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PACIFIC ISLANDS

M O N T H L Y

APRIL 1992



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What we'll bring back
Big colour pics of the region

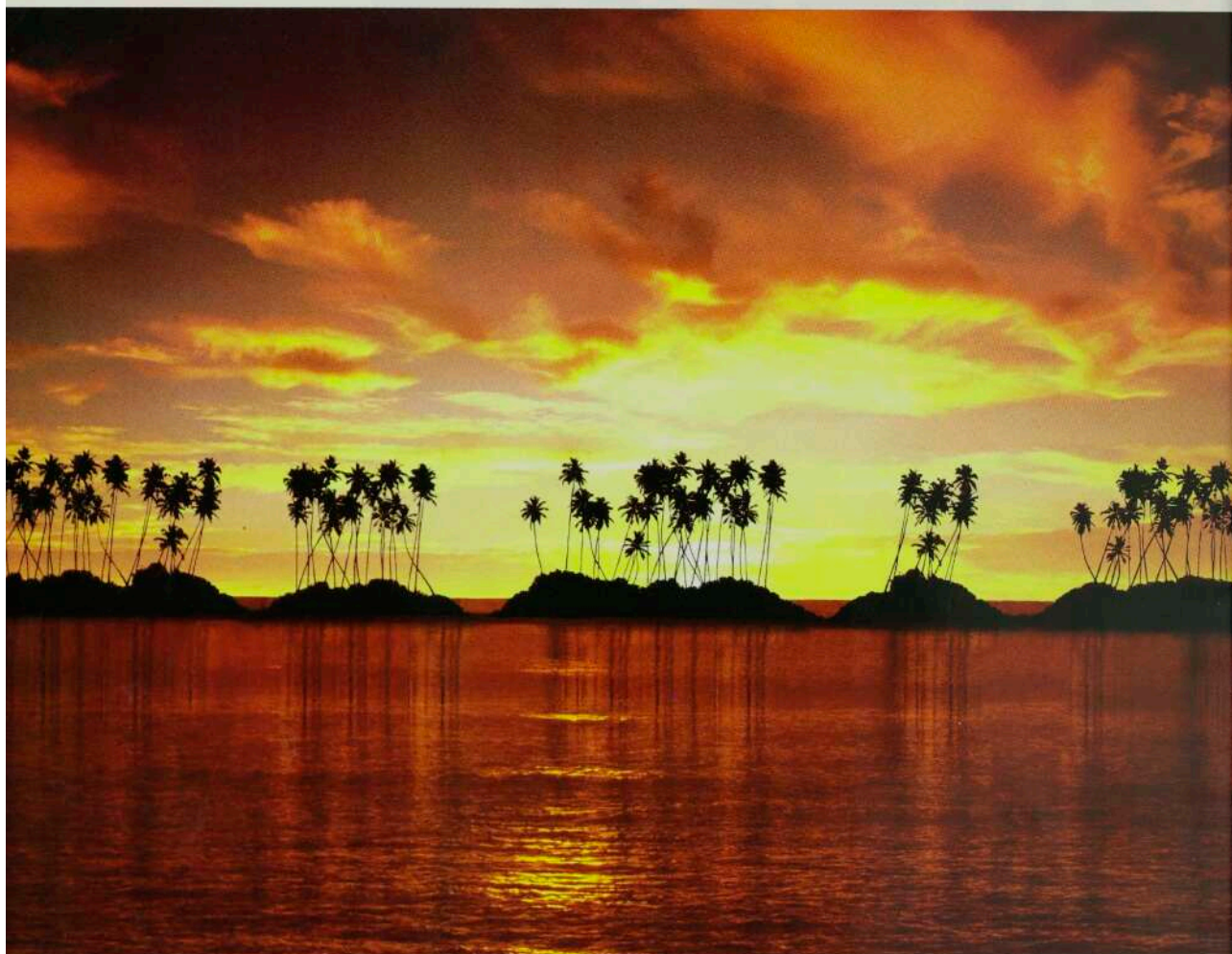
Threads of unionism



- From colonialism to unionism ... and a national strike planned as Fiji's elections loom
- Famine in Irian Jaya: was manipulation the cause?
- Plans for a troubled University of Papua New Guinea
- Ancient mariners' skills revived for the Arts Festival
- A travelling trumpeter sailing the Pacific
- Regional investment report

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PACIFIC ISLANDS

M O N T H L Y

Vol. 62 No.4

THE NEWS MAGAZINE

APRIL 1992

COVER STORIES:

Expo, Let's Go!
 Eyes on the Pacific
 What's in it for us
 NZ, something unique
 Quality furniture grows on trees
 PNG hopes pinned on war relics
 Picture special: Fiji, Vanuatu, Kiribati, the Solomons and PNG
 in the Garden of the Sleeping Giant
 Vanuatu, a land of opportunity for investors
 Cover photo: Expo team fashions by Tanya Whiteside
 photographed at Orchid Island near Suva.

UNION THREADS

From plantation strikes in the colonial era to a planned national
 strike as an election looms
 Who's who in the region's unions, and what they think

THE REGION

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 Amine in Irian Jaya: was it the result of manipulation?
 Reviving ancient mariners' skills for the Pacific Arts Festival

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Cover picture: Asaeli Lave

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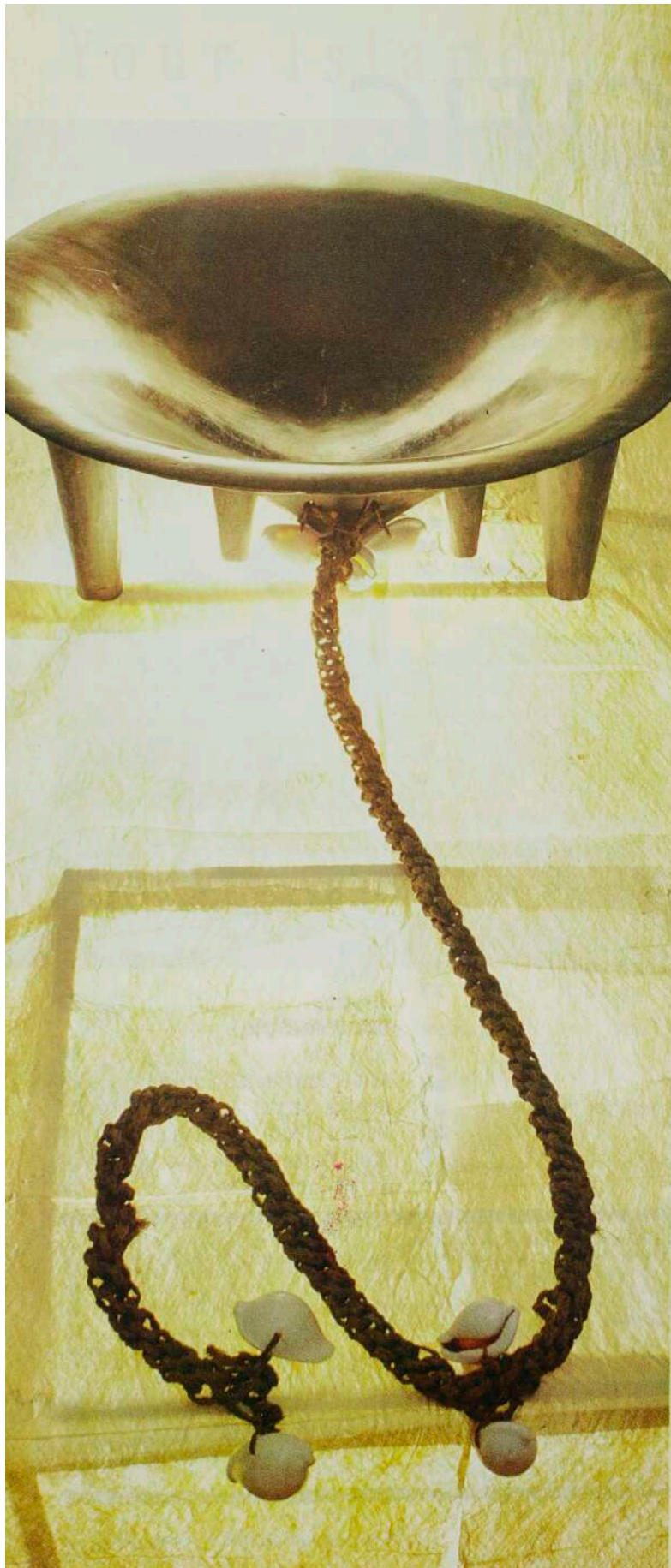
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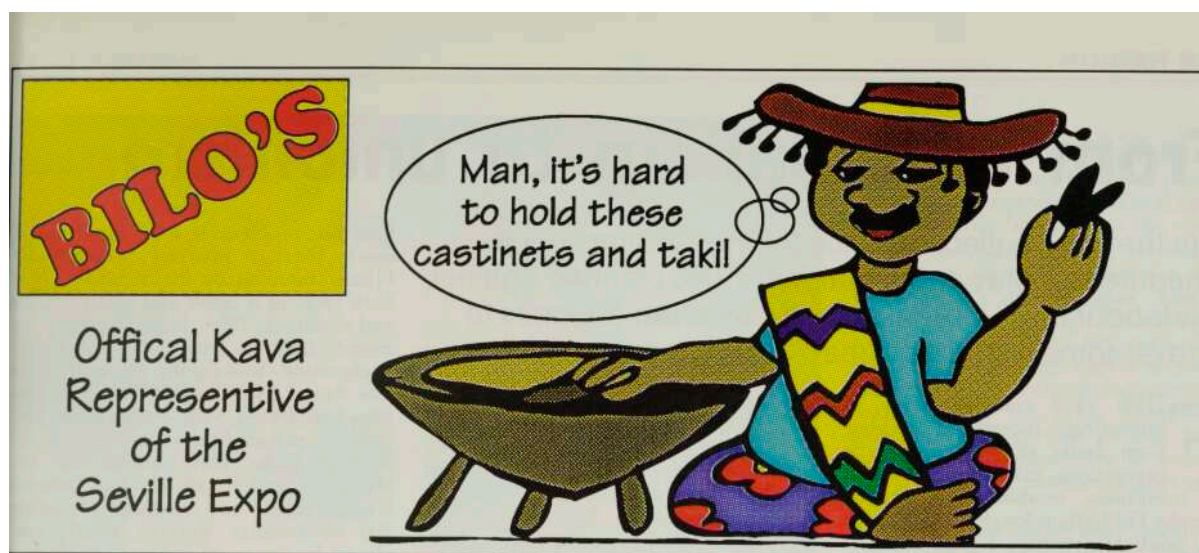
Pacifically Speaking

A warm welcome is probably the most important thing that any bank has to offer. Being the biggest bank in Fiji and part of the largest banking group in the Pacific may give us the edge in providing the best facilities for you locally and internationally, but never at the expense of our individual personal service. After all, that is why we are where we are today. Here for you, ANZ Bank Fiji. Your bank.



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LETTERS

Digging up facts on war relics

Dr Spenneman (*PIM* Feb 92) may sport the label chief archaeologist in Majuro, but he certainly reveals a dismal sense of knowledge of the real facts of war relic archaeology as it specially applies to the atoll islands of the Central Pacific.

Stan Gajda, to whom Spenneman directs somewhat sarcastic criticism, is keenly aware of the need (from the expatriate viewpoint) for a War Museum on Betio, and thus the relics which he has located and labelled are collected for that purpose. His efforts for the approval of such a museum have been unsuccessful.

The good Doctor should realise that only the Americans, British and similar peoples are interested in preserving the history of the Pacific Campaign. Understandably, the people of Kiribati couldn't care less about the preservation of wartime artefacts (junk, to them) which lies above and below the sands of Red Beach Betio, or any other island.

If Dr Spenneman visits these atolls, he would view with disbelief and finally horror (in his own words about Gajda's efforts) the domestic use that rusted weapons of war are subjected to. Specifically, rifle barrels make cheap cooking pot holders, shell cases make a fence, and unrecognisable pieces of aircraft do nicely for toilet covers. Would Dr Spenneman praise this as preserving authentic war history?

It is fine to preserve on-site locations such as Pompeii in Italy, or even the underwater relics of Truk. At least the Truk ships are readily identifiable, and visiting diving enthusiasts can enjoy the underwater scenery. It is my bet, however, that the Truk people are pretty disinterested in past war history, except for the golden oppor-

tunity to make a few bucks from the tourists.

Dr Spenneman would have the relics of Betio rot to dust, to crumble and disappear forever by the turn of the century. This, all in the name of on-site archaeological integrity — a totally idealistic and misplaced viewpoint.

Stan Gajda's efforts and skills in restoration of the relics of Betio deserve the highest recognition, yet we all know that his museum will never be built. After Gajda's departure, would Dr Spenneman seriously suggest that these priceless pieces

of history be literally consigned to the toilet house?

Put in perspective, the recovered relics cover a couple of table tops and weigh maybe 100 kilograms. There is thousands of tons of the stuff turning to dust below Betio.

I say thank you Stan Gajda for your efforts and idealism to preserve a fraction of the history of the 76 hours of the Betio Battle.

— John Jackson
Tullamarine
Australia

(Written during a visit to Tarawa)

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THE REGION

From colonialism to unionism

With the first Fiji election since the 1987 military coups scheduled for May and a national strike planned against new labour laws, journalist **Craig Skehan** attempts to unravel some historical threads of organised unionism

FIJI'S 1879 colonial policy of importing indentured labour from India to work sugarcane plantations, often in dehumanising conditions, established a pattern whereby Fiji Indians fought for economic and political security. Fijians, on the other hand, tended to align themselves with the colonisers in return for guarantees of supremacy.

Even during the indenture period there were instances of Indian challenges to authority. The history books record strikes on individual plantations operated by Australia's Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR) in 1886, 1887 and 1888. Some leaders were jailed.

Another strike by Indian labourers in 1907 resulted in three men being wounded by police bullets. Frustrations exploded in January, 1920, just after the indenture system ended. Striking Indian Public Works Department and municipal employees were joined by sugar workers. In the second week, defence force machinegunners intimidated a thousand protesting strikers into dispersing. The colonial administration saw the stoppage as politically motivated.

New Zealand dispatched soldiers and the Australian Government sent the warship *Marguerite*. Indian women allegedly severely beat a Fijian special constable and three European special constables. An Indian striker died from his wounds after being shot by police.

Significantly, an Indian lawyer from Mauritius, Manilal Doctor, was seen as fomenting the strike and deported from Fiji. Indian lawyers continue to play a prominent role in politics, and some people wish that it was still possible to deport "troublemakers". The colonial administration of 1920 helped instil a view among prominent Fijians that disloyal, anti-Empire Indian radicals were out to undermine the colony and seize power for themselves. Whereas indigenous Fijians today control the military, the power of the gun was then firmly in European hands. One group became known as "The Loyal Indians" because they opposed the strike.

An association of canegrowers was formed in 1920, and in February 1921 CSR labourers began striking over pay, access to land and living conditions, and to pressure for the release of men still in

prison from the 1920 strike. The stoppage went until August and, although it fizzled, again attitudes had been hardened. Many of the Indians involved became more anti-European and opposed to the colonial system.

The Fiji Times newspaper editorialised that while industrious Indians were welcome, "the agitating parasite is as great a curse to Fiji as he is to any other land and we want him blotted out."

In 1920 and 1921, minority Muslims joined with striking Hindus. However, this co-operation broke down with increasing free immigration from India and rising Hindu/Muslim rivalry. Hindu fundamentalist Arya Samaj carried a pan-Indian political message, while the Fiji Muslim League founded in 1926 sought better understanding between "the Government and its subjects".

Many representative organisations developed along racial lines. In 1939, a new industrial issue caused further polarisation. Indians refused to serve in World War II because they were not to be given the same pay and conditions as Europeans. Fijians, however, found common cause with Empire and went to war.

**The agitating parasite
is as great a curse
to Fiji as he is
to any other land**

— *The Fiji Times*, 1920

The schism, and its historical ramifications, was reinforced through a strike during 1943 by Indian cane farmers over cane prices. Critics saw this as tantamount to sabotage during a crisis. By the 1946 census, Fiji Indians outnumbered Native Fijians, fuelling paranoia.

A boom in the sugar industry during the 1950s led to a push for greater Indian access to Fijian land, and rekindled tensions over only short-term leases being available. Rural Fijians were drifting to the cities, especially Suva where there were not enough jobs. Many urban refugees became disillusioned and alienated. Food prices were rising faster than pay rates.

Common problems to some extent broke down barriers between Indians and Fijians, manifest by the involvement of both races in a bitter and violent strike and rioting in 1959. James Anthony, of mixed Indian, Irish and Polynesian background, was among the leaders, as was Apisai Mohammed Tora, a Fijian who had flirted with communism and made an extraordinary conversion to the Muslim faith. Their union was the Wholesale and Retail Workers General Union, which had coverage including 300 oil industry workers, mostly employed by the multi-nationals Shell and Vacuum Oil.

Pay demands led to a strike on Monday, December 7. By December 9, Europeans were being used to drive petrol tankers with police guards. While the union guaranteed supplies for essential services, the colonial administration used police to break pickets at retail outlets. Bus and taxi drivers, if they failed to join the strike, were physically intimidated.

Europeans were particularly singled out as targets for abuse and rocks by angry crowds. When unionists were refused permission to hold an outdoor meeting in Suva, violence escalated into rioting. Despite police baton charges and use of teargas, there was extensive damage to major stores and some looting.

Gangs of youths rampaged through the night and Burns Philp manager Bruce Brownlee was critically injured. A roll-call of Fiji's most senior Chiefs intervened, calling on Fijians to end the violence. Among them was the current President, Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau, and now incumbent Interim Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara.

Some Chiefs suggested that the good name of Fijians was being blackened by Indian ringleaders. Union secretary James Anthony reportedly slept for 12 hours after being prescribed a sleeping draft, only to awake to find that the union's President, Ratu Meli Gonewai, had negotiated an end to the dispute. For years to come, Fijian unions went back to greater organisation on racial lines, with some official encouragement.

In 1960 there was another prolonged strike in the cane fields. Harvest boycotts were to become an almost annual event. The fact that today Fiji has a National Farmers' Union (NFU), even though most farmers are self-employed, is no accident. It is a product of history where the miller, once CSR but now the Government's Sugar Corporation, has often been seen as an establishment foe. Fiji's politics from the early 1960s to the mid 1980s were dominated by the National Federation Party (NFP),

THE REGION



Chaudhry: an old Ratu Mara adversary, still in the hot seat

Picture on Fujifilm: Asaeli Lave

ounded by the leaders of the 1960 strike, and the Fijian Association, formed in response to industrial militancy. The association's combination with the General Voters (Europeans, part-Europeans and Chinese), as well as an Indian rump, was known as the Alliance Party.

While political leaders stepped back from confrontation in 1969 to allow tentative agreement on a 1970 independence Constitution, subject to later review, the friendliness did not last. Elections in 1972, 1977 and 1982 were characterised by disputes over Constitutional provisions. Some politicians exploited sensitivities over land, access to education and availability of government jobs. But Ratu Mara held on to the Prime Ministership until April 1987, when he faced a new force.

The Fiji Labour Party had been formed in 1985, following a wages freeze in 1984. It preached multi-racial class politics and was headed by a former president of the Fiji Public Service Association, Dr Timoci Bavadra.

Another leading light in the formation of the Labour Party was an old adversary of Ratu Mara, Mahendra Chaudhry,

who held positions in the Fiji Trades Union Congress (FTUC), the Public Service Association and the National Farmers' Union. Ratu Mara resented what he saw as Chaudhry's confrontationalist approach and accused him of attempting to politicise the public service. Some Alliance members considered the FTUC and Labour to be anti-American communist fronts.

There was another side to the union movement. For example Taniela "Big Dan" Veitata of the Dockworkers' and Seamen's Union was involved in agitation following election in April 1987 of a Labour/NFP coalition headed by Bavadra as Prime Minister. One of the strangest decisions of the interim Government was to make Veitata minister responsible for implementing industrial relation policies. Another of the militants involved in destabilising Bavadra was Tora.

There were orchestrated demonstrations, roadblocks and firebombings. Sitiveni Rabuka's May coup ousting Bavadra, avowedly to avoid civil violence and restore Fijian political dominance, followed. Chaudhry, as a

shortlived Finance Minister in the Bavadra Government, was bitter. Critics say he has since used his union positions to extract revenge with a political agenda not necessarily beneficial to the worker.

One associate of the 44-year-old Chaudhry says his experience as a Government auditor gave him an indepth understanding of the decision-making system. He has well-placed friends and has been known to receive confidential Government documents virtually hot off the press. However, a sometimes self-righteous attitude, and a tendency to be dismissive of contrary views, have made enemies of some union colleagues.

