

Te Taunga Te Rangatira



Carved Bone & Pounamu *Hei Matau* Maori Fishhook mounted on Rimu
Set upon an Oak Base that was created in Newfoundland

This treasure or *Taonga* of *Kaitiaki* Status carved and woven by Maori people in New Zealand was presented to the Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations by the Director General of the Department of Social Welfare, John Grant in 1987, on behalf of the Chairperson of the Ministerial Review Committee, Tuhoe Elder Honi Aniwanawa te Rangihau recognising *Puao-te-Ata-te*: (The Daybreak Report): The Report of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Maori Perspective for the work of the New Zealand Department of Social Welfare (later the NZ Child, Youth and Family Service) with Maori children and families.

In the World of Maori (*te Ao Maori*), any gathering of people – especially gatherings of important tribes and *whanau* or extended families affiliated with child and youth care across Canada – requires an elder or in some cases a *Kaitiaki*, a Keeper of *te Mauri* or Life Force. ***Te Taunga Te Rangatira*** is a *Kaitiaki* of this spiritual standing and serves the same function as the Talking Stick used by indigenous peoples of Canada in annual meetings, conventions or gatherings.

At the start of the National Canadian conference, and of provincial gatherings attended by the Canadian Council Conference Chairperson, the ***Te Taunga Te Rangatira*** is announced and the conference can begin. In Maori tradition, *korero o te Marae* (word weaving in the House) any contributions made from members of the audience or gathering would be identified in a circular fashion moving slowly from left to right.

At the end of each Conference, a formal handover of ***Te Taunga Te Rangatira*** to the new holder of the life force of the Canadian National Conference will be officiated, accepted and the annual conference is closed to be reconvened in [home of next conference venue] in [date to be specified]. Any Chairperson who continues, will remove ***Te Taunga te Rangatira***, signalling the next gathering location and time.