

1831
1841
1849
1852
1860

(Network Waitangi Taranaki, 2000)

aki

Constitutional Change: ~~Why and How?~~ About it Now?

Network Waitangi Taranaki

The following timeline was developed by Network Waitangi Taranaki as part of a detailed educational display on constitutional change, sovereignty and tino rangatiratanga. The timeline provides a background to the current political system and ongoing challenges to it.

1820s and 1830s

During this time two separate groups of Maori leaders travelled to England. In 1821 Nga Puhi leader Hongi Hika and Kendall (a missionary) travelled to England and in October 1832, Paratene Te Manu and other Maori leaders met with King William IV in England.

At the same time there were meetings of Maori in Aotearoa to discuss the idea of some form of inter-iwi political structure that would be able to make decisions on behalf of Maori and to deal with the problems of non-Maori living in this country. Other ideas such as a passport system and the deportation of undesirable Europeans were also discussed.

1831 Petition to King William IV

A meeting of 13 Rangatira of the north at Kerikeri signed a petition to the King - to ask him to "look after his hapu who are behaving in an uncivilised manner"

1833 Arrival of James Busby

James Busby arrived in the Bay of Islands to be kaiwhakarite (intermediary) between the races as British Resident.

1834 Te Hakituatahi o Aotearoa and Ko Huiarau

On March 24, 1834 a flag prepared in New South Wales and chosen by northern Maori leaders was hoisted and declared to be the national flag of Aotearoa. A group of Maori leaders from the north - described as Ko Huiarau, had the power to issue warrants that allowed trading ships to fly this flag and so avoid being confiscated.

1835 Declaration of Independence - He Wakaputanga o Te Rangatiratanga Signed

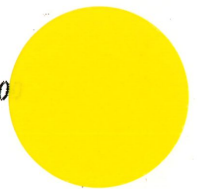
This was a statement by Maori to both the outside world and to themselves that the islands of Aotearoa and Te Waipounamu were to be an independent sovereign state.

The declaration made it clear that:

- All sovereign power and authority rested with Maori
- Maori would meet each year to make laws for "justice, peace, order and trade"
- No other "legislative authority" other than this would be recognised

from he

3rd



The Declaration, along with the adoption of the flag, were acts of Maori Sovereignty that in the eyes of the rest of the world established this country as an independent nation. Both were formally recognised by the British Crown.

The Declaration was first signed at Waitangi on the 28th of October 1835 and later other Iwi added their signatures bringing the total to 52.

1840 Treaty of Waitangi Signed

The Treaty was signed at Waitangi on 6th February 1840 between the British Crown and over 500 Rangatira representing the Maori Nation.

Article One of Te Tiriti gave British the right to govern British subjects residing in Aotearoa as a solution to the lawlessness created by those living here without English law.

The Second Article guaranteed Maori "Tino Rangatiratanga". The right to continue governing themselves as they had for many centuries in this country and to retain all aspects of property and culture "nga taonga katoa".

Article Three guaranteed Maori equal rights with the British.

The Fourth article, a verbal agreement at Waitangi, stated the right to spiritual freedom for all, including Maori spirituality.

The Treaty that was signed at Waitangi, was written in Maori and copies were later taken around the country for other Maori leaders to sign. In the Waikato, Te Wherowhero, who later became the first Maori leader of Te Kingitanga, refused to sign the Treaty as he had already signed the Declaration of Independence and felt that it said what he wanted to say.

In March of 1840 a Treaty copy written in English emerged and was signed by 37 Maori. In Article One Maori were described as having "ceded to her Majesty the Queen of England, absolutely and without reservation, all the rights and powers of Sovereignty". This was interpreted then and by later Colonial Governments as giving them the right to govern everyone - including Maori. The confusion between Maori and non-Maori expectations of the Treaty and the struggle for sovereignty and control of the country dominated Maori/non-Maori relations for the following years.

1840 Proclamation of Sovereignty

Hobson proclaimed British sovereignty over the whole of the country. In November, NZ became a separate Crown Colony.

