Change**

Even though the Rātana Church was great – to the people it was their sustenance and also the pathway to the new world – it was also a world of



constant change for us. The people turned away from the ways of the past. I now see the poorness of our existence here in Te Hāpua. In Te Hāpua today, our position [or our understanding of customary knowledge, values and practices] is weak [limited].

Waiora, our marae, came from Te Reo Mihi. This is the main marae in Ngāti Kuri. Te Reo Mihi marae does not follow the custom or karanga [call] of our ancestors. Neither does it have our ancestors carved on the house. There are no ancestors.

When I was growing up, we did not really go to the marae to the tangi [funerary rituals]. Attendance at tangi was new to us. We were not allowed to go to many tangi. We did go to some, but there was always the thought which I understood, 'Do not go to the marae. Go back to school. Go home.' Those kinds of statements. These ways were not the traditional ways of Māori. Instead we followed the ways of the Rātana Church.

When one of us got sick, one of the Apostles [church officials or ministers] would come to pray for us to make us well. When we went, the question was put to my father, 'What is troubling or ailing you?' Because some believed, 'That is why the children are sick.' [In other words, it was the treasures of old that were the source of sickness.]

And so my father would say, 'Yes I have them; release the taonga [ancestral treasures] to Rātana Pā. Free them up. These are the reasons why the children are sick.' There were many treasures of my father that were given like that.

If we abandoned or left behind our Māori ways, our customs, the songs of our elders, our farewell speeches, our karanga to our visitors, we would not have our language, there would be no one to speak. There would be no one amidst us today that would really know these customary practices. We sit in a state of bewilderment, hence the reason why I pursue these things now and hence the reason why we remain poor and ignorant to this day.

Outside this district I see and hear that the traditional things are being practised on other marae. Whaikōrero [formal oratory] and formal farewell speeches are still being carried out and are thriving within traditional Māori strongholds. I hear outstanding whaikōrero in other tribes. The formal speeches here are short. In the old days the whaikōrero here

were long. The Māori world and the world of Ngāti Kuri have changed since I was a child.

Whaikōrero was (and is) a real feature of the Māori community. Amongst Tuhoë, for example, whaikōrero is still there. They have beautiful language, with references and whakataukī [proverbs]. Their reo is coloured by all those sorts of elements of the language. The way people stand, the way people dress is also notable. They do not come in sandals. They put their suits on. And in Te Arawa, the old men warned the young, 'This is how you stand on the marae.' You could see them also with their beautifully polished shoes! These things are not what we really do here. We are not aware of these elements of 'tū marae' [marae protocol]. It is about bringing mana with you when you stand and speak on the marae.

Even though it is difficult today, we are always in search of those who know how to conduct the whaikōrero. Today I believe that we need to nurture and awaken this skill in the older ones. They should agree to a protocol for them to follow. Unfortunately there are some here that just choose to sit and remain idle, without a desire to move beyond this condition. It is of course difficult to pursue the customary practices that I speak of. Perhaps it is only a dream. Perhaps my people will awaken to it.

## The Language

The decline of the Māori language from when I was a child to today: Māori families throughout the country have experienced this phenomenon, that is, the supplanting of our Māori language in the schools (hence the reason why we protested). The rule in the schools was, 'Do not speak the Māori language'; therefore, this is what we followed because we would be beaten by the teachers. We were the children who were caught speaking Māori. We did not do anything wrong. We only protested. Now today, at home the call is, 'Do not speak the English language.' We did not harbour any resentment or bitterness. When we were jumping about we would be hit and of course we blurted out in Māori, hence 'people like me' came about.

The purpose of te kōhanga reo and te kura kaupapa Māori is commendable, but we need to be careful. We must never leave the teaching of our

Māori language solely to the teachers. The main thing is that we all speak our language, that we all know our language.

My father prohibited us from speaking English in our home. He could not speak English of course. When we (the children) listened to his English language we laughed, but we had to be careful that he did not catch us. However, he was a very knowledgeable person at counting kauri gum when he was selling it. He knew the English language for the words ‘pounds’, ‘shillings’ and other words relating to such transactions. And there were many Dalties [Dalmatians] living amongst us. They knew how to work. They were keen learners of the Māori language. We would laugh at their attempts as they were trying to learn.

I look back at my own journey from when I was young to now. I was strong, I managed to succeed because even though my parents did not know the academic world right through to their fingertips, they supported the path I chose. Mira and I were successful because of the help of the Pākehā people who really supported us when we were young, and beyond. It is not as though we are knowledgeable women, no. It was these women who researched the right path for us that we both became educated. I believe it is like this for all the children of the world: if the support and care is given from an early age and throughout childhood, one will succeed. This is my call to my people, that the life / success and death / failure of our children is in our hands. If we do not nurture our children from a young age, none of our children will produce leadership. Instead, we will remain the same, koretake or useless, poverty stricken. That is how it will be for the Māori language, that is how it will be.

We need to teach our language at home. Do not leave it up to someone else or to the teachers, or whoever else. Firstly you all need to return home to learn the Māori language and speak the Māori language to our children. I myself have not heard anyone say, ‘You the elders, whaea, parents, hold onto the Māori language in your homes, teach the Māori language at home.’ It seems like a waste of time, but it is not.

We need to change the thinking. I know, it is hard. But it needs to happen. It is more than just the words. It is an attitude. He reo rangatira. [It is a revered language.] We also need to be exposed to some of the really classic pieces spoken by elders such as on the marae. Let us hear

them. There are yards of material in the speeches of speakers of the reo. We need to hear more of those people. Listen to these other treasures. Expose learners of the language to that and make them realise, and then they get an appreciation, an awareness and a commitment. It is not playing marbles. Its greater than that. There is wairua [spirit] in the learning and in the language. The challenge for us, for Māori Television and others, is to keep those things in mind.

