

In the short time available to us, not all the people we invited were able to accept. But the conference benefited greatly from the attendance of Sione Latukefu, Malama Meleisea, Ron Crocombe, Margery Crocombe, and John Mugambwa. The UNESCO grant included a grant towards the cost of publishing the conference papers.

By the time we put the conference programme together we were embarrassed by the richness of the talent available to us. Eight, perhaps nine sessions had become eleven (not counting the final panel discussion), with fifteen speakers. We knew this would test the endurance of our audience, and it did. But we also knew from the pre-conference enrolments that the 170 men and women who would be the 1990 Stout Conference were themselves very well informed on Treaty issues and would bring a considerable depth and diversity of experience to bear on the issues to be discussed. We hoped that, with so many knowledgeable people present, the conference would generate its own momentum.



Summing Up

JOAN METGE

One of the six speakers in the final session 'Drawing The Threads Together'.

In the experience of the Maori and many other indigenous peoples, the coming of writing has 'fixed' the record, militating against change. Most people, including those in positions of power, tend to take what is recorded in writing ('documented') as somehow proven and of superior value to what is not written but in oral form. All the treaties we have been talking about were written down on the initiative, initially and often only, in the language of the signatories who had writing. The oral record has been submerged. Literary is not simply the ability to write but the whole mind-set which goes with writing and printed forms of recording.

Pakehas are often preoccupied with the words of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Maori continually insist on the importance of the spirit of the words. For most of the nineteenth century the Maori did not refer to the actual words of the Treaty: they had, and talked in terms of, their own oral understanding of it.

The encounter between Maori and Pakeha involves an encounter between two traditions, the literacy tradition which underpins university scholarship, and the oracy tradition. These traditions have their own distinct forms of expression and argument. The literacy tradition tends to go with an emphasis on strict, often straight-line, forms of logic and on 'the facts'. The oracy tradition emphasises oratory and rhetorical forms, prominent among which are metaphors and hyperbole, exaggeration to drive home a point and make it memorable. Pakehas are often upset by Maori discourse, because they take it literally and do not recognise its use of rhetoric.

At this conference we have experienced the excitement that results when people skilled in both traditions put them together to generate new forms of communication and understanding. If we are to understand the Treaty and translate that understanding into action, we must make use of the approaches of both cultural traditions and explore the words (concepts) of both languages