We need not be afraid of diversity, but acknowledge it as a strength. As I say, the Pacific community is taking the initiative in partnership with Government to bridge the gap with palagi in the key performance areas of employment and education. The employment task force Vaka Ou strategy is starting to have an impact on the more deep-seated issues that impact upon Pacific communities. It is too early to say that the problem will be solved, but I am optimistic that in the next 1,000 days we will be well down the road to ultimate success.

Let me end this way. I am proud to be here today, and I am optimistic about the future of Pacific people in New Zealand, the future of our nationhood, and the destiny of all our diverse range of cultures to be inclusive in New Zealand’s story of success. We now have four MPs here. One-third of the All Blacks are of Pacific descent. There are close to 2,000 Pacific-owned businesses, and they are growing all the time.

I began with a reference to the Pacific Island tradition of self-reliance in our home islands and how, in coming to New Zealand, Pacific people have had to adapt to the market-led culture. We are adapting, and we are doing so by digging back into our traditional culture to those skills and attitudes of self-reliance that have served our history well, and combining these with the modern technology that we have today.

Let us not run away from our problems. The longer they are permitted to fester the more damage will be done that will need to be redressed in future years. It was not long ago that Pacific Island unemployment was 32 percent. Can a nation that is regarded worldwide as a wonderful place, as economically progressive and innovative, really thrive in the 21st century when one of its fastest growing minority groups is in this situation?

Through a combination of factors, the market, a partnership of effort by Government and Pacific groups, and the determination of a new breed of New Zealand-born Pacific people to live out their lives in New Zealand, not as victims of change but as contributors to the new economy, unemployment has been reducing, education statistics are improving, and there is an undercurrent of movement within Pacific community leadership to wean ourselves away from the attitudes of dependency. Pacific people must be responsible and take the lead to change their situation and rework the perception of other New Zealanders about them.

In seeking solutions to our problems, my style will be to forge partnerships with the mainstream agencies, to seek for those agencies to be responsive to Pacific community expressions of need, and not to impose so-called solutions that are, in fact, bureaucratic and culturally arid and ultimately fail to get results that the Pacific community seeks. Our vision is clear—to be up there with all New Zealanders participating and contributing; to be ordinary New Zealanders doing extraordinary things, and not to stand out on the basis of poor economic and social indices.

May God bless and guide us all in this House to strive to achieve what is best for us and the people of this country who have trusted us to manage their needs today and into the future. Fafetai.
is a new era, it is a new movement, therefore one may well ponder where we are heading to. The hope is that we may be energetic and watchful so that the canoe reaches its destination as a betterment for the people. Oh my fathers and forefathers who are listening, clear the path that lies before me. I will gather together the vision that was spoken about in the years gone by. Be gentle."

Mr Speaker, parliamentary colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to address the House today. Firstly, I want to acknowledge those who supported my campaign—all the people from Te Tai Hauauru constituency who cast their votes for me and members of the Labour Party. Without their support and assistance I would not be standing here today as a Labour member of Parliament.

I acknowledge the tremendous contribution of the former Maori members who preceded me: Sir Peter Tapsell, the Hon. Whetu Tirikatene-Sullivan and the Hon. Koro Wetere. Their dedication, persistence, and unintering efforts to maintain a voice for Maori in Parliament have been reflected by their individual and collective achievements over the span of the last 30 years.

Let me take this opportunity to pay special tribute to the work of the Hon. Koro Wetere, who is not only a representative for his people of Western Maori but a representative for all Maori.

It is an auspicious occasion for newly elected and selected members of Parliament to address the House in the first mixed-member proportional Parliament. It gives me great honour to stand in Parliament at a time when the nation has reached a significant turning point in history. What we see before us is a Parliament that is becoming more representative of the people of this nation. For the first time we have more Maori representation, more women, more Pacific Islanders, and we have the first representative of our Asian communities. This will be indicative of a growing diversity in this House of Representatives.

This also signals the growing maturity of our nation—a maturity that I envisage will transcend historical grievances of the past in order to look forward to create a new future and define a new sense of nationhood.

As I deliver this speech, I recall the words left by Bernard Shaw when he said: "Some people see the world as it is and ask 'Why?'. Others see the world as it could be and ask 'Why not?'".

