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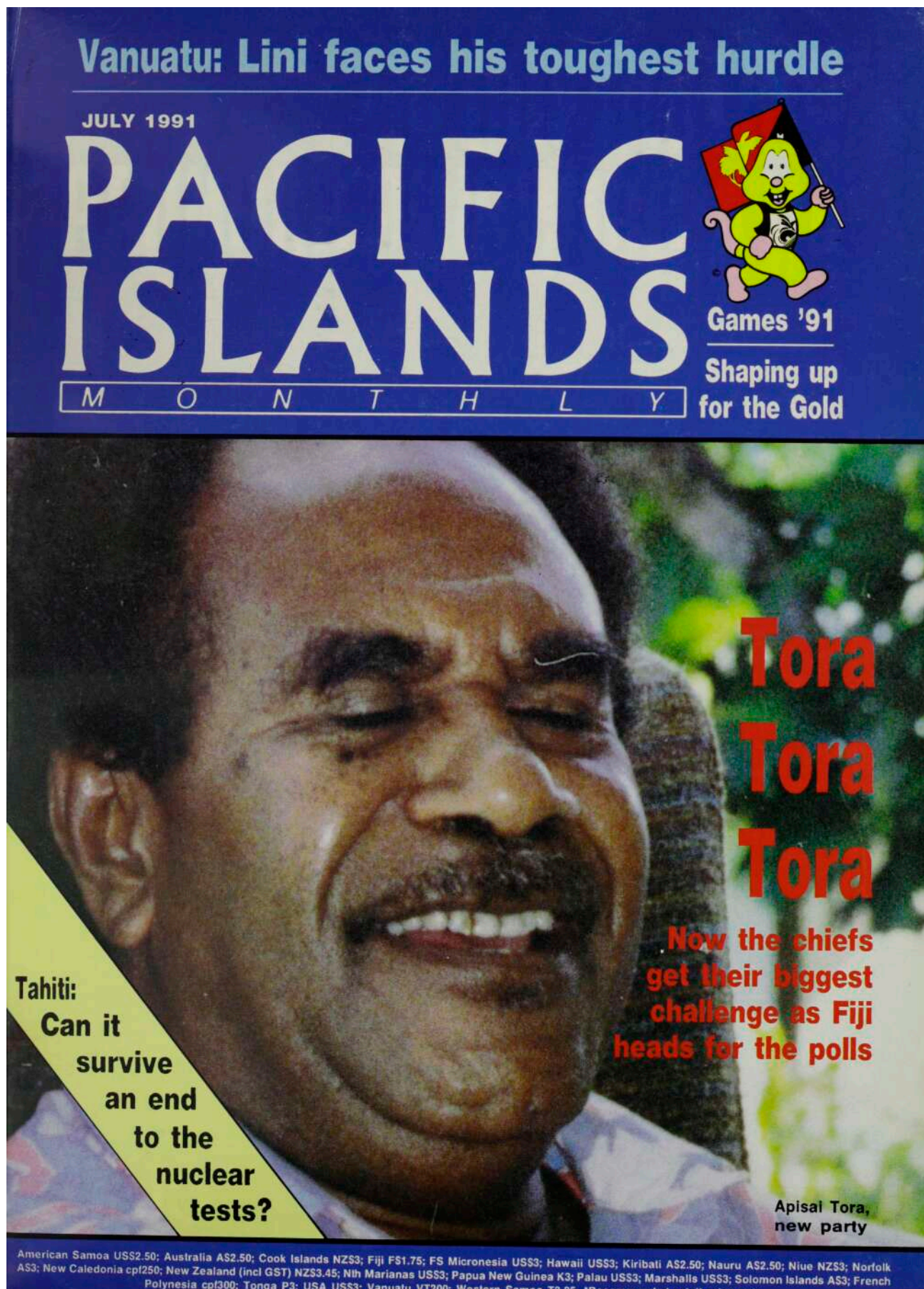
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PACIFIC ISLANDS

M O N T H L Y

Vol.61 No.7

THE NEWS MAGAZINE

JULY 1991



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LETTERS

Western values, western judgement

JACK Johnson's criticism of Nauru, 'Don't Cry for Nauru' (*PIM* May, 1991) is an example of Western value systems being used to judge a Polynesian culture. Mr Johnson fails to recognise that newly independent Nauru makes decisions and judgements based on their own moral, religious and cultural norms. His deported friends likely shared his lack of cultural sensitivity.

The judgement that his expat friends were unreasonably fired because of their attempts to run public services efficiently speaks to a lack of understanding of the proper role for expat administrators. Professional administrators should have studied the 1940 Friedrich-Finer debates to understand the public official/public administrator dichotomy. Perhaps a review of this academic material would be appropriate for expat administrators in Nauru.

Mr Johnson is not the only Westerner who uses foreign values and norms to condemn South Pacific countries. However, better trained administrators and greater cultural understanding are more desirable goals.

*Charles J. Sellens
Auki, Solomon Islands*

Nauru challenge

Your article in April's *PIM* on Nauru, 'Preparing to tackle the tough times ahead' by Robin Bromby, makes the statement that Nauru had to pay so much cash for "run down equipment

when they took over the operation on independence".

This statement I presume refers to the state of plant and equipment handed over by the British Phosphate Commissioners (BPD) to the Nauru Phosphate Corporation (NPC). If this is correct then I would strongly challenge this, for it can only be not only totally incorrect but total rubbish.

I say this since I was there at the time, so I know. The BPC was not the sort of company that specialised in "run down equipment". Also, I have since worked for several mining companies and I can safely say that the BPC and its staff was as professional an outfit as you would get anywhere, one that did not hand over clapped out plant and equipment.

I also worked for the NPC for one term after this, and it was noted at the time that the same care and attention to plant and equipment lavished by the BPC was not allowed by its successor. Nowhere near the same amounts of money was lavished on this, this not being allowed by the new political masters.

In fact I think that it would be true to say that very little money at all has been spent on this since Independence. There is no preventative maintenance allowed. It is crisis management in every sense, since nothing is repaired till it actually fails. This is not the fault of the designated managers for they are not really the managers.

The main differences between the two companies were as follows: the BPC was a mining company run by mining engineers. The NPC is a mining company run by politicians. Certainly managers are appointed, but their hands

are severely tied compared to the BPC days. In fact they are only there to take the blame if one of the politicians makes a major mistake. At least this was the way the company was run for most of the De Roburt years.

If the plant and equipment is now falling to bits then it is not because of its condition on handover but, I suggest, as a result of what has happened to it since as a direct result of political direction. Everyone who has worked on the island knows this, and no amount of blaming managers, nationalities, Australia or the Man in the Moon (in Nauru's case the Woman in the Moon) will alter this.

Former Phosphateer

'Outdated' notion of Guam lawyers

IN his March, 1991 article on Guam's attempt to legislate abortion, Mr North naively refers to Anita Arriola as being "one of Guam's few female lawyers". In truth, of Guam's 200 lawyers, over one-fifth are women. Of that number, some of the highest legal and judicial positions are held by female attorneys including, but not limited to, the Attorney General; the Deputy Attorney General, Child Support Enforcement Division; Chief Prosecutor; Counsel for the Governor; Clerk of District Court of Guam; two law clerks for the District Court of Guam, and Judge of the Superior Court of Guam. Indeed, approximately half of the attorneys for the Government of Guam are.

Thank you for correcting this misplaced (and outdated) assumption.

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A new force: Tora and his friends

Tora Tora Tora

A senior Cabinet Minister challenges the chiefs' right to contest next year's elections

By Jale Moala

A WALK with Apisai Tora on a Sunday morning is a six-and-half-hour trip of torture. He said it's two miles, when you finish it's about 10. From 8.30am to 3pm you walk. For the visitor, the only consolation is that the walk makes Tora talk. "This way it's easy, you relax." And so Tora, the man many fear as a political renegade, opened up his mind and spilled out his heart.

"Fiji," he said, "needs to change. We can't hold back the clock and return our people to the past when we are just a few steps away from the 21st century. The future is up ahead."

Tora is the Minister for Infrastructure and Public Utilities in the interim government. He has become unpopular in Cabinet after launching and becoming president of a new party, the All National Congress (ANC), to contest Fiji's first post-coup general election next year. The ANC, a multiracial organisation, is now the biggest threat to the

Fijian Political Party (FPP) which is being sponsored by the Great Council of Chiefs to win all 37 Fijian seats in the new parliament.

Tora walked out of his village and stopped on the dusty road to pick up a sugarcane flower. "Look around you — the cane is flowering. Do you know what that means? It means they are sweetest ... they are crying out to be cut. But what are we doing? We are spoiling everything simply because we are not talking to each other," meaning the sugarcane harvest boycott by the National Farmers' Union.

A few kilometres farther on he looked up at the sun: "It's not very good today, there's no heat. I like it when it's hot, when you can feel the heat on your face ... feel the fumes coming up from the ground and soak into you — you can eat it."

Then remembering his visitor he returned to the subject: "The leadership of the next parliament (in Fiji) is an interesting question. Who will be the leader? That's what everybody's wanting to know. And that's where my party comes in. We want to have a say."

Up and down a hill he walked to the foot of the legendary mountain called the Sleeping Giant: "Now we climb. This is the nice bit." And so Tora walked up the mountain from where his ancestors viewed the valley below nearly 3000 years ago on their crosscountry trip eastwards. "Now you hear so much about the Great Council of Chiefs and their Fijian Political Party. They are saying it will unite the Fijian people. But I say, rubbish!"

"The Great Council of Chiefs is a respectable and honoured institution. They should be above everything else, just making sure everything's in order. That's the way it was until 1987 when Sitiveni Rabuka staged his military coups. Rabuka summoned the Great Council of Chiefs and they endorsed his actions. At that very moment they lost the trust of the non-Fijians in this country. Now they want a political party."

"What do they want a political party for? What if the FPP loses one seat, or two or three or loses the province altogether, or two provinces which is possible? Do you know what that will

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mean? It will be a vote of no confidence in the Great Council of Chiefs. They will end up losing their credibility, they'll lose their authority and they'll lose the people they say they want to unite. Why are they trying to take us back to the past, anyway?

"Politics is a risky business, my friend, and if it's a risk for the chiefs, why take it?"

Guavas were ripening on the trees. Tora picked some. "We've lost so much on this mountain," he said. "We used to have lots of fruits here — mandarins, breadfruits, all kinds of fruits. Forests. Now someone's got a grazing lease and the goats are turning this mountain into a desert. If I had my way we'll stop all grazing leases on the mountains. We've got to look after our environment. In fact we should make the environment a major policy of the ANC government."

The ANC (with no link the African National Congress) was launched at Tora's village of Natalau on the outskirts of Nadi town on June 22 "to cater for all nationals in Fiji". Many of those at the launching belonged to the defunct Alliance Party which ruled post-independence Fiji under Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara.

Question: is the ANC a rejig of the Alliance? "No way," said Mick Beddoes who spearheaded the formation of the ANC and once a member of the Alliance inner circle. "We took great care when drawing up the constitution to weed out any likeness of the Alliance. This is a new party. This is a new direction in Fiji

The top 3

The indigenous Fijian population are divided into three confederacies, mainly the result of tribal wars and which exist today as domains or *matanitu* of powerful paramount chiefs.

Kubuna: Ruled by the Vunivalu. The position is vacant after the death of former Governor-General Ratu Sir George Cakobau. It covers roughly the northern parts of Viti Levu, and the Lomaiviti Group.

Burebasaga: Ruled by the Roko Tui Dreketi, Adi Lady Lala, the wife of Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. It covers roughly the southern parts of Viti Levu and the southern islands of Fiji.

Tovata: Ruled by the Roko Tui Cakau, President Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau. It covers Vanua Levu, Taveuni and the Lau Group. Ratu Sir Kamisese, the paramount chief of Lau, enjoys the same influence as Ratu Sir Penaia.

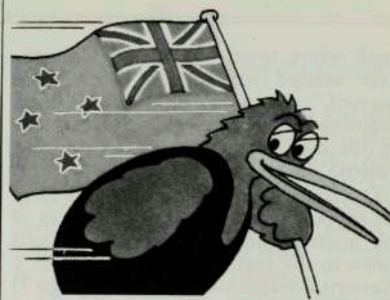
Viti Levu's Western Provinces want to break away from Kubuna and Burebasaga and form a fourth confederacy. □

politics." ANC officials must resign when they contest national or municipal elections. This, said Beddoes, makes those in parliament answerable to the party. In most other political parties, like it was in the Alliance, party officials retain their positions while in parliament.

Question: How strong will the ANC be in next year's polls? "Let me paint you a scenario," said Tora.

"Supposing the ANC wins three provincial seats in Ba — which is possible — and two seats in Ra — which is possible — one in Serua/Namosi, that's six seats. Suppose we also win the western Fijian urban seat, that's seven. We'll win the General Electors' seat in the west, that's eight. Sakeasi Butadroka (of the Fijian Nationalist Party) will win his seat in Rewa and you know that the Alliance government lost to Labour the Fijian seat in Suva in 1987. You know that the Labour will be strong in Suva. Now let's suppose the FPP loses at least 10 Fijian seats and they are left with 27. The Indians always block vote so the National Federation Party will win all 27 Indian seats. Interesting. What I'm saying is that we, the ANC, could end up holding the balance of power next year."

Walking was getting a bit tough and the road up the mountain seemed like never ending. The sun was climbing higher. It was hot. Tora was in good shape. Wearing blue jeans and a shirt with blue and white stripes, he continued to walk with ease, gathering dust on his Korean-made Reebok walking shoes. A



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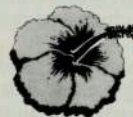
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small white towel was bound Chinese-style around his head. "Don't force yourself," he told his visitor, then chanting "cha cha cha cha ..." he trotted up the mountain to the next turn, and waited. There was no shade.

Question: Why is Tora so confident of his support in the western provinces of the main island of Viti Levu? It boils down to the region's attempt to form a Western Confederacy. (see box, page 7) The Western Confederacy issue is a uniting force in the western regions of Viti Levu where much of the country's resources are: gold, tourism, pine, the main international airport, and sugar.

"You really can't blame the people in this part for wanting a Western Confederacy," Tora said. "They know that their land provides the major portion of the wealth that runs this country and so rightly they desire to have a greater say in how that wealth is distributed. They were hurt when the Great Council of Chiefs did not even listen to them."

Does this mean that a vote for the ANC by people in the west is a vote for the Western Confederacy? "Right!"

From the top of the mountain, Tora looked at the green valley below with its flowering sugarcane and small farmhouses. The whole Nadi area was displayed before him in one spectacular panorama. Tora shook his head, his eyes closing into that familiar squint, and said: "You look at this and begin to wonder why we are fighting." There was no answer from the Sleeping Giant. Only silence.

Tora, 57, is a leader. He is the chief of Natalau, a nice little village of a little fewer than 300 people. The village is one of the better developed in the sugarcane belt and there his people treat him with much respect. Tora has a powerful influence in his Province of Ba.

His initiative in the launching of the ANC has attracted much anger in Cabinet where some of his colleagues regard him as a renegade. Yet few people in Cabinet would match his loyalty to the Prime Minister, Ratu Sir Kamisese. "I've known Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara longer than many Ministers in Government," he said. "My allegiance to him was sealed in the traditional way in the presence of my people, my chiefs and my spiritual ancestors."

On the 25th of last month Electoral Commission chairman Qoriniasi Bale said Fiji's first post-coup general election could be as early as February or March next year. This has given Tora's ANC a jump start over most parties chasing a place in the new parliament.

The National Federation Party/Fiji Labour Party Coalition is still without a leader following the resignation of Adi Kuini Bavadra. This is expected to be decided this month.

The Fijian Political Party will launch

Who's in for the race

Here are the political parties likely to be contesting next year's first post-coup general elections in Fiji:

Fiji Labour Party

It was founded by the Fiji Trades Union Congress in 1985 as a reaction to a government-imposed wage freeze. Labour is yet unsure whether it will contest next year's first post-coup general election. It totally rejects the new constitution promulgated on July 25 last year.

National Federation Party

It began as an association for cane farmers in the late 1950s. Like Labour it continues to be part of the Coalition, totally rejects the new constitution and is still unsure of its participation in next year's election.

Vasu i Taukei

A general electors' party based in western Viti Levu to cater only for those of Fijian descent. Now a move is being made to include South Pacific islanders who are Fiji citizens.

The party does not yet have a constitution.

General Voters Party

It was launched in Suva on December 5 last year and will win more support than Vasu i Taukei. The party is prepared "to enter into alliances with other political parties or organisations." It is chasing the five general electors' seats in parliament.

Fijian Political Party

This party belongs to the Great Council of Chiefs and was launched in June last year in Suva. It will win most of the 37 seats allocated to Fijians in the new parliament. It will launch its constitution in October.

Fiji Indian Liberal Party

Launched on March 23 as a "moderate progressive" Indian party. The launching at Rakiraki in western Viti Levu, was low key. The Liberals want long-term leases for cane farmers, 40 per cent of government jobs reserved for Indians and a F\$2 million

its constitution in October, barely enough time to preach its gospel. The Ministry of Fijian Affairs has been trying to influence people at village level to pay to be members. Last report: not very successful.

Urban Fijians opposed to FPP have formed a Council of Commons that is monitoring the build-up to the election to ensure that parties opposed to FPP do not field rival candidates against FPP in Fijian constituencies.

Next year's general election will be a test for the Great Council of Chiefs and its survival as an institution for the indigenous people. If they lose then they become the endangered species of Fiji's

scholarship scheme for poor Indian students. It is seeking a link with the Fijian Political Party.

NFP splinter group

This is the Muslim faction of the National Federation Party which broke away under the leadership of Siddiq Koya, a prominent lawyer, chairman of the Sugar Cane Growers' Council and former Leader of Opposition. This group is silent. But it will pounce if the Coalition decides to boycott the election.

The Western United Front

This was the creation of Ratu Osea Gavidi, a chief from the Nadroga Province in western Viti Levu. WUF was the result of a bitter dispute with the Alliance government over the proposed structure of, and participation in, the pine industry. Ratu Osea now has a close bond with the paramount chief of Nadroga and is expected to swing behind the All National Congress next year.

Fijian Nationalist Party

Its leader, Sakeasi Butadroka is strongly anti-Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara and once called for the expulsion of Indians from Fiji. He has strong support in eastern Viti Levu and has been trying to win support from the Methodist Church.

Fijian Conservative Party

A breakaway from the Fijian Nationalist Party. Its leader, Isireli Vuibau, was once Butadroka's closest lieutenants. Recently he and Butadroka have been discussing the election.

All National Congress

Launched in Nadi last month, this party means serious business and is expected to beat the odds next year. Its president is Utilities and Infrastructure Minister Apisai Tora. The party will gain strong Fijian support in western Viti Levu. □

new order.

Back home, Tora sipped coconut juice and listened to a Fijian couple asking for advice. Earlier in the morning he had attended to two Indians. One was a youth needing work and the other an elderly mother whose house had burnt down and whose son she said died after being arrested, and released, by the police.

"It's like this everyday he's in the village," said a villager. "Sometimes he sees three, four people here before breakfast ... all kinds of problems, all kinds of people." This shows that down in the west Tora is serious business. Those who regard him lightly in the east better take note. □

Growing, growing, growing . . .

By Beryl Cook

EVENTS in Fiji in the last month have highlighted the Interim Government's commitment to pursuing sustained economic growth at all costs, and raised the question of just how big a role traditional loyalties will have to play in shaping the face of Fiji's political and economy future.

The introduction of two economy decrees by the Interim Government on May 29 gave the message loud and clear that sustained economic growth would be sought come hell or high water.

And hell or high water may be an appropriate analogy.

Critics, especially trade unionists, see the introduction of the The Sugar Industry Special Protection Decree and the Protection of the National Economy Decree 1991 as foundations for an undemocratic hell — "draconian" measures imposed on residents by an authoritarian regime. Supporters of the interim government believe it is a "we mean business" message to refloat the economy on troubled international waters stirred up by the 1987 coups.

Whether hell or high water, there will be casualties along the way.

The unions have been the first hit. The sugar industry decree, an amendment to the Sugar Industry Act, was introduced in response to the sugar industry crisis — the dispute over a third cane payment had disrupted the start of the crushing season, and farmers had boycotted harvesting. The decree includes tough penalties, with anyone deemed to be interfering with the "orderly planting or growing or harvesting of sugar cane" facing a fine of F\$10,000 or a 14-year jail term or both.

The national economy decree extends similar protection to tourism, the Fiji Electricity Authority, civil aviation, copra, mining and oil (exploration and exploitation), the transport industry and telecommunication with the same penalties, and a F\$5000 fine or seven years jail for inciting or encouraging someone else to offend. Directors, officers and officials of body corporates, trade unions, industrial associations or any other organisation can be held liable.

The government introduced the decrees after the harvest boycott and a 14-week strike by Vatukoula gold miners. Introducing them was a hard-nosed economic decision, designed to provide stability for employees and business operators in Fiji, and for international investors who can provide the impetus for long-term growth.

The interim government's general policy is to move Fiji from an inward-oriented economy protected by import licences and high tariff barriers to an outward-oriented economy, looking for expanding and profitable markets over-



Vunibobo: calling for changes

seas. The idea is to make Fiji more competitive with better quality products and business operations, and to lift its international status — bringing it closer to promising trade and investment markets in Europe and Asia.

According to critics, such a plan will put greater distance between the "haves" and the "have nots", making long-term casualties out of the poor. With domestic rents rising, the newly established Public Rental Board selling off up to 71 per cent of low-cost rental properties formerly held by the Housing Authority, and a Value Added Tax (VAT) expected to

bump up prices, critics say the prospects for Fiji's poor are dim.

But the message delivered by Minister for Finance and Economic Planning Josevata Kamikamica at the Fiji Institute of Accountants Congress at The Warwick on May 31 to June 2 basically maintained that moves such as the VAT would be in the long-term, broader interests of all people in Fiji.

He told delegates taxation links the market economy of private trading and government in its aim of providing services to the people of Fiji. The market economy of private trading was "the engineroom of the whole system. Unless it works efficiently, we do not generate adequate employment and incomes. Nor do we generate the surpluses that can be taxed for communal purposes."

He said VAT should be seen as part of the larger tax system, alongside a progressive income tax which would make the overall picture more equitable.

The potential effects of VAT on the poor and unemployed seems to have passed over the heads of many in Fiji, particularly the poor and rural dwellers who, proceeding with the everyday business of growing dalo for subsistence, probably have always assumed they have little to lose in the complex world of high finance. Some groups and individuals concerned with social welfare have decried the effects the VAT will have on the poor.

The Government has not yet addressed the issue, maintaining it is staying "open to public suggestions" until July 31. But there are indications that at least some government members place the plight of the poor lower on the list of priorities than the overall objective of growth.

Trade and Commerce Minister Berenado Vunibobo stressed efforts to break the overreliance on sugar and tourism. Sugar had been disrupted by industrial unrest and he suggested sugar refining and processing could be desirable developments. Tourism had proved susceptible to the global economic climate and the fashions of tourist destinations.

