

Maori claim to sea 'misleading'

Wellington (PA). — A Maori Land Court judge deciding a dispute over resources including fishing quotas says the concept of mana over the sea is a new development, it was reported yesterday.

Judge Kenneth Hingston had been asked to rule on whether the Blenheim-based Ngati Toa trust or the Porirua-based Ngati Toa runanga was the appropriate body to receive the tribe's fishing quotas and represent it in negotiations and consultations.

His ruling puts key tribal decision-making powers in the hands of elders.

In his judgement, Judge Hingston said tribes that claimed historical rights to the fish off their

coast were pushing a line based on greed and ignorance, not tradition, the *Dominion* reported yesterday.

The wider community was being misled into believing the idea of "mana moana" (mana over the sea) was a traditional Maori concept, he said.

"We find there is no such and never has been until very recently a Maori concept mana moana," he said.

"It has become the vogue probably since the fishery settlements began. We are of the view it is rooted in greed and ignorance, not tikanga Maori (tradition)."

However, mana moana's leading supporter, Tuateka Wyllie, chairman of Treaty Tribes, disputed Judge Hingston's comments, the *Dominion* reported.

"There's never been any doubt mana moana exists; it's just that we have differences over definition and the nature of it," Mr Wyllie said.

He said Judge Hingston was perhaps not as knowledgeable about things Maori as he ought to be.