Thirty years ago, who would have ever thought that apartheid in South Africa would be abolished? Thirty years ago, who would have ever thought that the Berlin wall separating one nation would come down? Thirty years ago, who would have ever thought that Queen Elizabeth II would apologise to Te Arikinui for the historical injustice of raupatu? Thirty years ago, who would have thought that Pakeha would accept the need to settle treaty grievances? Today, because people asked "Why not?", the first settlements have been reached.

It is with this determination to make the impossible happen that I enter the House. I want today to try to express the reasons that I thought it was important to take on the huge responsibility of being a representative of this Parliament. I am reminded of those verses from Ecclesiastes that state: "To everything there is a season ... A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted". I trust that in my time in this House I will be able to sow a few ideas that will benefit the people we represent.

Unlike the constituent MPs, I stand in the House today as a Labour list member of Parliament. Whilst I am unable to define the geographical constituency that I represent, I can speak about the tribe to which I belong. I belong to the Waikato-Maniapoto of the Tainui confederation on my father's side, and Ngati Manu, Ngati Hine of the Ngapuhi tribe on my mother's side.

I was raised in the Waikato at Wahi Pa in Huntly, which is a small coal mining town where all my uncles worked and their fathers before them worked to provide for their families. The Waikato is commonly known for its rich, fertile soils, for its pastoral and agricultural production, and its coal resource. The population centres are Te Awamutu, Cambridge, Hamilton—all of which began as military settlements on raupatu land—and Ngaruawahia, Huntly, Pukekohe, Waiuku, and the south Auckland suburbs of Papakura,
Manurewa, Mangere, and Otahuhu. The harbours bordering the Waikato region are Manukau, Whaingaroa, Aotea, and Kawhia to the west. The Waikato River flows through the region from Tongariro to Te Puaha o Waikato, although its flow is blocked by dams and hydro-electric stations.

This is just a brief glimpse of the Waikato. When I was younger, growing up at Wahi, I saw struggles our people had in trying to make ends meet. Everybody worked, whether it was paid work or work for the marae, and the old people had a dogged determination to seek redress for the wrongs of the past.

Waikato, as a landless people, sought redress for the confiscation of 1.25 million acres that followed the Waikato wars. The determination and commitment of successive generations in their search for redress can be traced through delegations to the British monarchy, through participation in the parliamentary process, through the courts, and through political negotiation. The same determination led Waikato to stand firm to protect its autonomy—the sacrifice being our land. This became a defining moment for Waikato, whose characteristics are captured in the words by De Gaulle, who said: "There can be no power without mystery. There must always be something which others cannot altogether fathom; which puzzles them, stirs them, and rivets their attention. Nothing more enhances authority than silence. It is the crowning virtue of the strong, the refuge of the weak, the modesty of the proud, the pride of the humble, the prudence of the wise and the sense of fools."

In retrospect, the path to resolve raupatu has often been silent—a strength which kept the flame burning deep in the hearts of our old people.

May 1995 marked a watershed in the tribe’s quest for justice through the signing of the raupatu deed of settlement. This deed, and the subsequent passing of legislation to seal the settlement, and now the consultation process to establish new tribal governance structures, marks the beginning of a new era for Waikato. This has enabled Waikato to re-establish its economic base and pursue its objectives in education, and marae and community development.

Can I take this opportunity on behalf of our people to express our deep appreciation and thanks to the Hon. Doug Graham and his Government for the way in which they conducted the raupatu negotiations to conclusion. When the National Government’s fiscal envelope policy was released there was unified rejection by Maoridom of the proposal. However, all parties will agree that a claims settlement process is crucial to restoring an economic base and mending historical injustices between the Crown and Maori. Open dialogue and negotiation over these matters need to take place to resolve treaty grievances.

Yet resolution of such grievances introduces a new set of problems for many tribes. Tribes will have to address sustainable management of new tribal assets, political governance, dispute resolution, pan-Maori versus tribal interests, and academic capture of the negotiation and post-settlement process. As a result of tribal settlements, advocacy of hapu interests is a danger that can result in new inequities within the tribe. Tribes themselves will have to resolve these conflicts. Parliament needs to understand these issues, but must stand aside from them.