Finance Minister Kamikamica said growth would be achieved in manufacturing and associated service industries such as financial and professional services, and through measures such as the decrees which would protect the "stability" of economic growth.

He also stressed labour market reform. Wage guidelines will cease to operate with the lifting of the Wages Order at the end of this month, the legal requirement covering deduction of union contributions from wages should be removed, trade unions should not enjoy privileged protection when they disobey the law, and union leaders should not be able to force rank and file members to support

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their actions, he said. The Government is looking at amending legislation to provide independent supervision of trade union ballots, setting time limits on validity of strike ballots, requiring use of postal ballots in elections of union leaders, and establishing a strong mediation capacity in arbitration and tribunal machinery through staff who will assist negotiators of wage agreements.

The Government is hoping to boost investment, both public and private. A sustained upturn in private investment, taking it from 6 per cent of GDP to about 12 per cent, could help the government achieve its aim of 4 to 5 per cent growth in GDP, Kamikamica said.

This aim may have been thwarted to some extent by a shock call for the government's resignation, made by the Fiji Military Forces Commander, Major-General Sitiveni Rabuka, on June 6. The Major-General, who led the two military coups in 1987, said the government was "out of touch" with the people, had failed to solve the sugar crisis, and disenchanted people Fiji with the proposed VAT, the Fijian Political Party being sponsored by the Great Council of Chiefs, and the two decrees. The unions

Who's really poor?

PART of the problem of achieving economic growth is motivating the people to boost the size and standard of business, investment and trade, according to Trade and Commerce Minister, Berenado Vunibobo. Discussing his government's policies to achieve sustained economic growth, he said difficult decisions always had to be made, while encouraging locals to improve their products and services, become internationally competitive, and make the economy stronger.

He believes much of the opposition to Fiji's proposed Value Added Tax (VAT) is based on different perceptions of poverty. Different definitions of poverty exist in different corners of the globe, along with a tendency for those who have not travelled to take what they have for granted. "One of the most difficult things would be to define what is poverty in Fiji, how do you define it, what are the criteria?" Vunibobo asked. □

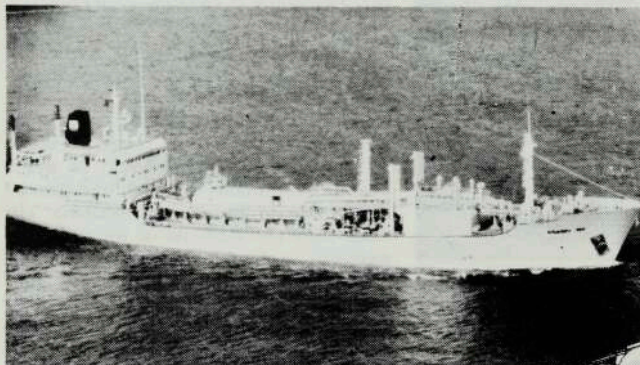
followed with vociferous support in the media, but the Major-General apologised publicly and traditionally and reconfirmed his support of the President, the Prime Minister and the Interim Government on June 12.

According to *The Fiji Times* (June 13), Rabuka's apology was believed to have followed extreme traditional pressure from his chiefs of Cakaudrove and from within his officers' ranks, "indicating just how strongly and significantly traditional ties and allegations dominate Fijian politics".

If the Major-General really has decided to put his personal beliefs and/or his political ambitions second to his obligations to the traditional system of chiefly authority, the lesson is unlikely to be lost on the people themselves.

The extent to which the Government can rely on this traditional allegiance to support its vision of the future will become clear when ethnic Fijians, at least, cast votes in the long-awaited election. Success at the polls may also depend, however, on the public's willingness to support a longer-term economic vision which lies only at the end of a tough road to reform. □

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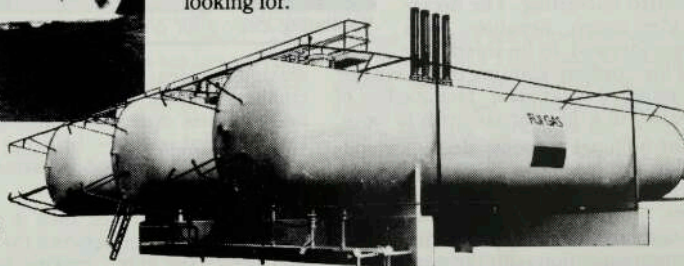


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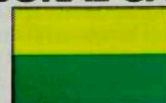
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10 PACIFIC ISLANDS MONTHLY — JULY, 1991

Multiple headaches from drug imports

A FRIEND of mine has theorised that if a drug is exported from its home turf to an entirely new community, and provided it was not chemically synthesised (Like LSD or heroin), then it will certainly be responsible for massive headaches in terms of social, psychological and legal problems.

A society, therefore, must be allowed to develop cultural reins with which to bridle the monsters in the substance. The times span required, however, is a matter of centuries, not years!

This is exemplified in the use of hashish and marijuana in the USA where whole segments of the whole population suffer from both physical and psychological ills through their use whereas in Morocco, Lebanon and other Middle Eastern communities they are daily fare, especially for adult males.

Closer to home the kava (or yaqona) has wrecked such havoc among the aborigines of the Northern Territory, and to a lesser extent in Western Australia, that state governments moved in to look at what threatened to become a national problem. Missionaries — a Tongan and a Fijian — are blamed as being responsible for introducing kava to the Northern Territory in the early eighties in a bid to reduce domestic violence in aboriginal settlements.

Kava is a depressant. It created additional difficulties. The aborigines mixed thick kava with spirits, wines and other ingredients so much that partakers in the resultant beverage became somnolent for up to three times the length of a normal rest.

The women folk were delighted because the level of wife-beating dropped dramatically and wives were usually ready with some of the punch to administer to their husbands when they but bestirred from a long sleep. The men soon showed symptoms of illnesses that were totally unknown to them heretofore.

In a wider context, however, the idea is also illustrated by the impact alcohol has had on the Pacific Islands, the correlation of alcohol to certain categories of crime is well established and truly alarming.

It is absolutely so in Papua New Guinea where currently about 75 per cent of serious crime and nearly 50 per cent of overall crime and offences are alcohol-related. Similar proportions hold for the rest of the Pacific though absolute rates are generally lower. At any event, the rate of alcohol-related road accidents has an average of approximately 90 per cent for the islands.

The psychological problem of the islanders was not helped by the original criminalisation of drugs especially alcohol in all the island groups. When it was recognised that the situation may be partly relieved by easing out the liquor licensing regulations, alcohol became just another commodity and people spoke of it as selling like lemani (lemonade), that is, without a liquor permit.

But the wheel has come full circle in some island countries such as Fiji and Samoa. Recognition of rising crimes and offences rates has caused the authorities to put the liquor strictures back into place. Tonga is now in the second phase

THE ISLAND



FUTA
HELU

— free access — but may revert back to square one.

In Papua New Guinea and the Solomons to some extent, the public bars bulge with boozing humanity six nights of the week, not to mention the thousands of parties in private homes and apartment houses in all the cities and major towns every weekend.

Tonga projects the same image at weekends and public holidays. On Sundays priests across the Pacific condemn alcoholism from the pulpit, but the governments, like Napoleon, regard it as lucrative sin.

With the exception of only a few, most Pacific islands have breweries of their own. Here they have been assisted by European companies.

Samoa has her Vailima, a German recipe that is also used for the PNG Swan and SP Lager. Tonga has Royal, a malted beer with a Swedish formula.

The Taska of Vanuatu is based on the same prescription though it comes in three different proofs. And of course Fiji Beer is an old veteran and has the distinction of being the favourite of many Pacific Islanders.

Before the breweries went into operation between 2.5 and 7 per cent of island import bills was accounted for by foreign beer, mainly New Zealand steinlager and Australia Foster.

Since the opening of the local breweries, however, beer import has been cut quite appreciably, in some cases as much as 70 per cent. At the same time consumption of the home brew caused national intakes to soar to at least three times former levels.

The imports of spirits and other liquors — and foreign beer despite the initial fall — have maintained substantial increases, doubling every three years for most islands.

Talking of drug-use as having a cultural dimension points to another thought. Most Pacific peoples are by nature excitable and show-offs, though not in a derogatory sense. Their culture makes them open, friendly, and perfectly available.

Therefore they stand in no great need of alcohol or drugs that heighten emotions or tend to excite. One has only to observe the way they go on in public celebrations and festivals to realise that they are — as they themselves say — "drugged by heaven" i.e. highstrung by nature.

In other words, kava and beetlenut suit them perfectly.

Incidentally, Latin peoples all over the world would be well-advised to take kava from time to time, though peoples who are already depressed by nature — the English, for example — should always keep away from the stuff.

Still, from a historical perspective, the impact of alcohol in the islands, considerable as it has been, has not become the major concern of national governments. We haven't seen anything yet really, except reversing Jesus' first miracle — we convert in the opposition direction.

It will be with the more potent drugs that the islanders would be required to show their mettle. Yet I suspect that if that happens they would again reverse Marx's idea and make opium the religion of the people. □



SPREP

SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINANTS OFFICER

Applications are invited from nationals of SPREP member countries for the position of a Environmental Contaminants Officer in the SPREP Secretariat.

SPREP is an intergovernmental organisation composed of twenty-seven countries as members. The primary objectives of the organisation include co-ordinating environmental activities in the region, providing, advising member countries on environmental issues and acting as clearing house for environmental information.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Applicants should have an appropriate university degree with postgraduate training in environment waste management and marine pollution or related fields or lower academic qualification with sufficient depth, breadth, managerial and practical experience on a broad range of environmental issues.

LANGUAGE

Fluency in oral and written ENGLISH is essential. Knowledge of French language is desirable.

POSITION OBJECTIVES

To assist member governments to prevent, reduce and control pollution and the impacts of pollution on their environment. (thus fulfilling, for those member governments who are party to the 'SPREP' Convention, obligations under the 'SPREP' Convention and its Protocols).

To develop and co-ordinate a regional programme of pollution, prevention, monitoring and control and waste management.

JOB DESCRIPTION

1. Co-ordinate obligations and institutional arrangements for member countries regarding dumping and banned and restricted substances under SPREP Convention.
2. Assist Parties to the SPREP Convention to fulfill pollution control and waste management obligations of the Convention and its Protocols.
3. Assist governments in formulating legislation and institutional arrangements pertaining to pollution control and waste management and identify infrastructure and technical back-up necessary to implement such legislation.
4. Assist governments to develop and implement waste prevention, reduction and recycling programmes and waste management plans.
5. Develop and implement a training programme in pollution monitoring and control, waste management and in the safe use of environment contaminants.
6. Provide query/response service for SPREP member governments on pollution and waste issues.
7. Co-ordinate and assist in planning and seeking funds to fulfill the programme objectives.
8. Develop, co-ordinate and implement the marine pollution monitoring and control (SPREP-POL) and land and freshwater pollution control components of SPREP Work Programme.
9. Liaise with universities and institutions in the region and other regional organisations on research and studies relating to the use of environment contaminants, pollution monitoring and control and waste management.
10. Implement the recommendations of the SPREP Pesticide Report, in co-operation with the SPC Plant Protection Officer, to maintain a South Pacific pesticide data base and to provide information as required on human health and environmental aspects of pesticide use.
11. Liaise with the International Maritime Organisation on the implications and applications of the London Dumping Convention and other conventions in the South Pacific region.
12. Liaise with the Pacific Basin Hazardous Waste Research Consortium and maintain links with the International Register for Potentially Toxic Chemicals (IRPTC) and keep SPREP members informed of its listings.
13. Co-ordinate with WHO and national public health departments in the application of the WHO Strategy on Control of Environmental Health Hazards as they relate to environmental contaminants and waste management.
14. Liaise with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's waste management and pollution control programmes in the U.S. Pacific Territories, for application to other island countries, as appropriate.
15. Liaise with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on monitoring the use, disposal and clean-up of radioactive materials in the South Pacific region.
16. Perform other duties as required by Director of SPREP.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT

Tenure

Appointment of the above position will be for three years in the first instance.

Remuneration

An attractive remuneration package will be paid to the appointee, depending on qualification and experience. Starting salary will be within the range CFP 341 280 to CFP 436, 320.

An appointee who is recruited from outside New Caledonia will also be eligible for the following:

- passage and freight allowance;
- establishment grant, housing allowance, child allowance and education assistance;
- exemption from income tax on his or her remuneration;
- home leave passage after every eighteen months of service.

Further information about the position can be obtained from SPREP - Telephone: (687) 26 20 00. Fax (687) 26 38 18.

Applications

All applications should be fully documented and include a copy of birth certificate, details of work experience and qualifications and the names of at least three referees. Applications marked SPREP Environmental Contaminants Officer should reach the Director, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), B.P. D5, NOUMEA CEDEX, New Caledonia by 16 August 1991.

Bitter battle over closing US bases

DESPITE virtually unanimous agreement that the US defence budget should shrink to reflect the end of the Cold War, members of congress are locked in a bitter parochial battle to starve off cuts in their own back yard.

The aim is to reduce American forces by 25 per cent by 1995. But when Defence Secretary Dick Cheney announced that the Pentagon plans to close 31 major military facilities as part of the cost-cutting drive, congressmen and women swarmed over media microphones to passionately defend bases on their turf — bases which often mean economic survival to adjoining townships.

But amid the clamour was a lone voice from the Pacific island of Guam begging the US administration to close a local base on the grounds that it would help promote economic survival.

While Cheney rebuffed emotional appeals from other congressmen to keep their bases open and observed tartly that no bases would be closed if they were up to Congress, Guam's representative Ben Blaz fumed.

"I think to myself 'Somebody's not reading my mail,'" Blaz said.

Blaz, a Republican and a former Marine Corps general, and Guam's Governor, Joseph Ada, want the Defence Department to evacuate the island's 2200-acre Argana naval Air Station so it can be used to expand a commercial airport and diversify the local economy.

"We're not seeking to expand the airport simply to accommodate more tourists," Blaz said.

"We have here a golden opportunity to make a pitch for economic development. We would like to be able to erect maintenance facilities, food service facilities and a wide range of support services to allow Guam to become an airhub for the Western Pacific. Right now the territory's economy is heavily reliant on tourism. By expanding our account base, we will be able to assure healthy growth well into the next century."

The Navy considers the base, located in the middle of the island, too valuable to military operations in the Pacific.

"The Navy mission remains unchanged in Guam," a Navy spokesman said.

Blaz says Argana's operation could be relocated to the larger Andersen Air Force Base on the northern tip of the island. But that would cost up to \$230 million, according to a government report. And it could take 100 years before the Pentagon could recoup the loss from savings by merging the two facilities.

It is a stark contrast to the US administration's plan to begin saving money from other bases closures by 1997. The Pentagon estimates the cost of closing recommended bases at \$5.7 billion over five years. But it would also save \$6.5 billion in operating costs over the same period.

Guam is a self-governing US

Washington



MARGOT O'NEILL

territory but about one-third of its land is controlled by the US administration. More than 22,000 military personnel and their dependants live on Guam, accounting for nearly one-fourth of the island's population.

Blaz, who is a non-voting delegate to Congress, says the island's repeated requests to reclaim Argana are also rooted in history and emotion.

As a 15-year-old boy, Blaz was forced to help clear the fields to build the airport for Japanese forces that occupied the island in World War II.

Argana "has tremendous emotional significance for us. We built it with our bare hands. It truly belongs to the people of Guam because we paid for it with our sweat and blood," he said.

Recently Argana was removed from a hit-list of bases slated for closure by an independent commission which is due to report to President George Bush in July.

Blaz says he remains optimistic. The initial inclusion of Guam on the hit-list at least gave Argana national attention. Until then, Blaz concedes it had been tough to even get a hearing from the Navy and the US administration.

"The problem with a little fry like me is there are not too many people listening."

The chairman of the Defence base Realignment and Closure Commission, James Courter, echoed similar sentiments.

"The Navy has basically stiff-armed the island. (Argana) was put on the list to create a signal that we want them (the Navy) to sit down and negotiate," Courter said.

Now Blaz says he has had discussions at the highest levels of the Navy and Air Force and there have been no objections to the idea of consolidating Argana with Andersen.

Guam is even willing to consider compensating the Navy for the cost of relocating the base.

"There is a desire on both sides to see it happen. It's the logical thing to do. The question under consideration is how soon and who will foot the bill." □



Lone voice: Guam says closing a US base is in the interests of its economic survival

Picture: US Department of Defense

THE REGION

True or False The Moruroa Test

France enters its 25th year of nuclear testing in the Pacific. What are the real worries?

By Al Prince

JULY 2 marks France's 25th year of nuclear testing in French Polynesia, a date that has become one of the most controversial and unpopular yearly anniversaries in the South Pacific since the end of World War II.

France's quarter century membership in the world's nuclear arms club has earned it an ever-lasting, controversial and not always honorable chapter in the history of the South Pacific. At the same time, that history has produced its share of contradictions among the countries in the region opposing the French tests the louder.

The French nuclear testing since 1966 in a remote area of the sprawling French Overseas Territory of French Polynesia has also played a key role in Tahiti's history, affecting just about every aspect of life in these islands, converting what was previously a sleepy South Pacific paradise with a third world economy into a French boutique of the modern way of life.

The testing so completely turned the local economy upside down, according to one recent French study, that the "perverse" results prohibit Tahiti's Territorial Government from surviving economically from one year to the next without massive injections of French State subsidies.

Meanwhile, France's nuclear testing programme has produced an almost

love-hate relationship with an overwhelming majority of former Anglo-Saxon colonies in the South Pacific. On the one hand, bourgeois consumers in the region continue to love buying just about anything that is French — from wines and cheese to perfumes and jewellery, not forgetting expensive vacations to Tahiti and Her Islands.

However, the historic year of 1985 produced two dramatic events that darkly coloured Paris' diplomatic relations with South Pacific countries, both individually and collectively. The first event was the July 10 sinking in Auckland Harbour of the Greenpeace vessel *Rainbow Warrior* after mines planted by French government secret agents had exploded, killing a crew member.

Sixteen days later, eight countries at the 16th South Pacific Forum meeting in the Cook Islands signed the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, more commonly known as the Rarotonga Treaty.

But with the treaty's sixth anniversary coming up on July 26, the only nuclear powers that have signed the treaty's protocols, banning nuclear testing in the region, have been the Soviet Union and China. France, The United States and the United Kingdom have yet to sign the protocols, each for very different reasons.

One of the major contradictions that has occurred during the past 25 years of French nuclear testing has been the up and down relationship between France

and the South Pacific's two biggest countries, Australia and New Zealand, the region's most vocal and diplomatically active opponents of the tests.

While the Canberra and Wellington governments have had long periods of strained relations with Paris because of the nuclear testing, the passing of time has gradually led up to today's good diplomatic relations despite the continued French testing.

The two most obvious explanations are basic economics and France's stubborn determination to continue its testing regardless of any opposition. New Zealand's economic reality is that it needs to sell its lamb and dairy products and Australia has lots of uranium to sell to France for its many nuclear power plants.

Other South Pacific governments, like that of Fiji and the self-governing New Zealand dependency of the Cook Islands, have become very willingly enticed in recent years by France's generous offers of development aid, technological expertise and low-interest loans.

But France's previous negative image in the South Pacific was not due entirely to its nuclear testing in French Polynesia. Other key factors were its handling of an independence movement in New Caledonia, also a French Overseas Territory, and its self-admitted lack of communications with the predominantly Anglo-Saxon government of the region. Still another factor has been a much weaker independence movement in Tahiti, which, by constantly opposing the nuclear tests, has picked up anti-French support in the region.

And it was not until late 1986 that France finally began doing something to improve its South Pacific image after 20 years of testing and support at home for those tests by four governments (three conservative and one liberal). French Socialist President Francois Mitterrand has faithfully respected conservative

Safe? no way, says Greenpeace

THE ecological organisation Greenpeace said radioactive elements were leaking from French underground nuclear testing sites in French Polynesia, and called for an independent probe. It called on the European Commission, executive arm of the European Community (EC), to back its demand for an independent study of the effects of nuclear testing at Moruroa and Fangataufa atolls.

Greenpeace official Jean-Luc Thierry

said: "The tests and the concealment must stop. The environmental consequences of damage to the coral atolls (of Moruroa and Fangatau) and marine environment from France's nuclear tests are far too serious to be hidden behind military secrecy."

Greenpeace said plankton samples it collected in December in the ocean near the testing area contained cesium-134, which results from nuclear testing. It said this indicated radioactive contamination

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THE REGION

President Charles de Gaulle's famous *force de frappe* (independent nuclear arsenal) policy into his second seven-year term since 1981. But it was not until France's unique "cohabitation" experiment in 1986 that it began softening its stone-walling approach to the nuclear tests.

The first sign of that change occurred at 26th South Pacific Commission conference in Tahiti in November 1986. President Mitterrand's conservative Prime Minister, Jacques Chirac, sent emissaries to that conference with the obvious goal of enticing the commission, with its 40-year history of doing things the Pacific Way, into considering a new French Way in the region.

There has never been a unanimous, or even a consensus, opinion coming out of the collective interpretation of reports compiled by various experts on the effect of nuclear testing in French Polynesia. Some reports tend to tilt in favour of the French claim that 25 years of nuclear testing have not caused any health or environmental damage for the 200,000 people now living in French Polynesia.

But individual interpretations of those reports, particularly by the international environmental organisation Greenpeace, strongly refute the French claim. Greenpeace, has earned a reputation over the years for consistently criticising the French tests.

The obvious question today, for critics and supporters alike, is how much longer will nuclear tests continue? The best answer appears to be that the day when tests are no longer

held may be getting closer each year.

But that raises perhaps an even more alarming question for Tahiti. What happens to its false, but rich, economy when France eventually decides to halt its nuclear testing programme in French Polynesia?

That question directly and indirectly concerned the nine experts sent to Tahiti last year by the Association of French Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. Called the Feuilhade Mission after team leader Dr Frank Feuilhade, a lecturer on cancer, its report described the 1964 construction of the French nuclear testing facilities at Moruroa as having been an event that "turned the economy of French Polynesia upside

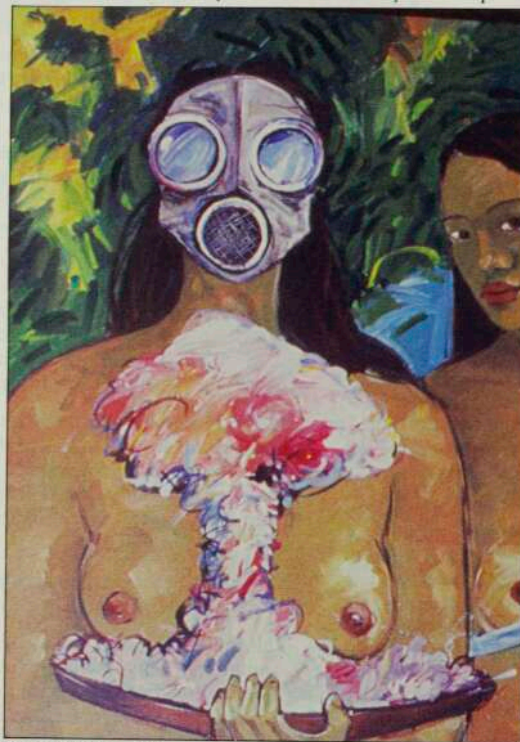
down. French Polynesia is now directly concerned by the (world) politics of nuclear dissuasion. Totally concerned from now on by the nuclear armament-disarmament process, the Polynesian economy and community lives as if in suspension between a dream and a nightmare in which the development experienced has no irreversible characteristic and remains dependent on the inequalities and subsidies of the Centre d'Experimentation Nucleaire (CEP) and more generally in the aid of the French State."