Among those purportedly working to undermine him have been the President of the FTUC, Michael Columbus, who has been involved in unionism since the 1950s. There are reportedly moves to use an FTUC delegates' conference in May to force Chaudhry to give up his FTUC position to allow employment of a fulltime national secretary, who would be subject to greater control. Chaudhry has something of a reputation for stacking meetings to get his own way. Those seeking to bring him down a peg or two are generally regarded as wishing to take the trade union movement in a more conciliatory direction.

The Government has taken a different path in trying to reduce Chaudhry's power. New Labor laws have resulted in him being charged before the courts with breaching a provision banning an individual from holding more than one industrial position — Chaudhry still has three such organisational hats. The Australian Government and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions have been among those outside Fiji opposing the action.

Other provisions of the new laws include secret ballots for union elections and strikes, ending of automatic employer deductions of union members' dues, and provision for unions to pay monetary damages for illegal strikes.

Chaudhry has said there will be a national strike and protest over the laws, which include jail terms for breaches, but has not said when. With the first post-coup elections scheduled for May, there remains a danger of such a protest resulting in a major confrontation. In the past, however, national union leaders have not been able to maintain momentum for such actions. Any bans applied by the Australian Council Trade Unions (ACTU) and New Zealand unions, with which the FTUC has close contacts, could bring the situation to a head quickly.

In January this year, the Interim Government was irate over Australian Transport Workers' Union (TWU) bans applied against some of Fiji's Air Pacific flights, at the request of Fiji trade unions.

THE REGION

Some Fiji ministers reportedly wanted Chaudhry jailed.

Deputy Prime Minister Josevata Kamikamica, seen as backing the labour laws in an attempt to paint himself as a man with the personal toughness to be a Prime Minister, this time counselled restraint. Nonetheless, bitterness in Government circles over the Air Pacific bans ran deep because it threatened attempts to overcome a tourism slump.

The labour laws are part of what Kamikamica and other economic ministers see as a need to develop an export-

oriented economy propelled by market forces. For people like Chaudhry, the Government has no mandate for such changes because of the way it came to power.

Chaudhry has continued to cling to the need to boycott the forthcoming elections under what he sees as a racist and undemocratic Constitution guaranteeing an ethnic Fijian House of Representatives majority. That stance has brought him increasingly into conflict with more pragmatic colleagues involved with the Labour Party. Even Adi Kuini Bavadra,

whose former husband, the late Timoci Bavadra, was involved with Labour's birth, recently said publicly she believed there was no practical option other than Labour going along with the National Federation Party in fielding election candidates and encouraging supporters to vote.

Only time will reveal a clearer picture on the wisdom or folly of the boycott stance. As things stand, the Labour Party is badly wounded, possibly fatally. Prominent defectors — Columbus among them — have already formed a 'New Labour Party' which will try and put MPs into Parliament to fight against the Constitution from within. Chaudhry has been involved in vitriolic exchanges on the issue with former allies.

While Chaudhry has had a massive setback on the Labour boycott, he can take heart from a morale-boosting landslide win for the National Farmers' Union in hotly contested, and much delayed, elections for the industry's Cane Growers' Council. His more conservative opponents in this arena argued that the country's 23,000 mainly Indian cane-farmers had lost out badly from regular protests interrupting cane harvesting and milling. Evidently a majority decided that Chaudhry's militant tactics had put more money in their pockets than had been lost.

In the middle of last year, there was the deep irony of coup leader Rabuka intervening with Chaudhry and Columbus as a peacemaker to successfully end a long harvest boycott over Sugar Corporation payments for raw cane, and avert a threatened national strike against industrial decrees. The decrees, which included 14-year jail terms for disruption of vital industries, were subsequently scrapped. Ironically, despite the coup, Chaudhry believed that at least it was possible to sit down and rationally exchange views with the former army strongman who is now bidding, along with Kamikamica and others, to become Prime Minister.

The current degree of polarisation of Fiji's politics and industrial relations partly goes back to the bitter days of indenture, colonial policies of separate development, and the legacy of political opportunism. The establishment tended to identify with development interests and fear challenges to their authority.

On the other hand, concepts of maximising industrial muscle to force gains perpetuated a cycle of conflict which is still playing itself out. Arguably, what Fiji needs, if it is to transform instability into stability and mistrust into trust, is a circuit-breaker.

The big question is whether the forces within the trade union movement, and the national elections, will ultimately provide such an opportunity. The costs of the alternative are high indeed. □



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Applications close on 30 April, 1992 and 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.

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Further information is available on request from Mrs Lailun Khan, Administration Officer, on 312600 Ext. 218.

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THE REGION

To market, to market

MARKET-DRIVEN government policies are seen by economists as a realistic approach to difficult times. Unions throughout the Pacific Islands, however, view it differently. They see their role of protecting workers' interests as crucial in such times.

More than 180 delegates from 12 Pacific nations gathered in Wellington, New Zealand, in mid-February for a conference on trade union rights and a regional social and economic charter organised by the Brisbane-based South Pacific and Oceanic Council of Trade Unions (SPOCTU).

Taha Fasi (an economics teacher at Tikipunga High School, a trustee member of the Pacific Island Employment Development Trust, and the only Pacific islander on the executive council of the Post-Primary Teachers' Association), said New Zealand's Employment Contract Act has forced many Pacific Islanders to work without proper contracts for low pay and below minimum conditions. "In these hard economic times, it is a question of survival. He or she will take a job at any pay rate or on any conditions." Some people worked several part-time jobs seven days a week, and social and health cuts had added to the pressure, he said.

The conference also unanimously condemned Fiji's new industrial decrees, which the interim Government sees as the basis for a stable industrial environment favouring economic growth. The Wellington meeting came less than a week after Mahendra Chaudhry, (a former cabinet minister in the late Dr Timoci Lavadra's short-lived coalition government deposed by Major-General Sitiveni Rabuka), was charged under the decrees with holding office in two unions at once. He was being paid as general secretary of the Fiji Public Servants' Association and voluntarily headed the National Farmers' Union for several years. The unions believe the Fiji Government's decrees are authoritarian and draconian. Council of Trade Unions President Ken Douglas also said the 1987 coups created conditions for changes in textile manufacturing in Australia and New Zealand through Fiji's cheap labour policies for foreign companies and anti-union curbs.

David Roble interviewed union leaders from the region about employment issues, and the role and development of unions in the region. □

French Polynesia

Marrying culture and democracy

The ocean is not a barrier — Hirohiti Tefaarere, secretary-general of Tahiti's A Tia I Mua: (10,000 members)

WE are trying to marry culture with modern democracy. You must remember the ocean is not a barrier — it is a means of communication. Our ancestors conquered the Pacific in canoes. The peoples of the Pacific jumped from the era of the canoe to the era of computers and space shuttles in one generation.

No other community has had to do that. Somewhere inside I feel still ill at ease with our problems back home — the social and economic problems ahead. When we formed Tia Mua seven and a half years ago we sought democracy for our people. At first we used the CFDT [socialist union in metropolitan France] as our model. We also pursued bilateral contacts with other unions abroad — like the mineworkers union in Germany, hospitality workers in Belgium, an Israeli union, and the Australian Council of Trade Unions. And to maintain our links with French culture we built a relationship with the Kanak and Exploited Workers' Union [USTKE] and OSOENC in New Caledonia.

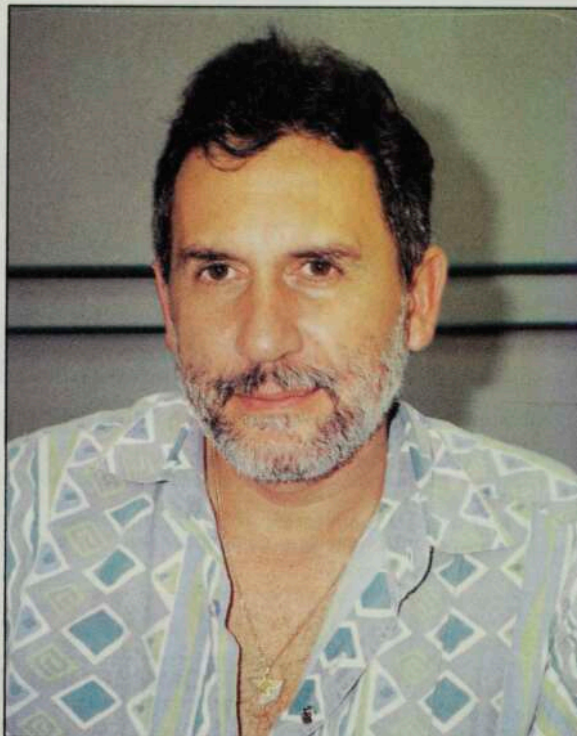
In seven years we went from nowhere to become the first-ranked union in Tahiti. Last year at Brisbane we approached SPOCTUS to support our campaign against the nuclear bomb — nuclear testing is such an important issue for us. It is so destructive of our social structure and the environment. We have often demonstrated publicly on Moruroa Atoll against the tests. There have been frequent strikes on the atoll. It shows that we Tahitians are mature. We demand a "popular consultation" of Tahitians about nuclear testing — not a national referendum [which by law includes all French citizens in metropolitan France]. The motto of our union is "Land, education

and a job". All our action hinges on these three rights.

For us the labour movement in the South Pacific is confronted with three vital issues — the environment and the European trade bloc that comes into force on January 1, 1993. We're not ready! Let us look each other in the eye. We are not ready.

My mother used to tell me, "Hiro, your name was never sullied by any of your ancestors." I look at the mirror and ask am I worthy of my name. Hirohiti means the "greatest god of warriors". It also means "god of thieves". Tefaarere means "flowing river valley" and the name of our union means "honest and forward". For us these words have some impact, which is why I understand our Maori cousins. Unions are a recent invention, but the people of the Pacific go back 2000 or 3000 years.

I stress our cultural values... Speak about productivity and gross national product and it doesn't mean anything to me. But speak of the land, food, fishing, agriculture and then I understand. Pacific unions need support in setting up our credit unions, health cooperatives, and legal and accounting cooperatives. □



Pictures: David Roble

Tefaarere: ill at ease with problems at home

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THE REGION

New Zealand - Niue

Lessons in asking questions

Islanders, Maori suffering most — Taha Fasi, Niuean-born, Pacific Islands executive member of New Zealand's Post-Primary Teacher's Association (membership 12,000 teachers, approx. 200-300 Pacific Islanders) and an outspoken advocate of Pacific Island rights in the New Zealand community:

IT is sad to see some Pacific governments adopt the market-driven economic model as developed by New Zealand and lose sight of what they should be doing.

On one hand I can see why some people are drawn to the emphasis on restructuring, and why some are seen as being "captured" by the commercial world.

But on the whole the market economy in New Zealand has failed — as shown by the indicators like high unemployment and the rise in social problems. An analysis of the unemployment figures shows that Pacific Islanders and the Maori people are suffering most from the restructuring.

Some Pacific politicians have too much faith in the restructuring. They should heed some of the lessons from New Zealand. Since the market-driven economy was introduced into New Zealand, a lot of industries and businesses have closed down. And the social cost on the community has been high, such as the rise in violence — both street violence and in the home.

Traditional jobs have been lost, jobs such as in the freezing works. The technological has triumphed at the expense of the people.

In the short run, the disadvantages of New Zealand's experiment outweigh the advantages. And in the long run? Well, cannot see things being turned around.

Both major parties — the ruling National Party and Labour — have been very dishonest about the restructuring. They both say that next year it will be okay. But it isn't. They are just concerned with their three years in Parliament.

They are not courageous enough to say there will be pain indefinitely.



Pictures: David Robie

Taha Fasi: market economy in New Zealand has failed

It is damaging for small Pacific countries like Niue, which relies on New Zealand for 90 per cent of its national economy. If New Zealand is in a recession, aid is reduced.

As Pacific Islanders in New Zealand, we recognise the struggle and aspirations of the *tangata whenua*. It is up to the Maori people and the *pakeha* to sort out the bicultural issues, and it is going to take a long time. But the *pakeha* should also recognise the Pacific islanders' place in New Zealand society.

There is apprehension among some New Zealanders about accepting Pacific Islanders — we have to make a lot of noise for our voice to be heard. There is a slowness to recognise that island people are not only a significant part of the population, but also of the workforce.

There is a reluctance to accept that Pacific people are here to stay — many of us are New Zealand citizens: many are second and third-generation New Zealanders. The attitude among the highest levels in the New Zealand social structure has been to hardly realise that we are here. The reality is that New Zealand is

a multicultural society, especially in the North Island. But we are not effectively represented as a people.

Pacific Islanders need to think more about action. Gone are the days when you could just think about yourself, or your family alone.

There is a fear among some islanders of questioning. People don't want to challenge or ask the boss because they might lose their job. They must realise they have rights as a worker.

This is where a union role is very important, in education of the people. Our people can be educated to challenge or question, to air their concerns. By acting in unions they become more aware of what is happening around them.

We need to think with a collective approach — community organisations, political organisations, and unions. And we need to have a broader outlook rather than just whether we are Samoans, or Tongans, or whatever ethnic grouping or boundaries.

Looking ahead at the economic future, we need to regard ourselves more as Pacific Islanders — as a group — and become more pro-active. □

THE REGION

Western Samoa

Change at our own pace

Role in national development — Koroseta To'o, general secretary of Western Samoa's Public Service Association (8000 members):

THE PSA plays a significant role in our national social, political and economic development. At the moment we are involved in organising the private sector and quasi-government and statutory corporations — the Bank Union, National Provident

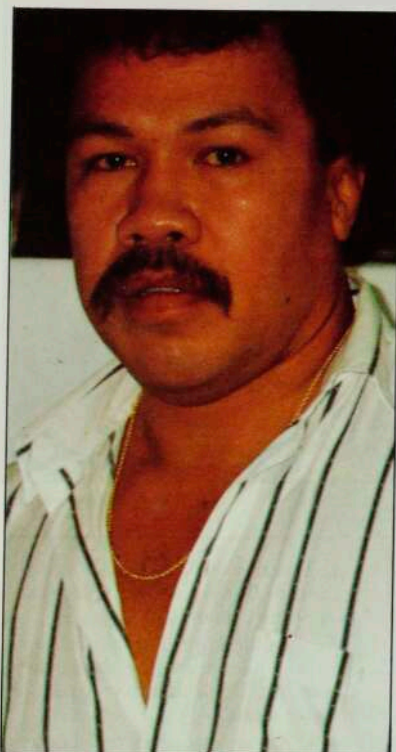
Fund and Shipping Corporation (we're setting up the first Seamen's Union).

Our philosophy is well-understood. We are endeavouring to start a credit union, cooperative stores, a medical scheme and insurance service. We are trying to achieve self-reliance and to raise standards in a national development role.

The PSA played a major role in achieving universal suffrage in Western Samoa, but we have to make changes at our own pace. We are well protected under our constitution. Article 13, where it spells out the freedom of association, is the only place of legislation to do with unions. The supreme law of the country acknowledges that right. Unless there was a move to seek the necessary two-thirds majority to change the law we have no need to worry.

Unions are the basis of protecting workers and human rights. SPOCTU has an important role in helping unions in the region. We have to help each other. We must remain in solidarity with the mineworkers in Fiji and so on. And we support recognition of SPOCTU by the South Pacific Forum.

Recognition of women's rights is also important. A new government ministry has been set up because of pressure. However, it isn't just a matter of what governments do, it is also what unions can do. We have four women in the PSA executive and 57 per cent of our members are women. In the next year or so we expect to see the formation of a national trade union centre representing both private and public service. More than 70 per cent of the country's 4000 public servants are unionised and 50 per cent of the 10,000 statutory corporation workers are also unionised. □



Koroseta To'o: union role in social, political and economic development

Vanuatu

Rebuilding and moving on

Good sign for the future — Ephraim Kalsakau, president National Union Blong Laba (2750 members) and co-ordinator of the National Committee of Unions

UNIONS in Vanuatu are going through a rebuilding process. Three of four major unions are involved in the new Vanuatu National Committee of Unions [VNCU] and we plan to set up a union centre.

The new government is surprisingly open to our aspirations, and perhaps it is a good sign for future labour relations.

After talks with Serge Vohor [Foreign Affairs Minister and UMP party president] we have been promised a building or a centre, and arbitration and conciliation procedures are being introduced. The big test will come with the new Parliament site.

One of the reasons the union movement didn't progress during the Lini era was because of the public servants' strike in 1981 — a year after Independence. As leader of the strike I was branded from



Positive signs: Kalsakau, right, with SPOCTU Education Officer, Raghwan



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THE REGION

then on as "sabotaging" the government efforts. I was forced to resign at the time, becoming Port Vila's senior health inspector and later, in 1984, town clerk.

Later I was involved in setting up the Municipal Workers Union and we supported the Labour Party in the 1987 general election.

In 1983 we had as many as 22 unions registered in a country of merely 150,000 people. They were mainly craft unions and you'd have a situation where a mechanics union, for example, would only have 20 members.

The Lini government was being advised by expatriate officials to keep the unions in check. By 1987 there was a Vanuatu Trades Union Congress but it was formed top down rather than from grassroots up and it didn't survive.

Now we have about 4500 workers unionised. Under the VNCU umbrella, the National Union Blong Leba has about 2750 members, the Public Service Association 700 and the Teachers Union 630; the Health Workers Union which is not so far within the VNCU has about 200 members.

The low point for labour relations came during the dock-workers' strike on Santo between October 1990 and August 1991.

We were seeking better pay and conditions — the government would raise the minimum wage paid just one month before the elections. Police were brought in to harass the workers who were seeking legitimate demands. Hopefully labour relations will be better now with the change of government.

We appreciate the help from other unions in the region, like Australia and New Zealand, but instead of deciding help from afar, the unionists should come to Vanuatu and see for themselves our difficulties and what we need. □

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Party Politics a la Pacific

THE principle of all transplantation is that the introduced item, in order to thrive, must adapt to the new environment. In many cases, the transplant in time loses all resemblance to the original but the name.

This is the case with the church. It has had to accommodate characteristics of the local cultures — a streak of cargoism in PNG and the Solomons, a bit of hysteria in Fiji, all feasting and politics in Tonga, priestcraft and churchianity in Samoa, and many other things got mixed in together with the moral hotchpotch that Christianity represents in the Pacific. Therefore we pride ourselves over Pacific theology, Pacific Way (really a formula for getting the weak states to accept the will of the strong ones and called "consensus"), and many other Pacific thingamibobs. But all these are transplants with the ubiquitous coconut cream dressing and served lukewarm, that is, in a nauseating condition.

Party politics is one of these imports. It is incredible to see how much this foreign institution is remodelled to suit local conditions, more strictly, local interests. This is not peculiar to the Pacific, of course. One finds the same sort of thing everywhere in the world. What is unique to the Pacific islands is that they use and recast this institution without an inkling of what it is, especially the fact that it does embody values which are absent from island societies e.g. liberalism, democracy, the work ethic, republicanism, criticism and so on.

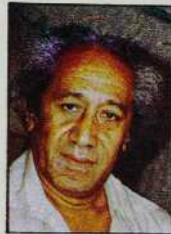
Pacific societies have moralities whose values include sharing (a strategy for survival in resource-poor environments), loyalty (of the weak to the strong), humility (reinforced by the oppressive side of Christian ethics), etc. But none ever had any of the values of liberal humanism. They have always been the target of violent persecution and bullying.

As a result, party programmes in the Islands have for their content part of this oppressive and slave morality. That is, so far as liberal and humanist sentiments are concerned their party politics is simply vacuous.

Although PNG has had parties for some time, though perhaps not as long as Fiji, it is only now — with Rabi Namaliu — that we see a leader in that country who tries to infuse PNG politics with a sense of humanist tradition. But the dead weight of her rural myriads with their innocent but uninformed perception is just too unwieldy and disproportionately huge compared to the minuscule progressive section of society. The sociopolitical effect of this force will continue to plague PNG for as long as the wide gap between a Namaliu's or a Lohia's comprehension of how things work in today's world and that of a Highland village headman. The gap must be destroyed.

And PNG must wean itself from being a buffer for Australia vis-a-vis Indonesia. Especially now that the Timor business looks risky. Where does PNG stand? With Australia or Portugal i.e. with kith and kin or principle? Moreover, PNG must sometimes look to Europe, though looking to Europe is an art

THE ISLANDS



FUTA HELU

that has to be acquired. But the country is now all wrapped up in party wars where the no-confidence vote is the favourite weapon. And Bougainville, a problem that Australia had a big hand in creating, will for some time yet be the standing symbol of PNG unhealed social ills.