1841 Executive Council.

In May of 1841 Hobson became Governor and was assisted by an Executive Council that he appointed. This consisted of a Colonial Secretary, Treasurer and Attorney General and a Legislative Council consisting of those three and three Justices of the Peace. All were Pakeha, land owning men. Auckland was selected as the seat of government.

1846 New Zealand Constitution Act - Britain

In this year the British Parliament passed a New Zealand Constitution Act which provided for a complicated three-tier system of government, with elected municipal corporations, two elected Provincial Councils and a General Assembly. The franchise was confined to adult males who occupied a tenement and could read and write in English. At this time there were approximately 13,000 settlers, about a fifth of the Maori population. Governor Grey refused to bring the constitution into operation.

1849 Settlers Constitutional Associations

Associations were formed by wealthy influential settlers who were seeking the immediate introduction of representative government.

1852 New Zealand Constitution Act

This established the beginning of the system of government, as we know it today. It allowed male, property owners with freehold land worth 50 pounds or leasehold land with an annual rental of 10 pounds, on individual title to vote for the House of Representatives.

In the first elections for the Provincial Councils and the General Assembly, it is thought that a few adult Maori voted for European candidates as the Act did not specifically exclude Maori. However in 1859, the Law Officers of the Crown were asked for an opinion on Maori eligibility and reported that Maori property being communal and Maori 'tenements', which were impermanent, did not meet the required conditions for the franchise. This meant that all Maori were denied a vote, but still had to pay taxes to keep this system going.

The Act established a two-tier system of government with a Legislative Council appointed by the Crown and a House of Representatives of 37 people. It also established a form of local government with 6 provincial councils to be elected by ratepayers.

The first elections were held in 1853 with 30,000 non-Maori men voting by a show of hands and the first General Assembly opened in Auckland in 1854.

This Act made provision under section 71 for districts to be declared where "Maori laws, customs and usages" could be maintained - this was never used.

1852 Rise of the Kingitanga

In 1852, Tamihana Te Rauparaha and Matene Te Whiwhi introduced to North Island Iwi, the idea of a Kingitanga movement to establish a Maori Nation. Over the next four years, the leadership of this movement was offered to several prominent Maori leaders but all refused.

In 1856 a meeting at Pukawa, near Taupo, of Maori leaders from the principal North Island Iwi, considered the establishment of a rohe tapu or sacred boundary inside which no more land would be sold. They also discussed denial of the Queen's sovereignty, discontinuation of prayers for the Royal family, the end of road building and the possibility of choosing a Maori King.

Also at this time the formation of runanga (local councils) occurred, mainly in the Waikato. These combined features of the traditional Korororero with practices originating in European legislatures.

Potatau Te Wherowhero accepted the role of Maori King on June 2, 1858. The Kingitanga was originally supported by most of the Waikato and Taupo hapu, by Ngati Maniapoto, Ngati Haua and some hapu of the East Coast, Taranaki and Hawke's Bay. They put their lands under the protection of the King in what was known as the "Rohe Potae". The unique title of King was used so as to avoid confusion with the titles of other Maori leaders.

Potatau died in June 1860 and was succeeded by his son Matutaera, who later took the name of Tawhiao.

1854 Taiporohenui

Taiporohenui was built in Manawapou, Taranaki to host a meeting of Ngati Toa, Ngati Ruanui, Te Atiawa, Ngati Raukawa, Ngati Kahungunu, Whanganui and Taranaki. A hatchet was passed around with the idea being that those who received it would pledge no more land sales to the Government - only the Ngati Ruanui and Taranaki people received the hatchet.

1856 Responsible Government

With the appointment of the first ministry, "responsible Government" was established. This signalled the beginning of self-government under the NZ Parliament. The Governor was now required by law to take the advice of ministers.

1860 Kohimarama Hui

A major conference of over 200 Maori leaders was held under government auspices at Kohimarama near Auckland. Officials attempted to clarify the Treaty of Waitangi clauses by presenting it in the most benevolent light. The Government saw this conference as a Maori ratification of the 1840 agreement and of the Crown's sovereignty. The Maori attending, however viewed the Queen's representatives as having only a nominal sovereignty and affirmed their support for inter-iwi movements such as the Kingitanga.