The Feuilhade report estimates that the direct cost of a single underground nuclear test at Moruroa is about 10 million French francs, or about US\$1.8 million. French Polynesia has a gross national product of US\$7830 per inhabitant, according to the report. That puts the territory slightly ahead of New Zealand (US\$7290), way ahead of Fiji (US\$1820) and comfortably ahead of French Overseas Departments and Territories, with the exception of New Caledonia (US\$8300).

But distribution of the level of development is irregular, high revenues co-existing with unemployment rate of 40 per cent among young people. The national (territorial) budget is completely unbalanced ... Traditional economic activities, such as agriculture and fishing, are in recession and development is mainly observed in the tertiary sector.

But what the Feuilhade Mission report appears to be just as equally concerned about is what will happen to Tahiti when France eventually decides to halt its nuclear testing programme. "What will this economy, which is essentially 'perverse,' become when the test centre is closed down, as demanded by international public opinion, the Polynesians and our association?"

"Can the population tolerate the disintegration of its sanitary and economic systems? This shows the urgent necessity for ensuring the development of an alternative economic system in Polynesia."



The Tahitian dilemma: nuclear test or go broke

from the testing site. But the organisation said it had been unable to obtain final proof because the French military had barred access to its military exclusion zone around Moruroa, and had arrested five Greenpeace researchers venturing inside it.

"Greenpeace is concerned that radioactivity may already be leaking from the French underground nuclear tests at Moruroa and Fangataufa, despite official French assurances that no leakage will occur for hundreds of years," it said.

It said the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), the EC's nu-

clear energy arm, had the legal right to demand French cooperation in an independent investigation, and should enforce this right. Greenpeace also released a copy of a letter to French Prime Minister Edith Cresson, signed by 15 scientists, calling for an independent probe of what it called a "potentially grave environmental threat".

The scientists, from France, Britain, Germany, the United States, Japan, New Zealand and Fiji, rejected a recent French offer of an investigation by scientists at nuclear institutions because they said it lacked independence. □

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Eye on the nuclear umbrella club

I MAKE no apology for returning to the question of French nuclear testing in the South Pacific for the second consecutive month. It is, after all, one of the key issues that unites all the Pacific nations; one in which New Zealand has, through the *Rainbow Warrior* bombing, a direct and sad national involvement and after 25 years it shows no sign of going away.

But I do so with some puzzlement. What is Jim Bolger's National government up to?

Three weeks after the now-ousted French Prime Minister Michel Rocard had visited these shores to make personal atonement for the *Rainbow Warrior* affair, the New Zealand government made a curious change in policy. It decided to abandon the former practice of making a formal protest after each and every test and instead issued a statement of condemnation only once a year — at the start of each test series.

Bolger, who had said all the right things to Rocard during his visit, reaffirming New Zealand's opposition to the tests, played down the move.

He said it was not a *policy* change but a *procedural* one; the government had not retreated "one iota" from its position and the move had nothing to do with Rocard's visit.

Well, in the absence of any explanation as to exactly why he was making this change — be it one of procedure or policy — one has to treat all that with some incredulity. It cannot be, for instance, that drafting the statements imposed too huge a workload on the bureaucracy or the cost of the paper involved added an unbearable burden to the country's budgetary problems.

It has to be admitted that New Zealand's constant stream of protests over the years had not persuaded the French to stop testing in the Pacific. But it should be recalled that it was united Pacific opposition, led by New Zealand sending a protest frigate to the test zone in 1973 and the joint New Zealand-Australian case at the International Court of Justice the following year, that had forced the French underground.

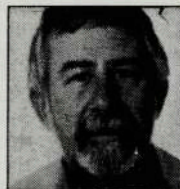
And New Zealand's unilateral action — unilateral in that Australia is continuing to make its protest after every test — can only weaken the united front of opposition to French nuclear testing in the Pacific that the two major regional powers have spearheaded for a quarter of a century.

If Bolger maintained the move did not indicate any dilution of New Zealand's opposition to the French, who being fond of diplomatic niceties had always been sensitive to the constant stream of criticism, certainly did not see it that way.

A Paris Foreign Ministry official was quick to hail the decision as showing that New Zealand now realised the tests were not as dangerous as it had previously thought. He linked the change to Rocard's visit, saying relations between the two countries had now improved and hinted that French scientists had satisfied the New Zealand government as to the harmlessness of the tests.

The government's Public Advisory Committee on

Wellington



DAVID
BARBER

Disarmament and Arms Control immediately urged Bolger to ensure that a condemnation of the French tests be included in the communique of this month's South Pacific Forum meeting in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia. There was no specific reference to the tests in last year's communique at Vanuatu, an omission which French diplomats were quick to seize on as having a significance that did not exist.

I understand that despite the recent policy change, New Zealand will readily support a reference to French testing this year if heads of state want it, though Bolger is unlikely to take the lead in pushing for its inclusion.

The only explanation for the move to what will now be seen as token opposition to the tests is the government's desire to improve the dialogue with France now that the *Rainbow Warrior* affair has been laid to rest.

What concerns many, given the National government's simultaneous wish to improve relations with the United States and Britain, is the nagging thought that it could also indicate a softening of New Zealand's anti-nuclear stance.

Bolger and his Foreign Minister Don McKinnon, who has personal convictions driving him to seek a restoration of defence and security ties with the US, would strenuously deny this. Both have insisted they have no plans to repeal or significantly amend the former Labour government's anti-nuclear legislation in "the foreseeable future".

But McKinnon makes no secret of his intention to try to turn public opinion around to accept the need for restoration of defence links with the Americans. He has advocated a full return to traditionally close defence and security ties with the US and Britain which were disrupted by the anti-nuclear policy.

Barring an unforeseen change in American policy, this will inevitably mean nuclear ship visits.

This much was made clear when McKinnon visited Washington in May. While he went with the aim of improving the political relationship, senior administration officials made it clear that all the warm feelings in the world would not restore the defence and security relationship while the anti-nuclear legislation remains on the statute books.

Most New Zealanders would probably be happy to renew those traditional defence ties — as long as the dedication to keep the South Pacific nuclear-free remains undiluted. And the government has not produced any evidence that New Zealand is disadvantaged in any way by its exclusion from the nuclear umbrella club.

Closer ties with France and the US are all part of what Bolger and McKinnon call their government's drive for a "new internationalism". One can only hope that this vision — which includes restoring traditional links with Europe and South Africa and building new relations with Asia — is not to be pursued at the expense of the early commitment McKinnon made on taking office to consolidating New Zealand's rightful place at home in the South Pacific. □



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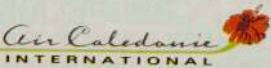
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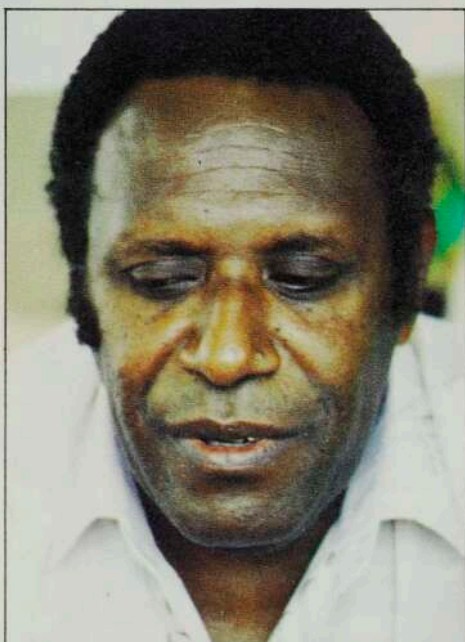

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VANUATU



Kalpokus: rebel who called the PM's bluff



Lini: Issued troublesome ministers and political secretaries an ultimatum

Shaping up for a showdown

After 11 years of power, Vanuatu's ruling Vanua'aku Pili is deeply divided over the nation's leadership. Prime Minister Walter Lini may now face his toughest hurdle.

David Robie reports.

EVER since the April congress of Vanuatu's ruling Vanua'aku on Aneityum Island, Prime Minister Father Walter Hadye Lini has been smarting. Even though a vote on the leadership issue had been deferred by a reasonably decisive margin, the extent of opposition and even open lobbying against him rankled with the Prime Minister.

When he left in early May to undergo tests after a mild heart attack the alleged disloyalty of several ministers still troubled him. Consequently, four senior ministers and seven political secretaries were sent letters setting out an ultimatum — pledge loyalty or face the sack. Last month Lini returned to Port Vila and appeared to have a showdown on his hands. The "rebels" — Education Minister Donald Kalpokas, Public Works Minister Edward Nipake Nalapei, Home Affairs Iolu Abbil and Health Minister Jimmy Melo Chilla — are understood to have responded with a joint letter calling the Prime Minister's bluff and suggesting he resigns.

The next move is up to the Prime

Minister, but key party officials are lying to avoid a serious rift that could damage Vanua'aku Pati prospects going into the general election due in November. Although Lini had earlier indicated he was ready to stand aside if the party wished, he also believes his leadership is needed to win the election — even though the three major opposition groups are fragmented and far from a credible challenge.

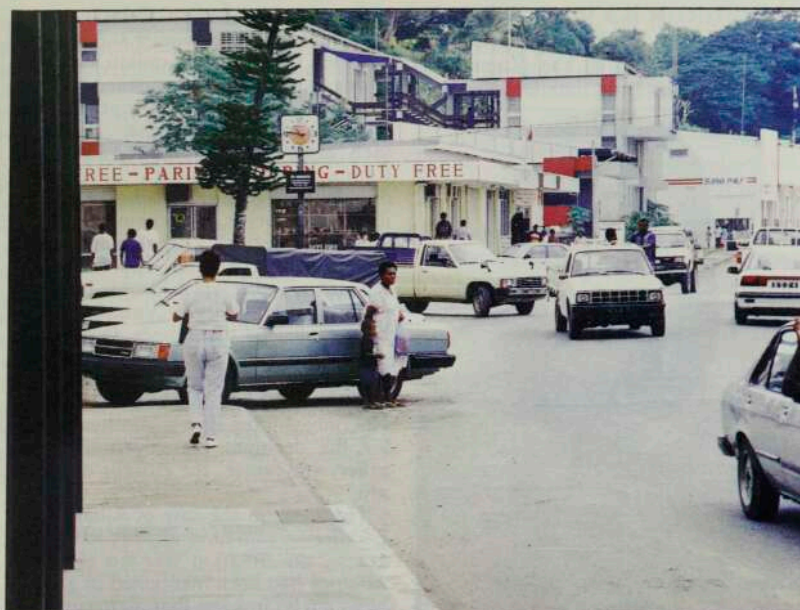
Vanua'aku Pati sources suggest that a mini-congress proposed for this month may not completely resolve the leadership crisis. There are complicating issues such as the cost and venue — the last congress, 760 participants representing 116 sub-committees, was the biggest and most expensive ever held. It is possible that the present executive might continue until the election with a new leadership taking over then. But much depends on Lini's actions — whether he forces a showdown.

Certainly there is a mounting mood for change within the VP with increasing concern over what is seen as the increasingly autocratic, arbitrary and

isolated leadership style of the Prime Minister. He is strongly criticised for not consulting fellow ministers and making "fast track" decisions, and is said to often rely heavily on the Vietnamese-descended Dinh family and a resident American millionaire for advice. Earlier this year Lini himself endorsed the veteran Kalpokas, who took over from rebel Barak Sope as party secretary-general, as the man in line to succeed him, and Kalpokas headed an "alternative list" — along with sacked Finance Minister Sela Mulisa — circulated at the April congress by party activists seeking a change. But some party sources put another name in the ring: Edward Nipake Nalapei. Although apparently quieter and younger — he is 37 — than his rivals, he is said to be a prime mover behind the aborted challenge in April.

The 48-year-old Lini suffered a stroke in 1987 which left his right side partially paralysed. He steered the country through the devastation caused by Cyclone Uma and then weathered the bitter leadership challenge from Sope after the Vila riot in 1988. But he reportedly began losing his grip on public affairs in 1989. And the situation is said to have deteriorated in the past six months, culminating with his latest health difficulties. According to a former close associate who observed changes, "His decisions were no longer strictly in the national interest, they were inclined to

VANUATU



Storm brewing: political dissent might soon come to the boil in Vanuatu

favour non-public individuals, he has shown less inclination to consult and he has spent a lot of time away from his office.

There have been many occasions, says

the former associate, where Lini has taken decisions without consulting the appropriate minister. "When we find out about the decision and realise the consultative processes have not been

followed, we in government have had to work hard to rectify irregular decisions. We have been observing crisis-management to preserve the national interest."

Critics cite "irregular" decisions such as Lini's "green letter" deportation orders last year against two highly respected and long-standing New Zealand residents for no reason — their case is being fought before the courts — after declaring in an Independence celebrations speech that the era of expulsions was over; the sacking of his private secretary, Grace Molisa, when she expressed concern over the expulsions; the stripping of five top ministers of key portfolios and taking the responsibilities himself in spite of his health; the sacking of Sela Molisa earlier this year and a further portfolio reshuffle; and finally the ultimatum letters to senior cabinet colleagues.

However, Acting Prime Minister Sethy Regenvanu staunchly defended his leader during an interview with *Pacific Islands Monthly* last month. Asked about the letters, he said: "They were confidential — I didn't see the letters. I understand that they asked the ministers to indicate their position on whether they supported the Prime Minister or not. Certain ministers and political secretaries were observed at the congress appearing not to support him."

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He added it was a difficult situation for ministers who also belonged to the 300-member executive council. "I hope the Prime Minister and the ministers will sit down together and discuss their views."

Regarded as among the handful of ministers still backing their leader, Regenvanu admitted that Lini had been handicapped by his health. "He does not have as much time for his work now, not as much time for consultation as ministers want," he said. "His condition has some effect on their access to consultation. Some ministers are reluctant to trouble him. An executive council meeting set to discuss the mini-congress was postponed when Lini delayed his return to Vila until shortly before the Melanesian Spearhead Group meeting on Espiritu Santo last month.

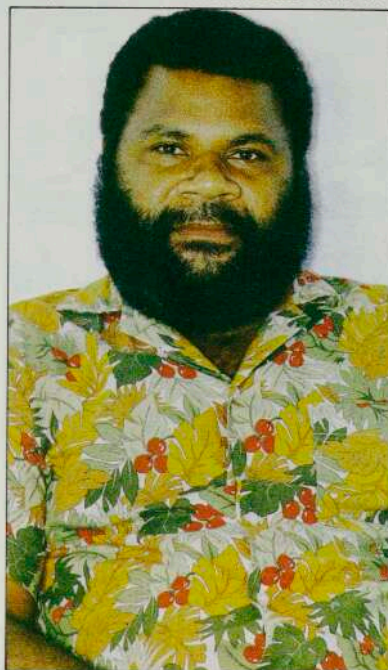
Regenvanu said many factors needed studying before a mini-congress could go ahead. "We have to consider many things — whether we can finance another congress, it is very expensive, and whether delegates would support it by attending in sufficient numbers."

Kalkot Mataskelekele, the only Vanua'aku Pati member in private law practice, is regarded as a key influence in maintaining unity. When elected to Parliament in the last election in 1987, he was frequently cited as a potential future leader. Married to one of Lini's younger sisters, Hanson, he saved the day for the Prime Minister in April when he found that constitutionally a new party executive could not be elected until after June 23. (Under party rules, the president is endorsed as prime minister). A reflective, self-effacing man, Mataskelekele answers with a hint of embarrassment when asked about his role in maintaining party unity.

"Unity? I don't see it that way. I've always had the view that if you have a back bone to pick, you bring out in the open. You don't leave it in your back pocket, hidden away. It hasn't always made me popular in the party. Sometimes I have asked the hard questions that should be asked. The trouble at the moment is that not enough questions are being raised in the open. Too many things are being said behind backs."

During the parliamentary session in April, according to some accounts, you could have almost heard a pin drop when Mataskelekele asked the Prime Minister about the role of his American telecommunications advisor, Jack Scantlin. It was a question that had been repeatedly raised in private among Lini's cabinet colleagues — but never asked directly of the Prime Minister. Lini replied that he needed the services of a personal adviser because he personally knew nothing about telecommunications, but his response did little to silence the speculation.

Mataskelekele is a strong believer in consensus style decision-making, one of the great strengths of the Vanua'aku Pati, and he has little time for Western-



Molisa: reluctant to openly discuss the leadership crisis

style lobbying. However, lobbying has begun in the party and is now probably there to stay. Along with others, he was surprised at the degree of lobbying during the April congress in support of Kalpokas and Sela Molisa.

What about Mataskelekele's own political future? Since he went into law practice on his own, he has been out of the limelight. He was not on the list of candidates to contest the November election — but many believe he should be. His personal integrity, grasp of the

**The deportation orders
smack of an illogical,
senseless, unthinking act**

— Grace Molisa

party constitution (which he helped draft) and sense of fair play, are regarded by many as essential to unity in the parliamentary process. A group of Efate chiefs have approached him and asked him to stand again. Although he has agreed to reconsider, his decision may not be known until this month.

Sela Molisa and his influential wife, Grace, have been reluctant to openly discuss the leadership crisis with journalists. However, Mrs Molisa protested against the deportation orders against four foreigners — New Zealanders Peter

Wilson and Peter Coimar, and Frenchmen Claude Boudier and Roberto Albanez. Noting that Vanuatu had come a long way since independence in 1980, Mrs Molisa said the attempt to expel "long-standing, impressive residents" such as Wilson, his wife, Aileen, and Colmar to whom Vanuatu "owed a debt of lifetime gratitude, smacks of an illogical, senseless, unthinking act."

She added: "It is a decision of someone who either does not appreciate the amount of work which people have put in to create stability in Vanuatu or has been misled by bad advice, from whom we do not know. This confidence only arises from the work of the people. The decision taken can only be on bad advice. Not only will the Prime Minister get hell for the decision; the government will suffer, and worse, the citizens of Vanuatu."

However, in the case of Albanez and Boudier — who have already left Vanuatu — the situation was less clear-cut. Albanez had been mentioned in government circles in a less than flattering light and Boudier had been linked with the secession attempt on Santo in 1980. Nevertheless, the deportation orders prompted an open letter protesting against the economic consequences from representatives of 14 major businesses from Vanuatu's Finance Centre Association.

It declared: "The economic cost to the country as a result of (the) order is difficult to quantify. We believe, and there are already specific examples, that pending investments are being cancelled or delayed as a result... This includes current-resident impending investments as well as non-resident."

Others in the VP also believe the "green letters" case is unjust exploitation of a draconian legislative hangover from colonial days — Section 17 of the 1974 Immigration Act. Kalkot Mataskelekele encountered some personal flak when he took on the case after local expatriate lawyers were reluctant to act for the New Zealanders. But he sees little conflict in spite of his VP role.

"It isn't part of the political struggle, it is just a matter of law," he said. "I've always disagreed with this part of the Act. It might have been alright at the time of our Independence in 1980 and during the attempted secession when it was necessary to make such deportations. But not now."

In 1975, the law was used by the colonial resident commissioners to deport a black Guyanese activist Paula Brown, who was working in support of the VP. Supporters demonstrated at Bauerfield Airport in an attempt to prevent him leaving.

Other lawyers say that Section 17 is a violation of the Vanuatu constitution in that unless reasons are given for the removal of a person it is impossible to

VANUATU

be given a fair hearing, and that it prevents the action being challenged in court contrary to constitutional right. According to leading New Zealand civil rights barrister Patrick Finnigan who is representing Colmar and Wilson. "We accept the need for an order-for-removal power. But we say it should be exercised only in circumstances and in a form which permits the deportee to know the reasons why the order-for-removal power is exercised, and be afforded a right of appeal or review. The whole thrust of administrative law these days is to take away from governments and officials the right to exercise power without being subject to review on the basis of natural justice, in terms of what is known as the Anisminic principle (named after a case in Britain) — particularly when people's rights and freedoms are at stake."

Finnigan flew to Vanuatu at the request of Colmar, Wilson and their solicitors last October — during which time an interim restraining order was imposed by the Supreme Court on Lini as Immigration Minister, prohibiting the deportation of the two New Zealanders pending a full court hearing. Following Finnigan's return to New Zealand, he was declared persona non grata by principal immigration officer Gordon Haines. Airlines flying to Vanuatu were also said to have been instructed not to allow Finnigan to travel to the country without a work permit.

Asked about this, Finnigan told *Pacific Islands Monthly* that he had not been officially notified of this action against him. When Finnigan originally applied for a temporary permit for legal practice to assist Mataskelekele conduct the deportation case, he was turned down. However, following submissions and a full hearing, Acting Chief Justice Edwin Goldsborough issued a temporary practice certificate to Finnigan.

Peter and Aileen Wilson, now in their 50s, arrived in Vanuatu in 1971. A builder, Peter Wilson has built up a successful construction business, Wilco Modular, in partnership with another New Zealander, Roger Owens (who is not being deported). They employ about 80 ni-Vanuatu. Peter Colmar left New Zealand for Vanuatu when he was aged 17. In two decades he has created a commercial "empire" — including cattle farms, abattoirs, cocoa and coffee plantations and processing plants — on Espiritu Santo. He employs about 500 ni-Vanuatu. Colmar's ni-Vanuatu wife is Madeleine Valale and he was recently honoured with a chiefly title, Molwitamata.

The Wilsons and Peter Colmer were given "no-reasons" deportation orders last September 24 with one month to leave the country and a threat that they could be detained and expelled after that date. An interim injunction was granted

against the order by the Supreme Court on October 26. On November 6, the Prime Minister withdrew the deportation letter while the Attorney-General, Silas Hakwa, moved the court to revoke the interim restraint. On November 13 another "green letter" was issued — this time closer to the form prescribed under the Act. Six days later, Justice Goldsborough granted a further interim restraining order.

Meanwhile, in developments in New Zealand, a protest letter was recently sent to External Affairs Minister Don

It's time we looked at government and who is in whose pocket

— Opposition newsletter

McKinnon, saying that although an "eye for an eye" approach was not advanced, "It seems unjust that the Prime Minister of Vanuatu can seek benefits from New Zealand — his children's education, free medical check-ups for himself and aid for Vanuatu; yet behave dishonourably towards New Zealand citizens; longstanding residents of Vanuatu, through these no-reasons deportations."