The situation in Fiji illustrates how far this can go. Here you have a confrontation between business interests, ethnic elements who are downtrodden but may be potentially blackguards all, and a traditional privileged class whose sole aim in this life and the next is to perfect social parasitism. The sum of their politics is the clash between those specific interests.

Rabuka, for instance, seeing a bleak future in his career if his party does not come home in the "next" election, wags an index finger to drive home the point: he and his party have no respectable platform. No liberty, no human rights, no tolerance, no opposition, just plain sadism alias

traditional privilege.

In fact the control — he may not be aware of it — marks and is the symbol of the turning point in Fiji politics: the end of the traditional form and the beginning of the new. I dare prophesy, however, no general election for Fiji this year. I was right last time and am dead sure I again will be this time.

Tonga is a laughing predicament not only because she has never had parties, but powerful churches which have the same social effect, but also in the way people reveal their ignorance and intolerance regarding party politics. Many people especially chiefs, their relatives and freeloaders and most people with power, do not want party politics.

Arguments offered say that party politics is a 'foreign thing', a convenient phrase, that it would double public expenditure (public expenditure has been doubling at shorter and shorter periods and mostly for villainous reasons), that the present system is a lesser evil — than what we do not know, that such a change would wreck the peace and stability we now enjoy.

The pro-democracy movement led by young representatives of the people, is accelerating and is shaping up well to be Tonga's first political party, though it wouldn't be in the books for quite some time yet. But Tonga seems to be poised to have parties in the next five or so years.

It will be another nail into the coffin of Tonga's feudal system as loyalties shift and reshuffle under the new consciousness for change.

The leadership of the two most powerful churches, Wesleyan and Catholic, are solidly behind the pro-democracy movement which is going to stage in November this year a conference on aspects of the constitution that may need revision. Such a colloquium is just the cement required to materialise such things as political parties. But the organisers will certainly experience a lot of intimidation and harassment from quarters that stand to lose if basic law is ever so little altered. □

HEADLINES



*Sukwianomb: new vice-chancellor
of the University of Papua
New Guinea, with new ideas*

Merry-maker's UPNG plans

By Martin Tiffany

TRYING to twist your tongue around Joseph Sukwianomb's surname can prove a bit of a mouthful when you first meet him. But after he gives you a quick linguistics lesson, you soon get it sounding acceptable.

In his native Papua New Guinea his surname means road to festivity or, as he likes to translate it, "merry-maker".

As the new vice-chancellor of the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), his translation fits quite well with his plans for the institution.

The Port Moresby-based university was shut down for the second semester last July following student unrest which involved violence and damaging property. Students at UPNG and its sister university, the University of Technology in Lae, boycotted lectures for several weeks before the shutdown in protest against pay increases for parliamentarians and constitutional office holders. The students defied orders to sit for examinations and some were charged by police for violence and property damage.

Apart from the PNG students, others from the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu,

Western Samoa and Kiribati were sent home because of the unrest.

Sukwianomb's predecessor, Professor John Lynch, resigned to join the University of the South Pacific and leaves the new VC the unenviable task of getting the university back on its feet.

However Sukwianomb is looking forward to it, and speaks with obvious enthusiasm about "pulling the university back together". He is undertaking a major public relations exercise and has plans to make the university a lively and exciting place.

"The university was closed down and students been sent home; we have to build confidence again which will take quite a while," said Sukwianomb.

He said the public relations exercise will be geared a lot towards the governments of the students who were sent home.

"We have to make up for it, build up the university — have a university day, present the university to the community, organise cultural events.

"Sometimes a university can become a boring place; you want to make it the centre of cultural revival, organise student activities... do something creative. A university should not be a place

where you just go and read text books, it can be an exciting place — you look forward to tomorrow and the next day, as there is something happening."

Sukwianomb said that, apart from lectures, there should be other things happening of which the students are a part. He also wants to get staff more involved in the university.

Sukwianomb would like to see the fences and iron gates that surround the university removed. He believes these do not represent the principal of a free and democratic institution.

Sukwianomb, 38, is no stranger to UPNG having obtained his Bachelor of Education there and later lecturing at the university. He also obtained a Master of Arts from the University of Nairobi in Kenya, and tutored there at the Kenyatta University College.

While in Kenya he met his wife Njeri and they have a son and a daughter. His son, Nelson Mandela, is named after the leader of the African National Congress because Sukwianomb was "supportive of the cause of South Africa".

In October 1988, Sukwianomb left UPNG on secondment to join the Nuku'alofa-based South Pacific Alliance for Family Health (SPAFH) as secretary general. He started another three-year term last year, but resigned when he was offered the vice-chancellor's post late last year. He took up his current post at UPNG on February 3. □

HEADLINES

Pumpkins tip trade scales

IN November 1991, Tonga recorded what is said to be its first visible trade surplus — US\$70,000. The surplus is said to be from squash pumpkin exports to Japan of about US\$3.3 million.

French aid to Cooks

THE Cook Islands has signed an aid

agreement with France worth almost US\$1 million, signalling an end to a 25-year struggle for better water and electricity supplies.

Anti-snake grant

HAWAII has received a US\$100,000 grant from Washington's Office of Territorial and international affairs to develop fool-proof ways of preventing Guam's destructive brown tree snake from becoming established in Hawaii. Some snakes have been found dead at Honolulu International Airport, in the

landing gear of planes from Guam.

US confirms presence

THE United States has affirmed its commitment to a military presence in the Asia-Pacific region, saying any talk of its decline in the region is wrong and dangerous. Assistant American Defence Secretary, James Lilley, told an Asia-Pacific defence conference in Singapore the need for a United States role in the region's security affairs would continue.

Special youth jail?

WESTERN Samoa's Police Commissioner, Galuvao Tanielu, has called for the establishment of a special jail for young people. He says offenders as young as 12 have been jailed with adults in the past because there were no alternatives, and as a result teenage inmates had picked up bad habits.

Rules for death

PAPUA New Guinea's attorney general, Bernard Narakobi, is working on a set of rules for the enforcement of capital punishment in the country. The PNG parliament passed the death penalty bill last year but it has still not been implemented due to lack of enforcement regulations.

Solomons warned off

THE Papua New Guinea government has warned the Solomon Islands to keep out of PNG's internal affairs. The warning from PNG Trade and Industry Minister, John Giheno, was in response to statements by Solomon Islands Opposition leader, Joses Tuhanuku, and former parliamentarian, Sethuel Kelly, in support of Bougainville secession.

Bond scheme revived

WESTERN Samoa has revived a scholarship bond scheme aimed at encouraging graduates funded by government to return and work in the public service. Most of the bonds were guaranteed by parents, who are liable to refund the thousands of tala spent on their children's sponsored studies if they do not honour signed contracts. The bond is for the same number of years the students spent on scholarship (usually three years).

Samoans set for TV

SAMOANS waiting for their own television station might get it by June, if a new timetable by the government can be met. The plan is to use Television New Zealand expertise to install a NZ Pal system covering Apia during the 30th independence celebration in June. Most TV owners have US standard NTSC systems to pick (free) transmissions from American Samoa.

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For further information on this posting, please contact:

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Please send applications and curriculum vitae to Ms. Fee at the above address. Deadline for receipt of applications is April 30, 1992.

HEADLINES

Shock death of Iekawe

JACQUES Iekawe, the first Kanak elected to head a regional organisation died unexpectedly in Wellington last month from cancer. He was admitted to hospital after complaining of a sore throat, but died soon after.

Iekawe, 45, was to take over as secretary-general of the Noumea-based South Pacific Commission in June.

Married with five children, he obtained a law degree in France before returning to the New Caledonia to take up a career in the administration of the territory. Before being appointed to head the SPC, he was New Caledonia's deputy high commissioner responsible for development, and the president of the Caledonian Investment Bank.

AIDS a big export

FRENCH Polynesia and New Caledonia have the highest incidence of AIDS in the region, says a Australian HIV surveillance report. Papua New Guinea has the largest number of carriers — 37 — though its relative percentage is lower because of its huge population of four million. The report gives 15 and 9.4 rate per 100,000 population in the French territories. French Polynesia's figure is alarming with 27 AIDS cases at World Health Organisation's last count in 1991. New Caledonia has 16 confirmed cases, Papua New Guinea 37, Guam eight, Fiji seven while Tonga, the Federated States of Micronesia and Marshall Islands two each, and Western Samoa one.

Countries and territories so far officially free of the deadly infection are American Samoa, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, Northern Marianas, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna. Last month a medical research centre in Melbourne disclosed that Australian male tourists could be "exporting AIDS" to Asian and Pacific holiday countries because of the increasing number of tourists travelling specifically on sex holidays. Australia has 2882 AIDS cases — up from the last count of 2474 cases, and 396 known HIV virus carriers.

New party

TWELVE Fiji trade unionists and former Fiji Labour Party (FLP) officials launched a new political party on February 25 because of FLP's insistence on boycotting this year's general elections. The New Labour party will be headed by Michale Columbus, president of the Fiji Trade Union Congress and a former vice-president of the FLP.

Deaths due to blockade

THERE have been more claims that the Papua New Guinea blockade of Bougainville has contributed to the deaths of

many people. Sam Voron, the Australian amateur radio enthusiast who set up the secessionist Bougainville government's radio services, says it is stopping medical supplies and causing great misery.

Mine determined

BOUGAINVILLE Copper Limited, the company that operated the giant copper mine on the secessionist island, says it is determined to re-open the mine once the crisis on the island is over, but the company has been unable to assess the mine's future viability because they have been unable to visit it since 1990.

Niue aid cut

SHARP cuts in New Zealand's aid to Niue have forced the country to seek development assistance in Australia. Niue Premier Sir Robert Rex and the head of the island's public service Terry Chapman returned from Canberra in February after meeting with Prime Minister Paul Keating and Foreign Affairs Minister Senator Gareth Evans.

Who's a Fijian?

THE question of who qualifies to be a Fijian was brought to the front in Fiji in February. This followed the disqualification of prominent Fiji businessman and former member of parliament Jim Ah Koy from contesting a parliamentary seat reserved for indigenous Fijians.

Ah Koy's mother is an indigenous

Fijian and last year his name was included in the Vola ni Kawa Bula, which is the register of indigenous Fijians.

However, his name was struck from the roll of Fijian voters in late February because his father is not a Fijian.

According to the registration officer for the Suva City Fijian Urban Constituency, Taniela Tabu, since Ah Koy's father is not a Fijian he cannot be registered on the roll of Fijian voters.

Ah Koy said the move was premeditated and said he would appeal to the courts.

Earlier when Ah Koy's "Fijianness" was challenged, he filed objections to the registration of Fijian high chief, Ratu Viliame Dreunimisimisi, as a Fijian on the grounds that his grandfather was a Tongan.

Ah Koy said the decision to drop him from the roll of Fijian voters would lead to questions about the duality of laws in Fiji. It would also create two classes of Fijians. Ah Koy supporter, Major General Sitiveni Rabuka, said the moves to question the Fijianness of Ah Koy and Dreunimisimisi were deeply "embarrassing".

University of the South Pacific academic Dr Tupeni Baba said the Fijian race was headed towards extinction if "we continue to define Fijianness so

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rigidly and on grounds of racial purity." Prior to the military coups of 1987, Ah Koy had sat in parliament as representative of the General Electors, a party which encompassed all races who are not indigenous Fijians or ethnic Indians. Fiji's post-coup constitution guarantees a majority of parliamentary seats for indigenous Fijians.

PNG's first freeway

PAPUA New Guinea is to get its first freeway following Cabinet approval of a K65 million tender for the construction of the Spring Garden Road/Airport link, providing 3000 jobs in skilled, semi-skilled and manual labour areas. The project involves construction of a tunnel through Burns Peak to provide a more direct link from the city area, including the port, and the provision of a freeway linking the city, via the tunnel, to Jacksons Airport. The contract has been awarded to Kinhill Kramer Consortium. Work is scheduled to start by June and finish within three years.

Difficult decade ahead

A RECENT economic report predicts a difficult decade for Pacific Island economies. The Pacific Economic Bulletin, published by the Australian National University, says Island countries will fall further behind the competitive nations of the Pacific rim. □

Samoa boxers look to Spain

BOXERS are Western Samoa's best bet at the Olympics this year.

Eager to get their squad into shape for the four-yearly event, a team of six New Zealand-based Samoan boxers were invited to Apia in early March.

New Zealand champions, heavyweight David Tua, middleweight Bob Casio, light-middleweight Sililo Figota, and welterweight Andrew Tua were among them. The other two were lightweight Fai Falemoe and light welterweight Ameto Tuumuli.

Lone soccer team

MELANESIAN Cup holders, Vanuatu, are the South Pacific's lone entrant in the World indoor soccer tournament.

It is placed in Oceania qualifying round play-offs in Brisbane against Australia and New Zealand in June. Vanuatu, which shocked tough opponents in the Melanesian Cup last year but failed to get the gold at the South Pacific Games, will try out their luck in World Indoor Soccer as underdogs.

Vanuatu's outdoor team coach Terry O'Donnel expects his side to qualify in the World Cup qualifying rounds against New Zealand and Fiji. The other pool,

redrawn after Western Samoa's withdrawal, has Australia, Solomon Island and Tahiti.

Singh wins third

FIJI'S Vijay Singh collected his third European title when he shot a final round of 66 to capture the Turespana Masters in Malaga recently.

The Fiji-born golfer, who was engaged in a bitter row with the Fiji golfing association a few years ago, won by two shots from England's first-year professional, Gary Evans. Singh turned 29 in February. His recent winning streak in Europe makes him one of most successful professionals from the islands.

Pick of the world

TWO Pacific Islands-born players are named in a World XV selection to play three Test matches against New Zealand All Blacks in April. Western Samoa's Peter Fatiafalo, who captained the side to a historic World Cup quarterfinal finish, and Tongan-born Willie Ofahengaue are the lone picks from the region. Second-rower Fatiafalo is based in New Zealand, but played for Samoa after missing out on All Blacks selection.

Ofahengaue now plays for Australia's Wallabies and represented them at the World Cup final. The World XV will play All Blacks at Christchurch on April 18, Wellington April 22, and at Auckland on April 25. □

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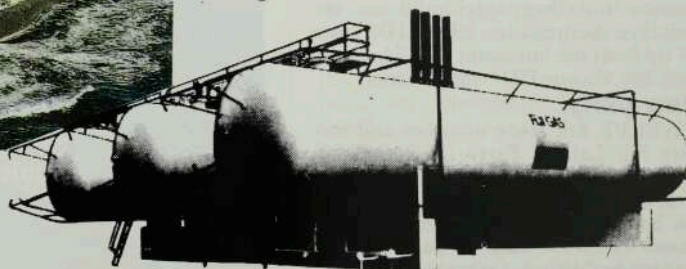


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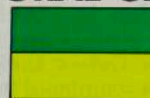
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THE REGION

Forced famine or seasonal?

By Evelyn Hogan

KURIMA district has had famines before. The whole of the Highlands of the Island of New Guinea suffers from periodic failures of the sweet potato crop. When rain falls heavily three to eight weeks after sweet potato is planted, the tubers don't develop.

In PNG, cash crops have been introduced and roads give access to markets. If the crop fails, people buy rice. In 1984, when food shortages through the Highlands provinces affected 750,000 people, food aid encouraged people to remain in their own villages. Through a regular planting program, people soon recover a steady production of sweet potato.

At the same time in Irian Jaya, food aid donated by the World Food Programme remained in the warehouses of Wamena and Nabire. Officials gave the excuse that it was difficult to get food in without road access. But corruption by local officials is suspected.

This current famine only occurs in the Kurima District. The Jayawijaya Regent in charge of the area, Jos B. Wenas, said the famine was caused by the villagers in Silimo being occupied by planting wild coconuts, a favourite delicacy, and forgot to plant sweet potatoes. One report said "In Irian Jaya, tribal villagers are still heavily dependent on food found in the forests and are unused to agriculture."

The delivery of food aid already has proved a contentious issue because of the incidental effects. In 1981, when there were food shortages in the Southern Highlands, the Provincial Nutritionist wrote: "I would like to put on record my view that indiscriminate food aid — without strong evidence of nutritional deprivation in the area concerned — can very often have contradictory effects to those intended." He said strengthening local coping strategies was better.

But it seems strange that, for the first time in 20,000 years in these mountain valleys, people have forgotten to plant. Trekking who recently returned from the Baliem Valley say that, immediately north of Kurima, people are very well fed on their traditional diet of sweet potato and vegetables. There is a heavy military presence south of Kurima. Evidence now coming out of Irian Jaya indicates that, since 1989, government teams have targeted a number of villages in the Kurima region with the intention of relocating their populations. Armed with warnings that the area was quake-prone, "persuader" teams visit villages to coax people into moving. They are offered food, school and health facilities if they

move; and nothing if they don't.

Government educational and health teams have moved away from the Hupla village of Soba and the Yali villages of Ninia and Holuwon, which in the eyes of the government have ceased to exist. For those that stay behind, there are no supplies from the Kabupaten government, and the village schools remain closed. When local people facing food shortages asked the Departement Sosial for rice they were told, "Go to Elelim where you belong."

Food aid supplies arrived in Wamena in late January for the stricken Silimo area with 27 kampungs and a population of about 12,000. However, as with the 1984 famine, the food is still in the warehouses and officials use the excuse that the helicopters used could not fly through the thick fog. Yet on January 24, a group of government officials visited the area by helicopter.

In Silimo, 148 have died in the famine affecting 12,000 yali people. Yet instead of taking food into the area, Freeport Indonesia Inc. (FII) helicopters have been used to move 600 people from Silimo to the new settlement at Elelim, off the end of the road north of Wamena. (FII mines in Irian Jaya and has expanded into a new 6.5 million acre exploration area.)

FII's new exploration area covers the whole of the central highlands. A section, including Soba, Ninia and Holuwon, projects into the Jayawijaya Ranges east of Silimo. Road development, planned for the year 2005, will connect the area to Wamena. Significant reserves of gold and copper are in these ranges.

Traditional landowners have been moved for Freeport's sake in the past. The Jayapura-based *Kabar dari Kampung* report in 1988 that, in January 1978, FFI issued a directive that the traditional owners of the area, the Amungme, were forbidden to enter and traverse Freeport's current mine site at Tembagapura, the international airfield at Timika, the Portsite of Amamapare and the copper smelter.

People were forcibly moved from the cool area near the mine down to the heat and humidity of the coast. Within two years, people were suffering from malnutrition and malaria, and 216 children died when an epidemic swept through the new settlement.

If the famine in Silimo was caused by freak climatic conditions, then the action of the Indonesian state in not delivering food aid to allow the people to remain in their ancestral area, amounts to neglect. If the famine has been the result of forced movements since 1989 to clear a crucial part of FII's new exploration area, the result would be genocide. □

EC red tape slows the flow

THE slow rate of disbursement of funds under Lome II and Lome III was a major discussion point during the fourth African, Caribbean and Pacific/European Community (ACP/EC) Joint Meeting in Suva on February 28. Pacific Island countries complained that they faced difficulty securing money to get projects running because of EC red tape.

EC representative and meeting co-chairman, Frans Klinkenbergh, said this was largely because procedures were too complicated. He pointed out these were laid down in the Lome Convention negotiated by EC and ACP countries. An in-depth study was started in 1990 to find out which procedures caused the delay. A report will be presented to the joint EC/ACP ministers' meeting in Jamaica in May.

The Suva meeting was attended at ministerial level by Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa, and at official level by Tonga. The meeting was to consider a final regional package to be funded under Lome IV.

Under Lome IV which began last year, ECU35 million (US\$42 million) has been made available to the eight ACP Pacific Group members for regional projects.

The meeting agreed that the Lome IV Regional Programme should concentrate on Natural Resources and Environment comprising marine resources, agriculture and forestry and the environment; Transport and Services comprising air and maritime transport, tourism and trade; and Human Resource Development. The three sectors will receive 45 per cent, 35 per cent and 10 per cent of the ECU35 million respectively with a reserve of 10 per cent being retained for agreed projects outside the three sectors.

Officials from both sides meet again in three months to specify priorities. According to Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, Western Samoa's Minister of Finance, there were about ECU110 million worth of projects and a total budget of ECU35 million. Malielegaoi co-chaired the meeting with Klinkenbergh. Total funding for the Pacific countries under Lome IV dropped by about US\$4 million from Lome III. Klinkenbergh said a bit more had been given to the STABEX fund and a bit less to programmable aid. STABEX provides a back-up fund when industries like copra or forestry experience a drop in income. □

THE REGION

Tale of two ports unfolding with the future

THE Singapore of the South Pacific. Where? Those with some knowledge of this region should have no problem picking the front-runner to fit the description.

With its diverse and growing industries — especially under its tax-free zone scheme — strong export base and status as a tourist haven, Fiji is the obvious choice. But something else sets it apart.