The gathering produced Te Whakakotahitanga o Te Tiriti o Waitangi or the Kohimarama Covenant.

1865 The King Country

In 1865, Wi Tamihana made a separate peace with the Government and unsuccessfully petitioned for an inquiry into the origin of the Waikato War and the return of confiscated land. Tawhiao and his people then withdrew behind the confiscation line, called aukati by Maori. The region under his jurisdiction became known as the 'King Country'. It covered an area of about 11,000 square kilometres in the west-central part of the North Island, much of it rugged and with a high rainfall. Europeans were warned that they would be killed if they crossed the aukati. This effectively created a separate Maori sphere that was recognised by Maori and non-Maori alike. Over 4,500 people lived in this area and the aukati remained until 1879 when Rewi Maniapoto withdrew Ngati Maniapoto from the control of the King and negotiated for a railway through the King Country to be built.

1867 Maori Representation Act

This created four Maori seats. Only Maori and 'half castes' could stand as candidates and all Maori males over 21 could vote (without any property qualification). The seats were originally introduced as a temporary measure until Maori could qualify to vote on the 'European' seats once Maori land was sufficiently individualised.

The four Maori Members of Parliament represented some 50,000 people, whereas the 250,000 non-Maori were represented by 72 MPs.

Maori could also vote in the European electorates if they had a property qualification - few did. This was phased out in 1893.

1868 First Election for Maori Seats

The first election for the Maori seats took place in 1868 with voting being by a show of hands or a declaration. Only two of the four seats were contested with the Eastern seat being decided by a show of hands at a hui in Napier, by 34 votes to 33.

1869 Kohimarama Conference Reconvened

Ngati Whatua leader Paora Tuhaere tried to reconvene the Kohimarama conference.

1860s Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kakahi

From the 1860s to the 1880s the Taranaki leaders Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kakahi were a focus for Taranaki Maori and their response to land confiscations. Their principle aims were the return of confiscated land and Maori control of Maori affairs.

When the land which had been confiscated on paper in 1865 started to be surveyed in the 1870s the people of Parihaka used non-violent resistance to prevent the surveying. People were sent out to plough the disputed land and were arrested. Later more people constructed fences across roads which passed through their cultivations and were also arrested. A series of acts were passed to enable the Government to imprison the ploughers and fencers without a trial. Eventually hundreds of Parihaka followers were in jail. Those who survived were mainly released in 1881.

In November 1881, over a thousand armed troops marched on Parihaka. Tohu and Te Whiti were arrested and taken away and the Pa was ransacked. After the army had systematically destroyed the Pa they turned their attentions to the cultivations in the surrounding area. Over 1600 people were forcibly removed from Parihaka and to enforce this the army remained until 1885.

Tohu and Te Whiti were tried for sedition and were imprisoned and not released until 1883, when they returned to Parihaka to rebuild the community there.

1870s The Repudiation Movement

The Repudiation Movement was a pressure group that was set up in the Hawke's Bay in the 1870s after the scandal of the Heretaunga Block 'purchase'. Its purpose was to contest the continual encroachment on local Maori land-holding that was occurring through the Pakeha system. It ran its own newspaper, Te Wananga. After initially trying to work through the Pakeha legal and political system, they realised that this was going to be unsuccessful and so turned to the idea of uniting Maori through Kotahitanga and a Maori Parliament.

1870 Tuhoe Union of Mataatua

This was a movement that sought the return of confiscated Tuhoe lands and the prevention of any further sales or leasing of remaining land.

1871 Universal Suffrage - for the Colonial Government

Universal suffrage, ie. being able to vote without having to own property, was introduced for non-Maori males. At the same time most of the Maori votes in the 'European' seats were eliminated when the rules about what property was needed to qualify to vote were made tougher.

The four Maori MPs however were regularly ignored in Parliament and out-voted on important issues for Maori.

