

EXCLUSIVE

Have your say: ministers hit the road

GOVERNMENT ministers plan to front up in the town halls and wool sheds of provincial New Zealand as they seek to educate citizens about the Treaty of Waitangi and our constitutional framework.

Attorney-General Margaret Wilson and Maori Affairs Minister Parekura Horomia have both made commitments to front meetings and workshops around the country, part of a civics education campaign that was requested by the Republican Movement.

Ms Wilson, speaking at the Waitangi Tribunal's 25th anniversary celebrations, said her meetings would be primarily focused on Treaty issues but she also restated her commitment to a broader education about how New Zealand is governed.

"As a result of the meetings, I hope all people will read and hear the compelling evidence of the things which gave rise to the grievances in the past, and thereby come to have a greater understanding of our shared history," she said.

"I think the whole process of constitutional change is one that the Government has signalled it will take slowly ... However, there is no issue that is without its constitutional implications, so you can't always put things in boxes.

"I think it's really important to get a strong base before we move. We have to move together [as Maori and Pakeha] which is why I want to go out and do these meetings. Because if one moves without the other, then that movement will be a disjointed one, and not one that will be lasting."

Mr Horomia welcomed Ms Wilson's plans, wishing her luck and promising a similar programme of workshops within Maoridom.

Republican Movement president Dave Guerin said the planned meetings were a step in the right direction — towards a programme of civics education that would encourage New Zealanders to think about how they were governed.

"We have always been strong on our commitment to moving toward a republic and addressing Treaty issues at the same time," he said.

"The Republican Movement believes that the Treaty must continue to sit in its central position in New Zealand's constitution.

"Kiwis, Maori and Pakeha alike, are already in the process of considering the constitutional framework that best fits our South Pacific nation. That is a process which we cannot and will not turn away from."

Mr Guerin indicated the movement would be announcing some exciting partnerships in the coming months, as it continued to address the implications of the Treaty and the republic on each other.

spoken

"I have heard strong arguments as to why New Zealand should become a republic and join up as the 51st state of America. And if we really are going to solve Invercargill's economic problems, we need to do something bold."

— *Invercargill mayor Tim Shadbolt*

"In the euphoria surrounding the news that New Zealand's top five political-legal jobs are now in the hands of women, there was a brief lapse of memory [of] the fact that the ultimate of 'top' jobs also belongs to a woman — the Queen."

— *Taranaki Daily News*

"The issue has nothing to do with republicanism. It's about having a flag that reflects our culture and uniqueness."

— *Timaru councillor Janie Annear introduces a motion for a new flag*

"Given that the Labour government itself is not about to reconsider the [Winebox] decision, it makes you wonder if we would be better off dispensing with the so-called 'democratic' system and going boldly for a republic instead."

— *correspondent Peter Boys*

"Let's face it, the reason why there was a special performance in Parliament — when there has never been for any New Zealander who has turned 100 — was because the Queen Mother is a royal."

— *Green MP Keith Locke*

"I don't think much of royalty. I think South Africa should be a republic."

— *South African guest*

"That's how we feel in Scotland too, but the English won't allow it."

— *The Queen Mother*



Parihaka, New Zealand's first republic

WEST of Mount Taranaki is the tomb of Te Whiti O Rongomai. The English inscription reads:

*He was a man who did
great deeds in suppressing evil
so that peace may reign
as a means of salvation
to all people on earth.*

Te Whiti -- was he also one of New Zealand's first republican leaders?

Through the wars of the 1860s Maori searched for methods to protect the reduced domain of their sovereignty. To the north, Waikato and Ngati Maniapoto held the boundaries of the King Country. The traditional interpretation -- that Maori sought to imitate British structures to preserve their sovereignty -- mistakes the degree of indigenous thought involved, but the model is still certainly not republican.

Parihaka, though, deserves consideration as contemporary New Zealand republicans seek historical connections and precedents for their actions.

James Cowan, an early twentieth century historian of the New Zealand wars, and respected enough to be invited to see Te Whiti in the twilight of his days, called Parihaka "Te Whiti's little republic".

Little maybe, but the city-state is a republican form with an impressive lineage.

Te Whiti followed in a long line of prophets from Taranaki. In 1867, the year the great warrior Titokowaru called

"the year of the daughters ... the year of the lamb", Te Whiti's vision of resistance centred not on further innovations in pa-based warfare, but on an open settlement, a village of peace.

The site he chose was on the banks of the Waitotara stream, with a view of the ocean and the mountain.

Over the following two years Te Whiti and his growing number of followers concentrated on building their state. Although apparently heedless of the wider war, in the republic they founded the challenge mounted was greater for its lack of aggression.

In carvings and chants Te Whiti represented resistance with the metaphor of Ruru and Riki, the gods of peace and war, being stalked by the Pakeha cat. What a way to resist too!

With the King Country the British could at least fool themselves that 'imitation is the sincerest form of flattery'.

But on November 5, 1881, the virulent and violent reaction to the peaceful sovereignty exerted at Parihaka indicated it was the form of sovereignty that proved provocative.

There are republican parallels too in the instances of the people of Parihaka refusing to pay rates and levies to bodies on which they were not represented.

A committee of management, with Te Whiti and Tohu giving spiritual and temporal oversight, ran the state. The influence of peaceful Christianity on the

state was noteworthy, and further confounded the colonial settlers whose own religion was being interpreted so differently.

Before the secular republicanism with which we are today more familiar, there was a long Calvinistic tradition in France, Switzerland and Scotland, which held that since all are equal before God no man is fit to be elevated to monarch. Perhaps then, the state was a modern Geneva -- a religious republican city-state.

Faced with colonial determination to assert sovereignty over the entirety of the country Parihaka slowly ceded its autonomy in the early twentieth century, despite its resistance to armed invasion in the 1870s and 1880s.

The death of Te Whiti weakened their struggle even more, and his daughter who was chosen to lead could not halt the slow ebb of sovereignty.

In time even the township fell into disrepair, but the vision has proved enduring and capturing. As well as their peaceful and communal resistance to British expansion there is a republican dimension to Parihaka.

As we look to the future New Zealand republic we can cast the nuclear-free assertion of independence as a parallel to the pacifism of Parihaka.

In as much, then, the portents for a New Zealand republic are not just our ideals, but concrete historical achievements. We will do well to emulate them.

Extreme monarchists mount leaflet campaign

A MONARCHIST group that believes republicanism is a Catholic plot has been handing out leaflets in central Wellington and Christchurch.

"The Monarchists", as they call themselves, argue that certain politicians are steering New Zealand "into the dark, uncharted waters of Republicanism".

"These politicians have no mandate

from the people, who are not rioting on the streets for a Republic," the leaflet says.

"The media has been attempting to influence a pro-Republic public opinion, and some believe there is a conspiracy."

The leaflet asserts that the Pope is the force behind New Zealand republicanism, taking the lead from "closet Catholics" like King Charles I.

"Gallons of ANZAC blood has been spilt safeguarding our liberties, insured by our democratic Constitutional Monarchy. This blood has preserved for us the best freedoms in the world.

"Immigrants flood into Australia and New Zealand to escape persecution, bigotry, injustices and poverty in their republics. They come to enjoy a better life under our tried and tested system."