Unlike other regional countries, Fiji has two major ports. Suva, the main port, which handles the bulk of the country's containerised cargo, and Lautoka, from where major foreign exchange-earners, sugar and woodchips, are exported.

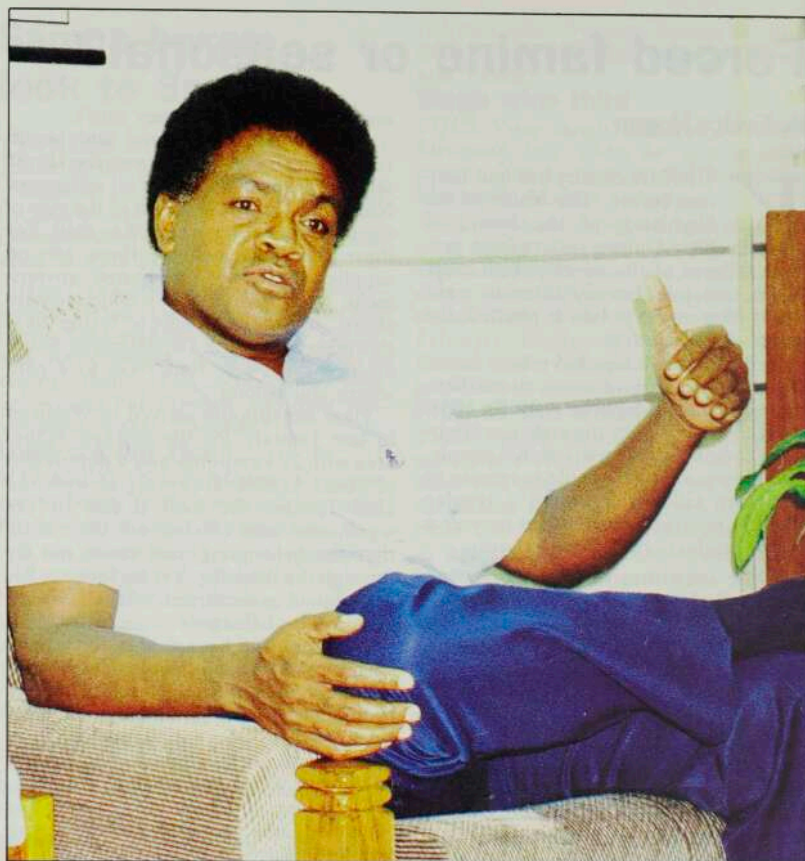
Isimeli Bose, the director general of the Ports Authority of Fiji (PAF), believes that the ports will play a vital part in the country's development, adding the tax-free zone scheme should be built around the port to make it viable by cutting out transportation costs.

Bose compares Fiji with Singapore and Hong Kong both physically and in their strategic location in their area. The difference, he says, is that Fiji has failed to fully use its ports.

He said Hong Kong's port has always been a key factor in its development and prosperity. Likewise with Singapore, which is the trans-shipment port serving the whole of South-east Asia.

"Singapore had no resources but what they did was facilitate, built the infrastructure — ship-building, ship repairs, and became a transfer point for cargo — Fiji could do the same," Bose explained.

Although Fiji is already involved in ship building and repair, Bose said for the future the country must look at servicing bigger ships and create the infrastructure



Bose: the future depends on ability to compete on a larger scale

to be able to build more ships. Fiji also has the plus of cheap labour.

Bose sees the PAF building infrastructure like slipways and warehouses which will be rented to private business to run competitively. He also envisages cargo destined for other Pacific countries being off-loaded in Suva, and the PAF transporting it to its destination cheaper than if it was transported direct.

When the PAF was established on November 1, 1975, it was modelled on the Singaporean system of port manage-

ment. Its role has changed from being involved just in stevedoring to a very diverse involvement in ships, ports and related activities.

PAF has spent millions of dollars upgrading its Suva and Lautoka ports and developing a container terminal in Suva, and used expatriates to train what is now a fully local engineering section.

Overseas tonnage is up from 1.5 million tons to around 1.9 million tons last year. The biggest increase has been in local shipping. From around 90,000 tons three years ago, the projection for local cargo this year is 250,000 tons mainly due to a lot of new trade, including pine, fertiliser and general inter-island trade.

The future of the ports, Bose says, depends on their ability to compete better in the new global economy.

"This requires an understanding of the changing international market, an investment in advanced technology, strong customer service and a marketing strategy that links the ports authority with the other sectors of economic activity... Ports will continue to set the pace for international trade, and ensure that they maintain their competitive edge in the highly complex international arena." □

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Foreign investment tango

WITH just eight years to go until the dawn of the much talked of "Pacific Century", the time when trade in the Asia Pacific region will dominate the world economy, the Pacific Island nations are scrambling to be part of the action.

Western Samoa is the latest country to try to boost its own trade by attracting Australian foreign investors with manufacturing interests.

In Sydney, last month, Western Samoa launched its first investment promotion program. The Cook Islands is set to follow, with its own investment mission late this year.

Vanuatu, on the other hand, is already well away with an innovative and multi-faceted trade program with the booming Northern Rivers region of Australia's New South Wales North Coast.

For Vanuatu, the Northern Rivers region has the advantage of already having a direct shipping route to Port Vila and of being small enough to get away from the marketing difficulties which come with big cities such as Sydney or Melbourne.

Although the program is 18 months old Andrew Kelly, Chairman of the Grafton and District Development Board (the main institutional player in Australia), says it is very much in its early stages.

Already some contracts have been signed.

Vanuatu will export timber to a Northern Rivers coffin-maker who will return some coffins.

Other Northern Rivers businesses are exporting paint and building supplies while a boat builder, who makes shallow punts for transporting livestock and other bulky produce, has found a ready market in landowners who need transport for short inter-island hops.

Until now, the Northern Rivers Clarence River port has only been open for exports. With new imports on their way from Vanuatu, the Grafton Development Board is arranging all the necessary customs and government approvals to receive goods direct from Port Vila.

It is also organising a special three-month business course for small businesspeople from Vanuatu at the Grafton College of Technical and Further Education.

In March, Western Samoa began its investment promotion campaign with a visit from a delegation led by Finance Minister, Tuilaepa Sailele.

After Western Samoa's happy experience with its new automotive parts factory put in by Yazaki factory, which opened in 1991, employs 800 people and plans expansions soon to 1000 and later on to 1500.

Tuilaepa Sailele says it was the devastation of three major cyclones in as many years, which really focussed Western Samoa's mind on the need for investment in export-based manufacturing.

At the moment Western Samoa depends on agriculture for its survival. While both tourism and agriculture take time to recover from cyclones, manufacturing can usually be up and running again in the space of a few short weeks.

After devastating cyclones elsewhere in the Pacific this year, Western Samoa's experience is one which other Island nations are likely to identify with.

But cyclones are not the main problem for small Island economies.

AUSTRALIA



**JEMIMA
GARRETT**

The world recession and rapidly growing youth unemployment are more lasting problems.

The recession has meant poor demand in countries which traditionally take island exports and increased the number of emigrants returning home, but it is also a time when Australian and New Zealand businesses are planning major restructuring.

Often that restructuring can mean a move off-shore to lower costs and hence opportunities for Island nations to snare a big-time, long-term and committed foreign investor such as Yazaki.

Youth unemployment is a more intractable problem.

Even if they achieve annual economic growth rates of three per cent some Island countries would still not be growing fast enough to provide jobs for school leavers flooding into the towns.

If those young people are not to become disillusioned, and then become part of the urban crime problem, they need jobs.

In the longer term, those jobs need to include some skilled positions which could provide a springboard for the development of an indigenously owned business sector.

While garment manufacturing, with its need for large numbers of workers, has big benefits in the short and medium term, it also has the disadvantage of providing few opportunities to develop local entrepreneurial skills.

Not only that, but because the equipment used is portable, the industry can easily move on as soon as tax incentives come to an end.

In the long term, the Island nations need investment which will add to the skill base of the country and help develop local entrepreneurs.

Just how to attract that sort of investment is the issue with which Pacific leaders are grappling.

In the case of both Yazaki's investment in Western Samoa and the Northern Rivers-Vanuatu trade program, the impetus for investment essentially came about through personal contacts.

While Yazaki did a careful comparative study of Fiji, Tonga, Western and American Samoa before making its decision, its initial interest in the Pacific Islands was prompted by its experience in New Zealand, where more than 50 per cent of its workforce is Samoan.

In the case of the New South Wales, Northern Rivers, Wayne Taylor, the man who is the brains behind the scheme, is married to a ni-Vanuatu.

While there is a natural tendency amongst the smaller Island countries to look to Fiji, with its numerous trade missions, as a model the value of the personal contact should not be underestimated.

Those with personal contacts value their reputation within the community, both here and in the Islands.

They are, therefore, less likely to exhibit some of the carpetbagger tendencies which, all too often, have been prevalent amongst would-be investors. □

THE REGION

Dolphin-safe, but what about the extra bits?

By David North

ENVIRONMENTALISTS, judges and consumer advocates have made life exciting for the tuna industry recently.

While both StarKist and Van Camp back only dolphin-safe tuna in Pago Pago, other firms tried to continue to buy tuna caught by purse-seiners working the Eastern Tropical Pacific, where they often catch (and kill) dolphins snared in their big nets.

America's powerful environmental lobby has pushed through legislation saying that the US cannot import tuna from countries whose vessels (like those of Mexico, Venezuela and Vanuatu) continue to fish "on dolphin". (Dolphins swim above schools of tuna in the Eastern Tropical Pacific.)

But vessel owners learned they could sell their catch to non-banned nations, such as Italy, Spain, and Japan which, in turn, sold the catch to US firms. The pro-dolphin Earth Island Institute in San Francisco went into the US District Court to fight this, and Judge Thelton E.

Henderson twice ordered that the practice of importing yellowfin caught in this manner be halted.

The ruling is beneficial to the two canneries in Pago Pago, which handled only dolphin-safe tuna anyway, and to most of the South Pacific nations. US law, by forcing tuna boats out of the Eastern Tropical Pacific, have caused many to move into the EEZs of nations further to the West, notably Papua New Guinea and the Federated States of Micronesia, thereby increasing the licence fees paid to those governments.

If the rulings have been good for some parts of the industry, and bad for others, the recent findings of the magazine, *Consumer Reports*, on the lack of cleanliness in canned tuna sold to Americans, hurts everyone in the business.

Consumer Reports is a very powerful, stridently independent American institution. It accepts no advertising, and uses expensive laboratory testing to examine and evaluate products. It devoted five full pages to a discussion of various brands of canned tuna.

While it assures readers that the crud

found in some tuna cans is not harmful to one's health (because of the cooking process) *Consumer Reports'* copy was not very appetising:

"We sent three samples of each tuna product to a lab that specialises in such testing. Scientists there wash the filth from the fish and examine it under a microscope. About half of the 123 samples contained things that shouldn't have been there: insect parts, hairs, fish scales, and feather "barbules" (indigestible bits of feathers that birds swallow when preening and later excrete, apparently when flying around the boats and the processing plants). Extraneous matter turned up in at least one sample of each brand we tested."

In earlier years, the magazine reported, there was a much lower incidence of such stuff in canned tuna.

Consumer Reports had some advice about buying low-sodium tuna in general — don't. If you worry about too much salt in the product, buy water-packed tuna and simply rinse it before eating it. The low-sodium tuna usually costs considerably more than the regular product. □

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New shots . . . post-Cold War

RED-FACED Pentagon officials are scrambling to diffuse a controversy over a leaked internal memo that sets out the most detailed set of US military objectives yet for the post-Cold War era.

The memo is the basis of the administration's two-yearly Defense Planning Guidance, which is the cornerstone of American military policy and strategy.

Despite the end of the Cold War, the memo outlines seven "illustrative" scenarios which could involve US combat troops including renewed Iraqi aggression, an expansion at Russia, and threats to the Panama Canal.

But of great interest to our region is the emphasis placed on Asian hotspots.

The Pentagon planners have imagined two cases which, if they escalated, might not only draw in US military forces but Australian, Southeast Asian and other regional troops.

The first is a North Korean invasion of South Korea under the guise of a peace initiative. The Pentagon assumed that North Korea will have acquired a nuclear weapons capability before it launches the attack, although it says the communist state would be unlikely to use them unless its armed forces faced "catastrophic defeat".

Even closer to the South Pacific, the Pentagon imagines an attempted coup in the Philippines some time after US forces are withdrawn, but which puts at risk about 5000 remaining American civilians.

According to *The New York Times* which, along with *The Washington Post*, obtained copies of the memo, it says, "In the aftermath of a major coup attempt, fighting continues with the Philippine military divided into different factions vying for control." In the chaos, about 300 Americans are taken hostage by one faction, prompting a US military rescue.

In part, the threat scenarios may have been fuelled by the Pentagon's looming budget battle with congress, which has floated various proposals to double White House cuts to American defence spending. The prospect of new enemies rising from the rubble of the Cold War is a useful buffer against further diminution of military resources.

But some experts in Washington have questioned whether the Pentagon has created an alarming menu of potential conflicts in order to justify the continuation of massive defence expenditure and weapons programs.

"Maintaining forces capable of fighting one or more of the seven scenarios outlined in the document would require a robust level of defense spending into the next century," said *The New York Times*.

But the most controversial element in the Pentagon document is its assertion that the main US military objective in the post-Cold War era should be to preclude the emergence of a new superpower either from Asia, Europe, or the former Soviet Union.

In what appears to be the advocacy of a lone superpower policy, the document implies that Washington would frown upon even allies such as Japan or Germany if they sought

WASHINGTON



MARGOT
O'NEILL

positions of enhanced global leadership.

The document says the US should establish an international framework which accounts "sufficiently for the interests of the advanced industrial nations to discourage them from challenging our leadership", while also maintaining American military supremacy to deter "potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role".

"While the US cannot become the world's 'policeman', by assuming responsibility for righting every wrong, we will retain the pre-eminent responsibility for addressing selectively those wrongs which threaten not only our interests, but those of our allies or friends, or which could seriously unsettle international relations," it says.

This bold assertion has been ridiculed by some congressmen and western diplomats as negating international hopes for more collective security, and as reviving Pax Americans.

Democrat Senator Robert Byrd said: "The basic thrust of the document seems to be this: We love being the sole remaining superpower in the world, and we want so much to remain that way that we are willing to risk the basic health of our economy and well-being of our people to do so."

Even some US administration officials have been quoted as decrying the document as a "dumb report" that "in no way or shape represents US policy".

In one instance, the Deputy Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger, was reported to have told an Indian delegation to dismiss unfavourable references in the document to India.

The document says that the United States "should discourage Indian hegemonic aspirations over the other states in South Asia and on the Indian Ocean".

Mr Eagleburger told the delegation that the language used in the document did not reflect US policy.

Pentagon officials have taken to the ramparts, saying the document is still a draft and will not, in its final form, advocate that American military power should be used to thwart the rise of even friendly regional competitors.

"What we seek to prevent is the emergence of a hostile power, a hostile superpower," said Pentagon spokesman, Pat Williams.

"The United States is not looking for a unilateral role in the world. What we are saying is that we want to stay involved with our allies, we want to remain part of the community of nations."

It also underscores American commitment to the Asia-Pacific region: "We must maintain our status as a military power of the first magnitude in the area. This will enable the US to continue to contribute to regional security and stability acting as a balancing force and preventing emergence of a vacuum or a regional hegemony."

While most nations welcome a continuing US role in the region, the shifting economic and political dynamics unleashed by the end of the Cold War mean it is less likely than ever that one military superpower will be able to call the shots. □

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Picture: Liz Thompson

Takaku: government knows what's needed, but not how to get there

Warriors on a new battlefield

By Liz Thompson

A YOUNG boy is dying slowly. He has a fever; his mother wipes his brow. Eventually he is dead and both parents lie prostrate next to the body, crying, stroking the young body.

You sense their helpless confusion. The death which takes place in the Papua New Guinean feature film *Warriors in Transit* is a symbol, says Albert Toro, the director. He and William Takaku, director of the National Theatre Company, wrote the script.

They see the young boy as a symbol of Papua New Guinea — his parents metaphorically the government, wanting what is best for the country, but not knowing how to reap it.

As problems intensify and social order breaks down the government, says Toro, do not know how to treat the disease — neither do the boys' parents. They recognise that he is ill but never understand what exactly the illness is, or how to improve his condition.

This is an important thread in the eight times 25-minute series.

This, and an examination of various social manifestations developing in the process of modernisation. It moves across a number of important issues, from the human side of urban drift, tracing

particular families' experience, to the very real problems of corruption in high places, drunken politicians having brawls in urinals. It is a powerful critique and unique in presenting them to a broad audience in accessible form. The form is theatrical, not highly polished, the pace sometimes slow and meandering; but it is a pace and form appropriate to the spirit of Melanesia.

Not that the Melanesian spirit is slow and meandering, but it is a world away from the rapid, multi-stimuli of most western film forms. Whilst some have criticised *Warriors in Transit* for not being highly polished and slick and therefore probably unappealing to an overseas market, Takaku argues against such a proposition. He believes the film is for Papua New Guineans and is more in keeping with culture.

Unfortunately, I and only a few others have had an opportunity to see it. Largely funded by the tourism department, it has not yet been shown. The only broadcasting channel operating in Papua New Guinea is MTV. Originally set up with a mandate which proposed the inclusion of 50 per cent nationally-made films, its direction has changed dramatically. Never achieving this goal, the objective further diminished when the company was taken over by former entrepreneurial giant Alan Bond and

relied, and continues to rely, heavily on Channel 9 programming.

New Guinea BWS and a rather strange programme, Meditation with a pastor at 11pm, provide almost the only national content. The few persistent and dedicated film-makers bemoan this situation. Unfortunately, once again the government has overlooked the importance of areas such as national film, and physically funded contemporary arts arena has struggled to survive in Papua New Guinea for years.

The National Art School has almost no materials, the National Theatre Company struggles to survive, and the film industry is in tatters. Arts sacrificed, in the words of Sir Julius Chan, the country's opposition finance minister, for the sake of industrial development. It is, after all, a culture which relied heavily on creative ways of transmitting social codes and ethical beliefs in ritual and ceremony.

The government doesn't seem to connect the fact that, in a country with a staggering illiteracy rate, film is an extremely powerful and potentially extremely useful medium for transmitting ideas. Film is a powerful medium. The country is overwhelmed with law-and-order problems spiralling from a vortex of reasons, but most obviously from unemployment disillusionment and a breakdown of traditional structures. Why, then, show films which focus on and celebrate violence?

Why not fund a national film industry

FOCUS

and film-makers who want to look at national issues in a sensitive and informed way, and want to contribute to the forging of a new cultural identity?

Skool Bilong Wokim Piksa, a film school established in the Highlands and recent producer of the feature film *Tin Pis*, is a French-funded operation. Toro complains the films it produces have become too french, lacking an intrinsically Papua New Guinean flavour.

Takaku says Papua New Guineans only see their own people appear in documentaries, which frequently look at them as the other, the exotic, primitive race, or in advertisements. It's time, he says, the people could relate to their own heroes. *Warriors in Transit* doesn't necessarily produce superheroes, but it does address numerous issues extremely pertinent to most Papua New Guineans, in a accessible and entertaining form.

It traces, through a few key figures and a squatter community, the pain of urban migration. It is directed on one level, says Takaku, to the grassroots-level Papua New Guinean, "attracted by the bright lights of the city, coming in from rural areas with the hope of good times, when they arrive the problems begin".

Once there, they wonder where the food they imagined is, the shelter they envisaged, the money they assumed

flourished. The film looks at the movement of youth away from parents, the rejection of all traditional. Sensitively, it examines family breakdown.

"The entire family unit," says Takaku, "is crumbling, we must highlight this so people are aware. Families are the root of all love that kept societies together before and now that is crumbling, the house is rotting and things are going all over the place and people are wandering around mad."

It scathingly examines workings and hypocrisy within government. Using the process of a real estate developer bribing government officials to bulldoze a squatter settlement, it addresses issues close to home. Politicians get drunk, fight in toilets and are depicted as essentially self-interested and corrupt.

Toro says government selfishness, combined with failure to understand the real problems as with the parents and dying child, compound to produce chaos.

The film is hard-hitting in its depiction of the country's government and bureaucracies — maybe that's why the industry's so badly funded. But it is important, as in any country, to be able to examine these issues, and in Papua New Guinea a broadly received presentation can only really take place in the medium of film or radio.

