

# Tokelau's Administrator from N.Z. recognised

The Administrator of Tokelau, Jonathan Kings, was recognised as a tautai or master fisherman, in a kaukumete ceremony at Atafu this week.

Traditionally, this ceremony is held to recognise a man's technical skills and knowledge to handle a fishing canoe and its crew in any circumstances.

The title also implies honour, trust and the virtues of chivalry.

Tautai can navigate by the stars, know how to deal with the winds and the weather, know that after heavy thunderstorm it is better to wait for three days, and know how to pull in the big fish.

In the old days, the kaukumete involved the assembly of village elders bestowing gifts of pearl shell and lures, and their recognition that a tautai could lead a fishing expedition from the honoured position at the stern of a canoe.

Last Saturday, after a series of

speeches from members of the Taupulega, the village council of elders, Mr. Kings was given the tools of his trade.

These comprise a set of traditional fishing lures, a carved tool to be used for holding a fishing rod, a miniature vaka (canoe), and a tulumu, a traditional carved wooden tackle box.

The tulumu is also the symbol representing the Tokelau government.

Mr. Kings gratefully accepted the honour bestowed upon him. In doing so he said he would take the advice, and from now on wait three days after any return from overseas of his Minister, Mr. McCully before hassling him. He also promised he would try extra hard to pull in the big fish for Tokelau and get funding proposals through.

He then joined the fishermen, members of the Taupulega and other villagers in a collective performance of a fatele, the traditional dance.

Their graceful movements to the

beat of a drum expressed the throwing out the fishing lines from the boat, and hauling in the catch.

He reiterated the expressed concerns from Tupa'i Murray McCully, New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Most of the funding for Tokelau comes from New Zealand via MFAT.

Tupa'i had raised concerns for the quality of life for the villagers in Tokelau, who have New Zealand citizenship. Life was not improving to the extent and at the rate that was expected from the villages on the atolls. Key concerns were education, health care and priority setting for expenditure.

Mr. Kings had also suggested the country put together a 10-year asset management plan now that a full inventory of the country's assets, to the tune of NZ\$74million, had been completed.