Lini was quoted in the now-defunct Vanuatu news magazine *Pacific Islands Profile* as having said it was usual practice in any Commonwealth country not to give reasons for a deportation order (a claim rejected by some Commonwealth lawyers), and that the VP had endorsed

his decisions. He reportedly said the government had the right to refuse residency permits or to deport anyone "if it considers they are a threat to security that their continued presence in Vanuatu will create problems".

Although no official reasons have been given, it is widely thought in Vila that the deportations could be because of a perceived business threat by Colmar and Wilson to the Dinh family. On past occasions the two New Zealanders have found themselves competing with the Dinhs in business, tendering for land and business opportunities. Said one lawyer, "The associations of Prime Minister Lini with the Dinhs are not difficult to observe; the strong feeling is that Lini may have been influenced by the Vietnamese family. This seems the only logical reason for the issue of the deportation letters."

A recent issue of *Freedom Mo Jastis* (Freedom and Justice), newsletter of Barak Sope's opposition *Melanesian Prokresif Pati*, published a three-page critique of the Vanua'aku Pati's performance over the past decade. It made allegations of bribery and corruption in the Lini government and declared it was time to end this. It was also critical of Dinh Van Than, Rene Ah Pow and other influential businessmen. "It's time we looked into government affairs and see who is in whose pocket."

According to a former government advisor, Father Lini used to be highly regarded as a leader of integrity and example. "But now things have changed. He stands head and shoulders above the other cabinet ministers in his understanding of the relationship between political power and business. He is probably a man ahead of his time; he discovered ways to fast-track decisions and cut the red tape — he can get things done quickly, whereas most of the other cabinet ministers are tied down by the heavy machinery of bureaucratic decision-making that we inherited from the British and French colonial system. Barak Sope was another minister with a fine appreciation of this power relationship."

"I'm not saying this is how things should be done. Once everything used to be decided with full consultation with the grassroots. Now that is no longer the case. But the positive side is that important things can be done quickly." Examples of such "fast track" action are said to be Air Vanuatu and Vanuatu Telecommunications.

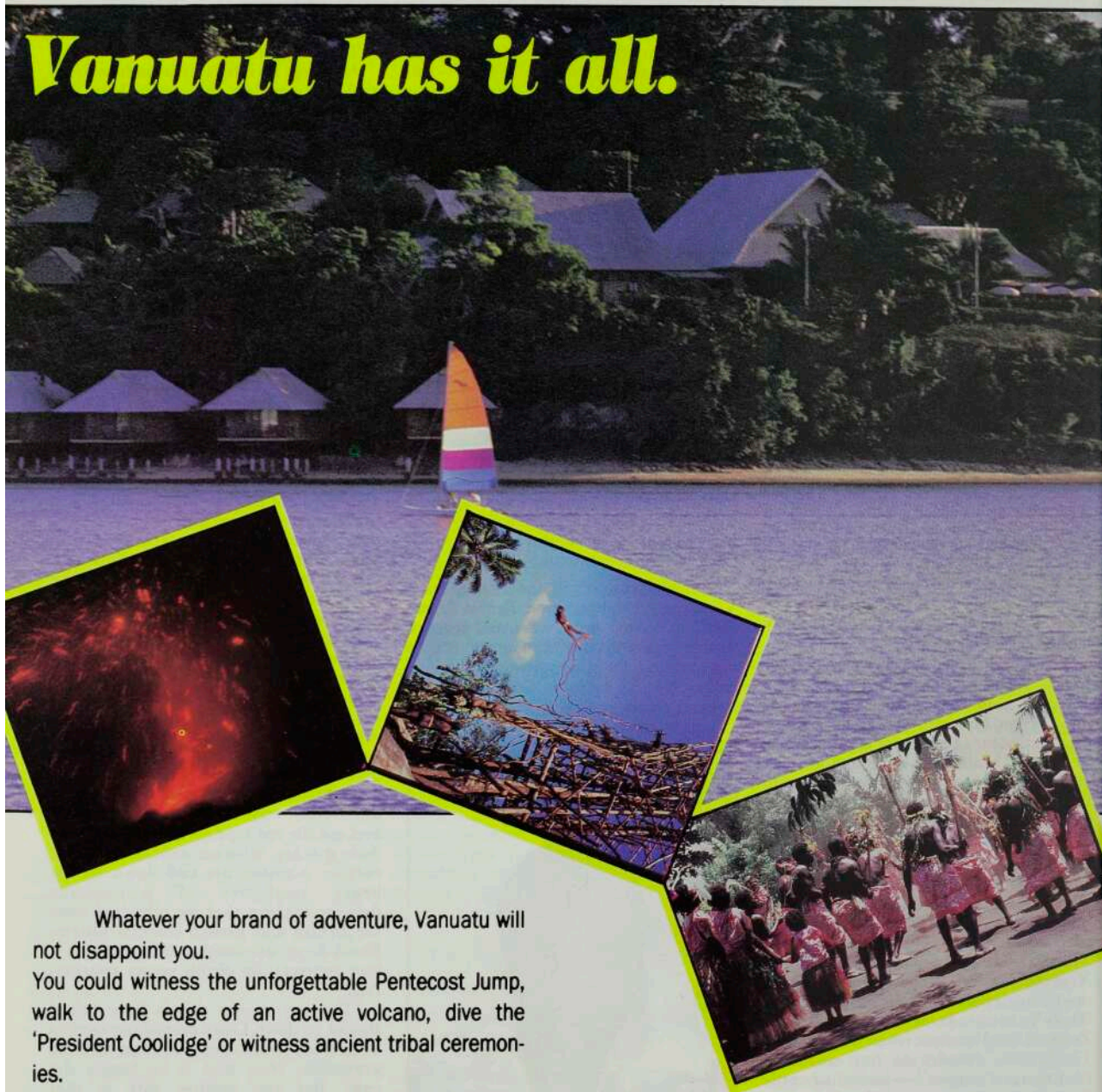
Many officers believe Lini relies too heavily on the influence of his business advisers, some of whom are said to be underwriting his continued hold on the prime ministership. The opposition will probably move as a group this time. They realise the mistakes of the past: Barak Sope moved too soon, the Molisias were sacrificed and the Prime Minister



Boulecone: ombudsman needed to make government accountable

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is too powerful unless the opposition move together.

The consensus processes of the past have been steadily eroded in the past three years. The change started with Barak Sope when he sent some of his supporters to Libya for training without endorsement from the party executive. Neither the party nor the cabinet challenged him then and the door was opened to doing things without party endorsement. "In the old days, the Prime Minister hardly did anything without consulting his colleagues and the grassroots," said a party official. "Now there is hardly ever any consultation."

Opposition Leader Vincent Boulekone is scathing about the "undemocratic" government but he is also under no illusions about other opposition parties. "I'd like to see Walter Lini step down," he told *Pacific Islands Monthly*. "But I don't think he will ever resign, unless his illness forces him to. The leadership problem is here in Vila alone. People in many of the islands still want him to lead — in Tanna, Malekula and practically Pentecost." (Like the Prime Minister Boulekone comes from Pentecost).

"But if there is a change, I don't worry about who the next leader is. The only right man is whoever will accept to cooperate with us and understand our policy."

"With six seats, the opposition Tan Union is dwarfed by the Vanua'aku Pati's 40 seats. They gained the seats in byelections in 1988 after 18 Union Moderate Parties members and Sope — with four other VP rebels — boycotted Parliament for three successive sittings. Yet Boulekone believes that his party could be in an even stronger position after the election, possibly holding the balance of power."

He has a deep distrust of Sope and the MPP. "I'm under no illusions in the unlikely event that they ever get into power — they wouldn't have any more respect for democracy or freedom of the

press than the present government. As MP and secretary-general of the VP, Barak Sope sacked me from Parliament in a gross denial of democratic rights. Sope and Jimmy Simon signed a motion to expel me from Parliament in 1986 after I'd twice failed to seek leave when I had been ill for some time. I still question the leadership of the MPP about democracy. I question the VP. I don't want the Union of Moderate Parties to follow the same line."

Boulekone, a year younger than Lini, is vice-chairperson of the constitutional review committee established last year. But, admits Boulekone, he is less concerned with changing the constitution than changing its application. The constitution provides for an ombudsman,

*It won't matter much,
in the end we will
still be the government*

— Sethy Regenvanu

yet the government has never appointed one.

"Why? Because the government is afraid of an ombudsman. An ombudsman's duty is to put things right, to make government accountable and to deliver justice to ordinary people." Boulekone believes that if an ombudsman was in office now, some of what he regards as the more blatant abuses of power would end. Among other feedback that has emerged from submissions heard by the commission:

- "No genuine land reform. After independence, Parliament approved national land reforms. But until now they have not been fully carried out — the custom owner has no rights on his own land."

- "The constitution needs to include legal recognition of customary rights and

organisations, such as the Malfatumaauri (National Council of Chiefs). They need to be recognised as the authentic power — recognised and defended by the constitution, Parliament, judiciary and the people. Since 1980 this hasn't happened. I want to see this in law. We need to recognise the justice system in our custom — this is custom, this is our culture."

Boulekone is also critical of the lopsided composition of the commission — two thirds of the 31 members are Vanua'aku Pati members. Acting Prime Minister Sethy Regenvanu disagrees. He considers the composition a wide representation of chiefs, churches, women and the parties. Some of the changes he anticipates are that the head of state, largely ceremonial at present, would like more executive power, the parliamentary term should be extended from four to five years; and women need a more visible place in the political structure. Another idea is to expand Parliament from 46 members to 56 — an increase easily absorbed in the impressive new red-roofed Parliament Buildings under construction on a hill overlooking Port Vila harbour. (The old chamber was so cramped that some MPs had to sit in the visitors' seats.)

The UMP has kept a fairly low profile. A recent 21-point manifesto adopted by the party provoked an incredulous response from critics when one clause advocated opening the country to a foreign military base. Even with their allies, Sope's MPP, they are not regarded as a serious challenge by the VP.

"Certainly not, if we had an election this month we'd win," said Regenvanu. "There is no reason for it to change later in the year. The MP are working really hard to make an impact in the elections. They are determined to win some seats. I don't know where and in what constituencies, but in the end it won't make much difference. We will still be the government." □

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AIR VANUATU

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VANUATU

Safe bet on tourism

GABRIEL Bani is not a gambler. But he is prepared to bet his pay packet a tourist could walk the streets of Port Vila and not be molested — by men or women. "This is untouched paradise," he said. "The people are friendly and our streets are safe."

Bani, 29, is manager of Vanuatu's National Tourism Office and one of the ni-Vanuatus taking over senior management positions. "We need more ni-Vanuatus as (tourism) owners and ni-Vanuatus as managers. It's a growing industry."

It already has gone through exciting growth, with a history and fluctuating fortunes which has depended largely on airlines and political events since the mid 1970s.

Tourism really got under way in Vanuatu in 1975 when the Intercontinental Island Inn opened, heralding a steady growth pattern in tourism arrivals and receipts from 1975 to 1979, the year before Independence. Visitor arrivals (not including transit passengers on aircraft or cruise ships) grew by a healthy average of 23 per cent each year, giving the country an excess of 30,000 visitors for the first time ever in 1979.

Until 1974 New Caledonia provided the single biggest source of visitors and in 1973 residents of New Caledonia visiting Vanuatu were double the number in the second category, Australia.

After the opening of the Intercontinental, Australians quickly became the dominant visitor sector, moving from 25 per cent of all visitor arrivals in 1974 to 41 per cent in 1979, while growing in numbers by 190 per cent. In the period 1988-1989, Australia provided nearly 60 per cent of all visitors to Vanuatu. But the Australian market has been volatile and, in the 10 years since 1979, the number of Australians visiting Vanuatu only five times exceeded the 1979 level, with a high in 1984 of 21,223 and a low in 1987 of 6617.

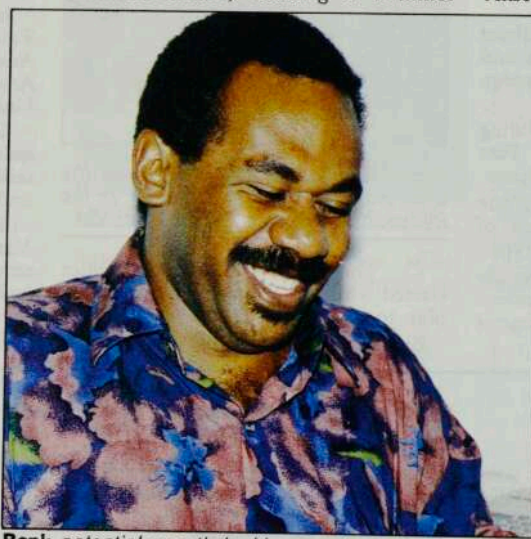
Japanese visitors showed spectacular growth immediately prior to 1979, and in 1979 and 1980 Japanese visitors constituted the third biggest number of visitors.

They peaked at 3721 visitors a year but gradually fell away and hit a low of 438 in 1987, when killer Cyclone Uma ravaged crops and devastated hotels and resorts. After the unsuccessful constitutional coup of 1988, Japanese arrivals started to grow again. The Air Pacific Nadi-Tokyo-Nadi services have opened a

new Nadi-Vila route for Japanese tourists to Vanuatu.

Lack of a convenient airline connection at Noumea led to a major drop in New Zealand arrivals in 1985. Visitors from France peaked in 1979 and 1980 then declined by 50 per cent in 1981. In 1980, when Vanuatu gained independence from Britain and France, visitor numbers fell by 28 per cent over the previous year.

In 1981, the Australian and New Zealand markets rallied but numbers from New Caledonia, Japan and France declined further, resulting in a minor



Bani: potential growth looking great

change to total visitor numbers which were down to 22,000 from the high of 30,000.

Generally secondary markets like New Caledonia, New Zealand, Japan, USA, and Fiji were still performing reasonably well, so it was to the major market, Australia, that efforts were directed.

In 1981 Air Vanuatu was formed, and it contracted Ansett Airlines, of Australia, to operate all its services for the first five years. Visitor arrivals from Australia doubled between 1981 and 1982 and increased the total arrivals by 46 per cent in 1982 to 32,180.

Vanuatu tourism was now back to pre-independence levels, but Australian visitors were now 57 per cent of all arrivals compared to 40 per cent in 1979. Air Vanuatu continued to improve business from Australia over the next two years to an all-time peak of 21,233 visitor arrivals, and other markets continued to soften. By 1984 Australians made up 67 per cent of the total visitor arrivals.

The potential danger of over-reliance

on one market source was demonstrated in 1985 when, due to a progressive weakening of the Australian dollar against the Vatu in 1984-85, Vanuatu became less competitive in the price-sensitive New South Wales market. Air Vanuatu found its returns dwindling.

Vanuatu also suffered from civil unrest in neighbouring New Caledonia. Very little image-building advertising meant many countries were unsure whether Vanuatu was or was not a part of New Caledonia, and tourism fell.

Little promotion was undertaken in Australia and this led to a worse decline so flight frequencies were reduced. 1986 arrivals from Australia were the lowest for nine years and non-renewal of the contract between Air Vanuatu and Ansett in 1986 led to a further reduction in flights from Australia when Air Vanuatu services were discontinued.

In February 1987 Port Vila was struck by killer Cyclone Uma which caused major disruption to the tourist plant with almost half the hotel rooms in the greater Vila area out of commission at various times throughout the year.

1987 was a bad year. Australian visits dropped to 6612 and total visitor arrivals slumped to a 15 year low of 14,642. Air Vanuatu recommenced services between Vanuatu and Australia in late 1987, using aircraft leased from Australian Airlines. Very limited funding was available for promotion and the civil disturbance that occurred in May 1988 was widely reported in Australia and made recovery of tourism difficult in 1988.

However, funding for promotion in Australia did halt the downturn at the end of 1988 when some growth returned.

The recovery of the tourism industry got underway in earnest in 1989. Air Vanuatu, led by new managing director Peter Roberts, bought a Boeing 727 jet from Australian Airlines which immediately provided a new service from Melbourne, and launched a advertising and public relations campaign in Australia. The result was an immediate increase in visitors from Australia and healthy increases in the second half of 1989. Ansett withdrew services in May 1989, bringing to an end a chapter in Vanuatu's tourism history.

While the national airline was injecting new life into Vanuatu tourism, only one medium size resort has been built during the past 10 years. Iririki Island Resort was opened in 1986.

But there has been substantial upgrading of accommodation facilities in recent years. The major properties upgraded and renovated have been Le Lagon

VANUATU

Pacific Resort, the Solaise International Hotel, Erakor Island Resort and the Hotel Santo. The high standard of restaurants in the country has been maintained.

1989 was a year of substantial achievements pointing to future development:

□ Air Vanuatu acquired its own aircraft and commenced a major television promotion in Australia.

□ Air Vanuatu put into effect a public relations campaign that has strengthened the positive image of Vanuatu overseas.

□ Air Vanuatu started direct services between Melbourne and Vila, re-started services from Sydney and, later in the year, re-started the former Ansett operated link from Sydney via Brisbane to Vila.

● Air Vanuatu started a direct service between Auckland and Vila and launched a strong advertising campaign in New Zealand.

● A contract was let for the building of a new passenger terminal at Port Vila's Bauerfield International Airport.

● It was agreed to upgrade Bauerfield to facilitate the movement of wide-body jets of the Boeing 767 type.

pi0012 It was agreed to upgrade Bauerfield facilities and provide modern navigational aids including a new control tower.



Nicolai Michoutouchkine creation: the artist watches his work paraded at the Radisson Royal Palms Resort, Port Vila

□ The National Tourism Office started work on a tourism development plan to cover the next 20 years.

Significant advances have been made

in the involvement of ni-Vanuatu in the tourism sector, who now own and manage accommodation properties like White Grass Bungalows in Tanna, the local government-owned and managed Jaranmole Bungalows in Santo and the recently opened Talimoru Hotel in Vila. There is the fledgling resort at Lokalei in Santo and several privately owned and managed guest houses. The Mele Trust manages and part-owns Hideaway Island Resort and there is a locally-owned restaurant in North Efate, the Nagar.

As part of the government policy to maximise ni-Vanuatu participation in tourism the government acquired a major shareholding in Tour Vanuatu which handles reservations and services for many overseas travel agents.

In the past three years, the National Tourism Office has established offices in Australia, New Zealand and North America. It has representatives in the United Kingdom and Western Europe.

The tourism industry needs planned guidelines for growth in plant and people skills, a responsibility shared by public and private sectors.

The future of tourism development is Vanuatu is, as previously, tied to airline services and political events. "The future looks great," said Bani. "The potential is there."

Better still — it's safe. □

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VANUATU

Plan for industry turbulence needed



LIKE everybody else in the Vanuatu tourism business, Air Caledonia

International had a bonanza year in 1990. With 35,000 visitors, more than double the previous year, Vanuatu enjoyed its best year since 1983.

But, admits the airline's resident manager Joseph Laloyer, this year it will be tougher. Australians comprise more than 80 per cent of tourists, and deregulation of the airlines industry, growing recession and alternative cheaper packages there are encouraging them to travel to places like Bali or Hawaii, or at home.

Another setback for this Noumea-based carrier is a series of agreements in March with the Vanuatu government redefining traffic rights between New Caledonia and Vanuatu, giving a share of the market to Air Vanuatu.

Until the new service introduced last month, the airline had been operating four 727 flights a week out of Vila. But now its capacity has been restricted under the new agreement.

Air Caledonie plans a new target. It will redevelop a New Caledonian market to Vila, offering attractive weekend packages. The airline hopes to lure the tourists it had in the early 1980s.

"It won't be the caldoche themselves so much," says Laloyer. "It will be the French metros out for three-year-contracts in New Caledonie — the doctors, engineers, and teachers who want to see as much of the South Pacific as they can while they're here."

Laloyer admits the market for tourists from New Caledonia has been fickle at times, depending on relations between France and Vanuatu. A ni-Vanuatu



Laloyer: urging a rethink of the future

himself and a former foreign affairs official, the 35-year-old Laloyer has astutely weathered the storms.

"We've had several drop-offs since 1982-84," he says. "And then we had the damage to the hotel industry caused by Cyclone Uma in 1985. Then in 1988 the Vanuatu government imposed visas on anybody visiting from New Caledonia. The New Caledonia market has been a difficult one ever since independence with lots of ups and downs.

"But now . . . it is settling down and it is a good time to launch this market again. After all, coming to Vila for the weekend is almost the same as going to the Isle of Pines.

"The biggest attractions here are the vegetation — it is so different from in

New Caledonia, the friendliness of the people, the variety of the islands and customs and how people live, and it is duty-free."

But, says Laloyer, Vanuatu has to make some hard decisions about the future of tourism. "The government says we need more flights, but the hotels are full already. If the airlines put on more flights there'll be no room to stay."

Laloyer believes more involvement and consultation with everybody in the tourist industry is needed to prepare a strategy for the future.

"We were lucky last year that the Australian Government provided the A\$3 million fund to market Vanuatu as a destination. But the trouble is that while the government gains funds out of the promotion of Vanuatu, not enough is being put back into the industry."

More thought should be given to a greater variety of accommodation and joint planning. "Vanuatu used to be a reasonably cheap destination for families. Not any more; now it is a destination for couples or single people. Families are being attracted to the Cook Islands, Fiji and Noumea.

"At present the tendency is for each company or hotel to do their own thing. Little is done jointly for planning ahead. Unless we have a different approach we'll go backwards."

He also warns that the ni-Vanuatu people should be involved in the industry. "Tourism benefits to the local people are very limited. Landowners have imposed a 1200-vatu toll fee on the road to the volcano; there has been a debate on who should be paying the Pentecost dive organisers; and there has been trouble with access to some beaches.

"These are signs of the discontent. Unless we put priority into education and involvement of the local people in tourism, the frustrations will grow." □

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FOCUS

HE claps his hands above his head to call his ancestors. All of a sudden he shoots out like a rocket and becomes a dark shadow racing towards the ground. The vines take the strain and his black, curly hair briefly kisses the earth.

This brave ritual is performed every year on Pentecost Island by the landdivers of Vanuatu, following strict spiritual beliefs.

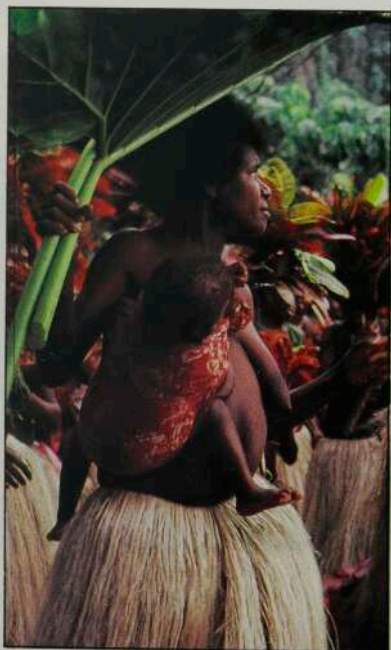
Tamalie's spirit is said to lurk in the "Naghol" tower.