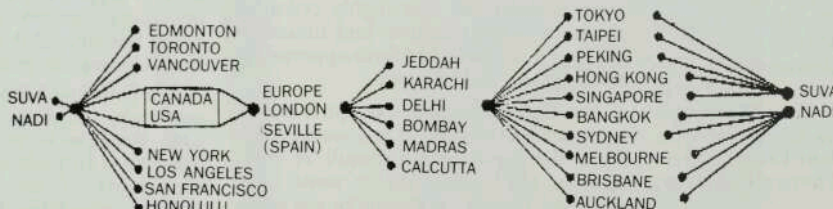
"Warriors", as the film title suggests, are "in transit". The film asks, says Takaku, "where do we go from here, how do we transit into this new era, and why do we have to do it?"

It is part of a process of production which could be extremely valuable and constructive in Papua New Guinea today. Already invited to appear in overseas festivals, MTV have offered Takaku and Toro about K260 per episode, about A\$400. That, says Takaku, is a joke. Given the total lack of copyright laws in the country as soon as it went to air on TV, it would be pirated and the filmmakers would find it difficult to make any more money. Takaku plans to try and screen it in theatres around the country.

NBC, the National Broadcasting Commission from which the radio emerges, is currently being revamped, along with financial assistance from ABC correspondent Sean Dorney. Hopefully, it will eventually provide an alternative television broadcasting station. This, in conjunction with a better-funded film industry and the number of talented and committed directors who have already emerged, could start to turn film into an exciting, important and culturally useful medium. One can only hope that the film industry is in transit and on its way to better times. □

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PACIFIC ISLANDS

M O N T H L Y

BUSINESS

Manganese revival for Vanuatu?

By Davendra Sharma

AN Australian mining giant with massive interests in Queensland, Portman Mining company has unveiled plans to mine 60,000 tonnes of manganese a year in Vanuatu for exports to Japan and China.

Australian manganese giant Portman Mining is developing deposits on a small scale for export to industrial Asian markets. Manganese was last mined on Efate in 1979, when the mine at Forari was closed because of declining prospects and world prices.

A French prospector, Campagnie Francaise des Phosphates de l'Océanie (CEPO), found manganese deposits of about two million tonnes in 1955. It began development of open pit mine in 1960, and went into full production two years later.

CFPO pulled out in 1968, selling the mine to Port Vila-based consortium Le Manganese de Vate (LMV), which subsequently sold it to Australia's Southland Mining. Production was reactivated at full scale in 1970. Output began to decline slowly and the mine was closed in 1979.

Falling manganese prices in principal international markets were also to blame. Portman directed its initial exploration on the extension of reserves beneath a limestone capping to the east and north of the disused mine. Deposits at Forari are under fairly shallow soil cover, spread across like a sheet, similar to the phosphate fields in Nauru, said Portman chairman, Charles Copeman.

Portman's current exploration seeks to extend reserves to the north of the old mine. It is also engaged in metallurgical test work on ore samples and residual



Picture: Davendra Sharma

Copeman: confident of \$A10 million revenue

tailings left by the former mining company on Efate.

"The project has considerable promise and involves the redevelopment of the Forari mine, which has indicated reserves of two million tonnes of metallurgical grade ore," said Portman director Trevor Tenant. The company has a 95 per cent stake in the project, while LMV has retained the other five per cent.

Portman intends to inject investment of \$US3.75 million with promises of initial employment for about 40. Revenue from the sales will be \$US5.25 million a year.

Copeman told *Pacific Islands Monthly* the company decided to redevelop the Forari site with a recent jump in world prices. "World price of manganese has risen more than twice. That is what gave us the idea. We knew of this project."

Copeman believes once the mine turns into full-scale, ore production could rise to 80 or 90,000 tonnes a year. "If that happens we would be looking at revenue in the order of \$A10 million (\$US7.5 million)."

World demand for manganese is slowly swelling again after years of low prices and dwindling demand. "We're not convinced yet how viable the mine

will be in terms of long-term, supposing the prices fall again," Copeman said. "Also, we really have to determine how far the sheet (holding manganese deposits) extends. We would like it (the mine's lifespan) to be five or 10 years of continued output."

Initial targets for exports would be Japan and China but sales could also be made to Korea and Taiwan, depending on the volume of the mineral mined. "The (Forari) mine is well located for shipping to Asian markets, as it was a mine before. We can be basically looking at anywhere (market) that makes steel and that doesn't have its own supply (of manganese)."

Portman is also eyeing mining on Vanuatu's Erromango island, which also is believed to hold manganese deposits, said Tenant. "There has been evidence of manganese mineralisation on Erromango, and should a exploration licence be granted on this island, an exploration programme will be initiated to prove up additional reserves to form the basis for a commercial manganese mining operation in Vanuatu," Tenant told PIM. □

BUSINESS

Crackdown on exploitation

The US Government says some Saipan garment workers are being virtually held prisoner. **David North** reports.

THE US Department of Labor has cracked down on what it regards as the exploitive labor practices of a major group of CNMI garment factories whose products are sold on the Mainland.

The Department has charged that garment workers are overworked, underpaid, and forced to live in unsanitary conditions while being held virtual prisoners by their employers.

The workers toil 11 hours a day, six days a week, and work eight and a half hours on Sunday. That adds to 74.5 hours a week, or 322 a month, about twice as long as the average work week on the Mainland. Further, they are not paid at the higher (overtime) rates for work beyond 40 hours a week, as Mainland law stipulates.

The workers are supposed to get \$2.15 an hour, the minimum wage set by the CNMI government, but the US Labor Department says that the average worker gets only \$1.63 an hour, gross, and that is further reduced by a series of deductions, many of which the Department finds questionable.

Some of these deductions are mandatory savings, but other deductions are contrary to law (such as \$75 to \$120 a month for "management fees"). With the deductions figures in (and excluding the remittances home) the workers' hourly wages are reduced to between 74 cents and \$1.04 an hour, *PIM* calculates on the basis of the Department's statistics.

While a deduction from a worker's wages for housing may be appropriate under some circumstances, in this case the \$100-\$150 per month deductions were made despite a provision in the contracts between the employers and the workers saying housing would be free. When the garment workers are using their housing, they work and live in fenced and guarded compounds, and many of them sleep in converted shipping containers.

The amount of money at stake in this dispute has been estimated at \$20 million; this is the amount of back wages that the Department of Labour calculates are due some 1,350 workers. A lawyer for the owners says that the figure is more than twice too high.

The principal owner is Willie Tan, a US citizen of Chinese ancestry; he and his relatives own American International Knitters Corporation and four other firms which ship sweaters and sportswear to Mainland retail stores. Some of

America's best-known fashion labels are on these garments.

The battle between the Labor Department and Willie Tan has been a long one. The Department first investigated the case. Then, on behalf of the workers, sued Tan for backwages in July.

Subsequently the Federal District Court in Saipan ordered Tan to put up \$400,000 in bonds to guarantee that if back wages are found due, money will be available, and to prevent Tan from shipping any workers (and potential witnesses) back to China or the Philippines without the Court's consent.

In this connection, the Department released an affidavit filed by one of the workers and subsequently translated from the Chinese. It recounted that the worker had received, seen by two Labor Department investigators, two cheques for back wages from the factory. We pick up the story from the workers' statement:

**'You enforce your laws
as stable as a mountain ...
against all danger
I appeal to you for help'**

"... At that time [a management person] told me to keep the checks (cheques) safely; someone will collect from me later on. That night, at around 8.30pm [a management person] came to my post and demanded the checks from me. I told him that it stated on top of the checks that nobody can demand these checks from me... he replied that "this paper is of no use to you..."

"I saw that he had a few checks in his hand, so I gave my checks. I was afraid that if I refused there'd be problems for me. I don't know any laws, I was thinking to telephone you people. But after witnessing 12 of the workers who refused to return the checks, and they received many threats, therefore I did not telephone you.

"I learned that you enforce your laws as stable as a mountain. So against all danger I appeal to you for help. I hope you will secret for me that we will not come to any harm. Until then."

There are virtually no Chamorros involved in any aspect of the conflict. The workers are largely Mainland Chin-

ese, although there are some Thai, some Filipinos and some from FSM; the owners are Chinese with US citizenship; and the enforcers are Mainland US government officials.

Saipan decided to encourage the manufacture of garments but, in essence, decided not to use its own workers in these plants. Instead Saipan has allowed the business to be run by off-shore interests, who, in turn were allowed to bring in powerless "guest workers" to actually make the garments. It is as if the CNMI government simply carved off a piece of the island and permitted Mainland Chinese wages and working conditions to exist, all the while producing clothes marked "Made in the USA".

This last point upsets some people in the Mainland clothing industry who have been investing in a large advertising campaign on behalf of US-made garments; that their advertising dollars are helping to sell garments made in Saipan's sweatshops.

On the island, there are more than a dozen other Saipan clothing manufacturers, wondering whether the Department of Labor will be able to make a precedent. As Allan McCann, the Department's principal investigator in Guam and CNMI said recently "I've never reviewed a company that didn't have violations in the two years that I've been going to Saipan."

On the Mainland, both employers and the unions are watching to see if the Labor Department can bring the rate of pay up to the local (CNMI) legal rate of \$2.15 an hour. The Mainland minimum is \$4.25 an hour.

On both the Mainland and in the islands there is another observer, Juan N Babauta, the elected Washington Representative of CNMI. "If Willie Tan is in violation he should be held accountable for those violations," Babauta said.

"It is about time that we treated our alien workers humanely, paid them their rightful wages, and put them in clean housing."

The Mainland rules apply in full to both Hawaii and Guam, as does the Mainland rate of \$4.25 an hour.

The minimum is set industry-by-industry in American Samoa by a joint Mainland-Island panel appointed by the Secretary of Labour and the Governor of American Samoa. There the principal industry is tuna canning, and its rate is \$2.87 an hour, though most workers are paid a few cents more per hour. (The issue there is the setting of the rates, not their enforcement; see *PIM* July, 1991.)

In CNMI the rate (\$2.15 an hour) is set by the local government, but enforced by the federal authorities.

In Palau (as in the Associated States) local option prevails. □

BUSINESS

Placer Pacific sets new pace

WHEN record production was achieved at the world-rated Porgera mine in the PNG highlands, it was their three principal Australian partners who picked up the most credits.

Porgera manager, Placer Pacific, has won reputation in Australia as the country's leading gold producer with the help of output from Porgera. It said in its production report for 1991, that it churned out 2 million ounces (62.2 tonnes) of gold last year, almost double the 1990 figure.

Output from five mines surged from 1.14 ounces to 2.06 million ounces.

With that it has replaced Western Mining Corporation — once involved with Emperor at Fiji's Vatukoula gold mines — as Australia's leading gold producer. Placer and Western Mining are expected to be virtually at level billing in terms of overall equity gold

production.

However, the Canadian controlled Placer Pacific should edge ahead in coming years, largely on the strength of Porgera. It said the main factor in the production increase was the strong performance by the huge Porgera mine in PNG, owned 30 per cent and managed by Placer.

Placer's other PNG mine, the 80 per cent owned and managed Misima mine on the island of the same name, was also a strong performer. Its production for the year, 323,127 ounces was up only marginally from 317,167 ounces, but was well up on expectations.

Placer said production there was also helped by improved recovery rates (94 per cent) and increased treatment rates.

Exploration adjacent to the main pit area and elsewhere on Misima has continued, with Placer reporting additional drilling planned for 1992. □

PNG fishing for investors

THE PNG Government has approved a package of incentives in a bid to attract foreign investors into the country's fishing industry.

The incentives package includes exemption of import and export duty on vessels, vessel parts, fuel and stores, boat construction material and canned or frozen fish products.

The government also has decided on a tax holiday of five years for pioneer industries and depreciation costs rebates on plant, equipment and vessels, and facilities for repatriation of capital and profits as part of the package.

The Government has closed off its waters to distant water fleets on access conditions. Preferential access will be given to domestic-based operators and foreign investors committed to shore-based fisheries development projects. □

Investment report

Different and attractive

FROM the tiny atolls of Kiribati to the large land-mass of Papua New Guinea, the Pacific region is marked by its diversity — a diversity that makes investment in this region of the world both attractive and different.

Vanuatu

Offshore investment can be arranged without visiting the country.

There are no direct personal or corporate income taxes or gains taxes, withholding taxes or estate duty taxes for either investors taking advantage of the offshore status or those who live and work in the country.

Business opportunities available to the investor are in tourism, agriculture and light industry.

Tourism is the fastest growing area of development, and investment in agriculture is possible. Exporting agricultural produce is feasible. Industrial concerns are also encouraged by the government, in particular opportunities in manufacturing items to assist in import substitution.

Papua New Guinea

The economy is largely dependant upon its natural resources. The country is noted for producing copra, palm oil, cocoa, tea and coffee, and an increasing number of spices.

Forestry is also an important source of revenue.

A growing fishing industry is provid-

ing another source of income, and tuna fishing and processing are seen as having the most opportunities for commercial development.

Mineral and petroleum developments include gold and copper mines.

Commercial and business enterprises concentrate on retail and wholesale trading, light manufacturing, transport and shipping.

Solomon Islands

The government seeks to encourage foreign investors with investment assistance, and it is keen to see the development of industries that will use and process natural resources. In particular, development of industries that produce products for export and import-substitution will receive substantial encouragement.

Opportunities also exist in tourism, forestry, fisheries, transport and mining.

There are several investment incentives.

Kiribati

The economy is dependent upon copra, salt, fishing and foreign aid.

There is a current programme of encouragement of small-scale industries and privatisation in an effort to increase the participation of the people.

The company tax rate is 25 per cent on the first \$50,000 and 35 per cent thereafter.

However new businesses may be granted "Pioneer Industry" tax status

which allows for reduced tax rates. There are also several double taxation treaties in place.

Fiji

The economy has been largely dependent on the production and export of sugar. However, with the advent of tourism in the 1960s and the government's commitment to encourage private investment and economic growth, the dominance of the sugar industry in the economy has decreased.

The manufacture and export of garments under the government's taxation concessions for certain industries also produces substantial earnings for the economy while other major exports include unrefined gold, timber and fish.

Manufacturing, which is export-oriented, has been encouraged by the government with various taxation concessions.

All new foreign investment proposals require the approval of the Fiji Trade and Investment Board.

Customs duties are levied on goods entering Fiji.

Investment incentives primarily take the form of tax concessions — reductions in company income tax, accelerated deductions, import duty concessions, tax holidays etc.

A number of trade concessions are available to assist the development of exports from Fiji. □

Compiled by Pacific branches of Peat Marwick, chartered accountants

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BUSINESS

Painful economic jump-start

By David North

ONE way to jump-start an Island economy is to suffer a major hurricane, then have the US Government come to the rescue. That has been American Samoa's experience three times in recent years.

The sequence works like this. First, the big storm — Tusi, in 1987, Ofa in 1990, and last December, Val. A lot of damage is done. The Governor (most recently Peter Tali Coleman) prevails on the US President to declare American Samoa a disaster area. The President's decision sets in motion a flurry of not always well-coordinated relief efforts, and volunteers and supplies pour in from the Mainland. A number of sharpsters — as well as real victims — benefit.

One reason why the pattern persists is that, even in a time of budget constraints, the amounts of money shipped from Washington to Pago Pago are tiny by Washington terms, if massive by those of the American Samoan Government (ASG). Further, they come from many places, so no single federal government agency is nicked significantly. Finally, it is not in the interests of ASG to slow the distribution of goods and services to make sure that the Mainland money is spent wisely — so it often isn't.

How much money is involved? Estimates suggest about \$30 million for Val (as opposed to a miserly US allocation of \$150,000 to help the far more numerous victims in Western Samoa.)

In general terms, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) does

houses and the Red Cross does food and household vouchers. Both traditionally have trouble working out who is eligible for some help and who needs none; the Mainlanders who do most of the work are easily confused by Island names and there is no system of numbering houses, so FEMA has been known to provide more housing repair assistance than was needed.

The FEMA package is attractive — convince FEMA that you own the house, and it needs fixing, and they give you a cheque for up to \$8,000. No receipts are called for routinely unless the damage is more than \$8,000. In cases of severe damage, FEMA will replace the entire house with one of its own.

Relief vouchers and food baskets distributed by the Red Cross are equally attractive; vouchers were reportedly given to 10,226 families representing 77,035 individuals. In contrast, the most recent estimate of the entire population is 50,000. The average family voucher was worth \$1,100.

Sometimes sharpsters are thwarted. Half a dozen locals, who had been Red Cross volunteers, were caught writing out phoney vouchers for their own use. A building contractor was arrested for taking more than \$100,000 in deposits from homeowners, then not doing any work on their houses.

The ASG government, meanwhile, got funding from FEMA for more than 600 short-term jobs, and paid many of the workers \$5 an hour — much more than the minimum wage set for regular ASG workers. It also came out, after Val, that ASG was in a jam for mismanaging the

Tusi clean-up during the Lutali Administration, and owing the Feds \$1 million as a result.

Meanwhile, substantial amounts of money and supplies pour into the American Islands after these storms. During Ofa there was so much money, in FEMA repair funds, that new supplies of US bills had to be flown in from Hawaii — those with the cheques wanted greenbacks. Similarly, the outpouring of money into Western Samoa banks was so great following Ofa, that the banks had too few borrowers to absorb it. (PIM, April 1991)

But some lessons had been learned:

○ ASG reduced the usually easy migration from Western Samoa for 30 days after Val, apparently to see to it that only residents of American Samoa benefited from the Mainland largess; Governor Coleman's explanation was he did not want to place additional burdens on the territory's utilities, services, and public infrastructure post-storm.

○ FEMA houses, built to strict mainland building codes, after Tusi and Ofa, generally survived Val's even fiercer winds.

○ FEMA has decided, after the village of Sili (15 houses) was virtually demolished three times by heavy seas, that it will not rebuild it again. This is painful to the inhabitants who, because of traditional Samoan ties to the land, feel that they cannot buy plausible building sites elsewhere.

The relief workers — particularly the short-term people brought in right after the disaster — are not auditors, they're just good-hearted folk who want to help. So the chances are that the pattern of real damage, generous Mainland response, and local waste will be repeated when Val's successor hits the Islands. □

Western Samoa push for investment

WESTERN Samoa last month launched a campaign in Australia and Hong Kong for investment in its manufacturing industries.

Finance minister Tuilaepa Sailele, speaking to a meeting of Sydney businessmen as head of a high-level delegation from the public and private sectors, promised a variety of tax incentives for investors including income tax holidays of up to 10 years.

"We believe there is scope for Australian investment in Western Samoa in the form of light manufacturing industries, and in the development of the tourist

industry," Sailele said.

The Western Samoa drive follows establishment last year of Yazaki Samoa, a subsidiary of the Japanese firm that also has operations in Australia.

The Apia-based company now employs more than 600 Samoans manufacturing automotive electrical components for export to Australia, a figure that could soon increase to 1000.

Chief executive Peter Ray said his company had been impressed by the lack of red-tape in Western Samoa government circles that enabled it to set up its plant quickly.

Sailele said the investment promotion mission was launched because Western Samoa's agricultural base had "not performed well" in past years, a situation compounded by recent cyclones.

This had resulted in a fall in production and in foreign exchange earnings. Agriculture and the public sector also had been unable to absorb annual increases in the country's labour force.

To help develop export-oriented manufacturing, import-substitution industries and tourism, the government was offering incentives such as income-tax holidays of up to 10 years and the import of raw materials and building materials free of duty or excise tax.

Large manufacturing enterprises could negotiate additional incentives with the government, the minister added.

Western Samoa also has available an offshore financial centre established under legislation covering international companies and trusts, offshore banking, trustee companies and insurance. □

BUSINESS

Nickel profit for Sofinor

NEW Caledonia's Sofinor nickel company, in which native Kanaks were encouraged to buy shares two years ago, posted a \$US6 million profit in 1991.

Its prospects for exports this year look promising with orders from Japan, France, Germany, the United States, Spain and Italy. It plans to sell 700,000 tonnes.

Nickel mining is the territory's biggest local-income generator and foreign-exchange earner, with exports bringing in 72 billion Pacific francs. Other exports are meat, prawns, canned foods and agricultural goods. Nickel brings 90 per cent of export revenue.

Under the 1988 Matignon Accord, Kanaks from economically-depressed northern province are being encouraged to buy shares in nickel industry-related companies. Former nickel-mining chief executive, Jacques Lafleur, sold some of the mine's operations to the Sofinor company.

Expansion of nickel mining in the north is seen as a way of boosting the economy and involving the Kanaks in commerce. The north is relatively undeveloped, while other parts have fishing, tourist and small-scale agriculture industries. Feasibility studies are being done on the suitability of a Fiji-type taxfree scheme to attract investors.

New Caledonia lifts trade barriers

Fiji and Australia's push to capture the consumer goods market in New Caledonia has received a huge plus with the territorial government lifting restrictions on a wide range of commodities it has traditionally imported from France.