1872 Maori on Legislative Council

In response to a motion from a Maori MP, two Maori were nominated to the Legislative Council. Thereafter there was one to two Maori members on the Council until it was abolished in 1950.

1878 Tuwharetoa Parliament - held in Taupo

Kohimarama Conference Reconvened

Ngati Whatua again reconvened the Kohimarama Conference at Orakei to discuss how to have the Treaty of Waitangi honoured and regain control from the Colonial Government. Discussion on the formation of a Maori Parliament again took place. Over 300 people attended, including some from Nga Puhi and it was decided to begin regular meetings at Waitangi.

1881 Ngapuhi Treaty Parliament or Runanga began

Following the meeting in 1879 at Orakei, the Waitangi meetings of 1834 were revived and a Runanga with a two house structure was established in the Bay of Islands. The trustees were Hare Hongi, Maihi Kawiti, Kini Hori Kira and Kerie Mangonui. The chairperson was Heta Te Hara. Demands for Maori land were put to the Government.

The new "Treaty of Waitangi" house was opened at Te Tii marae and the Governor was invited to attend, but stayed away as the Government had no intention of recognising the Parliament

1882 Ngapuhi deputation to England

Led by Hirini Taiwhanga, this deputation made a personal appeal to Queen seeking redress on the basis of the 1840 agreement. The petition was for:

- The Queen to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate and rectify laws that contravened the Treaty
- Permission to be given to establish a Maori Parliament.

1884 King Tawhiao Petitions the Queen of England

In 1884, King Tawhiao and four other leaders travelled to England to petition Queen Victoria. Gladstone and the Queen snubbed the delegation despite Gladstone's claim in Parliament that "there was not a more strictly and rigorously binding Treaty in existence than that of Waitangi".

Tawhiao had specifically asked for Section 71 of the 1867 Maori Representation Act to be used - this was refused with the excuse that the English Parliament no longer had the right to interfere in internal matters in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

1886 Maori Council of Chiefs

At a meeting with Native Minister Balance, Tawhiao requested the setting up of a Maori Council of chiefs to consider legislation effecting Maori, which would be submitted to the Government for ratification. Balance countered by again offering Tawhiao a seat on the Legislative Council. This was refused.

1888-1889 Kotahitanga

Further Maori Parliaments were called in 1888 in the 'four quarters' - at Waitangi, Waiomatatini, Omaahu and Putiki. At the last meeting it was decided that a

Kotahitanga of all North Island Iwi be created, however this did not happen as it did not gain support from the Waikato or Taranaki.

In 1889, further meetings resulted in the production of the "Maori Union of Waitangi", a document of 500 signatures purportedly with the power to administer Maori internal affairs.

1889 Plural voting abolished

Now everyone could only vote in one electorate and the first election under the 'one man, one vote' system was held in 1890.

1891 Kotahitanga Hui

The Kotahitanga hui asked for the Treaty of Waitangi to be written into law and a for a Maori Parliament to handle Maori Affairs, especially land.

Maori leaders appointed a committee of thirty members to follow the course of Maori legislation in Wellington. Led by Wi Parata Te Kakakura the committee proposed a bill to:

- Give mana to Maori District Committees
- Create a General Committee to investigate land disputes and Treaty grievances

1891 Te Arawa Petition

Te Arawa petitioned the Queen of England requesting the "formation of a representative Council, to be elected by your Maori subjects as a mountain of rest from which all measures affecting the Maori people can be clearly reviewed, and all measures also affecting the natives can be dealt with by that Council".

1892 Maori Parliament

Plagued with problems for which there seemed to be no machinery for redress in the colonial bureaucracy, Maori leaders of the Kotahitanga movement considered forming their own Maori Parliament. Meetings to discuss this were held at Waitangi and elsewhere in the 1880s.

In January of 1892 a meeting at Parakino (Whanganui River) was held to consider forming a representative council without the permission of the Colonial Government.

Later that year in April at Waitangi, a Maori Parliament of two houses was planned, the electoral districts coinciding with tribal boundaries. The Lower House was to have 96 elected members who in turn were to choose the Upper house of 50 members.