"Don't go up there until the tower is finished," the young boy whispers, his arm pointing towards the tall structure which is barely visible behind the palm trees.

In just a few hours the village will be embraced by a velvet darkness and we will hear the men singing by the tower. It's a sign that their toil is over and the ceremony can begin the next morning.



Bound by faith: platforms made from tree trunks tied with vines by a family friend.



The lead-up: women, some carrying babies, sing, dance and wave leaves.

The landdivers of Vanuatu perform their deadly annual ritual. **Tove Randi Rasmussen** reports.

This deadly ritual occurs every year — on a tiny island called Pentecost which is part of a larger chain of islands known collectively as Vanuatu. Its purpose is to graduate a good harvest of yams.

Brave young boys prove their valour by launching themselves out from the towers. It is 30 metres straight down, and their only lifeline is a single vine tied to one of their ankles. If it is a perfect dive their hair will only just touch the ground and they will be unharmed.

Night falls, and the males of the village begin to gather their courage.

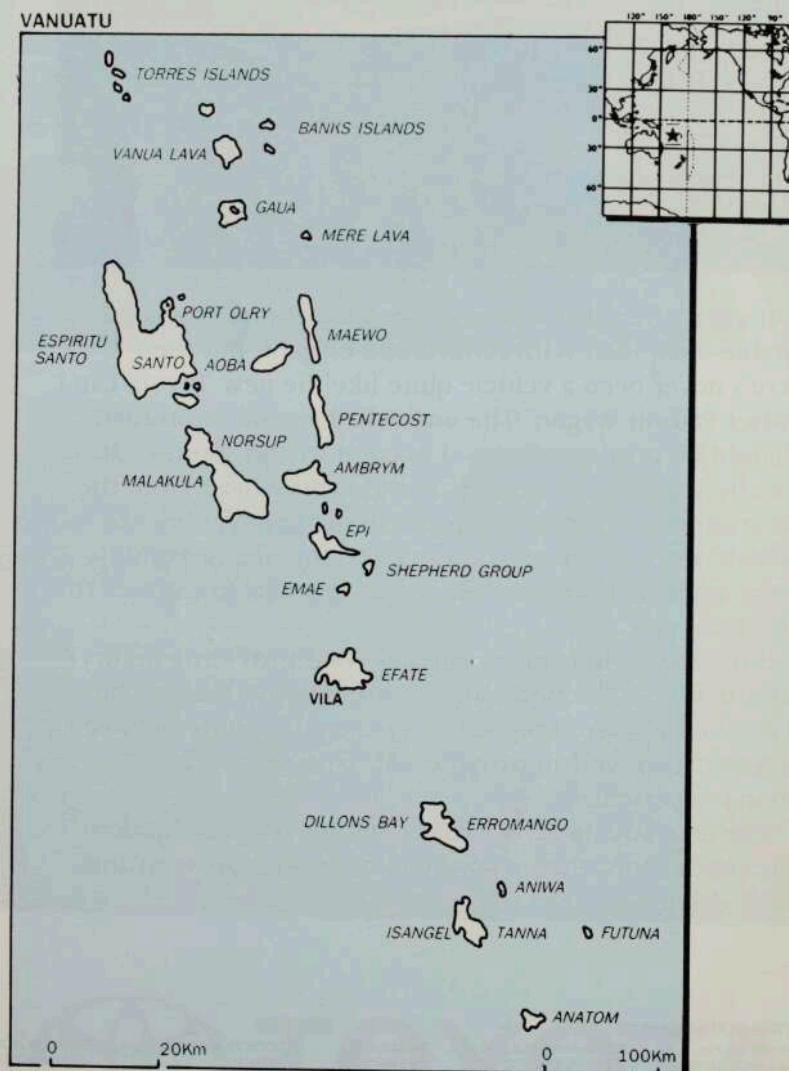
The morning sun is creeping up from behind the hill. The village of Wali awakes, and a holy atmosphere seems to descend upon it.

The women are dressed in grass skirts, while the men wear their traditional *Nambas* — a garment which makes a loincloth look like a bodysuit.

The "Naghol" legend is the story of a young woman who kept trying to escape from her violent husband, Tamalie. In her last desperate attempt she hid in a young palm tree, where she tied vines to her ankles.

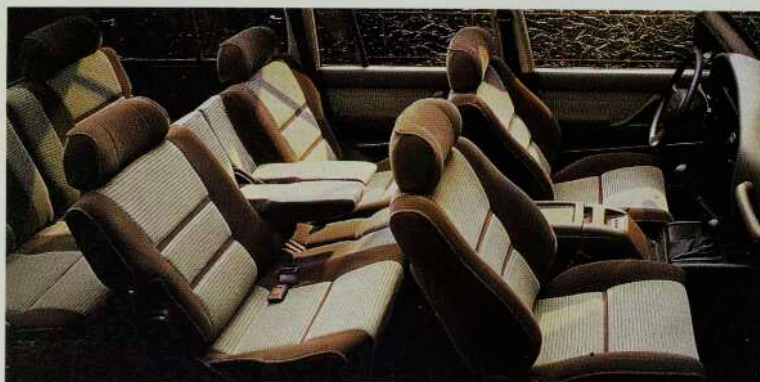
Tamalie searched for hours and was enraged by the time he found her. He climbed the tree, but as he was about to grab his wife she jumped, and the vines left her swinging safely just below the fronds. Tamalie dived after her and fell to his death.

It remains a mystery as to how this





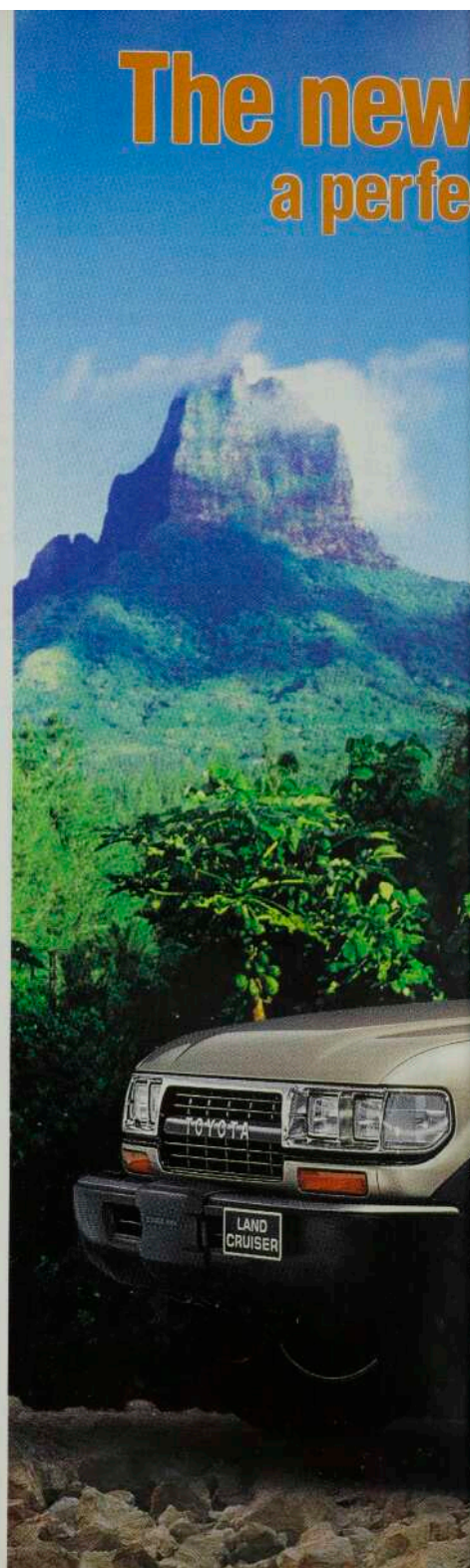
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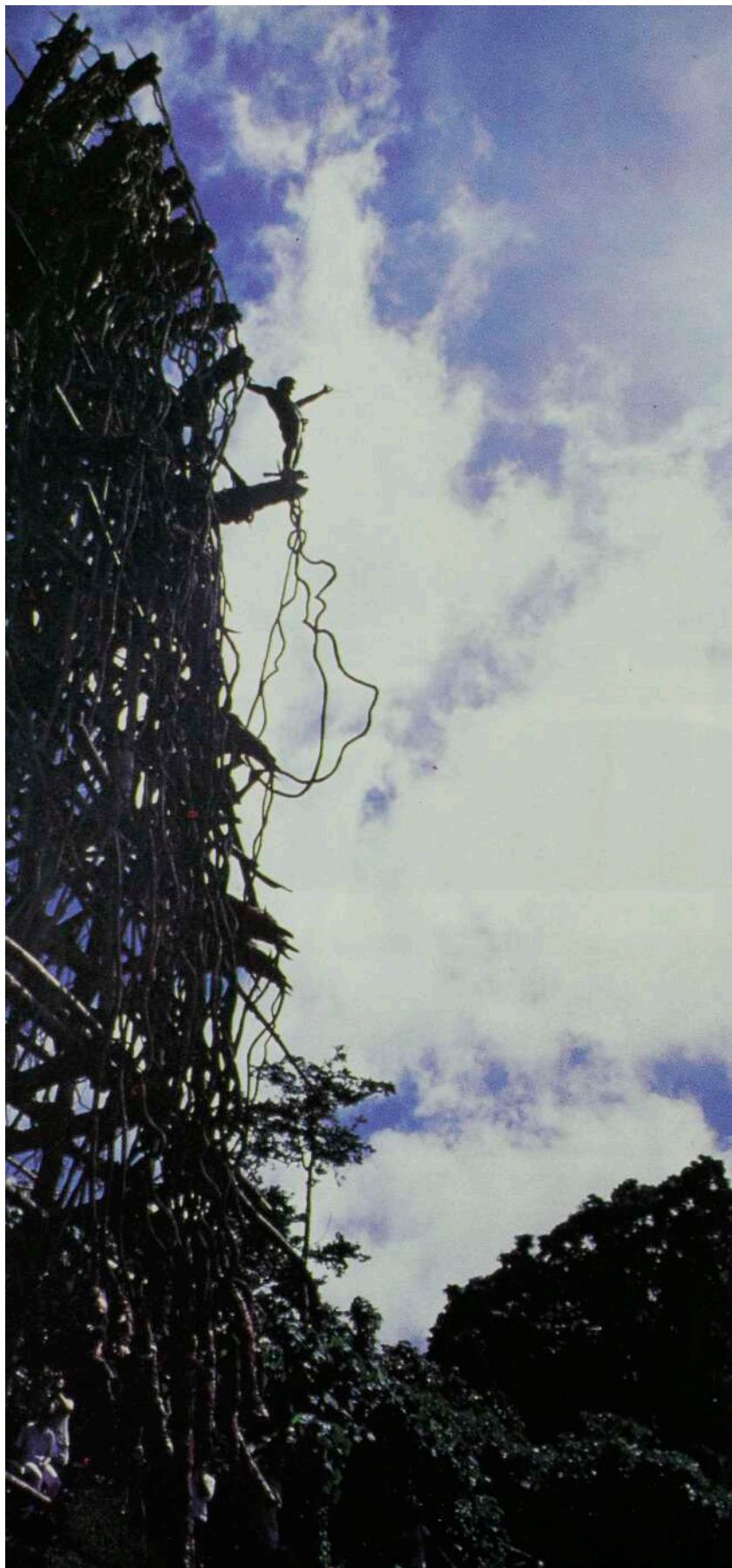
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ceremony became connected with the yam harvest.

With anticipation we are led away from Wali, and towards the tower. The track twists and turns — first through thick jungle, and then through open fields and tall coconut trees.

Heavy rain has made the track very muddy and more like a stream in places. We struggle to keep our balance. We pass groups of bamboo huts and excited faces peer out at us, while some of the villagers wave.

Finally we arrive at our destination, sweaty and exhausted. A huge tower reaches skyward — it is at least 30 metres tall.

Although the legend of "Naghol" involves a palm tree, three skydivers now use any tall tree. Unnecessary branches are cut off, a scaffold of logs and branches is built around the trunk and the structure is secured to surrounding trees by vines.

Hammer and nails don't exist. The labour is carried out according to ancient traditions and it is an art that only a few villages have mastered. The tower before us was built by chief Telkon and the men of Bunlap — a village on the other side of the mountain.

When missionaries first arrived on Pentecost the "Naghol" ceremony was banned. Only two villages kept the tradition alive, but recently the men from Bunlap have passed the ritual on to other groups.

For the last two weeks before their leap, the participants must abstain from any sexual activity. They follow a strict diet and drinking kava is definitely taboo. Other special rites are observed in order to drive off evil spirits.

While the tower is being raised, the women are forbidden to come near it, or even be seen in the area. If any of the rules are violated it is bound to result in a terrible accident for one of the divers.

The tower has several platforms — one for each of the 28 men who will jump. Each man carefully selects his own vine. It must be of exact length and incredible strength. If not, the diver will plummet into the ground — head first!

Each platform is built by a trusted friend of the diver's family.

Three young men are chosen to guard the tower through the dark hours on the eve of the "Naghol". No evil must over-

Certainty: dark clouds roll in as the last man, his muscular body gleaming with coconut oil, moves his hands confidently to the song resounding from the crowd below. He then claps his hands, lets his head fall back, throws himself from the platform and plummets like a rocket toward the ground far below.

FOCUS

come the platforms.

The ceremony begins when the men atop the tower begin singing and dancing. Soon the women below join in. They are delightful to watch — perfumed leaves draped over bare breasts, flowers in their hair. They wave colourful kroton leaves while their grass skirts flick around their legs.

A seven year old climbs to his platform while the singing and dancing intensifies. The women from the boy's family hold their arms in a cradle position while they dance, to signify that they have raised him from an infant.

As the boy inches out onto the platform the women begin a loud, high-pitched whistle. Everyone focuses their concentration on the boy.

It is his first dive. His actions are uncertain. He grips some vines which hang from above, and his toes dig into the edge of the platform. He lifts his trembling arms out from his sides, as if to feel the air.

The crowd urge him on. They are

singing the song he has chosen.

The boy grows braver and begins to wave his arms to the rhythm. He yells wildly and drops a green leaf to the ground to ward off any demons which might still be haunting the tower.

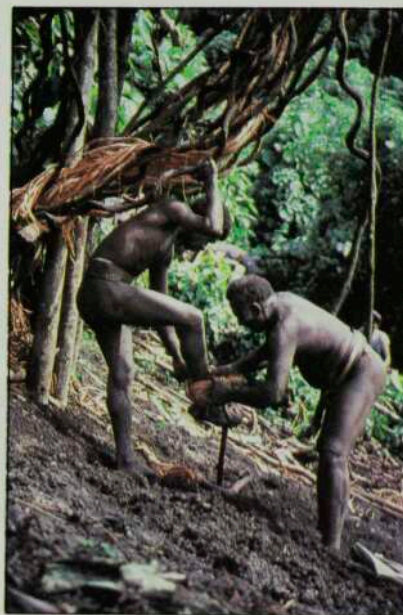
He claps his hands above his head to call his ancestors. Letting himself fall forward, he pushes off when he is almost horizontal, and his hands come up to cover his face.

He falls earthward. The vine tightens and stretches. The platform collapses!

The crowd falls silent as two men run to the boy's aid. They cut the vines from his ankles with a machete. He is okay, and whoops with pride as he stretches his arms upward in triumph. His first dive is a success.

Every year someone is either killed or seriously injured, but more often than

Tied to ritual: *all that saves a landdiver from death is the vines connecting his feet to the platform, and his faith in the goodwill of the spirits.*



Spiritual support: *women below the platform wave colourful kroton leaves while their grass skirts flick around their legs.*

FOCUS



Young and brave: a boy makes his first jump from a platform which collapsed just as the vine tightened.

not they succeed. The old men with more than 20 dives behind them ensure that everything is done correctly. They rely on their spirits to tell them if there is any danger.

The drama is heightened as dark clouds roll in. Tropical downpours are interspersed with patches of brilliant sunshine, but the deluge doesn't dampen the enthusiasm of the dancers.

Taro leaves become umbrellas and the wet, shining bodies continue with their rhythmic movements. The tension rises as the jumpers go higher. By the time the last diver reaches his platform the crowd is in an ecstatic state — a frenzy of song, dance and whistling.

The last man enjoys the attention. He has done this before and takes his time, moving his hands confidently to the song. His muscular body, covered in coconut oil, gleams when the sun flickers onto it.

He claps his hands and lets his head fall back. His hands cover his face. Concentrate now. He shoots out like a rocket and becomes a dark shadow racing towards the ground. The vine takes the strain and his black, curly hair briefly kisses the earth.

A perfect dive!

The crowd is overjoyed. There will be plenty of yams this year. And the last man has proven that he is the bravest of the brave. □



Encouragement: men beat the ground with sticks, sing, chant and whistle.

VANUATU



Educational play: Mighty Hawk and Magic Fish fight Mr Kill-The-World and his robot assistant, Fosters, in an environmental battle

Lessons on life and death

WHEN Charlie Falau fell in love with Nora Gorden it seemed like the beginning of a fairytale romance. Nora was a nurse and Falau, young and promising, had a good job in the bank. Falau smiled a lot. Life, he thought, was going to be good.

But things changed a few weeks later when he asked Nora for sex. The nurse said no. Falau asked again . . . and again. Nora instead asked for an AIDS test. "Why an AIDS test?" asked Falau, angry. "I don't have AIDS!" But Nora stood her ground: no test, no sex.

When Falau finally did have his test, it was positive, the result of a casual sexual encounter some years earlier during a drunken night out with friends. The love story that had started out so sweetly turned sour. Falau lost his job, his friends, and broke up with Nora. In the end he lost everything and died.

This story of love and death was played out on the stage at Malapoa College

on the outskirts of the Vanuatu capital of Port Vila. The message was powerful. It was produced and presented by *Wan Smolbag Theatre*, Vanuatu's first fulltime theatre company.

Wan Smolbag was founded in February 1989. Initially, it was an escape route for young jobless men and women and was the brainchild of Englishman Peter Walker and his wife Jo Doris who teaches

English at Malapoa. Walker has had acting experience in London and, later, Zimbabwe where he helped run a community theatre for school children. It was from his Zimbabwe's Kanyama Productions that Walker "pinched" *Wan Smolbag's* theme for their first production, a short play based on the goodness of boiling drinking water.

As in the AIDS play, *Wan Smolbag* does not perform in fancy studios with fancy lighting and expensive backdrops. The group draws its strength from performing in unlikely locations; under the breadfruit tree in the village at dusk or in the village square where the whole world is a stage. Their message is always educational; why people should boil drinking water, why a condom can prevent the spread of AIDS, the environment. Their longest play is an environmental pantomime for primary schools which was commissioned by the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP). This often involves children in the acting area, helping Mighty Hawk and Magic Fish fight Mr Kill-The-World and his robot assistant, Fosters.

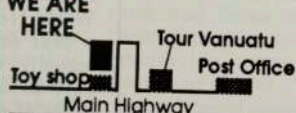
With the absence of television in Vanuatu and the inaccessibility of expensive video facilities, *Wan*



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VANUATU

Smolbag plays a key role in the country's visual education programme. Its immediate objectives are to bring important issues to the attention of villagers and to act as an educational back-up service for the Health Department, the Department of Community Development & Women's Affairs, and Non-Government Organisations.

"*Wan Smolbag* is not just a performance group," said Walker, actor and group leader. "We also teach drama and the result is three or four drama groups in Abrym," one of the bigger islands north of the capital Port Vila. Their biggest project now involves working on a cultural history play on Vanuatu to cover blackbirding, the history of plantations which thrived before independence in 1980, and traditional dances.

The five fulltime members of the group share a diverse background and joined to *Wan Smolbag* after having aimlessly wandered from job to job. The cast:

- Charlie Falau is in his early 20s and is from the island of Ambrym. Falau did secondary education in Fiji and returned to Vanuatu to work for the Tagabe Agricultural Centre on the main island of Efate, taking blood samples from cows and bulls. He joined *Wan Smolbag* as a part-time and stayed on fulltime.

- Jo Jeffred is also from Ambrym. He attended University of the South Pacific in Suva for a year and left after failing his exam. He attended Futa Helu's Atenisi Institute in Tonga and joined *Wan Smolbag* fulltime. He does a lot of the administration work and was in Melbourne recently for two months on the *Beyond Borders* cultural programme.

- Pirre Lict is a francophone halfcaste who trained as an electrician but ended up not being able to keep a job. He joined *Wan Smolbag* in 1989 and is the group's one-man band.

- Nora Gorden is the only woman in the group and perhaps the most powerful performer. She is originally from Pangu village on the main island of Efate and speaks French and English fluently. She was born into an Anglophone family and learnt French enough to teach it at high school. She had no permanent work until joining *Wan Smolbag* last August.

All the members of the group work fulltime. Their salaries are paid by the Australian Community Aid Abroad. The World Health Organisation gives \$4000 a year for works on AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. SPREP gave \$3000 for a play on environmental issues. *Wan Smolbag* is seeking sponsorship for a regional tour this year. With the power of their message they would be a hit abroad. □

WESTERN SAMOA

Slow suicides in Samoa

By Ulafala Aiavao

WESTERN Samoan officials trying to combat the country's high suicide rate want to revive a suicide awareness programme — and limit access to the weedkiller paraquat.

Paraquat is the most popular suicide method in Western Samoa, and one of the most agonising, with some taking several days or more than a week to die. Since the first paraquat suicide was recorded here in 1973 more than 277 Samoans have died by paraquat alone.

Last year Western Samoa (population 160,000) listed 27 suicides, 19 of them by paraquat. Medical statistician Vili Ropati told a seminar in Apia in May that statistics in past years may be under-reported because data from rural medical centres was incomplete. Nurses in charge of district centres often list cases of paraquat poisoning as renal failure, because they are only required to list the final diagnosis.

The worst year for suicide statistics was in 1981 when authorities recorded 49, (including 39 by paraquat). The rate of suicide for young males aged 15 to 24 years was three times higher than the same group in the next highest country.

The suicide rate, and number, has declined since the 1981 high but "It is still too high," said Dr David Parkinson, the World Health Organisation (WHO) resident representative in Apia.

Officials are aware that the high suicide rate is not reflected in the large Samoan communities overseas, but there are no easy answers to explain why. Attention is now being shifted to preventive programmes.

Dr John Bowles, a WHO consultant at the seminar who worked in Western Samoa in 1981 to 1984, has suggested better controls on access to paraquat.

Agriculture officials have resisted calls for a ban on paraquat, widely used as a weed control method by farmers. The Agriculture Department argues that removing paraquat only makes a potential suicide seek another method.

Dr Bowles told the seminar that this is not necessarily the case. He said that in England in the 1970s a popular suicide method was to stick one's head in a gas oven. The fuel suppliers switched from coal gas to North Sea gas which Dr Bowles said had no carbon monoxide. There was no jump in suicide

by other methods, when the fuel switch was made.