France's high commissioner Alain Christnacht who, since taking office last year, has been actively trying to integrate the French territories in the region, said he has removed import-licensing requirements for 408 categories of goods. He said the new move to gradually free up the New Caledonia market will see only 117 categories, including imports of beer, restricted. New Caledonia has had tough trade protection against all 525 imported products, allowing only European and particularly French goods with preferential access.

Over the past two years Fiji and Australia have sent trade missions to New Caledonia to boost exports into the territory of 167,000 population. France's plans to integrate the territorial markets within the South Pacific Forum region started soon after former French premier Michel Rocard visited the South Pacific, making stopovers in Australia and then Fiji in August, 1989.

After Fiji embarked on a trade promotion mission to New Caledonia last year with hopes of selling fish, furniture, garments and other manufactured goods there, Christnacht followed it up with a delegation of senior government and Kanak representatives visiting Suva in August. He had announced then that he would look at ways of boosting inter-island trade. □

Breakthrough with New Caledonia

NEW Zealand, Australia and other exporting nations may benefit from what is being described as a break-through trade agreement with New Caledonia.

A nine-member New Zealand trade mission went to Noumea in late November, coinciding with a visit to the French Territory by New Zealand's External Relations and Trade Minister, Don McKinnon.

McKinnon said breakthrough had been made in commitments given by New Caledonian authorities to liberalise access for wine and dairy products.

The pledge to allow in more imports came from France's High Commissioner to New Caledonia, Alain Christnacht.

Under existing import rules, milk-powder exports to New Caledonia face quotas. Shipments of UHT milk are prohibited, as is wine from sources other than France.

Wellington lawyer, Celia Caghey of Russell McVeagh, who prepared the ground for the trade mission by reporting on the potential to increase New Zealand's annual \$42 million export trade, said New Caledonia already imported a lot of wood products and there is much potential for exporting construction materials. Boats and pleasure craft, especially yachts, and marine equipment were in high demand by both wealthy residents and the tourist trade. New Zealand oysters were already selling successfully and there were markets for other foodstuffs, including fresh fruit and vegetables.

New Zealand's agricultural expertise could provide the basis for technological transfers in such areas as deer and poultry farming.

There's a flip-side to the trade agreement, details of which remain to be settled. Jacques Lafleur, New Caledonian magnate and leader of the pro-French RPCR party, said there must be an improvement in two-way trade. Last year, New Caledonia exported only \$NZ300 in goods to New Zealand. There have been difficulties for access of prawns and tropical fruit shipments because of New Zealand's strict quarantine standards.

Apart from any trade deals, New Zealand is keen to attract more investment from New Caledonia. With its huge nickel export exports, New Caledonia enjoys a per capita Gross National Product not much below New Zealand's. □

Defying logic on the stock exchange

MINING leader CRA, which maintains substantial interest in Papua New Guinea, seems to defy all economic logic on the Australian stock exchange.

Its share prices have been rising instead of falling following news of a disappointing current financial year.

CRA's difficult season was underpinned by continuing uncertainty about the huge Panguna mine on PNG's troubled Bougainville island. Panguna was closed in May, 1989.

The PNG mine at Mt Kare also was abruptly closed last January 6, following an armed attack.

Share prices of CRA rose by more than a dollar in February-March. CRA shares picked up from \$A12.10 on January 1 to nearly \$A14 late February.

It has puzzled brokers at a time when stocks for BHP, Australia's largest company and said to be the only real market equivalent to CRA, has stagnated at \$A13.70.

Since the start of 1992, nearly 8.5 million shares have been traded, virtually sales by overseas institutions to Australians.

Though some analysts are doubting the company would have success with re-entering Bougainville, CRA executives are optimistic of returning to the island where it has mined copper and gold since the early 1970s.

It has said the Mt Kare alluvial gold mine would only reopen when the government could guarantee the safety of workers by posting extra police in the region. □

BUSINESS

Cruising, not all smooth sailing

By Davendra Sharma and Anna Buckley

NEW Caledonia, Vanuatu and Fiji will be attracting more visitors this year from cruise ships.

Qantas subsidiaries, Viva Holdings and Jetabout, who jointly book 60 per cent of the Pacific islands-bound Australian tourists, found that as recession gripped most would-be travellers last year, cheaper holidays like Bali, Hawaii and Los Angeles were preferred. Fiji, New Caledonia, Vanuatu and Tahiti were not so popular.

Viva's Pacific manager Karen Miller told *Pacific Islands Monthly* that though Fiji was able to sway some tourists with cheap \$A499 return airfares from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, New Caledonia, Vanuatu and Tahiti have remained high-cost destinations.

"Vanuatu has had a fairly steady flow because of the low flight frequencies," she said. Viva, however, is offering special packages to Vanuatu with three international hotels, Iririki, LeLagon and Radisson Royal Palms Resort. It also launched packages with Qantas to Tahiti.

In February, it started selling Air

Pacific's low fares on fly-cruise packages with Italian cruiseliner, *Starlauro* Cruises. "It gives option to travellers to either cruise to Fiji or fly across by Air Pacific," Miller said.

New Caledonia and Vanuatu are main destinations on *Starlauro's* schedules this year. Solomon Islands capital, Honiara and Papua New Guinea's alluring Samarai island have been included in a March 21 sail, which will also make stopovers at Ambrym volcanoes in Vanuatu. Three other cruises from mid April to early May are planned for Vanuatu, Fiji and New Caledonia.

It has cut back fares by up to 28 per cent to get more travellers on board. Its *Archille Lauro* has a capacity to carry 930 passengers. *Starlauro's* Pacific products spokeswoman Marcy Furse told *PIM* that the Pacific Islands destinations were picked according to customer preference. "Starlauro has found that a lot of passengers want places which offer something different. They want to look around and explore."

Cruise ship trips cost considerably less than travelling by air and staying at hotels, she said.

More than half of all Vanuatu's

visitors are from cruise ships. Passengers are offloaded in Port Vila, a thousand at a time, once a fortnight. This year, the number of tourist boats coming to Port Vila has doubled. Many boats will now stay overnight, some for up to three days.

"We make up \$US20,000 worth of business every time a tourist boat is in town, not to mention benefits to taxi drivers, minibuses, shop owners, car-hire companies, restaurants and cafes," said Joel Joseph of Tour Vanuatu. It is good business, he says, because Tourists book trips in advance; money is paid up front.

"Good money for the government," he says. The government owns 55 per cent of shares in Tour Vanuatu.

But not everyone wants more cruise ships. Port Vila residents already complain of noise, crowds and queues.

There are profits to be made, but some business houses complain that passengers on pre-paid package tours typically stay no more than a day and meals and entertainment on board are inclusive and pre-paid.

"Cruise ships represent less than 10 per cent of my business," says Frank King, an independent tour operator. "What Vanuatu needs is big spenders, not people interested only in drink and duty free."

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BUSINESS

Solomons' sweet success

By Martin Tiffany

OH How Sweet It Is," declares the sign on the front of the little white wooden building in Honiara. It is describing the honey sold within, but could well be describing what this honey is accomplishing.

It is doubtful whether many visitors to Honiara will notice this wooden building on the hand side of the road as they whizz to town from Henderson Airport.

Situated about halfway between Honiara and the airport, it will most likely pass as a blurr and the sign "Honey For Sale" will not be read.

But, what this little building is achieving is certainly making people in the Solomon Islands sit up and take notice.

It is the headquarters of the Solomons Islands honey industry, which in three years has made the country self-sufficient in honey. It has also enabled the Solomons to establish an export market and made honey the fastest-growing industry in the Solomons.

In 1988, the Solomons imported about SI\$35,000 worth of honey. This figure was expected to expand by about 10 per cent per annum.

But then Welshman Bryan Evans appeared and changed all that.

Evans — more commonly known in Honiara as Bryan the Bee Man — has lived in New Zealand for the last 23 years. In February 1989, he was sent to the Solomon Islands by the New Zealand government to look at the possibility of beginning a honey industry. He was told little else.

"I arrived here with no guidelines, no one knew what they wanted to do," said the stocky apiarist.

"There were a few hobbist bee keepers who were mainly Roman Catholic fathers but that was it."

Evans started a workshop for bee keepers on the main island of Guadalcanal and then moved on to some of the other islands. The response was so great that he had to decide what to do with all the honey.

Because he was against the industry being institutionalised he set up a co-operative, which packages and re-sells honey from about 150 farmers.

Evans says this ensures that the bee-keepers get a fair deal and they don't have to chase around looking for a good price.

Of the 150 farmers, the average number of hives per farmer is five — this has built up from an average of two.

The co-operative is now so successful that it does not require any more aid

money, and is being run as a business. It supplies around six tonnes of honey to the local market annually and exports about the same amount, mainly to Nauru, Kiribati and Vanuatu. Potential markets exist in Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Korea and Taiwan.

It is planned to tap the smaller markets before looking at the larger ones — but growth will depend on supply.

Marketed as "Solomon Islands Honey — Pure Rain Forest", it is estimated that

If this were not enough Evans has also set up a box factory and hopes to soon start exporting these. The boxes are used by the bees to build hives in.

On top of all this the Solomon Islands is free of bee diseases and uses little toxic spray which is good news when marketing — especially queen bees — abroad. Evans is behind pushing an Aparies Act through parliament to protect the industry from bee diseases that can be brought in through imports.

He has also registered all known bee keepers in the Solomons so they can take preventive action if disease does come.



Time off from their busy schedule: Bryan the Bee Man and his workers

if production targets can be met, by 1999 honey and pollen exports will produce nearly SI\$6,000,000 of foreign exchange per annum.

Pollen, cultivated along with the hives, is used for pharmaceutical purposes.

Apart for these two good money-earners, more lucrative revenue can be earned in the queen bee market. It is planned to develop this market over the next two years.

Queen bees are in big demand in northern hemisphere countries to get hives going after the winter.

In the long term — over a 25 year time span — the honey industry is estimated to have export potential of up to SI\$33,250,00 per annum. \$8,750,000 of this would be generated from honey (2000 small holders having 25 hives each), \$12,500,000 from pollen collection (1000 small holders having 25 pollen collectors each) and \$12,000,000 from the sale of 600,000 queen bees.

This sum is equivalent to or greater than the import savings that can be generated from the cattle industry or rice production. Not bad for an industry which started off with SI\$116,000 in project money.

The New Zealand-funded bee-keeping project began in January 1989 and expired at the end of 1991. It has left behind a fully locally-owned business with great potential and over 1000 trained farmers.

It is projected that honey sales could directly provide 2000 rural households with an income of close to SI\$3000 per annum and supply a higher income for those who sell pollen.

The industry is probably not going to have such a diverse base as the copra industry or have the potential distribution base of the cocoa and vegetable seed supply industries. But, no other export crop can match the overall balance the honey industry has in terms of farm income, foreign exchange earnings and income distribution.

Evans resigned at the end of the project despite a lot of requests for him to stay on and guide the industry over the next few years. The good news for the Solomon Islands is that he has built a home in the country with his local wife Annie and will remain for a while.

And for the future? "Maybe butterfly export or dried fruit — who knows." □



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Unemployment's dark companion

NOT long ago — certainly within the memory of a generation — New Zealanders used to leave their back doors and cars unlocked, happy in the knowledge that they lived in safe, prosperous and crime-free society. Crimes of violence were rare and they liked to call it "God's Own Country".

It is a sad irony that, as New Zealand has belatedly discovered it is a Pacific country, it has become less and less Pacific. Police statistics show that a record 525,622 crimes were committed during 1991 — that's one every minute of the year. Worse, violent crime figures were also well up, including rapes and other sexual attacks which reached their highest level in a decade.

A total of 15 murders in the first two months of 1992 further focuses New Zealanders' attention on the question: "What is happening to our country?"

Regrettably, if inevitably, the ensuing debate quickly began to turn on racial issues. Regrettably, because most thinking *pakeha* acknowledge the need for racial fairness in this multi-cultural nation and accept, as this column has pointed out in the past, that Maori and their Pacific Island cousins are disadvantaged and under-privileged in today's society.

And inevitably, because the 1989 prison census showed Maori (then 9.3 per cent of the population) accounted for 49 per cent of male inmates and 50 per cent of female. Pacific Island people (then 3.6 per cent of the population) made up eight per cent of men and seven per cent of women behind bars. With an extra 1000 people in prison today, the situation is not likely to be much different and could be even worse.

These are facts, but it was no surprise that Prime Minister Jim Bolger found himself in hot water for pointing them out. It was not perhaps the most diplomatic observation, implying as it did that the soaring crime rate was a Maori problem. This is patently not true. What appears to be a collapse in moral values concerning people and other people's property, giving rise to increasing personal violence and more robberies and burglaries, has no less a *pakeha* dimension than a Maori dimension.

But as he explained later: "For many years it has concerned me deeply that acts of violence by Maori and to Maori were subjects of which we were hardly permitted to speak, and that in our silence we turned away from a problem which, left unchecked, would cause great misery." Speaking out, he hoped, would focus Maori and *pakeha* attention on the need for joint action to find solutions.

His comments certainly focussed attention on the issue if not the solutions, and reaction came fast and furious.

Anglican Maori Bishop Whakahuihui Vercoe said the government's economic policies were responsible for creating a class of people who were totally disadvantaged and, seeing no future, were turning to crime. A Maori police superintendent blamed

WELLINGTON



DAVID
BARBER

unemployment, now 10 per cent of the workforce and still rising, saying those who felt alienated by longterm joblessness were more likely to act violently.

Government MP Ross Meurant drew accusations of racism when he blamed the upsurge in violent crime on parenting failures by Polynesians. But criminologist Greg Newbold agreed with him, saying statistics showed Maori were more likely to be abused as children, and violence was transmitted through the generations. "If you add to that the factor of poverty you have a good formula for a high violent crime rate," he said.

Newbold said Social Welfare figures showed that six out of 10 males in prison for assaulting women were Maori, as were two-thirds of those jailed for assaulting a child.

Despite having described crime as "the dark travelling partner" of unemployment when he was in opposition, Bolger eschewed the link drawn by Police superintendent Rana Waitai, insisting there could be no general conclusion that unemployment fuelled violent offending. But he seemed to misinterpret the policeman's comments as justifying the commission of violent crime by the unemployed when he was, in fact, citing unemployment as a factor, not an excuse.

This had been noted by a Ministerial Committee of Inquiry into Violence conducted by former judge Sir Clinton Roper in 1987, which belatedly the government agreed to have another look at in its search for answers. The report had included a chapter on the Maori perspective, pointing out the damage done to traditional tribal and family structures by the way New Zealand was colonised, with the settlers seizing land and assuming power.

Another report noted the dramatic increase in Maori imprisonment in the 1950s and 1960s when Maori left their tribal homelands for the cities in huge numbers, an urbanisation process described as the most rapid of any ethnic minority in the world. It demonstrated the need to look back to long-term trends to understand contemporary Maori imprisonment patterns.

The Roper report, which was the result of 18 months work and thousands of public submissions, made wide-ranging recommendations, including more consultation with Maori and the need for more *pakeha* sensitivity to Maori culture.

At the time of writing, the government was talking about extending the maximum prison term for rape from 14 to 20 years and giving the police wider powers. The country was still awaiting evidence of a new drive by Maori and *pakeha* to come together to try to solve the twin problems of all-round increasing violence and rising Polynesian involvement.

And time was running out. As Race Relations Conciliator Chris Laidlaw said: "One thing is clear: If we don't begin to devise distinctive solutions to the distinctive problem of Maori offending, then it will soon be beyond all hope of rescue."

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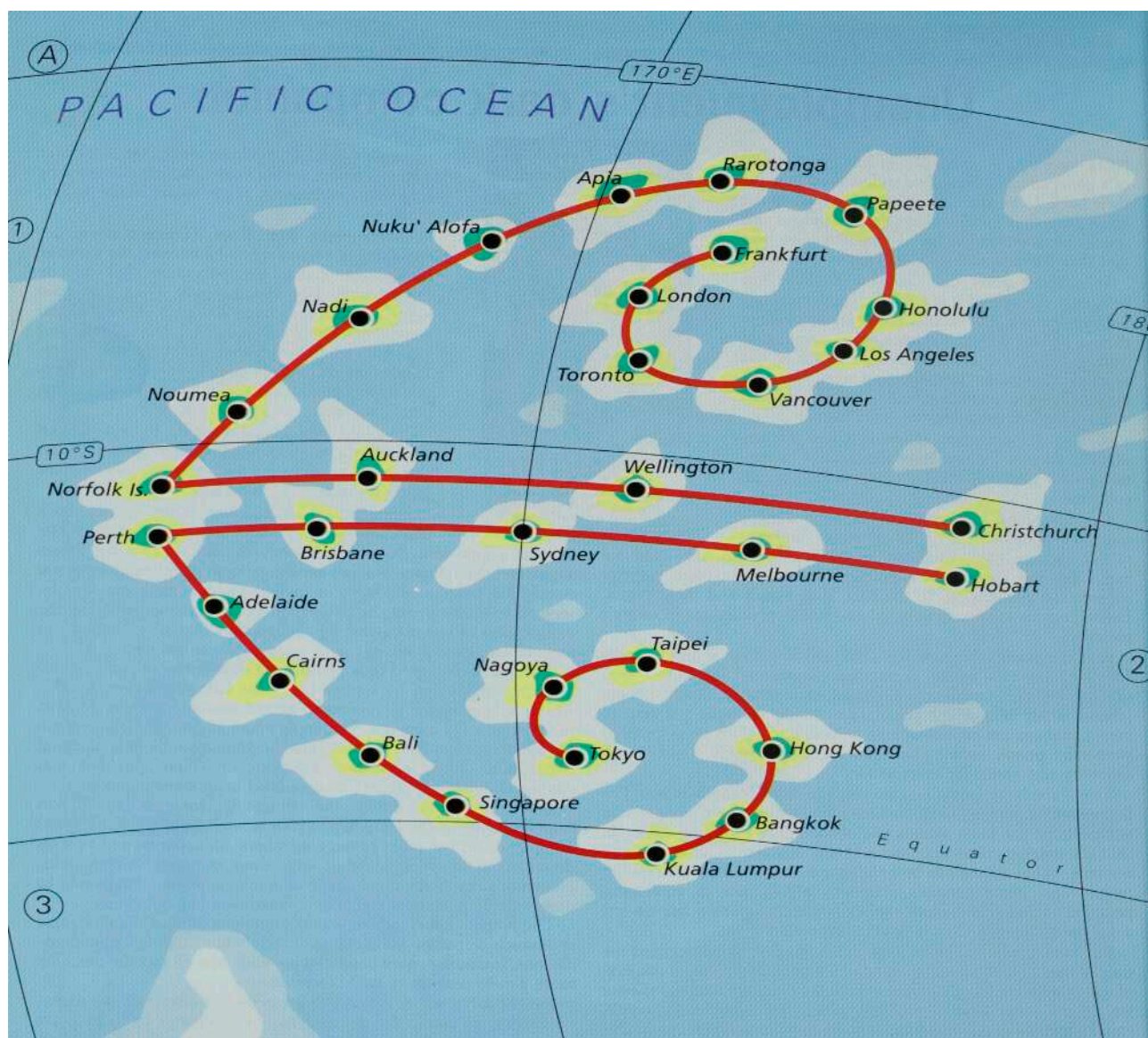
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Samoan sights on new business

THAT business horizons in the South Pacific are changing was underlined in March when the government of Western Samoa sent its first ever investment promotion mission abroad — to Australia.

The mission leader, Minister for Finance Tuilapea Sailele, was forthright in explaining to a representative group of Australian business leaders at a luncheon in Sydney why the mission had been launched, and why Australian had been selected as the target.

He said Samoa's economy was largely dependent on agriculture for its survival, and there was very little manufacturing activity. Tourism had gained momentum but there was still a lot of room for its development. The fact was that agriculture had "not performed all that well over the years", and it had also been affected by the recent hurricanes. The result was that production, and thus Samoa's foreign exchange earnings, had fallen.

As neither agriculture or the public sector could absorb the increase in the number of people wanting jobs each year, the government saw the development of manufacturing and tourism as a means of increasing both export earnings and employment, Sailele said. There was great need for foreign capital as well as skilled people with the expertise and marketing know-how.

Why aim at Australia?

"Because Australia is Western Samoa's largest neighbour and we've had a long relationship on a government-to-government level, but we feel that the average Australian, and the business community in particular, are not aware of us . . . or that Western Samoa has maintained political stability since independence in 1962.

"We believe there is scope for Australian investment in Western Samoa in the form of light manufacturing industries and in the development of the tourism industry. Our Offshore Finance Centre is also an attractive proposition of those who might have surplus funds to invest."