We also need people from our area to go to other areas to experience what I call ‘performances’. Learn from there. But we have to make the move. It is about experiencing whaikōrero and other things at another level, learn from that, and then bring those experiences home. Different areas have different tikanga. In Ngāpuhi, for example, you would not know who were the speakers. The speakers would sit in amongst the people. Sitting on the other side were people lined up, and one could say, ‘O yes, I know him, I know him, I know him.’ Monitoring of these speakers could happen, but not in the cases when Ngāpuhi came. It was a political game that they played. They were smart about that. They never revealed who the speakers were, and therefore retained advantage. It was all tactics.

The Land Court minute books hold much knowledge too. Access to the libraries where they have all the minutes about land issues is also important. Even though our people are reluctant readers, we need to direct people in that way. Expose them to all the possibilities. Make them curious. There are all sorts of ways of strengthening the reo and tikanga. It is not easy. But it has to be done.

The issue of wairua in language is very real when, for example, learners may be able to recite a pepeha [tribal saying] from their home, but have not had the background or opportunity of being home. The language in those cases is out of context. If, for example – and I would love to do it actually – you can get people to become aware of ‘icons’, of geography of place, then you can have meaning and understanding. Then you can quote. The words are meaningful, when you are addressing a hill, for example. You can regard it as an icon. And people can use it in whaikōrero and in other elements of the reo. They are treasures, worthwhile hanging on to, instead of only pieces of Māori that you learn to say which are out of context, meaningless and where there is no real understanding. But there

are all sorts of ways of enriching the language. And children will take to them. They are curious little things. Once you say ‘this is an icon’, they all know about it. It is not incorporated into the reo learning here, not even amongst the adults. There are all these things (places) around and they are being ignored. Yet, they have meaning and are, therefore, worthwhile to focus on in the learning of the language.

I wrote an article recently concerning unlawful use of these harbours by trawlers. I made the point, ‘Tērā ngā tai o Muriwhenua te hora nei. Te Kokotahi Pārengarenga. Tokerau ki Houhora. He taonga tuku iho na ngā tūpuna.’ Suddenly you can make these places have a significance and people might then be compelled into doing something to protect them, such as in the case of our harbours where trawling occurs and where our waters have been raided. Sayings like this one are a fabulous way of addressing and using the language. All sorts of issues come up, like commercial fishing techniques, the impact on the local fishers, conservation, policy and many others. You cannot underestimate the role of language in helping to address and identify issues from a Māori world view. And that is why some things have to be in Māori, and not in English, otherwise the whole sense of why something is important, what values are important, is lost. People can under-appreciate. When I say ‘ngā tai o Muriwhenua’, ‘the tides of Muriwhenua’, do people know what those are? At least, put them in print as well. And ‘e hora nei ki Kokotahi Pārengarenga’ for example. Local people, fishers and others need to know what those are. ‘Ki Tokerau’, Tokerau beach, next to Houhora. Those are the two areas. These are the tides spread out amongst us that are being polluted or being abused. Ko ēnei ngā tū kupu i roto i te reo Māori [These are the kinds of words in the Māori language]. Only te reo Māori can truly capture the essence of a Māori world view. But whether people understand is the question. We have to do something about the lack of understanding and encourage the learning of the values. The language is a good way to do that.

### **The Stories of the Land**

When you return home, you will learn the talk, the whakapapa [genealogy]

of home. You never learned all this from somewhere else. I heard this from our people. Thus, on the marae, when the visitors arrive, they ask, ‘Who are you?’ Then one replies, ‘I am from Kurahaupō, ko Pōhurihanga.’ This was when this was spoken. Nowhere else. Ngāti Kurī is afraid when such words were spoken, but it is an age-old custom. The visitors will tell us who they are so that everyone will know the mana of each group. The manuhiri will identify themselves and it is important for the identity of each group to be known so that the political relationship can be understood. But Ngāti Kurī are afraid to identify themselves using customary cues. The Māori spirit has been lost amongst us. We have been switched off from the Māori world for a long time.

### **Māori Women Standing on the Marae**

I can see women displacing men in speaking roles on the marae. But, traditionally, we were not allowed to speak on the marae. But I believe the time is coming for women to have a role in speaking. From what I see, they are managing better than men in many cases! Women will always continue to have an important role in fulfilling kaikaranga duties.

### **The Challenge**

The crisis of the marae for us began almost 100 years ago when the Rātana Church began to have influence amongst our communities.

Of course Rātana brought renewed hope and faith, at a time when there was much adversity and difficulty facing our people concerning our lands, and our health also. Many in our community had died in the great flu epidemic of 1918. But new faith brought new values. Te reo and tikanga of our marae were directly affected. We have not recovered since. We are still bereft of strong leadership in whaikōrero, in waiata, in karanga. For more than 90 years we have had a loss of language and a loss of traditional knowledge.

These things, the customs of the marae, they are jumbled. Some of us are not skilled to pursue these things, to bring these thoughts out in the Māori language. There was no planning ahead.

Although these are my opinions, there is a big job before us. A big challenge. This challenge falls on the elders. It seems that it (the challenge) has not landed. They, the elders, are busy looking at someone else, a teacher, others perhaps. This is a very bad problem within the Māori people. The elders have not taken up the subject. My words to the elders: our way of speaking, the customs and speech-making are being lost. Where have you all gone?

These are my thoughts and my attitude about teaching te reo. Drive its significance home. Do not excuse the elders. They have a responsibility. The parents have a responsibility. The attitude 'somebody else can do it' is not right. Kōhanga reo, kura and Māori Television are of course important. But they do not and cannot replace the centrality of the home in learning the language.