The allocation debate over Maori fisheries is a case in point of a post-settlement conflict of interests, and I welcome the collective wisdom of the Maori Fisheries Commission in finding a solution to this vexed problem. In other words, treaty settlements in themselves cannot guarantee a better life for tribal members unless the tribe has the skills to manage settlements wisely.

Tainui leaders have chosen to place education as the top priority and the key to catapulting whole generations into a brighter future. The tribe is seeking to establish two post-graduate endowed colleges at the Auckland and Waikato universities. These colleges will mould and produce the future leaders for the tribe for the next 100 years and, through its international networks, attract world-class scholars who will come to Waikato.

The whole thrust of our people’s education policy is to create wealth between our ears and not in our pockets. This will be a new cadre of leadership based on dedication, commitment, and pure hard work. There will be no place for short cuts, and no excuses.
Sustainable employment for our young people, Maori and Pakeha, must be a major goal for the future. However, employment opportunities are not created in a vacuum. It is only when industry training is supported, businesses generate profit and create the opportunity to expand, that real jobs can be found.

However, the flip side is that tribal settlements cannot by themselves rectify all the socio-economic inequalities that currently exist. We must support positive initiatives to reverse the negative trend in areas of employment, educational achievement, work status, income, housing, health, imprisonment and crime, suicide and mental health.

It is for this reason that I chose to stand as a member to represent the Labour Party—a party that is founded on principles of achieving social justice and social equity. The major challenge for all members of this House will be to reduce socio-economic inequalities that exist between Maori and Pakeha.

As we start this first term of the new MMP Parliament, I ask what the future holds in store for us as a nation. I would like to think that by the year 2010 we will have gone some way towards closing the socio-economic gap and the gap in achievement levels between our people and the rest of society. Education will no longer be seen as a barrier to participation in the "good life", but rather as a passport to the richness of life yet to be discovered.

Good health will no longer be the outcome of superior medical care, but rather the consequence of healthy lifestyles. Good housing will be taken as given, because we will have created a society where higher education, healthy living, comfortable homes, and sustainable employment will be fundamental.

I look forward to such a day when each of us accepts the responsibility to value human life, to invest in education, to promote a safe society, and to respect cultural diversity. Only then will we be able to transform society and see the world as it can be. This is the genesis of a sense of nation building in which everyone is valued as a stakeholder in this country. This world view has been shaped by my Tupuna Tawhiao, who said: ‘‘Māku anō hei hanga i tōku nei whare. Ko ngā pou pou he māhoe, he patete. Ko te tāhūhū he hīnau. Me whakatuputupu ki te hua o te rengarenga, me whakapākari ki te hua o te kawariki.’’

[Subsequent authorised translation: I will build my own house. The posts will be of māhoe and patete. The ridgepole will be of hīnau. The inhabitants shall be raised on rengarenga and nurtured on kawariki.]

As members would know, the mahoe, patete, and hīnau are the least valued trees in the native forest. The rengarenga and the kawariki are foods of absolute desperation. Yet those were the plants that Tawhiao chose. Tawhiao believed that the future of his people was dependent on everybody contributing to the tribe’s well-being, according to what their personal strengths were. His philosophy was inclusive and promised hope for a new nation. And that is the vision of a different future.

Kia tau ngā manaakitanga ki runga ki a koutou i ngā wā katou. Mā te Atua tātau hei tiaki, rire, rire, rire, hau. Pāi mārire.

Waiaata

[Subsequent authorised translation: Let the blessings descend upon you at all times. God will protect us. Rire, rire, rire, hau. Be gentle.]

JOHN CARTER (Senior Whip—NZ National): I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. Mr John Delamere is now due to start his maiden speech. He is allowed 15 minutes by the Standing Orders, but as the House would normally adjourn at 6 o'clock I would seek leave of the House to extend the sitting time—

Hon. Richard Prebble: He should have 3 minutes next week.

JOHN CARTER: Actually, it would be tomorrow rather than next week. I seek the leave of the House to extend the sitting time of the House to the conclusion of Mr Delamere’s speech.

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