If any businessman at the Sydney launch, which was arranged by the South Pacific Trade Commission, had doubts about how manufacturing investment in Western Samoa might work out in practice, they would have been put to rest by the address from Peter Ray, managing director of Yazaki Australia, giving an enthusiastic account of the company's experience in Samoa.

Peter told the group that Yazaki had first visited Western Samoa in November 1990 as part of a search for a suitable Forum island country, in which to establish an assembly plant for automotive electrical components. Having been involved in developing ventures in Europe, North America, Asia and elsewhere in Oceania, the Yazaki team fully expected to have to systematically schedule interviews and appointments at safe intervals, "going through the tiresome process day after day" until there was an understanding.

"To our surprise and delight," Peter said, "we found that people in Western Samoa made time for special appointments and, in one day, we were able to confer with the Department of Labour, the EPC (the power authority), Telecom, the Post

TRADEWINDS



**BILL
McCABE**

Office, the Central Bank, the Bank of Western Samoa, the Public Works Department and many private sector organisations as well. In all, 21 appointments and interviews in one day — try doing that in Canberra, Sydney or Melbourne!"

Peter said ministers and heads of departments were readily accessible and decision-making was facilitated. The government offered a significant range of investments aimed at minimising establishment costs and providing tax-free and concessional arrangements at least on a par with those offered elsewhere, and others that were quite innovative.

He said there was no bureaucratic delay in processing any form of application to establish or run a business (Yazaki in Samoa operates as a branch of the Australian company), and a very flexible and friendly approach was always apparent. Yazaki gave the government "10 out of 10".

As a result, he said, the company opened its Apia plant very swiftly, and as the end of its first year of operations approached, "we are satisfied we have made a sound decision. Put simply, we are finding Western Samoa to be excellent . . . we are poised to expand the operation from 800 people to over 1000 once our new industrial complex is completed later this year. We have plans to further expand the scope of the business and to increase the workforce towards 1500 to ensure that required support services are in place, and this of itself will create further business opportunities in Samoa."

As if his high praise of the government's efficiency weren't enough, Peter spent another five minutes expounding on the high qualities of the company's Apia workforce.

"We have recruited, selected, inducted, trained and now promoted many people, and find them to be excellent," he said. "In some sense, our assembly operations are akin to handcrafting. It therefore follows that a nation with a heritage of basket-weaving and thatching will be very adept. Attributes such as dexterity, suppleness of limbs, basic body strength, good eyesight, superior binocular vision, superior acuity, accurate colour recognition, good co-ordination and body motor actions are important.

"Equally so, factors such as daily attendance, punctuality, capacity and keenness to learn and to acquire skills are important."

He said Samoan workers had pride in achievement, accepted authority, were aware of the need to safely preserve materials, produce error-free outcomes, report suspected faults, practice error containment and self-inspection functions, and to co-operate through "buddy checking" systems — for all this was readily facilitated by people "whose racial upbringing is based upon harmonisation."

Western Samoa could hardly have had better testimony as a place to invest in. □



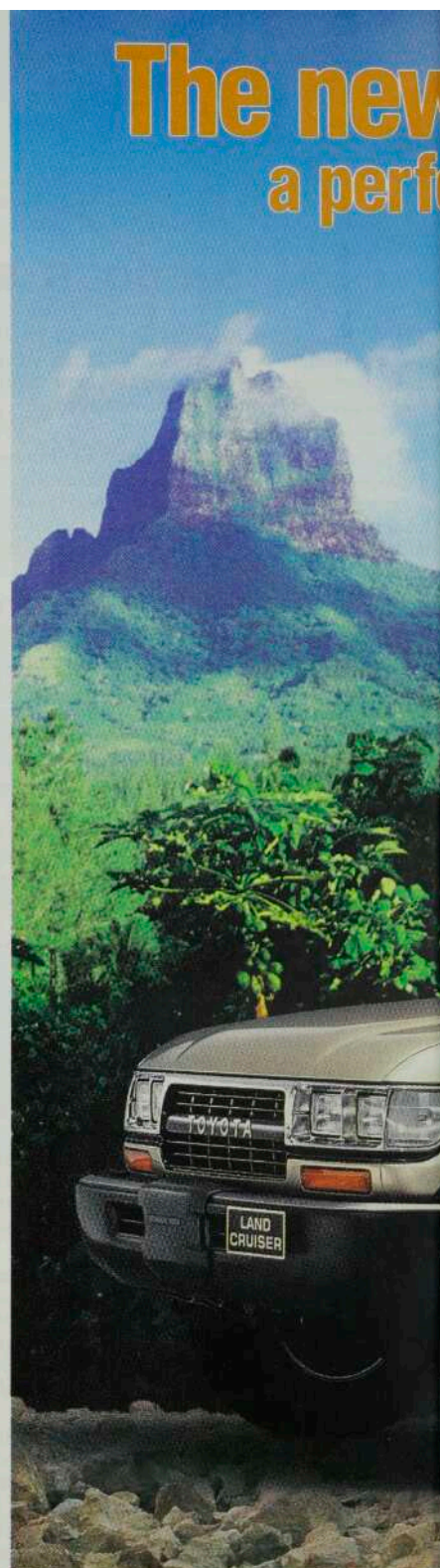
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Eyes on the Pacific

IT began at the rugby union World Cup in France and Great Britain in October and continued when 30 Fijians landed in Spain in January.

What? Exposure and interest in the South Pacific leading up to Expo 92 in Seville.

Western Samoa took the rugby world by storm when they qualified for the quarter-finals of the World Cup, defeating more-fancied Argentina and Wales. But the British media, hungry for a new slant to the World Cup, gave them much more. They dubbed them the "sexiest men in the World Cup", and camped outside the team hotels waiting for interviews. A number of newspapers even ran maps explaining exactly where Western Samoa is in relation to New Zealand and Australia.

It generated so much interest in Europe that Expo organisers are looking at having a rugby union team from Western Samoa and Fiji play during Expo.

Now what about these 30 Fijians in Spain? These men came to Seville on January 13 to re-erect prefabricated traditional South Pacific buildings which will make up the Pacific Pavilion.

Being the only dark-skinned people on the Expo site obviously helped to get them noticed. But when they lifted the

huge poles for the Papua New Guinean *haus tambaran* out of the container and onto their shoulders the Spanish workers on the site really took an interest.

Used to such jobs being done by machine, they all stopped work and rushed to the Pacific Pavilion site.

Spanish Ambassador to Australia Senor Jose Luis Pardos said he is convinced that the Pacific Pavilion will be "attraction number one in Spain". He said this is because the word *pacifico* is a Spanish word meaning "peace", and the Spanish are very interested in the culture and civilisation of the Pacific.

"They are more interested (in the Pacific) than in Germany, Italy, France, Belgium or Holland, because these countries are nearby and we know them.

"We don't know the Pacific so you are going to show us," said Senor Pardos.

The Pacific site is also expected to generate interest because it will be a site of traditional buildings which will be in sharp contrast to the multi-million dollar, high-tech pavilions around it.

The Pacific Pavilion will be made up of three buildings — a Fijian *bure kalou*, a Polynesian *fale*, and a Papua New Guinean *haus tambaran*.

You begin your Pacific trip through the *bure kalou*, in which navigation is the theme and the early ocean voyages in the

Pacific are illustrated. As you queue to enter the *bure kalou* there is a man carving a traditional canoe.

In the middle building, which is the *fale*, there is a series of light boxes which give very dramatic aspects of the Pacific as it is today — each participating country has their own light boxes.

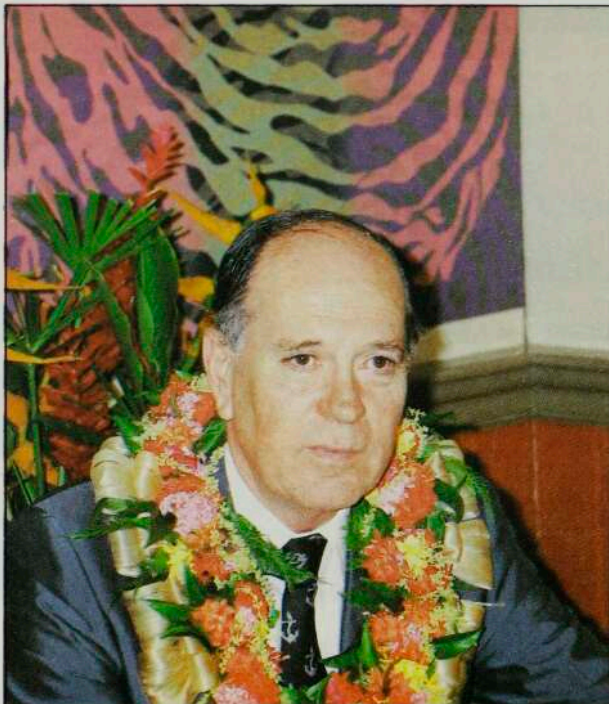
The boxes show the unspoiled Pacific environment, major tourist attractions, Pacific faces, the modern Pacific infrastructure and other highlights.

The *haus tambaran* is mainly a shop for handicrafts. Business promotion programmes to show Pacific trade and investment opportunities also are planned.

The Pacific Pavilion has a stage for cultural performances and a spectator area. Around three million visitors are expected through the Pacific Pavilion.

Expo organisers estimate 40 million people will pass through the Expo site. The Expo site is 215 hectares, more than five times the size of Expo '88 in Brisbane.

There are 156 participants in Expo 92 — 111 countries, 17 autonomous regions of Spain, 22 international organisations and six companies. The theme is "The Age of Discovery". The Pacific Pavilion hopes to fit into this theme by letting the world discover the Pacific. □



Connections: Spain's Ambassador to Australia Senor Jose Luis Pardos during a visit to Fiji



It's not a Spanish fan: Bernadette Ganilau of Pacific Discoveries examines a potential traditional arts and crafts exhibit

EXPO • EXPO • EXPO • EXP

What's in it for us?

THE question has been asked time and again, and the query will continue until people are satisfied with the answers.

They ask: What will the five Pacific countries taking part in Expo '92 in Spain gain? These knockers query the thousands of dollars spent to send the five nations — Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Kiribati — to Seville, presumptuously declaring that there is little in return to be had.

Perhaps it was such queries that saw the Cook Islands, Western Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu pull out of the Pacific Village at Expo.

The Solomons hung in limbo for a long while, but good sense prevailed and the country's Minister of Finance basically declared "We're going — find the money."

Wilson Maelaau, vice-chairman of the Solomon Islands Government Expo '92 Committee, knows the benefits of such an exposition. As general manager of the Solomon Islands Tourist Authority, he says the tourism benefits from the 1988 Brisbane Expo are being felt now.

Maelaau said the exposure they get from this year's Expo will not only boost their tourism industry, but expose their trade and investment opportunities.

Similar sentiments are shared by the other Pacific participants.

Camillus Narokobi, commissioner general of Expo '92 Papua New Guinea, wants the world to experience PNG from its natural environment to its natural resources to its trade and investment possibilities. Vanuatu and Fiji want to present to themselves to Europe and the world along similar lines.

Kiribati, the smallest participant at



Co-ordinated effort: Pacific Discoveries' Bernadette Ganilau and Peter Colton work out the last details of the big Expo promotional effort

Expo, will have more modest plans. Its 33 islands, with a land area of 810.68 sq km, do not possess the infrastructure required for any large-scale investment, and at Seville its hopes will rest on tourism and fishing.

That such a tiny island nation is participating in such a major international event shows tremendous foresight, but as Pacific Pavilion director Peter Colton points out, the cost is worth it.

Kiribati's contribution is US\$50,000 for the six months of Expo. An estimated 40 million visitors are expected through the site with around three million expected through the Pacific Pavilion. Millions will also be reached by television, radio, magazine and newspaper coverage.

As Colton points out, imagine how far

Kiribati's \$50,000 would go if they spent it on a publicity campaign in Europe, the United States or Australia. Even Fiji's US\$900,000 contribution seems a fair price to pay for the returns.

After the Brisbane Expo in 1988, tourist numbers to Fiji showed a marked increase and there has been investment in the country directly linked to their participation.

Perhaps the best way to look at it is to listen to the words of Pacific Pavilion director Colton: "If the Pacific wants to adopt the view that we should not take part in major world events then fine, except for the fact that the world will forget about you because if you're not there you're not noticed and you're not known. They just won't be aware of you in a highly competitive world." □

Something unique from NZ team

MAORI cultural performances are usually classified as Polynesian or South Pacific, but their performance at Expo '92 is said to have developed into a style totally unique.

New Zealand — thanks to Los Maoris de Expo, a group of top Maori performers put together following a four-month nationwide search.

At the Brisbane Expo in 1988, they moved literally to be showstoppers — one day the crowd grew so large it brought pedestrian traffic to a stand-still and the stage had to close temporarily.

At Expo 92, visitors can see Maori

performances several times a day on a stage next to the giant rock face outside the New Zealand Pavilion. The rocks form a sea-cliff scene the size of a four-storey building and represent Young Nick's Head, the point where the British explorer Captain James Cook first sighted New Zealand. They are part of an animated scene which includes rock pools, simulated waves, model blowholes, sea spray, native New Zealand trees, and model seabirds moving and calling overhead.

Visitors to the Pavilion move through four separate theatres of discovery. They first board a 15th century sailing ship and travel as early European explorers, beneath a sky of fibre-optic stars. Upon "arrival" they are surrounded by the sights and sounds which met New

Zealand discovers and encounter life-sized sculptures of the great Pacific explorers including the Polynesian, Kupe, the Spaniard, Mendana, and the Englishman, Cook.

Visitors are also treated to a recorded "mini opera" performed on a giant backdrop screen by the great New Zealand soprano, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, accompanied by the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, a children's chorus, a Celtic folk band, Polynesian drums, and a Maori haka (war dance) party.

The Pavilion also includes an exhibition of ceramic art from 13 of New Zealand's best ceramic artists and one cast-glass artist, and a theatre where visitors can sample or buy goods from sports clothing to wine and venison. □

EXPO●EXPO●EXPO●

Quality, it grows on trees

By Aniltra Chaudhari

WHEN world copra prices fell, the South Pacific's coconut trees seemed to have no other part to play than to sway their fronds to attract the tourists.

Now, a Fiji company, Pacific Green Furniture, set up a year ago on the drier Western side of Viti Levu, is making furniture from the trunks of coconut palms and exporting completely co-ordinated lounge and dining settings, and architectural building products to Australia, New Zealand, Tonga, Noumea and Japan.

A report will be made to the Fiji government in a few months on the viability of coconut-timber furniture.

"Although the furniture industry is very bright in Fiji, it's a big job putting a new product in a new market but we are working towards it," says Managing Director Bruce Dowse.

It takes seven months from the time the palm is cut down and put out to dry, to when it is turned into an exportable commodity. But the coconut is better than pine and other wood in that it lasts longer, is more durable and is harder,

Dowse says.

"It could be a substitute for yaka."

He sees a bright future for the coconut furniture business in the South Pacific. Most of the Island countries had a lot of coconuts and the process of making coconut furniture was very simple, so a high level of skills was not needed, he said.

Dowse says coconut palms are one of the world's most prolific tree species. Known as the "tree of life", they have provided cooking and heating oils, cosmetics, soaps, flesh for use in food, a refreshing drink, leaves to make brooms, and trunks for firewood. Today the demand for these products has fallen and, despite their potential, "millions of palms throughout the world are being wasted", he said.

The production of goods from coconut palms has immense environmental advantages over the use of tropical hardwoods. Dowse said "the company's manufacturing process uses only mature 60- to 100-year-old non-fruit-bearing palms (the older the palm the better for making furniture) from established plantations".

The use of these palms will allow

plantations to be replanted with more viable and productive hybrids.

Dowse designs the furniture himself and said furniture had been made from coconut palms in the past but never on a commercial basis.

Research is in progress in countries around the world to examine the use of coconut as a substitute for common timber products.

"People have been trying to work out how to utilise coconut palms for commercial purposes for years, but have based their ideas on existing uses of timber which are not viable," Dowse said.

Pacific Green has been researching for seven years with Post and Rail Furniture in Australia in developing production systems suitable for coconut.

"Design is evolutionary and the design we make for the furniture has to evolve with the material," he said.

Suva-based architect Stuart Hughes, realising the breakthrough and innovative use of coconut as a workable material, is designing with it in mind for certain Pacific applications.

The results have been distinctive and





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**Old source of materials,
new business:** A Pacific
Green dining suite
from coconut timber.

realising the breakthrough and innovative use of coconut as a workable material, is designing with it in mind for certain Pacific applications.

The results have been distinctive and refreshing. Coconut can't compete with existing timbers in the ease of use.

The wood can be extremely hard and the high silica content makes traditional wood-working machinery inadequate.

Machinery using state-of-the-art abrasives and low-friction sawing systems were designed to address this particular problem.

But then its hardness is an advantage because the material is strong and durable.

It also has a natural beauty due to the unique grain structure which is unlike any other timber. The production processes which the company has developed brings out the best of these natural qualities.

But Dowse was not about to release information on the processing of the coconut trunks.

"That's a trade secret," he said.

He did reveal that the sawn trunks went into an organic solution which prevented infection from wood borers

and other bugs, then they were left to dry for two months in a special room for "mellow drying".

After this the material is ready for making furniture and other goods.

The site of the factory on the dry Western coast of Viti Levu, near Sigatoka, was necessary to obtain export quality, low-moisture content material.

"Moisture leads to expansion and contraction in any material and could cause cracking in the finished product".

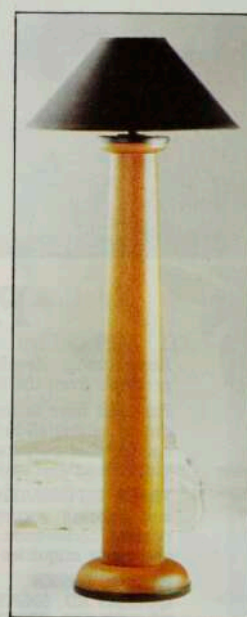
At the Pacific Green plant, breakthroughs are occurring all the time, although Dowse acknowledges that they still need to explore the full potential of coconut timber.

A final report on their research findings

is still to be prepared, however Dowse is confident of the future of the industry and its benefit for the entire region. □



**Nice to admire and
durable:** lamp and
small table made
from coconut timber



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PNG pins hopes on war relics

ABANDONED relics from the last world war are being turned around by Papua New Guinea this year to lure tourists from Japan, the United States and Australia. Europe is next.

Visitors are expected to flock to PNG from April to commemorate the 50th anniversary of World War Two's Pacific campaign. The war was fought for three years in parts of PNG, which are converted into special tourist fortress zones.

Kokoda Epic Pty, a company to promote PNG war anniversaries, was launched in February in Sydney. Its founder, former Australian army major Charles Lynn, has mapped out plans to reshape a fresh new appeal for PNG.

During the war, the 100-km Kokoda Trail earned notoriety as the scene of some of the most bitter fighting of 1945. Stretching north from the capital of Port Moresby to the goldfields of Yodda and Kokoda, and used originally by gold miners during the 1860's, the trail will be a principal centre for anniversaries. Once referred as the bush highway, the track gives walkers with a chance to retrace the

steps of the war-time armies.

Lynn has four programs in mind for a return to Kokoda:

- April 15-25: Kokoda remembrance trek — a trek between the village of Kokoda and war cemetery at Bomana to partake in official ANZAC Day activities. (Bomana is one of PNG's four memorial war cemeteries);

- November 3-8: Kokoda epic run-an international endurance race across the tough trail;

- November 8-18: Kokoda military challenge — a contest between armed force teams from Japan, United States, Australia and the home side. The test would be who can complete the track in the fastest time;

- 1992-95: Kokoda corporate challenge — to test the fastest corporate teams, invited from Australia, Japan, US and PNG. "The only way we can appreciate what happened on the Kokoda Trail is to get executives to walk on it," said Lynn.

The world war clashes on Kokoda ended with Australian victory in November 50 years ago.

The track and the rest of PNG's war relics are a reminder of the role the

country played in the war, says war historian McLaren Hiari, of PNG's defence department. There is a strong feeling among tourist and conservation agencies in PNG and Australia, that PNG's world war relics like the Kokoda Trail should be protected and sold in tourist packages.

Prime Minister Rabbie Namaliu was urged in February to impose stiffer penalties for illegal removal of wrecks. Hiari claimed foreign souvenir hunters and smugglers removed nearly \$US1.00 million worth of relics since 1985.

Some wrecked warplanes — Japanese zero fighters attract \$US13,800 prices — fetch attractive offers at US museums. Hiari said despite a government proclamation in 1986 that all relics were the property of the state, smugglers have been active with the help of local villagers.