The first sitting of the Maori Parliament was at Waipatu near Hastings in June 1892. Another meeting was held the following year. The 1894 to 1896 meetings were held at Pakirikiri near Gisborne, at Rotorua and at Tokaanu on Lake Taupo. The last session was at Waimatatini on the East Coast in 1902. From 1893 to 1896, bills passed by the Maori Parliament were then introduced into the Colonial Parliament, but they were either ignored or defeated.

1892 Waikato Kauhanganui

King Tawhiao set up his Great Council or Kauhanganui, which was intended to have jurisdiction over Maori affairs in general and over the sale or leasing of land in particular. These continued to be held until the 1920s. Discussions included: Treaty rights, Maori political autonomy and land confiscation.

1893 Hone Heke elected

Hone Heke was elected to Parliament as a spokesman for the Kotahitanga. In 1893 Hone Heke and the other Maori MPs put forward the Federated Assembly Empowering Bill which was to have:

- power to govern Maori
- an Upper House composed of Chiefs
- a Lower House elected by Iwi
- the Assembly was to have the power to appoint and regulate committees of Local Government for Maori Districts.

This bill was put forward to the Native Minister who did not even try and introduce it to the House.

In 1894, they tried again with the Native Rights Bill which was to contain the constitutional details for a Maori Parliament. This time Hone Heke put it forward as a private members bill but it was not passed in the Colonial Parliament, with the Pakeha MPs leaving the Debating Chamber to prevent it even being debated.

1893 Votes for Women - Colonial Government

Women were allowed to vote for the first time. The same Act also abolished the provision that allowed Maori men who met the property qualification to vote on the 'European' seats.

People who were half-Maori and half-Pakeha could choose which system they voted in. An estimated 4,000 Maori women voted for the first time for the four Maori electorates.

1893 Written Votes for Maori

Maori were given the opportunity, if they were dissatisfied with voting by show of hands, to demand a poll. They could then cast a written vote, if necessary using an interpreter.

1894 Tawhiao succeeded by Mahuta

In 1894, Tawhiao established Taupiri Mountain as the major burial place for the Waikato people, transferring the remains of his ancestors from their graves in confiscated lands. He himself died on August 26th and was succeeded by his eldest son Mahuta.

The Kingitanga plans for self-determination were formalised at this time. Taingakawa, as leader of the King's Government announced the setting up of the kingdom's own courts for land, civil and criminal cases. Judges, registrars, police and clerks were appointed. A minister of lands was appointed to allow people to lease out their lands. A newspaper was in existence - Te Paki o Matariki.

1897 Votes for Women - Te Kotahitanga

Maori women achieved the right to stand and vote in Te Kotahitanga.

1897 Young Maori Party

In 1897, a group of young Maori, educated in Pakeha academic institutions formed the Te Aute Students' Association. Later they were to call themselves the Young Maori Party and their purpose was to improve Maori health through the introduction of

modern sanitation and other public health measures, to revive Maori morale and achieve economic prosperity. Members included: Te Rangi Hiroa, Maui Pomare, Apirana Ngata, Tutuere Wi Repa, Edward Pohua Ellison and Frederick Bennett.

1900 Maori Councils Act

The Act put forward by Maori MP, James Carroll gave Maori a very limited form of local government. The Maori Councils assumed some of the functions of the Maori Land Court and adopted a policy of leasing rather than selling. Since issues other than land could be debated, providing an outlet for the expression of Maori opinion, the Councils contributed to the disbanding of the Maori Parliament. However, in actual fact the Councils had few resources and little real power.

The Councils only lasted until 1905, because Pakeha complained that the leasing policies were unfair to Pakeha. The Councils were replaced by Land Boards, with Pakeha presidents.

1906 Rua Kenana and Maungapohatu

In 1906, Rua Kenana established a self-governing community at Maungapohatu. Rua was a Tuhoe prophet whose main concern was Maori autonomy. As a result of his opposition to conscription and his urging neutrality on his followers he was accused of pro-German sympathies. On Sunday 2nd April 1916, in an incident which must stand as a low point in the history of justice in this country, a party of armed constabulary attacked Maungapohatu killing two men, including one of Rua's sons. After his arrest and lengthy trial in Tamaki Makaurau, Rua was finally convicted on only one very minor charge, yet given a heavy sentence of one year's hard labour.

