

PREFACE

This book is my first reaction to a problem, and the problem is as follows: Of between 60-70 new pupils with whom I have to deal each year, I find one-third have a reasonably good speaking knowledge of Maori, but with very inadequate knowledge of writing it. Another third have some understanding of it, but can neither speak it nor write it. The last third have no knowledge at all. The equipment provided is equally exciting and exhilarating, consisting of a supply of chalk and a duster for the teacher, and exercise books and pens for the pupils. A few copies of Pope's *Pukapuka* provide reading matter for No. 1 group but it is far too advanced for groups 2 and 3. All three groups have to be taken together, with most of the teaching time spent by teacher and pupil in writing a great deal of material on blackboard or in copy books.

The result is that group No. 1 goes on to pass the School Certificate Examination and groups 2 and 3 drop the subject, and grow up, endowed by nature with the brown pigmentation of their race, but without the language that enables them to enjoy the fellowship and social life of their people. I know many such, and in quiet moments they tell me they are ashamed of their inability to speak Maori.

It is the members of groups 2 and 3 who are my chief concern, and I have tried to lead them slowly and carefully through the tangled masses of scrub and brushwood, on to the more thinly wooded slopes above.

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I feel certain that when pupils know this book, advance will be rapid and easy. Group 3, may very well spend two years over it, but it is essential that every step be mastered and every word known.

I acknowledge my debt to the late W. L. Williams, Bishop of Waiapu, whose *First Lessons in Maori* will always be the scholar's book, and I have availed myself of much of its material.

To Mr. S. Dwyer of the Te Aute College staff, I owe my sincere thanks for typing the whole of my manuscript and for some excellent advice in the way I should set out the work.

To the young Maori boys and girls, who have my heart and my confidence, I would like to say this: I have written this book for you, to enable you to preserve the treasure of your forefathers, and hope by doing so, you will feel it a joy, as well as a matter of pride to be a Maori.

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