"Western Samoa is the second country to show this," said Dr Bowles. Statistics support him at the moment.

When paraquat suicides declined after the 1981 high, there was no appreciable rise in suicide by other methods such as hanging, shooting and poisoning. Nobody knows how long this will last.

Suicide prevention programmes will face obstacles. Samoan culture frowns on young people who ask questions of their elders. This causes problems for programmes aimed at encouraging people to seek outside help when they are under great stress. Another problem is that publicity about suicide deaths is sometimes blamed for "copycat" suicides.

Officials know that nearly half those who take paraquat actually survived because they spat out the tiny amount they held in their mouths, or because the liquid was in a very diluted form. But they prefer to leave this fact out of the prevention programmes as it is easy to miscalculate what constitutes a fatal dose.

Increasing stress on Samoans has been blamed on various factors, including rapid social changes, breakup of extended family units via mi-

gration, inability to communicate problems... even a three-month public servant's strike in 1981.

The senior nurse in charge of the WS Health Department's psychiatric service, Sister Iokapeta Enoka, listed several categories for those who use, or try to use, suicide as a means of communicating. For some, suicide is a means of expressing emotions of anger or loneliness. Others use it to gain attention or escape marital, financial or social situations.

Some fieldworkers worry that a few potential suiciders view suicide as an acceptable way to resolve a conflict. The theory here is that Western Samoa's devout Christianity may, by perverse logic, lead a troubled person to view Christ's sacrifice for the world's sins as an example i.e. taking a burden with them and being admired for it. The theory fails to explain why such a person ignores the strong opposition of any church to suicide.

Survivors of suicide attempts often say they did not really want to die. The challenge is to convince the small group with suicidal tendencies they can seek help from friends or support groups. □

It sometimes expresses anger, isolation or a need to escape

Shortlived victory after election

THE man who defeated Western Samoa's former Opposition Leader Tuiatua Tufua Tamasese in the April 5 general election has himself lost his seat after a court case.

The Supreme Court ruled on June 12 that the election of Mananuo Salale was void, following hearings into a petition filed by two voters who alleged casts of bribery and treating in the Anoamaa Sasae electorate.

Moananu, a retired postal supervisor, had been an MP for less than five weeks (the MPs were sworn in on May 7).

Chief Justice Anthony Ryan upheld the first part of the petition calling for Moananu's election to be void. But the CJ rejected a separate section which had asked the former Opposition Leader to be immediately declared the rightful holder of the seat.

Instead, the Supreme Court ordered a by-election.

The case was the second election petition to be heard by the court, but the first to involve a reversal of the April general election result.

An earlier petition hearing, filed by the former Speaker of the house who also lost his seat to a newcomer, was dismissed for lack of evidence. □

GST widened for broader tax base

THE Western Samoan government is to expand a 10 per cent Goods and Sales Tax to include professionals, some forms of insurance, and tourist support services. GST is currently applied only to a small number of items in hotels and restaurants.

The change takes effect on July 1. The professional classes that will be affected include law, valuation, consultant engineering, surveying, pharmacists, insurance, medicine, dentistry, architecture, auditing and accounting.

Finance Minister Tuilaepa Sailele said in his budget statement tabled on June 6 that government wanted to widen the tax base, to ease the burden on salary/wage earners and companies. There are plans to introduce a universal consumption tax early next year which will cover all sectors of the economy. In his budget, Tuilaepa said total planned expenditure would be at a record WST222.59 million for the fiscal year starting July 1.

Balance of payments were expected to show a reduced surplus during the fiscal year. Manufacturing and tourism would receive the closest attention, he said. □

Inquiry turns spotlight on PNG aid

AUSTRALIAN helicopters given to the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, the secessionist rebellion on Bougainville and gun-smuggling through the Torres Strait and PNG to the pro-independence melanesian guerillas in the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya are all issues you would expect to be at the top of the agenda for Australia's parliamentary inquiry into its relations with PNG.

But while the inquiry, which is being conducted by the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, is not shying away from them, there has been an unexpected lack of heat in the debate.

Instead, many of those presenting submissions to the inquiry focussed on the management of Australia's massive aid to PNG, and following from that, how Australia can strengthen its relations with its nearest neighbour and former colony without creating dependence.

Overwhelmingly that money goes into consolidated revenue as budget aid.

The move to budget aid was intended to give PNG's post-independence government maximum possible control over its development.

Now, more than 15 years down the track, there is growing feeling that the massive infusion of budget aid, which still accounts for more than 15 per cent of PNG's annual revenue, is the cause of many of PNG's problems; that is swelling the public sector and public sector pay packets, making it impossible for the private sector to compete.

Among the more than 80 submissions to the parliamentary inquiry, there has been almost unanimous support for a phase out of budgetary assistance in favour of funding specific projects.

Such a move is expected to go hand in hand with a lucrative minerals boom in PNG and a substantial cut in the total funds flowing from Canberra.

The question is just how soon budget assistance should be phased out.

Although prime ministers Hawke and Namaliu have nominated the year 2005 as a tentative cut-off date there have been a few signs so far that there is enough political will to effect the huge changes required.

Changes which will affect almost every government department and which at this stage are still predicted on the minerals and energy boom predicted for the mid to late 1990's.

The most radical phase-out proposal has come from the influential Canberra-based Centre for Development Studies (NCDS).

It has recommended that it take place over five years beginning in 1994 whether or not the minerals boom pays the dividends expected.

The centre's Director, Professor Helen Hughes, told the inquiry that rather than giving PNG's decisionmakers freedom to exercise their independence, budget aid was creating dependence on Australia.

It was now, she said, "the most important issue in Australia/Papua New Guinea relations".

According to Professor Hughes, PNG's economy is in "extremely bad shape".

While it receives budget support "it will never need to take the politically hard decisions about its expenditure" on wages productivity, education or infrastructure.

AUSTRALIA



**JEMIMA
GARRETT**

Professor Hughes drew a parallel with the situation of Taiwan and South Korea in the 1950's.

Today, Taiwan and South Korea are two of Asia's success stories but, as Professor Hughes pointed out, that was far from the case four decades ago.

"They had budget aid in the 1950s and at the end of the 1950s they were both regarded as basket cases," Hughes told the parliamentary inquiry.

"At that point the United States decided to cut them off budget aid and reduce aid substantially. The result was that they had to take some hard decisions and you have the phenomenal growth of those two economies until they are both catching up with other industrial countries."

While few would agree that conditions in PNG are comparable with those in very mercantile cultures such as South Korea and Taiwan, the point behind Professor Hughes comments is widely acknowledged.

The question then arises as to how the new project aid should be spent.

The non-government aid agencies would like to see more money going to small-scale projects which attack the root causes of major social problems such as law and order, illiteracy and poor health which are undermining the capacity of the PNG economy.

The Melbourne-based Overseas Service Bureau which co-ordinates the work of Australian volunteers cites the Ex-Criminal Self Help Group in the Western Highlands province as the sort of success story Australia should be fostering.

There a few hundred former rascals have come together to work on community projects assisted by an Australian volunteer. That project's emphasis on direct help for the ordinary people of PNG, 85 per cent of whom still live in the rural areas, is one all non-government organisations would applaud.

Economists such as Professor Ross Garnaut, a senior economic adviser to Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke, stress the importance of big spending on infrastructure.

Garnaut, like many of the big companies which made submissions to the inquiry, has a good deal of faith in PNG's economic management but points out it will take several billion dollars to bring its infrastructure up to South-East Asian standards.

According to Garnaut the amount of resources available to provide infrastructure "will depend to a considerable extent on decisions about Australian aid".

For Professor Hughes and her colleagues, a real reduction in the amount of aid is as crucial as the sectors it flows into.

Less aid would bring down the value of the Kina and of wages, providing the conditions for well-targeted exports such as cut flowers and pot plants for markets in Europe and Japan to flourish.

Professor Hughes says such a strategy could lead to an annual growth rate as high as 9 per cent a year.

The parliamentary inquiry is due to table its recommendations late this year. □

SPORT

Missing by a mile

By Loveni Enari

LOOKING at the results of the Fijian's three-match tour to New Zealand last month one could sum up their performances by as accentuating the positive and eliminating the negative... or "almost but not quite there".

As usual the Fijians showed they can score tries from any position on the field and their oft-quoted "natural flair" excited the crowds. But they also pulled a new trick out of the bag when they showed the benefits of increased attention to the intricacies of forward play — though with the likes of 2.04m (six foot seven), 128kg lock, Aisake Nadolo, there isn't much that's intricate about this Fijian pack.

They outweighed the Auckland pack by an astounding 77kg, and this sort of muscle and the focus on lineouts and scrums prompted team manager, Peter Hughes, to predict a Fijian win over Auckland. It's part of Eden Park history now that Fiji lost 36-6 and in doing so boosted Auckland's impressive home record to 38 consecutive wins. The last time Auckland lost at home was back in 1987 when their All Blacks were away allowing Canterbury to sneak by them.

Boasting such an impressive record, why then did Hughes so boldly predict a Fijian win? And why is coach Viriviri finding it difficult to conceal a smile when he talks about this New Zealand tour that ended with just one win from three matches?

For both men it all comes back to that summing up of "almost but not quite there". At this stage in the game "almost" translates to good enough. The "game" referred to is of course the Rugby World Cup in October — and with four months to go, both men are satisfied Fiji is on course for a strong showing.

"To me the whole tour has been a success," said Viriviri before departing New Zealand for the last match on their tour against Australian provincial champions, Queensland. "We came here for the experience and to get the match fitness we are lacking. That experience meant we achieved what we hoped to.

"Technically also we have achieved a lot. There has been a lot of improvement in the scrums and lineouts and in that sense it

was a good build up for the World Cup. Of course it was demoralising for the players when they saw the scoreboard at the end of the game. But for what we came for they should be happy.

"The players are fit but not match fit. They still need plenty more matches under their belts. For so early in the season to attain the standards we have I feel we are doing exceptionally well."

Positive words indeed, and Hughes echoes Viriviri's feelings. You get the feeling if his side faced Auckland tomorrow, Hughes would double any bets he may have put on the first game.

"I did think Fiji would win," said Hughes. "Mainly because of the work that had been done on the scrums and lineouts and because of the size of our forward pack. This is the biggest Fijian team we've ever had and we had moved out of the learning stage into the

correcting stage.

"And I felt the spirit in the team. The confidence was there but the bodies on the field didn't respond. Mentally we were well prepared but our big guys found the Auckland pace a bit too much and so presumably Fiji now have the big forwards capable of matching the 'super-powers' such as New Zealand and England. But to many of the crowd at Eden Park, Fiji seems to have acquired the extra beef at the expense of their traditional flair."

Against Auckland they seemed intent on winning the game up front and many a rolling maul was attempted, only to crumble at the feet of All Blacks like Steve McDowell and Olo Brown, while their backs were starved of the call cut twice. But if that's a criticism, it's the type which doesn't worry Viriviri. For many years now the Fijian style of rugby has been criticised for a perceived lack of commitment and attention to techniques in the forward exchanges.

That often has proved to be the undoing of many a good Fijian side. But under Viriviri, and technical director, George Simpkin, that sort of criticism has hopefully passed. Viriviri doesn't feel their traditional flair will be sacrificed in improving their forward pack.

"At the moment we're looking to strike the ideal balance between big forwards who can compete in the tight exchanges and the fast running backs that throw the ball around. I'm really confident we're on that road... if it's just entertaining the crowd then we'll have to discard it."

Ironically, in their last match of the tour against Australian provincial champions Queensland, the home side turned on both winning and entertaining rugby, thrashing the tourists 40-13. Three big losses doesn't provide many fond memories but, surprise, surprise, Viriviri and Co are sticking to their tune. They believe they lost momentum early in the first half whenever referee Brian Leask failed to play the advantage.

According to Viriviri: "We thought at least three times tries could have been scored."

Switching the focus away from their side and eliminating that negativity they were "almost there" in many facets of their play. But not quite.

Maybe they need to be reminded that no matter how much the positive is accentuated and highlighted, missing by an inch is as good as missing by a mile. □



Not quite there: the Fiji team is a crowd pleaser with talent like Waisele Serevi, but it failed to notch up the match wins in New Zealand

SPORT

Security challenge for chairman

WHEN high profile former politician, Sir Anthony Siaguru, left Papua New Guinea last June to take up his new job as Deputy Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, he left the South Pacific Games Foundation without a chairman.

The Foundation chose a quiet chicken farmer and banana grower to replace Sir Anthony: Bart Philemon.

Philemon, 45, has been with the Foundation since April, 1989. When he became chairman in June, 1990, his first major dilemma was time. Much of the work seemed to be lacking with a controversy surrounding awarding of tenders and contracts for the Games village in Port Moresby. His second priority was to ensure the different sporting bodies trained hard to ensure the host country was champions.

But the challenge was made bigger by publicity given to PNG's crime problem. Several countries demanded guarantees that their teams would be safe, and he was forced to set up a security committee and ask the government for an additional K1 million for security arrangements. It was granted and a campaign to convince participating countries their teams were guaranteed safety at the games and their

accommodation sites. Finally, in April Philemon said all that could be done to ensure safety had been done and returned his attention to the venues and teams, with 14 sub-committees and about 1500 workers working full time.

In 1980, Philemon, who comes from Bulibum in Morobe province, was chairman of the organising committee of the third South Pacific Festival of Arts staged in Papua New Guinea with 1700 participants from all over the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand.

From 1982 to 1986, Philemon was chairman of the National Airline Commission at a time when Air Niugini made a record loss of K7 million. With his appointment KLM was brought in on a control management basis resulting in a record profit of K4 million in 1985.

Philemon is a director of Kambang Holdings, the business arm of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, a director of Niugini Table Birds, an alternate director of Oil Search Limited, and a director of PNG Gravel Ltd, a Butibum

village company. He is also a director of the Fresh Fruit Development Corporation, funded by the New Zealand government to establish an information system about fresh fruit cultivation, harvesting and marketing in PNG. He was educated in Queensland, Australia from 1958 to 1965, and was captain of the undefeated rugby union team at St Peter's Lutheran College in 1964.

In 1966, Philemon attended the University of Papua New Guinea while training to take part in the 2nd South Pacific Games. But he injured himself playing and couldn't make the team.

He studied arts for two years, then worked at the UPNG Administration from 1968 to 1973, when he was appointed services manager. In 1973, he left the university and joined Trans Australian Airlines (TTA) as a sales representative. In November, TAA and Ansett Airlines amalgamated and formed Air Niugini. In 1975, he was appointed the second national port manager in Mount Hagen. That year, he returned to Port Moresby and became secretary to the National Airline Commission, and later Assistant General Manager until he left in 1980. □



South Pacific Games '91

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SPORT

Operation Gold . . . a mould for PNG

By Frank Senge

WHEN housewife, Geua Tau came out of obscurity to win Papua New Guinea's first ever gold medal at the Auckland Commonwealth Games, tears filled Bart Philemon's eyes.

For Philemon and very many Papua New Guineans who also shed tears, it was not Geua's spectacular bowling which saw her demolish some of the world's best. It was the way the PNG flag was draped around her after her win and the way the National Anthem was played to the world as she took the stand.

Now, Chairman of the South Pacific Games Foundation, Bart Philemon and his team of officials refer to the 9th South Pacific Games as "Operation Gold" — with a similar motive in mind. They want PNG sports men and women to win as many gold medals as possible.

But more so, they want the games to be a major public relations exercise for the country.

With its public image overseas trained by wide publicity of crime problems besetting this nation of nearly 4 million people, the games could have come at no better times.

Security and preparations. "We must clean up our cities", Finance and Planning Minister Paul Pora told a gathering of PNG Urban Councils in April.

"We must get ready to greet our neighbours from the South Pacific. We must clear our image problem quickly".

Ironically, the image problem has nearly brought the preparations for the Games to a standstill. Early this year, four countries — Fiji, Tahiti, Western Samoa and New Caledonia — have written or made personal representation asking for assurances that their teams would be safe.

New Caledonia and Tahitian



Ready for the athletes: The stadium in Port Moresby for the South Pacific Games

representatives met with Deputy Prime Minister, Ted Diro (now suspended) and Games Officials who assured them that adequate security would be provided for the Games.

However, by then it was too late. The

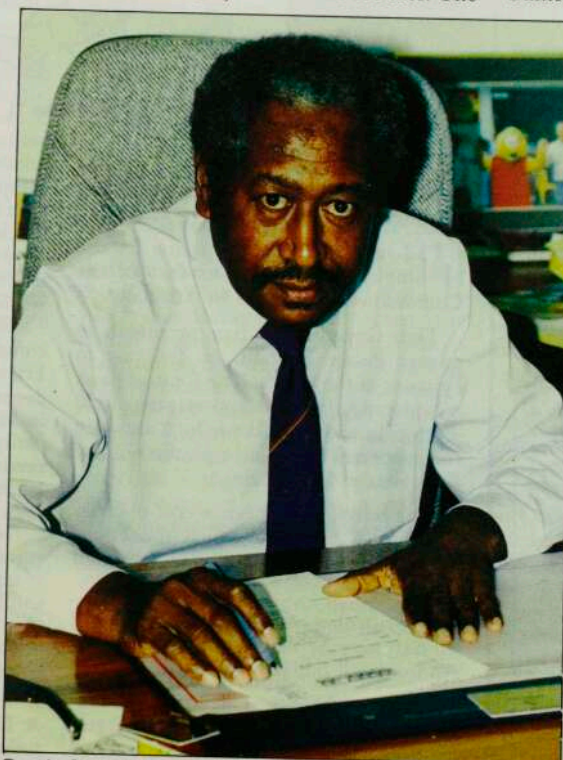
two stadiums at Port Moresby and Lae were nearly completed. The Games village in Port Moresby and the renovation of the Lae Technical College to accommodate teams had started. The SP Games Foundation had spent most of a K1 million raised mainly through private sponsorship.

The Government threw a 8 am to 5 pm curfew in Port Moresby, Lae, Popondetta and Mt Hagen where crime was prevalent.

Upon request from the Games Foundation the Government allocated an additional K1 million for communication equipment for Police and Defence Force Personnel who will provide security during the games.

There will be 1000 police men and women, 250 police reservists and 260 defence force soldiers providing 24 hour security at all the games venues, during transportation between venues and at accommodation sites. Every vehicle to be used in the Games has been fitted with Police radios.

Said chairman Philemon: "Security surveys have been carried out at all the competition venues and training centres in the two cities where the Games will be held. I can assure you every precaution



Ready for the public: Foundation chairman Bart Philemon believes safety precautions are well in hand

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SPORT

will be taken to ensure everyone's safety.

"We have gone to the extent of fitting police radios in all vehicles used to transport all athletes and officials during their stay in PNG as well as placing security men on each bus."

Philemon said Prime Minister Rabbie Namaliu has spoken on a government to government level with governments of all participating countries.

He said with about 3000 athletes and officials expected and 1500 security forces deployed the ratio is one to two.

And so far it seems to be working. Seventeen of the 20 countries which nominated to attend the Games have confirmed that they will send teams with Wallis and Futuna, Kiribati and Palau uncertain at the moment, Philemon said.

After initial complaints early this year that preparations were falling behind schedule, Philemon is confident that all venues will be ready well before the start of the Games on September 7.

The Port Moresby Games village, the indoor and main stadium, synthetic track, dining motel and light towers have either been completed and handed over to the Foundation or nearing completion.

In Lae the main stadium has been handed over and only the weightlifting and volleyball venues have yet to be completed. Upgrading of

the Lae Technical College to accommodate 1000 athletes and officials is also nearing completion.

Philemon said that preparing for the SP Games was similar to that of the Commonwealth Games in Auckland.

The Government has promised to release Public Servants on full pay to help out at the games. The Central Bank has already designed and released a 50 Toea coin with the Games logo and is in the process of designing a plastic K2 and K10 for the Games also.

One setback has been a cost overrun by some K2 million which the Foundation is now trying to recoup through cost cuts.

The opening ceremony will take place on Saturday September 7, 1991. Prince Andrew will officially open the Games.

The eight South Pacific Games attracted 12 countries and was the largest to date. If all countries which have nominated send teams, the games in PNG will be the largest.

American Samoa has indicated it will be sending a team of 190 to compete in athletics, basketball, board sailing, boxing, golf, hobie cats, lawn tennis, netball, softball, table tennis, volleyball and weightlifting. They are traditionally strong in basketball and boxing.

Cook Islands will be sending a team of 91 to compete in athletic, bowls, boxing, golf, hobie cats, lawn tennis, netball, rugby union and weightlifting.

The Federated States of Micronesia will be making their first appearance in the South Pacific Games, entering teams in basketball and volleyball.

They hosted the Micronesian Games early this year. They will bring a team of 50 to PNG.

Fiji will send one of the largest teams with 240 Sports men and women expected to participate. They are expected to provide strong competition in athletics, bowls, basketball, rugby union, soccer and netball in addition to fielding teams in almost all events.

French Polynesia is expected to send 283 people to compete in 15 of the 18 sports. South Pacific Games Council President, Dr Lysis Lavigne is from this country and at the last council meeting in April, French Polynesia (Tahiti) won the rights to host the 10th South Pacific Games in 1995.

Other countries that have

nominated teams are Guam with 228 to compete in 14 games; Marshall Islands with 23 to compete in two Games; Nauru will send 91 to compete in seven Games; New Caledonia, host of the last Games will send 307 to compete in 15 Games; Norfolk Island will send 30 to compete in 10 Games; Niue will send 11 people to compete in two Games; Tonga, the Friendly Islands to send 211 to contest 12 event; Vanuatu will send 196 to compete in 11 events; Western Samoa will send a team of 207, and Solomon Islands will send 247 to compete in 17 events. Palau, Wallis and Futuna and Kiribati have indicated they will attend but have not yet reconfirmed their participation with the Games organisers.

All figures given are subject to further confirmation.

Papua New Guinea as host nation will compete in all 18 sports, fielding 422 competitors.

This is the first Game hosted in PNG since Independence in 1975 and authorities are hopeful, it will lead the medal tally for the first time. □



South Pacific Games '91

Journey through island politics

Tuturani, a political journey in the South Pacific, by Scott Malcomson, published by Hamish Hamilton, 15.99 pounds. Published March 1991.

By Nicholas Rothwell

ALLURING and exotic, the Pacific islands tantalise something in the minds of young, inquiring westerners. In recent years, in place of Melville, Loti and Stevenson, have come film-makers, anthropologists and those generous grazers of the surface, journalists.

One such is the likeable, earnest American, Scott Malcomson, engagingly described by his publishers as a "senior editor" on the *Village Voice* newspaper, a free-thinking, free-wheeling New York weekly. Youthful, blessed with a powerful faith in the redeeming powers of his profession, Malcomson quartered the Pacific islands during a few months in the late 1980's, touching base with most of the familiar informants of the itinerant Pacific journalist.