1912 Death of King Mahuta, succeeded by King Te Rata.

1914 Te Rata visits London

In 1914, the Waikato leader King Te Rata visited King George V in London, but no redress for Maori grievances was gained.

1915 Kauhanganui decision not to enlist for WWI

As a result of the Kingitanga decision not to volunteer for WWI, many Waikato Maori were arrested or imprisoned for refusing to report for duty, including the brothers of Te Rata the Maori King, Tonga and Te Rauangaanga.

1918 Ratana political movement

Ratana, a Maori prophet and leader formed a political party in the early 1920s to address current social problems and past grievances by incorporating the Treaty into legislation. In 1924 he travelled to England to plead with the Queen for justice under the Treaty. Within a few years, his church had 22,000 adherents. By 1935, three of the four Maori MPs were of his faith.

1919 Kauhanganui house at Ngaruawahia opened

1919 Women's Parliamentary Rights Act

This gave all women the right to stand as Members of Parliament in the Colonial Government. Three women stood in the following general election, but no women MP

entered Parliament until 1933, when Elizabeth McCoombs won the Lyttleton seat for Labour.

1919 to 1951 Maori Voting Rules in the Colonial Government

Maori voting was held the day before the election in the 'European' seats up until 1951.

From 1937, secret ballots were introduced for the Maori seats. Until 1910, voting had been by a show of hands and later by a declaration to a polling officer. (Secret ballots had been allowed in 'European' seats since 1870 and this had been compulsory since 1890).

1933 King Koroki succeeds on the death of King Te Rata.

1936 Ratana/Labour alliance

Ratana visited Labour Prime Minister Savage and formed an alliance that saw Ratana members taking all four Maori seats and supporting Labour until 1979.

This alliance led to the election of a Labour government in both 1946 and 1957 where the Labour majority was less than the four seats it gained from the support of the Maori MPs. Despite this the Labour government failed to deliver on its promises to Maori.

1949 Kingitanga efforts to keep King Country dry

King Koroki and Te Puea led a deputation of 600 Waikato Maori to Parliament in a vain attempt to keep alcohol out of the King Country. The Colonial Government in the 1870s had promised this.

1949 Maori Electoral Roll

In 1949, a Maori electoral roll was established. This had been done for the 'European' seats in 1852 and had been a Labour party promise since the early 1930s.

1950 Legislative Council Abolished

1956 Maori enrolment on electoral rolls made compulsory.

This had been done for the 'European' rolls in 1927 and was done partly because of the bad state of the Maori rolls.

1960s Emergence of Maori groups Nga Tamatoa - MOOHR

1966 Te Atairangikaahu succeeded on the death of King Koroki

1967 Electoral Amendment Act

This act allowed Maori to stand in the 'European' seats of the Colonial Government. Before this only 'half-caste' Pakeha were allowed to contest 'European' seats. Non-Maori were also allowed to contest the Maori seats for the first time. However, Maori still could not choose to vote on the 'European' seats unless they were willing to be described as "half-caste Europeans".

1967 Revival of Kotahitanga Movement

Meeting at Otiria Marae, Kawakawa to revive the Kotahitanga movement. Discussions included Maori self-determination, ratification of the Treaty of Waitangi and a symbolic unity under the Maori Queen.

1975 Electoral Amendment Act

This act was introduced by the Labour Government and introduced the "Maori option" whereby all persons of Maori descent could choose, after each census, whether to be enrolled on the Maori or General (previously the 'European') roll.

This act also introduced changes concerning the number of Maori seats and the setting of the boundaries of Maori seats. This would now be done by population, which meant that there would have been an additional 8 - 10 Maori seats. However, the National Government, when it came to power in the end of 1975, reversed this.

Because of this the situation remained as it was - Maori votes counted for less than votes in the general electorates. In 1984, there was on average one MP for every 32,000 non-Maori but only one for every 72,500 Maori.

1975 Maori Land March

1979 Mana Motuhake formed

Matiu Rata, the sitting MP for Northern Maori, resigned from the Labour Party. He announced the formation of a new Maori party called Mana Motuhake of which he was the leader and Dr Pat Hohepa the general secretary. This ended the exclusive Labour/Ratana alliance and was a result of Maori disillusionment with Labour's efforts on Maori issues.

1982-1984 Maori Sovereignty

Donna Awatere wrote four articles entitled Maori Sovereignty, which were first published in the magazine Broadsheet and later combined as a book.

1984 Ngaruawahia Conference

Sponsored by Te Runanga Whakawhanaunga and the NZ Maori Council, the Ngaruawahia Conference considered constitutional questions relating to the Treaty. It was followed up in 1985 by a Conference at Waitangi.

1986 Report of the Royal Commission on the Electoral System.

This was commissioned in 1985, as a result of a Labour election promise in 1984. It recommended a referendum on electoral reform, including, amongst other things, the abolition of the Maori seats.

1986 Constitution Act

This Act removed the provision in Section 71 of the 1852 Constitution Act that allowed for Maori districts to be set up under Maori control. Property qualifications for voting in local body elections were abolished.

1990 Runanga A Iwi Act

Introduced by the Labour Government - it proposed criteria for gazetting iwi organisations as authorised voices and required these authorities to be registered through the Maori Land Court. The Land Court would provide the mechanism for

settling disputes over boundaries and iwi status. The bill was opposed by many Maori including the Maori Congress as an attempt by the Government to control Maori political structures and decision making. There was also dissent about using iwi as the recognised Maori structure rather than hapu. The bill was repealed by the incoming National Government.

1990 National Maori Congress Formed

With the aim of whakakotahitanga (unification) the National Maori Congress was formed in 1990 with the backing of Sir Hepi te Heuheu, the Maori Queen Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu and Mrs Reo Hura, the leader of the Ratana Church.

The first chairperson was Apirana Mahuika and the movement was originally supported by many North Island iwi, with the aim of achieving the goals of tino rangatiratanga. Support by iwi gradually declined, in particular after the Sealords deal.

1991- 1993 Electoral Reform Referendum and the introduction of MMP

In 1991, the Electoral Referendum Bill was put forward to allow for a referendum on Electoral reform. The Bill, in its original form, made no provision for any Maori seats, but was amended in the committee stage to retain the Maori seats and, instead of setting the number at four, they were to be set according to the number of people on the Maori roll.

The referendum was held in September 1992, when people were offered a choice between the previous First Past the Post (FPP) system and a form of proportional representation. They were then asked to pick which sort of proportional representation, out of the four offered, they would prefer. 1,217,284 people voted (55% of those eligible) and of these 1,031,257 (84.7) voted for change. 70.5 % of the vote opted for MMP or Mixed Member proportional representation.

A second referendum was held with the 1993 General Election, with a choice between FPP and MMP. The first MMP election was held in 1996 and resulted in a coalition Government between National and New Zealand First.

At the time of the referendum, Maori groups including Tino Rangatiratanga and the Maori Congress, asserted that constitutional change not electoral reform was what Maori needed.

Maori Option

The legislation introducing MMP also allowed for a special Maori option where all people who identified as Maori (not only "half castes") could choose whether to be on the Maori roll or the general roll. The number of Maori seats would then be set according to the number of people on the rolls and would, for the first time, make the Maori seats equal to the General seats in the number of people each electorate represented. If all the eligible Maori people had enrolled there would be 12 or so Maori seats.

The first Maori option was only open between February and April of 1994 and was grossly under-advertised and under-funded. Despite a claim to the Waitangi Tribunal and court action that went as far as the Privy Council no extra time or funding was allowed. The result of the 1994 Maori option was that there were 136,708 people on the Maori roll, 127,826 Maori on the General Roll and an estimated 50,000 eligible Maori were on no roll. The result was that only one extra Maori seat was established and five Maori seats were contested in the 1996 election.