The result is *Tuturani*, a gentle attempt to uncover the thick grime of colonialist history that still encrusts many of today's Pacific societies. Malcomson is no master of the intricacies of radical politics in the Pacific realm — the title surely belongs to *Pacific Islands Monthly's* David Robie, who has devoted decades to this cause — yet he is able to catch the prevailing winds with some aplomb. He explains his method; "In the process of writing about other places I seemed to be writing myself out of the relatively stable, if threatened, discourses of EuroAmerican culture and many of the ideas supporting them." His journey, he hoped, might help him break free of the traditional formula of travel writing, and find new ways of foreign corresponding.

Yet Malcomson's brief foray through the islands rests on two unstated assumptions that are, at best, debatable: first, that small societies throw up relatively simple political structures, easily comprehended by the outsider; and second, that "western" political and party rivalries provide a valuable key to the evolution of Pacific societies. In fact, the tiniest of Pacific Islands societies can be as baffling in their hidden workings as the most technologically advanced western nation, and their wellsprings as hidden as those of a communist monolith.

Malcomson's travels take him to nations such as the Marshalls and Palau, where standard journalistic wisdom offers a tale of American colonialism, or

Vanuatu and New Caledonia, which bustle with the complexities of past European stewardships. Roman Bendor, Grace Molisa and other such island intermediaries guided him through their worlds with patient tolerance, until Malcomson was in a position to piece together a fair account. Judgemental enough to care, intelligent enough to realise his own ignorance, he makes an agreeable companion for readers. Yet, as with many a young radical, his agenda palls after a few stops along the journey. Travel is used as a screen to consider the self, and the first point on the agenda is the traditional one of the new author — namely, how to escape the conventional agenda.

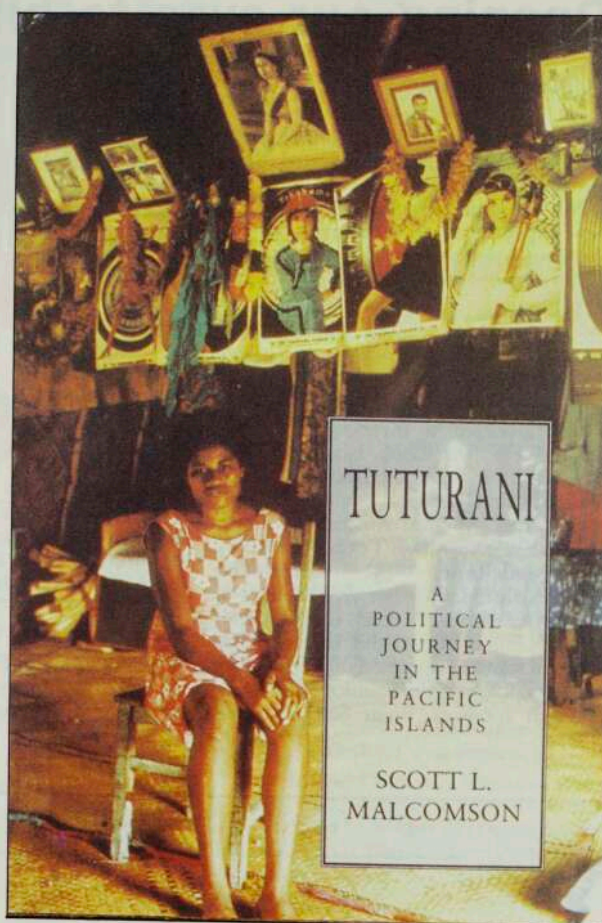
Time is the great foe of the travelling writer. Thus, Malcomson's visit to Fiji nestles in the shadow of the two military coups. Port Vila is on the brink of the late 1988 constitutional crisis when the author passes through, while Palau is about to be convulsed by the suicide of President Lazarus Salil. New Caledonia has yet to witness the murder of Jean-Marie Tjibaou. Such transformative events have lent some of Malcomson's reflection a slightly dated quality, although often he catches with uncanny precision the mood of places he visits.

Less fortunate are Malcomson's 'island-hops' — to places such as Kiribati which he assesses after an overnight stop on the trusty AMI through-flight from Majuro to Nadi.

Like many a francophone, Malcomson feels at home in the Pacific's two most troubling dependencies, French Polynesia and New Caledonia. These are particularly attractive for Anglo-Saxon reporters, who are able to sit in judge-

ment both on colonialism and French cultural imperialism — easy and inviting targets. After an account of the ravages inflicted by American stewardship of the Pacific, the implied reproach contained in these pages of Malcomson's work seems a trifle overdone.

Malcomson's program sketch for this book solemnly announces his intention to examine the process by which the islands of the Pacific give westerners the source material for their own tales and self-images. They have been, he says, "a provider of pleasant white myths and a playground for the symptoms of unpleasant ones; sanguinary wars were fought there, nuclear devices are still tested among the palms and beaches, geopolitical dramas are played out, and the mysterious god of economic development receives its offerings." This journalist and writer embarked on a journey to "places long considered pre-civilised to find a bit of what post-civilised life might be like". Further journeys in the Pacific would surely uncover to his eyes ample evidence of high civilisations flourishing in the bright noon of the present day. □



HEALTH

Opening our eyes to blindness

By Martin Tiffany

EIGHTY per cent of all blindness in the Pacific could be eliminated in the not too distant future.

Not by some miracle or a wonderful, new, expensive medical discovery but for the simple reason that 80 per cent of all blindness is preventable or curable.

The wheels are already in motion to prevent the preventable and cure the curable. In mid-May the Pacific Islands Council For Blind Persons (PIC) held its first annual general meeting in Suva, Fiji, which included a three-day planning session. Fiji, the Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and Western Samoa and representatives of the Australian South Pacific Eye Consultant Team (ASPECT) of Melbourne, the Christoffel-Blindenmission of Germany, Foresight of Australia, Hilton/Perkins International of the United States, the International Council for the Education of the Visually Handicapped regional office in Australia, and sponsors, Sight Savers of the



Hope for the blind: Dr Bage Yominao of the Pacific Islands Council for Blind Persons examines a woman in Asaro in the Eastern Highland Province in PNG

United Kingdom, took part.

Bill Winkley of Sight Savers has been in Suva for the past year working at establishing a permanent regional PIC

office there. An executive director and a training officer will be appointed for PIC soon and an office should be running by January 1992.

PIC aims to ensure that needless blindness is prevented or corrected, and that incurably blind people receive appropriate education and rehabilitation services. Organisational development services, technical assistance, and staff training will be provided by PIC to government bodies and non-government organisations in member countries.

According to Winkley, they want to train locals of each country to run their own organisation and be self-sufficient under the guidance of PIC. He said in Vanuatu a non-doctor has been trained to do cataract surgery, and this was the answer for the other islands.

Winkley said that in PNG, where he spent four years, 5 per cent of the 4000 people tested had cataracts and 51 per cent of people in their 50s had them. The situation was similar in the Solomons because people took for granted that when you got old, you went blind, he said. An estimated 20 million people world-wide are made blind by cataracts, yet this kind of blindness can be relatively easily cured by operations.

However, education in basic hygiene and a good diet also works wonders.

In Kiribati, lack of Vitamin A has led to blindness, mainly because Kiribati was an atoll and vegetables containing Vitamin A couldn't be grown there, he said. Vitamin A tablets are being distributed there, work will then be done to improve diet.

Another blinding disease is trachoma, associated with overcrowding and lack of hygiene and particularly clean water. Better eye hygiene is needed.

Apart from Fiji and PNG, services for blind people in the Pacific are minimal. PIC wants to deinstitutionalise blindness, and break down stereotypes of the blind as useless through schemes such as teacher training for integrated education. PIC wants to conduct community-based rehabilitation so blind children can be taught skills appropriate to their living environment, not be taken off to some institution to learn irrelevant skills.

PIC's aim is organisation, development and training which will begin with primary eye care. Its most effective strategies will be to invest in "people power". They help to train local people, from villagers to hospital staff, who will give a lifetime of service to their communities. A number of the council members are blind and preference will be given to blind people and/or those experienced in providing services to the blind or those at risk, when PIC's executive director is chosen.

The new slogan for their 1991 campaign is "Please don't turn a blind eye." PIC is proving that it, at least, certainly is not doing that. □

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PACIFIC ISLANDS

M O N T H L Y

BUSINESS

No plan, little growth

By BERYL COOK

THE good news for everyone is: the recession may be over later this year. The bad news for Fiji is: lack of a tourism master plan has led to unfocussed, knee-jerk reaction to crises; failure to manage the effects of tourism on the environment; and a lower percentage visitor arrival growth than any other country in the region for the decade to 1986.

One of Europe's leading tourism industry economists and consultants, Esmond Devas, said at the Fiji Tourism Convention on June 13-15 that virtually all the major economies would pick up in 1992 and tourist demand would start to regain strength. The eight recessions since World War II had lasted an average of 11 months and a maximum of 16 months, suggesting "we might reasonably expect to see firm signs of resumed growth sometime this year," he said.

Chairman and chief executive of Blue Lagoon Cruises and Tapa Tours, David Wilson, said Fiji's "uncoordinated knee-jerk solutions even when the crisis was predictable months before", had demonstrated its lack of a vision and plan.

Wilson said Fiji had recorded the lowest percentage visitor arrival growth in the whole region for the decade to 1986. In that period its visitor arrivals grew by 49 per cent from 170,000 to 258,000 but percentage increases for other countries were: Australia, up by 153 per cent from 563,000 to 1.43 million; New Zealand up by 89 per cent from 389,000 to 733,000; Indonesia up by 80 per cent from 456,000 to 825,000; Singapore up by 111 per cent from 1,506,000 to 3,191,000; Malaysia up by 65 per cent from 638,000 to 1,053,000; Western Samoa up by 55 per cent from 29,435 to 45,567; Tahiti up by 76 per cent from 91,475 to 161,238; Cook Islands up by 114 per cent from 14,584 to 31,246.

The industry had "drifted along year after year without a definitive plan". Instead Government, the national carrier Air Pacific, and the tourism plant through industry associations should identify the type of tourism Fiji wanted, and a short and long-term plan for tourism. A precise strategy and a cohesive and effective industry framework for management, control and guidance of tourism — basics in any commercial

organisation, were needed. A fully commercially accountable Statutory Corporation, perhaps known as the Fiji Tourism Authority, could be established by Government, and the private sector could act as its mentor with a single, strong Fiji National Tourism Association.

President of Pacific Asia Travel Association and General Manager of the New Zealand Tourist and Publicity Department, Neil Plimmer, said each country needed a tourism vision for help regional cooperation. He suggested overseas joint marketing efforts particularly in more distant markets such as Europe and North America, rather than Singapore, New Zealand and Australia.

Jean-Michel Cousteau, executive vice-president and director of the Cousteau Society and son of ocean explorer Jacques, urged Pacific island nations to develop tourism management plans and legislation to protect the environment.

Tourism had become one of the world's largest industries, employing 56 million people with receipts expected to reach \$3 trillion by 1996, he said.

But developers and tourists were often ignorant of how to enjoy natural resources such as the reef and mangroves without damaging or destroying them.

"Some places and things we are loving to death," he said. "It's time to begin to manage our love." □

Expo effort could boost trade

REGIONAL sponsorship of the South Pacific Village at World Expo '92 in Spain will pay off in increased tourism and trade, according to co-ordinators of the venture.

A promotions team for Fiji-based Pacific Discoveries Limited (PD) said the number of Australian visitors to Fiji reached a record high during the 1988 Brisbane Expo. The number of visitors to the Expo village is expected to double from 1988 to 2 million, between April 20 and October 12 next year.

Managing director for PD Ltd, Peter Colton, said a Business Visitors Program

to promote trade would be included, effectively providing a South Pacific Trade Commission.

About \$6.5 million is needed to build, transport, set up, staff and run traditional buildings. The EC has donated \$2.2 million, and the Spanish Expo committee has contributed \$1.2 million. Individual country contributions including business sponsorships are provisionally estimated at: Papua New Guinea US\$1.2 million; Fiji US\$900,000; Kiribati US\$50,000; Solomons US\$200,000; Tonga US\$100,000; Tuvalu US\$50,000; Vanuatu US\$200,000; Western Samoa; US\$200,000. □

Nauru tuned in for television

A TELEVISION service for the Republic of Nauru began broadcasting on May 31.

The Nauru Government has signed a contract with Television New Zealand Limited to supply television equipment, technical expertise and programmes to establish and operate the new television service. Nauru will become the third Pacific nation state to receive television after the Cook Islands and Niue. The TVNZ Pacific Service also started a programme service to the Chatham Islands in May. □

BUSINESS

No welcome for Filipino vets

By David North

A CERTAIN type of potential tourist, regarded favorably by the US Supreme Court, has upset some Chamorro organisations.

The visitors would be elderly Filipino males coming to Guam to apply for US citizenship on the grounds that they fought with US forces in the Philippines during World War II.

Congress decided right after World War II to grant citizenship to aliens who fought with the US in the war. Most of the vets had enlisted formally in the US armed forces, most applied on the Mainland, and their cases were handled quickly by the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

But most Filipinos did not fall into this category. They had served with guerilla units, or with more formal entities, but

their records were lost as the Japanese crushed the American Army on Bataan. INS, facing tough decisions about scores of thousands of potential applicants, defined eligibility narrowly, and fought the matter in court literally for decades. Recently INS lost when the Supreme Court decided to extend citizenship to those who had survived: a) the war, and b) the last 46 years.

INS was told to start processing naturalisation applications by the Supreme Court, but administrative details were left to them. INS has resisted the Filipino vets' program for nearly half a century and has no interest in handling applications in the Philippines. It would maximise the number of applicants, and it would have to at least quadruple the size of its tiny staff there.

The closest full-scale INS office is in Agana, Guam. Any new or old US citizen, or permanent resident alien can live in Guam. The Chamorro nationalists are worried that Mainland control of immigration may make them a minority in their own land. INS has shown some willingness to adjust regulations to give Guam some decision-making powers, but has resisted statutory changes.

If the US Government decided to process the Filipino vet's applications on Guam many might stay, the activists concluded. The average age of applicants is probably 70 so naturalisation will be instant (no five years waiting) and the newly-naturalised, full-fledged US citizens will be able to petition INS immediately to bring spouses, then children and grandchildren into the US.

The Chamorro organisations suspect the immigrants' favorite part of the US will be Guam, so they have objected. The resolution should be interesting. □



FORUM SECRETARIAT

VACANCY DIRECTOR, ENERGY DIVISION

Applications are invited from suitably qualified and experienced persons, who must be nationals of a member state of the South Pacific Forum*, for a new position of Director, Energy Division, in the Forum Secretariat.

The Forum Secretariat was established in 1973 by the South Pacific Forum to encourage economic and political cooperation between its member states, and between those states and the more industrialized countries. Under the control of a Secretary General, the Secretariat undertakes a regional work programme covering economic development, legal and political services and the civil aviation, energy, maritime, telecommunications and trade sectors. The Secretariat also has significant responsibilities with regard to ACP/EC regional projects funded under Lome Conventions.

The Energy Division aims to assist Forum Island Countries improve their capabilities to plan and manage their energy sectors. Consisting of three sections — Petroleum, Electric Power and Special Projects (including renewable technologies) — the Division administers a range of activities in the energy sector. It assists in coordinating the activities of other organisations active in regional energy programmes, convenes the annual Regional Energy Meeting, provides technical advice and training services and gathers and disseminates energy information and statistics to member countries.

The Director will be responsible to the Secretary General, through the Deputy Secretary General (Work Programme), for the efficient operation of the Division and the effective implementation of its projects. More specifically, the Director will assist with formulating regional policy initiatives, identifying regional projects, drafting funding proposals, liaising with officials of member countries and with other energy-related agencies, arranging consultancies, organising regional seminars, workshops and other training activities and representing the Secretariat at regional and international meetings dealing with energy matters. In the course of these activities, the appointee will be required to undertake periodic duty travel.

Applicants should have proven ability to manage successfully a regional technical assistance programme and to direct the work of a team of specialists. Experience in administering energy-related, or similar, technical programmes in developing countries would be highly regarded as would relevant tertiary qualifications, probably in economics, engineering or science. Preference will be given to applicants with a demonstrated appreciation of the economic, social and political aspirations of the Forum's region.

The appointment will carry an attractive remuneration package, payable in Fiji dollars. For non-Fiji citizens this is tax-free and includes housing or a housing allowance and education and child allowances where eligible. Other benefits include payments in lieu of superannuation, and medical, life and travel insurance coverage. The appointee will be based at the Secretariat's Headquarters in Suva. The appointment will be for three years initially, and is renewable by mutual agreement.

Applications close on 31 July 1991. They should contain full information on education and career backgrounds and should give names, addresses and telephone numbers of at least three referees with whom the applicant has been associated professionally.

Applications should be addressed to:

**The Secretary General
Forum Secretariat
GPO Box 856, Suva, Fiji
Telephone 312600 Telex 2229FJ Fax 302204**

Further information is available on request to Mrs Lailun Khan, Administration Officer, on 312600 Extension 219

* Member states of the South Pacific Forum: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa.

Boost for can crushers

A NEW Zealand-made aluminium can-crusher was delivered recently to Majuro by American environmentalists for use by a local recycling operation.

The bright red can-crusher, a small model designed for inland use, was made by Lion Nathan Company, the New Zealand brewers known for their Steinlager beer. They decided that since their principal product is delivered in aluminium cans it would be appropriate for them to help the recycling. The machine costs about NZ\$5000 to \$6000.

The machine was brought to the island by Greenpeace's *Rainbow Warrior*. Frank Cabrai, who works on recycling in Majuro, said the new machine would do a better job of smashing empties than the current system using student workers, who often have to resort to crushing cans with their feet. □

BUSINESS

Savai'i still under threat

By Ian Williams

A YEAR after Cyclone Ofa, the water supply system on Savai'i, Samoa's biggest island, is still under repair. The United Nations Development Programme has contributed US\$300,000 for water pipes and equipment to help reconstruct the 15-kilometre network of pipes to 22 villages in the Western and Northern parts of the island. Almost 10,000 people have been left without regular water supplies since the wind and waves tore through the island.

In Tuvalu, UNDP has also contributed US\$300,000 for rebuilding 65 houses on the island of Vaitapu destroyed by Ofa. Most of the families were still living under canvas since the usual local materials, coconut and pandanus, were also destroyed by Ofa.

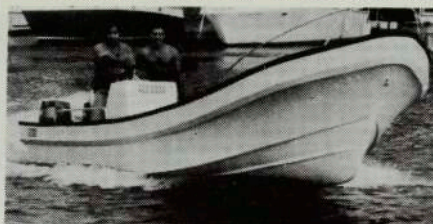
UNDP will provide the materials, and the Tuvalu government skilled carpenters to help the homeless build "cyclone-proofed" new homes, using structural timber frameworks, rockfill floors and corrugated roofs. Most of Tuvalu is less than four metres above sea level, making a repetition of the disaster very likely.

Indeed in April, the UN Secretary General released a report requested by the General Assembly on the possible effects of sea level rise on island states. The South Pacific was, he said, comprised of over 3000 isolated islands divided between 24 political entities, including 14 Pacific Island States "which would be severely or profoundly impacted by even low to medium projected levels of global change ... such islands and island nations are threatened with damage to coastlines and groundwater sources by rising sea levels, or even with total destruction should sea levels rise by more than one metre, or should waves and storm surges increase as expected from intensified cyclone activity".

The Report continued, "Although the population of the region is relatively small in absolute terms, numbering approximately 5 million, the cultural diversity is enormous (one third of the world's languages are spoken in Melanesia). The social, political and economic integrity and physical and biological environments of more than 800 separate human cultures will be threatened", if people were forced to move as "environmental refugees".

"Cultural identity, an extremely important concern in the Pacific islands, is difficult to maintain in migrant communities", he concluded. □

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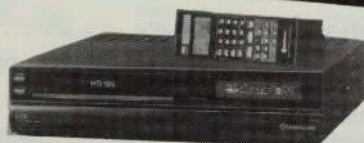
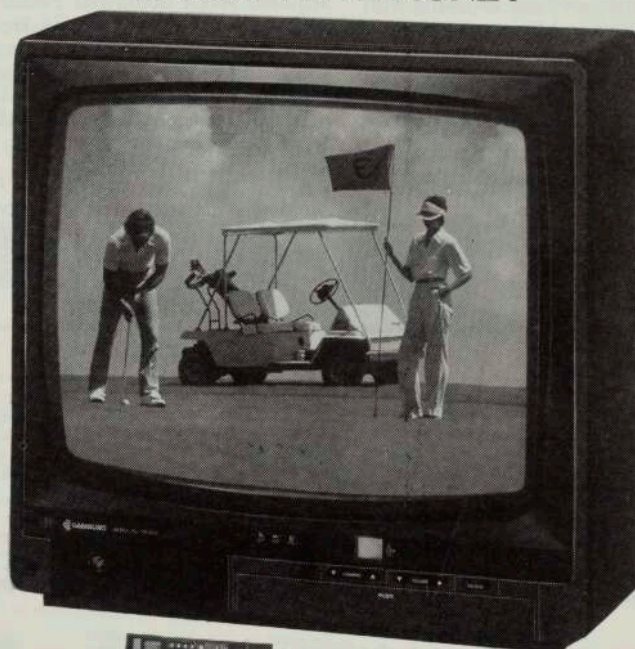
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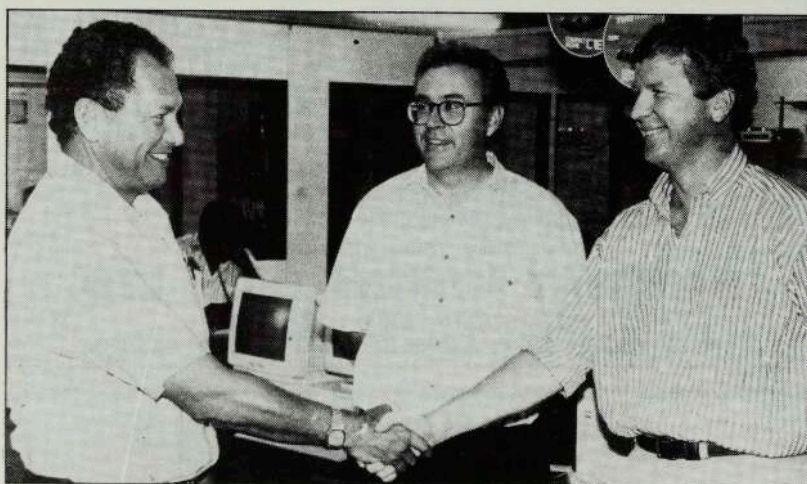
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BUSINESS



Fijian executives buy out AWA

AWA Southwest Pacific has become a Fiji-owned company following a \$1 million management buyout by three of the company's local executives. Main shareholders and directors in the electronics and telecommunications venture are Harry Powell, AWA's regional manager for the last eight years and now managing director; Richard Lucas, Lautoka branch manager and Richard Fiu, financial controller and company secretary. (Singapore-based Kevin Parnell also has a shareholding.) They have the majority interest in a new firm, Com-

munications Pacific Ltd, which has acquired AWA Southwest Pacific's Fiji assets and liabilities. The Fiji Development Bank has 20 per cent of the shares which will be available for purchase by Fijian investors. The restructured business will trade initially as COMPAC-AWA and eventually operate solely under the COMPAC name.

Pictured are, from left: *Harry Powell, managing director Communications Pacific Ltd; Jeff Smith, group general manager Finance AWA Ltd (Australia); and Stephen Eli, senior business analyst AWA Ltd (Australia).* □

Tradewinds

ABOUT two thirds of 39,000 black pearls offered in the first full auction by Cook Islands Pearls Ltd was sold after five hours of bidding on June 14. Organisers said a total 54 lots had a total reserve price of \$2.7 million but was expected to fetch \$4.5 million. The highest successful bid of US\$114 thousand came from Kikuchi Pearl Co Ltd of Japan. □

FIJI recorded a balance of payments surplus of about US\$14 million in its international trade in the first three months of this year, compared with a deficit of more than \$3.5 million for the same period last year. □

FIJI's five commercial banks and the Reserve Bank are moving to establish a forward-exchange market to protect importers and exporters from foreign exchange fluctuations. It has been available to exporters only since 1985. □

A UNDP report commissioned by the Fiji Trade and Investment Board has recommended 13-year tax holidays for tax-free factories be cut to five years. It proposes stepping down company income tax exemption from year five to year 13 by 10 percentage points annually. The recommendations could be included in tax-free zone legislation being drawn up by the Fiji State Law Office. It also proposed company income tax exemption for all foreign investments, abolition of income tax exemptions for local investors, and that minimum wage rates and compliance with local working regulations be approval conditions for tax-free factories and non-tax free factories. □

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SHIPPING

Canadian tax changes lure new service

CANADIAN tax law changes were a big factor in the headquarters there of a new shipping service to the South Pacific from West Coast North America.

The tax changes were meant to lure big Hong Kong fleet owners to move head offices to Vancouver before Beijing takes over the British colony in 1997.

The changes mean that Canadian-based shipowners will no longer be taxed on their offshore operations.

South Pacific InterLine Ltd is providing the new service. The company is owned by the Swedish-based Gotland shipping group.

This is Gotland's first operational venture in the Pacific. Melin said Gotland had chosen the name Swedish Pacific Line (PIM, March 1991) but then found someone else had registered rights to it.

The group is also interested in setting up a cruise ferry service between the Seattle-Vancouver area and Alaska, he said.

And it is building five 25,000-

deadweight ton ships in Indonesia.

South Pacific Inter Line will operate a 50-day round trip schedule originating in Vancouver and calling at Seattle/Tacoma, Coos Bay, San Francisco and Los Angeles/Long Beach on the west coast, and Papeete (Tahiti), Pago Pago (American Samoa), Apia (Western Samoa), Nukualofa (Tonga), Noumea (New Caledonia) and Lae (Papua New Guinea) in the South Pacific Islands.

Service for the new shipping line will be provided by the *MV TS Adventure*, a 17,000 tone state-of-the-art multi-service, self-sustaining, box type Japanese-build ship, launched in Japan in January. The new vessel is designed to carry dry and refrigerated containers as well as breakbulk and heavy lift cargoes. She is registered in Panama.

The Bahamas-based company, South Pacific InterLine, is owned by the Gotland Group of Sweden which has served the shipping industry and other transportation sectors in Europe since 1865. South Pacific InterLine is opening its Vancouver office as a result of the newly introduced amendment to the

Canadian income tax legislation.

The Gotland was established in British Columbia as Gotland Invest Corporation in September 1990, at which time Mr Staffan Melin was appointed its president. British Columbia was selected by Gotland because of its exceptional future potential as a world class city in the Pacific Rim. The establishment of the International Commercial Arbitration Centre and the presence of Asian financial institutions also contributed to Gotland's interest in Vancouver.

John Bowkett, who has been in the shipping industry for the past 30 years, has been appointed Vice-President of Operations for South Pacific InterLine Ltd.

Hanse Shipping Agency, Inc. of San Francisco has been named the Managing Agent for South Pacific InterLine's American operation, with Sunrise Shipping Agency, Inc. as Agent for the Pacific Northwest, and Farman Shipping for Canada.

The Gotland Group has selected the Hong Bank of Canada as principal corporate bank for its Pacific Rim operations. □

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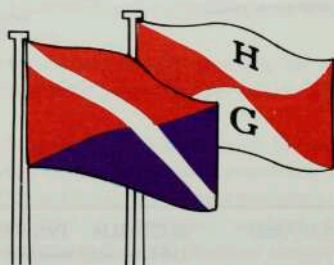
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New Zealand Unit Express (NZUE) operates a monthly service accepting containerised and break-bulk cargoes from Manila, Keelung, Kaoshiung, Hong Kong, Lae to Suva, Lautoka (via Suva) and thence to New Zealand ports. Contact Carpenters Shipping Suva, Fiji, tel (679) 312244, fax (679) 301572. New Zealand Unit Express, Maritime Building, 2-10 Customs House Quay, PO Box

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China Navigations New Guinea Pacific Line operates a regular container and breakbulk — heavy lift service from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Manila, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand to Port Moresby, Lae, Rabaul, Kieta and Honiara. Cargo from the same eastern ports to the South Pacific Ports of Noumea, Santo, Vila, Papeete, Pagopago, Apia, Nukualofa, Rarotonga and Tarawa will be shipped via Japan or Busan on the monthly Bali Hai Service. Contact Steamships Shipping, Port Moresby, PO Box 634, Tel 220283 or 220289.

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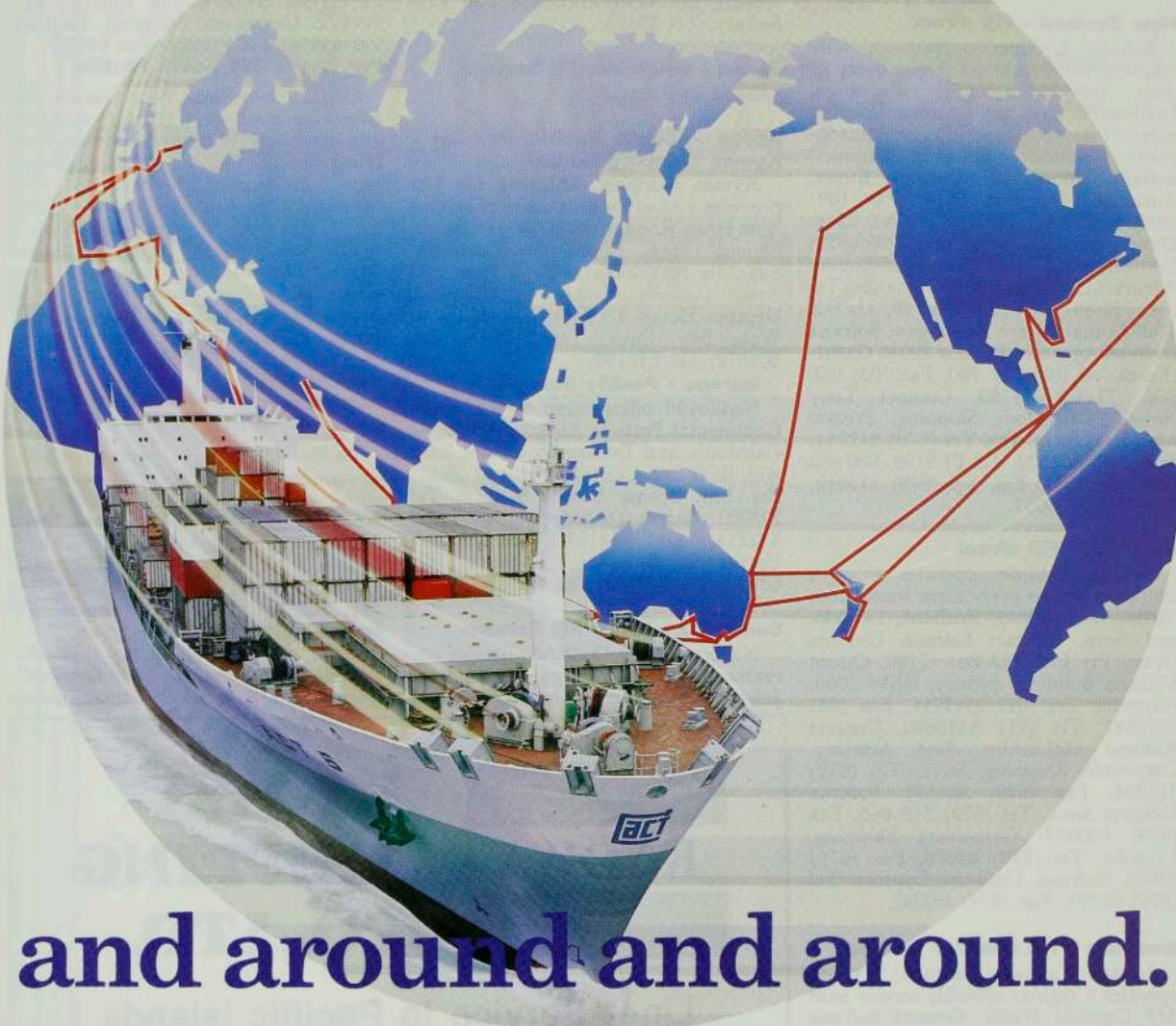
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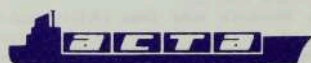
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Translink Pacific Shipping sail twice a month to Fiji, with Polynesian Link and Coral Links which operate out of Tauranga and Auckland. Fiji Agents are: Campbells Shipping Agency Ltd, Ph 314189 Fax 300144 Suva; Ph 62231 Fax 62251 Lautoka. Auckland Agents: McKay Shipping Ph (9) 390229 Fax (9) 303293. Tauranga Agents, searade agencies Ph (75) 754989 Fax (75) 758380.

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The Region

Wages of tuna workers frozen

By David North

ALL workers under the US flag — except those in American Samoa — got a raise in the minimum wage to \$4.25 an hour on April 1 this year.

In a much delayed move, the US Department of Labor decided effectively in January not to increase the minimum wage for American Samoa's tuna cannery or territorial government workers. There are about 4000 workers in each category.

The tuna workers, most of whom are from Western Samoa, have grim jobs. They behead and disembowel fish. They work for two huge, multi-national corporations whose product — canned tuna — is protected by US tariffs. Americans love canned tuna; they buy about \$1.8 billion worth a year.

The decision to freeze the minimum wage in American Samoa came as no surprise, as the principal employers (the tuna factories and the American Samoan Government, or ASG) had pulled together a strong political coalition in both the islands and the Mainland to hold down wages. This was a thoroughly bi-partisan coalition, with Senator Ted Kennedy (D — Mass.) and President Bush playing minor supportive roles, alongside the Democratic Congressman from the islands, Eni F.H. Faleomavaega, and his arch-rival, Republican Governor Peter Tali Coleman, who carried the ball for the employers.

The two sets of employers in American Samoa have two completely different financial situations but they had a common position against the wage increases. The Territorial Government, which is running a substantial deficit, raised taxes and put some of its workers on a short work-week last year to try to make ends meet.

The two tuna factories, on the other hand, belong to global conglomerates, one based in Indonesia and the other in



Silent and distant: the interests of American Samoan tuna workers were canned

Pittsburgh, Pa. The latter, the H.J. Heinz Company (packers of the Star Kist tuna), according to its last annual report, had profits in excess of half a billion dollars last year. Had all the American Samoa tuna workers received an 80 cents an hour raise, not just the ones working for Heinz, it would have cost their employers less than \$6 million.

The American Samoan economy revolves around Mainland tax-funded subsidies to the island government and the Mainland's appetite for tuna; the special minimum wage applies to both parts of the economy. Governor Coleman opposed an increase in the minimum wage for both the Territory's own employees and those working at the tuna

canneries. If the minimum wage were raised for the government's workers, he would either have to lay off some of them or raise taxes further, neither politically desirable. As for the tuna workers his concern, and that of Congressman Faleomavaega, is based on threats laid on by the packers — help us keep wages low or we will move jobs to other, lower-wage islands. In contrast to his position on the minimum wage, Faleomavaega has pressed the canneries to provide paid holidays and vacations for workers but without results so far.

The tuna processed by the Samoan factories are caught all over the Pacific. Once caught, tuna can be iced or frozen and moved over large distances at sea at

relatively low cost; once canned, it can be moved at even lower cost, as there is no need to refrigerate it. So corporations pack tuna where fresh water is abundant, where labor is cheap and docile, and where the tariffs are favorable. Puerto Rico and American Samoa qualify on all counts and with the exception of small operations in California, all tuna packing in the US has moved to these two island territories.

American Samoa is the second most-expensive place in the world to pack tuna, but the tuna companies have



Thriving: US tariffs protect VCS Samoa Packing Co's product



South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission Director and Deputy Director Positions

Applications are invited from nationals of SOPAC member countries for the following senior positions in the Technical Secretariat of SOPAC, based in Suva, Fiji:

- (1) Director : for a three year appointment from January, 1992
- (2) Deputy Director for a three year appointment from 1 January, 1992

SOPAC

SOPAC is an inter-governmental organisation comprising fourteen South Pacific countries as members*. Its primary objectives is to assist its member countries in the identification and assessment of the marine mineral and other non-living resource potential of the offshore areas within their Exclusive Economic Zones, in the management of development in their coastal areas, and in the training of their nationals in all relevant areas within the SOPAC Work Programme.

TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

The Technical Secretariat is the executive arm of SOPAC. The Director is responsible to the Governing Council of SOPAC for the overall management and operation of the Technical Secretariat. The Deputy Director is responsible to the Director for managing the SOPAC Technical Work Programme.

The SOPAC Technical Work Programme is reviewed and formulated by the member countries during their Annual Session each year.

The staff establishment of the Technical Secretariat is currently 50 people of which more than half are professional technical staff recruited internationally.

QUALIFICATIONS

Applicants for both positions should have a sound understanding of the Pacific Islands region and should be capable of developing effective relations with the member countries of SOPAC and with other Governments and organisations providing funding, technical and scientific support to SOPAC.

In addition, the following specific requirements will also apply:

Director: Applicants should have a high degree of ability and extensive experience at a senior level in administration and management; a proven record of successful team leadership; and demonstrable negotiating and communication skills. Extensive experience in dealing with Pacific Island Governments and with donor sources would be a considerable advantage.

Deputy Director: Applicants should have a degree in one of the Earth Sciences with team leadership and management experience in addition to technical experience in their area of expertise. Work experience in the SOPAC region, familiarity with current marine geoscience programmes in the South Pacific, and a proven ability to work with member country nationals would be an advantage.

Remuneration

An attractive salary will be offered, depending on the successful applicant's qualifications and experience. The overall remuneration and other terms and conditions of employment for professional officers in SOPAC will apply. These are comparable to that of similar senior positions in other South Pacific regional organisations.

An appointee who is not a citizen or permanent resident of Fiji may be granted full diplomatic privileges by the Government of Fiji.

Appointment

The Governing Council of SOPAC will decide appointments to the above positions during its Annual Session in early October 1991.

The appointment for each position will be for a 3-year contract. In the third year of a tenure, the post will be advertised to allow the Governing Council of SOPAC to award a new three-year contract from the end of the current contract. An incumbent will be eligible for a further three year contract.

The current incumbent Director will complete his second three-year contract on 12 January 1992.

The current incumbent Deputy Director will complete his first three-year contract on 31 December 1991.

Documentation

All applications should be fully documented and include details of work experience and qualifications and the names of at least three referees. Applications, to be marked "Director Application" or "Deputy Director Application", as appropriate should be addressed to the Chairman of SOPAC and should reach the following address by 31 July 1991:

**SOPAC Technical Secretariat
Private Mail Bag
Suva, Fiji**

Further information on the above positions may be obtained from Mr Umar Farook, Finance and Administration Controller, Technical Secretariat on Telephone 381-377 or Fax 370-040.

* Member countries of SOPAC are AUSTRALIA, COOK ISLANDS, FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA, FIJI, KIRIBATI, GUAM, MARSHALL ISLANDS, NEW ZEALAND, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, SOLOMON ISLANDS, TONGA, TUVALU, VANUATU, WESTERN SAMOA.

THE REGION

two strong reasons for staying: it is the cheapest place under the American Flag to pack tuna and the flagged location gives them protective tariffs of 6 to 30 per cent; and they have tens of millions of dollars invested in their plants. But the threat to move, stressed recently by the closing of a small cannery in Puerto Rico, terrifies island politicians.

Minimum wages in American Samoa are set in a Mainland context, as federal grants help underwrite the territory's government. In recent years the economies in Guam, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico have all matured to the extent that special arrangements are no longer needed — their employers pay the regular minimum wage. The special low rates apply only in American Samoa.

Despite opposition from the White

House, the Congress increased the Mainland minimum wage in 1989 to \$3.80 an hour last April, with another increase to

paid in Pago Pago.

The employers went into this struggle with three major advantages: long-established ground rules for making decisions favor employers; employers were ably represented by lawyers, lobbyists and politicians in Washington, while virtually no one spoke up for the workers; the issue is so obscure and so complex that there has been no media attention outside of Pago, Pago (and PIM).

The ground rules. If any off-shore employers want to avoid the Mainland minimum, they may petition to the US Secretary of Labor to establish a

six-person board to decide the issue. Three board members are drawn from the islands, and three from the Mainland; there are two public, two employer, and two workers' representatives. While the Secretary of Labor makes all six appointments, deference is given to the Governor of Samoa in connection with the three island representatives.

In case of a tie, the minimum wage set earlier remains in place. In effect, both public members and both labor members must support an increase, assuming that both employer members oppose it.

The lobbyists. Before the six-person panel could meet there was a legislative accident, the resolution of which showed the tuna industry's prowess in Washington.

Back in 1989 when the minimum wage increases were going through Congress a long-standing provision in the US Minimum Wage Act, previously applied to Puerto Rico but not to American Samoa, was applied to the latter. No one noticed it at the time (such bills are long and complex). This provision required that an American Samoan employer wanting exemption from the coverage of the Mainland minimum must open its books to show it would be adversely affected by application of the regular minimum wage.

The tuna industry was adamantly opposed to the provision, presumably because it would have weakened its position on the minimum wage and because it would have shown that it could afford to spend some money cleaning up the mess it makes in Pago Pago Harbor.

The American tuna industry is in a



Star-Kist Samoa: H.J. Heinz Company's netted about \$72.5 million on tuna in 1989

\$4.25 an hour which went into effect on April 1 of this year. As soon as this decision was made, the tuna factories and the Governor of American Samoa moved in an effort to prevent those wages being

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THE REGION

stronger financial position than it is willing to admit. While there has been a substantial growth in imports in the last two decades, in each of the last five years the American industry has secured 70 per cent or more of the American retail market. *The New York Times* has estimated that Heinz, alone, had an operating profit from its tuna activities of \$145 million in 1989. Heinz' annual report shows its operating profits are about twice its net profits, so this would suggest a net profit on tuna of \$72.5 million.

The tuna industry started pulling strings over the issue of opening its books. Then Senator Robert McClure of Idaho (the Republican's expert on the Pacific) introduced a bill deleting the open books provision in the Senate. Congressman Faleomaveaga, supported by the Democratic leadership of the House Education and Labor Committee (which handles the minimum wage) did the same.

Neither bill moved swiftly, so President Bush's then Secretary of Labor (encouraged by Stella Guerra, Assistant Secretary of Interior for Territories) postponed the scheduled wage hearings in Pago Pago. The Labor Secretary, Elizabeth Dole (spouse to Senator Republican Leader Bob Dole) then postponed the hearing again; the tuna industry did not want a hearing in which they had to show their profits.

In the dying days of the last Congress Ted Kennedy became convinced that if he let the tuna packer's bill through his Senate Labor Committee (and therefore the Senate) it would take the steam out of other efforts to water-down the minimum wage; Kennedy acquiesced. The principal Mainland labor organisation, the AFL-CIO had similar thoughts, as did the liberal Democrats on the House Labor Committee, and so the

interests of the silent and distant tuna workers were sacrificed. The little bill passed, and President Bush signed it into law.

In connection with the observation that American Samoa's political leader-



Ideal: Tuna-packing corporations look for locations with cheap and docile labour

ship did not fight for these thousands of Samoan tuna workers, most of the workers are not voters in American Samoa and never will be, given the territory's citizenship rules. Similarly, although the tuna workers are Western Samoan citizens, they do not vote there either, and its Government has been, so far, silent on the issue.

The hearings. The people Secretary Dole appointed to the panel included John Murphy, an official of Boston Local 122 of the Teamster's Union and the Mainland labor member. Murphy sought to secure information from the tuna industry on the size of their profits, but the tuna industry people refused to provide any information beyond the corporate-wide data of the Heinz annual report. The tuna industry reported that its shipments from American Samoa had declined in 1990 to 180,000 short tons from 203,000 short tons the previous year and argued that low-wage foreign competition, from Thailand and elsewhere, made the payment of higher wages in Pago Pago impossible.

The hearings in January continued much longer than usual — five full days

— as the six members heard testimony on 15 different industries. On the tuna wage increase the panel was split three to three.

In their dissent, Murphy and Ilo Ilo Amataga (an American Samoan living in San Francisco) argued that "the tuna canneries did not meet the burden of proving that a higher minimum wage would substantially curtail employment in the industry ... in contrast, undisputed evidence indicates that the cost of living ... on American Samoa has risen approximately 25 per cent since 1985 ... The gap between the wealthy and poor is increasing which portends dire consequences for American Samoan society."

They also stated that various tax breaks (the tariff and concessions made by ASG) enjoyed by the canneries "negates the impact of cheaper wage rates from foreign competition".

Their statement expressed concern at the "massive economic power (which) gives the canneries enormous control over the people of the island ... rumours of plant closings ... have ... a chilling effect on the appearance of witnesses supporting realistic wage increases ... and thus the record of the public hearing was distorted in favor of the canneries."

The cannery minimum will go to \$2.92 an hour a year from now but the labor representatives suspect that this will have no impact on wages for most cannery workers. The minimum rate for ASG workers, \$2.17 an hour, will remain in place. The other hourly wage rates will all rise about 4 per cent in a year.

Two years from now, unless Congress changes the law, or the Secretary of Labor against postpones the hearings, another six-person panel will review the minimum wage structure in American Samoa. □

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X-P77 305W (PMPO)



- 305W (PMPO) ■ Digital sound field processor ■ L.P.S. (Listening Point Selector) ■ One-touch KARAOKE (Vocal Cancel) ■ Sound jog dial for sound image control and S.F.C. effect ■ Auto Synchronized Editing System (A.S.E.S.) ready ■ P.Bass (Power Bass)

* X-P55/X-P55M (305W PMPO), X-P33 (210W PMPO) and X-P11 (200W PMPO) Contempo models are also available.

For further information, please contact:

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normal driving. Here, as drivers push their cars to the limit, the rigidity and strength of new space-age constructions can be checked and proven reliable.

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