PNG's expo commissioner general Camillus Narokobi believes the new theme is a fresh initiative which displaces the old perspective of PNG being a land of traditional outlooks. Narokobi says their expo campaign is not just to seek investors injecting capital to tap natural resources like oil and minerals, but also enter into tourism deals. □



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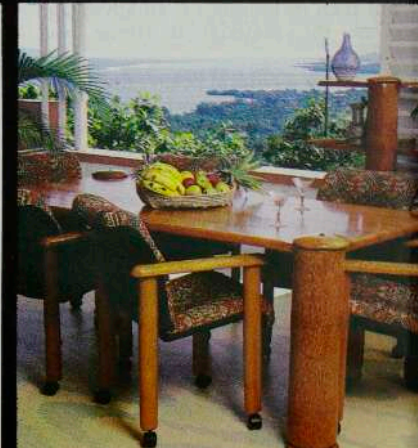
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Fiji ...

SOME authorities on Fiji say there are 320 islands in the Fiji archipelago (18,376 sq. km), but others say this figure does not include the many islets, some of them in rivers.

One list contains almost 1000 names, and a more accurate figure of islands may be 800.

Fiji gained Independence from Britain on October 10, 1970, but became a republic on October 7, 1987, following a military coup. The indigenous Fijians are racially classed

as Melanesians but they have a considerable admixture of Polynesian blood. At the time the first Europeans arrived in Fiji, this Polynesian influence was greater in the Lau Islands (nearest to Tonga) and on the windward sides of the largest islands, while people in the interiors of the large islands were more purely Melanesian.

Just less than half the population are Indians, whose ancestors came from India as indentured labourers in 1879. The indenture

system was abandoned in 1916 but by then 40,000 elected to remain as free settlers, and they have long since become part of the community as farmers, business or professional men, public servants, clerical workers, transport workers etc.

Europeans came to Fiji in the early 19th century in search of sandalwood. Missionaries and settlers who wanted land and trade followed. "Other islanders" now in the census figures are people such as the Banabans, who originally came from Ocean

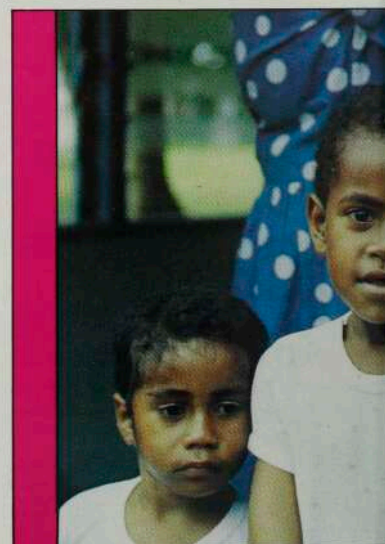


Natural attractions: waterfall on Taveuni Island

Picture: Beryl Cook



Rich culture: Fiji Indians



Warm smiles: Fijian children

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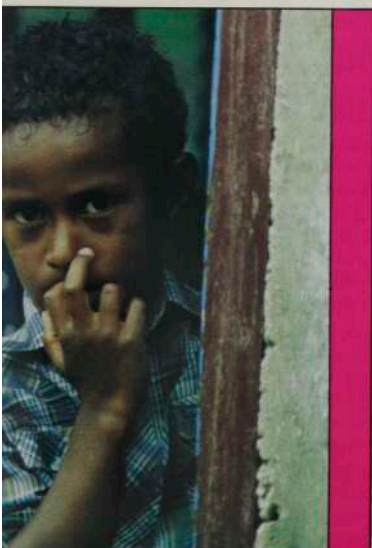
Island and settled on Rabbi Island, or the people from Kioa Island where several hundred Ellice Islands have been resettled.

The people of Rotuma, which became a dependency of Fiji in 1881, are Polynesian.

The Chinese were comparative latecomers to Fiji, the first census to record them being in 1911.

English is the official language, and the Bau dialect is the most widely used of the Fijian tongues. Hindi is spoken by the majority of the Indians.

The main religious groups are Methodist (36.7 per cent), Hindu (38.1 per cent), Roman Catholic (8.8 per cent), and Moslem (7.8 per cent). About 61 per



Ready for tourists: Beach resorts are a big attraction

Picture: Tourism Council of the South Pacific

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Out to beat the odds

VANUATU has an impressive range of crops and manufactured goods and opening for exports; it enjoys the same access as Fiji has in selling garments and furniture into Australia and New Zealand (under SPARTECA) and exporting agriculture or dairy products into the European Community (Lome Convention); and it has special entry into the United States under the Generalised System of Preferences.

Vanuatu also has at least as many investment and finance centre security incentives as any other Island country. It has operated a respected international finance centre since 1971.

Why then, asks principal trade officer, Roy Mickey, is the country lacking large-scale foreign investment and export thrust? Mickey, the chief government officer seconded to the World Expo Committee last year, discovered that it has been a lack of exposure coupled with local problems. "Our local politics of the past . . . problems with work permits, the green letter business where foreigners got deported were all problems for us," he said.

But there has been a change in government, with a new coalition partner joining the old Lini administration. A few exports have started in a big way with beef being exported to Japan, New Caledonia and Fiji, copra to Europe, and coffee, cocoa and kava to France.

Kava and coffee have shown potential for export expansion this year. Four million kava plants are planned for plantation in 1992. Kava used in the chemical and pharmaceutical market in France earned the country 8.9 million (\$US70,000 could you) in 1989.

A large coffee-planting scheme is under way on Tanna island under a joint Commonwealth Development Corporation (60 per cent) and Vanuatu government venture. Exports of up to five tonnes of coffee a month were planned for this year to Australia, Vanuatu's principal trading partner.

Vanuatu's push into Europe will start at Expo '92, said finance secretary George Pakoa. "Some think that our trade and tourism links are with Australia, why should we go all the way to Europe. But I feel Vanuatu should be made known. Our going to Spain is not

only tourism but for boosting trade and investment as well."

The country's appeal for tourists will be that Vanuatu is an "untouched paradise". With a decline in tourist arrivals from Australia and New Zealand as a result of recession, Europeans could fill the vacuum. "Europe could easily full the slump we're facing," said Linda Kalpoi, a manager at National Tourism Office in Port Vila.

Vanuatu has been attracting a steady flow of European tourists after it began taking part in World Trade shows with the Tourism Council of the South Pacific in Munich, London and Germany. Kalpoi said remote and exotic areas like the islands of Tanna, Santo and Malekula are now being opened up for tourists.

Vanuatu offers that something extra: volcanoes, unique Melanesian custom dances, diving and the bungy jumping. It has some of the most exclusive resorts in the South Pacific. A new hotel, Kakula Island Resort and Club Med are planned in the outer lesser-known islands.

New Caledonia, which has direct flights to France, provides the quickest connection to Port Vila. Flag carrier, Air Vanuatu has plans to increase flights out of Australia and New Zealand from June if forecasts improve. □

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cent of Fijians still live in villages in a largely subsistence economy and with the obligations of communal life.

However, under modern economic pressures life for the people, with increasing numbers of Fijians working for wages or looking for work in cities such as Suva, living far from their family villages.

The growth of urban areas has associated problems — lack of housing, employment, education facilities and basic infrastructure has contributed to growth in crime.

Recreation includes sports such as cricket, hockey, basketball, squash, tennis and bowls. The winter sports, Rugby football and soccer, command the biggest followings. Water sports are popular and golf has advanced with private sponsorship of tournaments.

Tourism is the biggest earner, but much of the money goes out of the country to the developers. Sugar has been the economic mainstay, and Fiji produces a range of manufactured products. Processing of raw materials from primary resources has been the most significant form of manufacturing — sugar milling, gold extraction, coconut oil extraction and fish canning. Main exports are sugar, molasses, gold, fish, coconut oil, lumber and ginger, but tourism has grown. □

Compiled from the Pacific Islands Yearbook.

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Vanuatu ...

VANUATU is a double chain of 80 islands with a total land area of 11,880 sq. km. The largest single island, Santo, is 3947 sq. km.

Efate, with the capital Vila, is 915 sq. km.

Vanuatu gained independence on July 30, 1980, as the New Hebrides.

The new name of Vanuatu, meaning Our Land, was given to the group by the Vanua'aku Party (formerly the New Hebrides National Party) which became the government on independence. After elections last year, the Vanua'aku Party and the Union of Moderate Parties formed a coalition government.

The indigenous people, known as ni-Vanuatu, are racially classed as Melanesians. There are also European, Micronesian/Polynesian, other Melanesian, Chinese and Vietnamese living in Vanuatu.

The people speak more than 100 Melanesian languages with Bislama being the national language. The "official" languages are Bislama, English and French. About 80 per cent of the islanders live in rural communities. Chief activity for rural dwellers is traditional subsistence agriculture.

Recreation includes soccer, which is the main sport, cricket, golf, yachting, boxing, netball, tennis, basketball and rugby union.

Within the Vanuatu Group there are active volcanos. Yasur (Yahuwei) crater on Tanna continues to produce periodic ash. Two volcanos on Ambrym emit showers of ash also and occasionally this is accompanied by lava.

Copra, fish and beef are still the main exports of Vanuatu.

The coconut is the source of the major export. The total area under coconuts is about 70,000 ha but about 82 per cent of the copra produced comes from smallholders rather than large plantations.

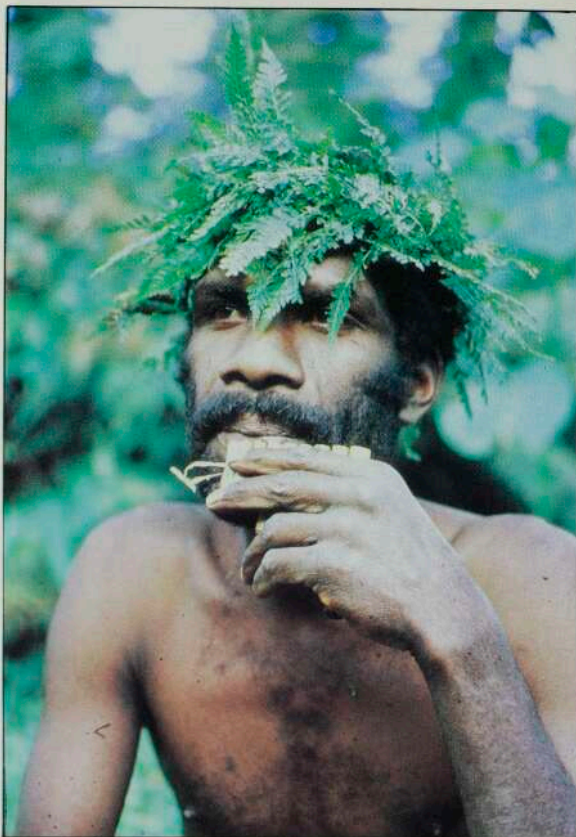
The secondary industry which includes manufacturing and mining is on a small scale, catering almost exclusively for local consumption. The only exceptions are the small meat canneries and fish-freezing works and sawmills, which have a limited export trade.

The government is taking an increasingly positive part in the future of tourism policy.

An average of 60 per cent of Vanuatu's visitors come from Australia while New Caledonia provides the next largest number, followed by New Zealand and Japan. The first European to see Vanuatu was Spanish explorer Pedro Fernandez de Quiros. He saw several islands in the Banks Group and Maewo on April 25, 1606. □







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Picture: Liz Thompson

Close to nature: a ni-Vanuatuan man plays a traditional pipe. About 80 per cent of the islanders still live in rural communities and their chief activity is traditional subsistence agriculture.



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Kiribati . . .

THIS group of 33 islands, lying astride of the equator over an area of five million sq km of ocean, was named the Gilbert Islands in the 1820s.

It was administered by Britain from 1892 until July 12, 1979, when it became an independent republic with the name of Kiribati (pronounced Kiribas, the nearest pronunciation in the indigenous tongue to the word "Gilberts").

It consists of three main groups — the Gilberts proper, Phoenix, Northern and Southern Line Islands with Ocean Island.

The people are known as I-Kiribati. There are only 13 letters in the language, and 's' is not one of them, so Kiribati is the nearest one can get to the phonetic sound of Gilberts. A 't' followed by an 'i' becomes an 's' — hence Kiribas.

The name Gilbert Islands was given to the group by the Russian hydrographer A.I. Krusenstern in the 1820s. From then until about 1870, many British and American whaling vessels sought sperm whales in Gilbertese waters.

Seamen from some of these vessels began visiting the islands and became beachcombers, while adventurous Gilbertese were taken as crewmen.

Until October 1975, the Gilbert Islands were joined with the Ellice Islands in a single British colony. On that date, the Polynesian inhabitants of the Ellice Islands withdrew to form Tuvalu.

The I-Kiribati (Gilbert Islanders) are Micronesians who use a Micronesian dialect and English.

The I-Kiribati are very much men of the sea. Traditional skills include cultivating **babal**, fishing, and making and sailing canoes.

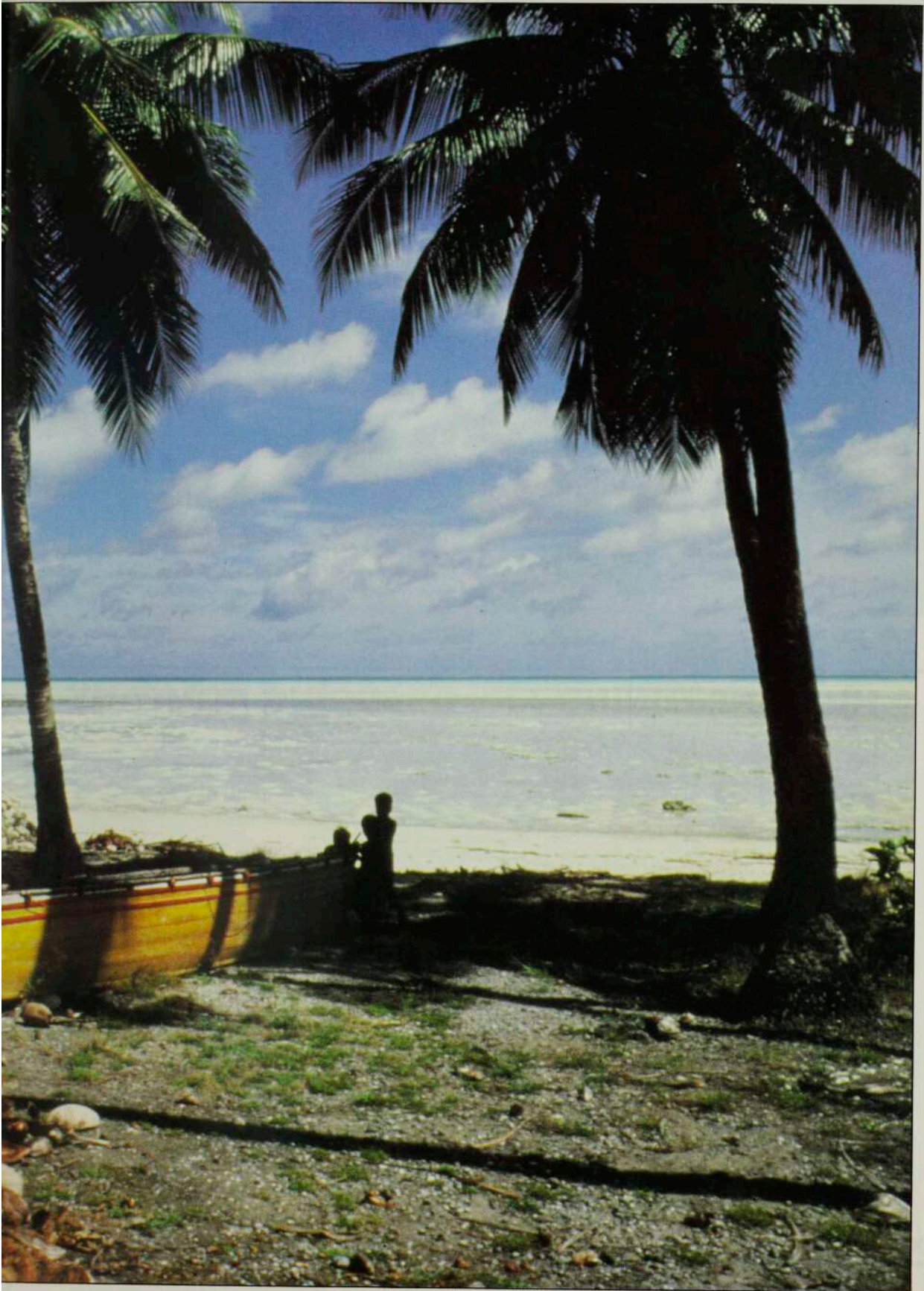
Outer island life is essentially affluent subsistence with cash income from copra remittances. Recreation includes dancing, canoe-racing, volleyball, soccer and traditional games. A marine training school in the country has operated successfully for several years, and several hundred Kiribati men are crewing overseas ships and have acquired excellent reputations.

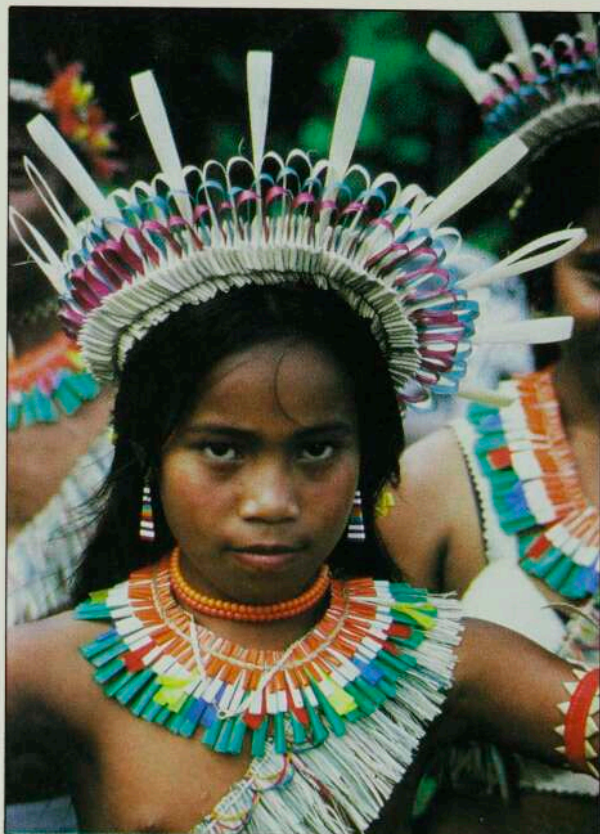
In recent years tourism has been given increased priority. Links have been established with Micronesia via Airlines of the Marshall Islands with a weekly flight through Fiji Islands.

Kiribati imports mainly food, fuel and manufactured goods.

Copra is the only exported agricultural product. Food crops for local consumption are mainly **babal** (taro), coconuts, bananas, pandanus, breadfruit and pawpaw. Locally caught fish form the staple diet. □





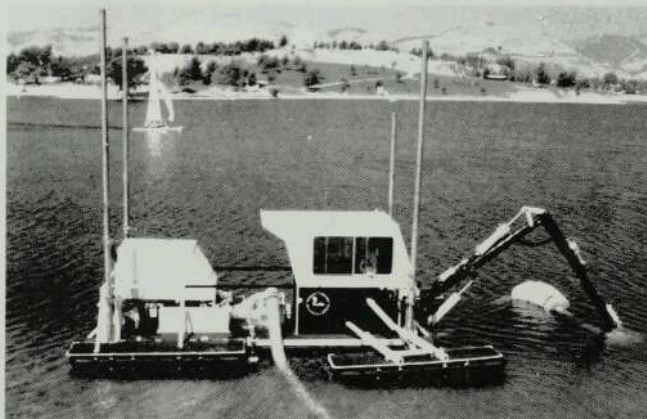


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Picture: Tourism Council of the South Pacific

Dressed to dance: a young Kiribati girl takes seriously what for most I-Kiribati is a recreational pursuit. Other activities include canoe-racing, volleyball, soccer and traditional games.

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Solomon Islands . .

THE Solomon Islands extend over some 600,000 sq. km of sea, lying as a scattered archipelago in a south-easterly direction from Bougainville to the Santa Cruz Islands. The group has a total land area of 29,785 sq. km.

The group consists of a double chain of six large islands and many smaller ones including those of the Lord Howe, Santa Cruz, Duff and Reef groups.

The main island is Guadalcanal and the capital is Honiara.

The Solomon Islands gained independence from Britain on July 7, 1978, and became a republic on the tenth anniversary of its independence.

The 1970 census showed a total population of 160,998 of whom 94 per cent were Melanesians. The Polynesians, who have mainly settled on small islands or atolls such as Ontong, Java, Sikaiana, Rennell, Bellona, the Reef Islands and Tikopia, are the second largest group.

The Solomons is a constitutional monarchy with the British monarch as Head of State, and represented in the Solomons by a Governor-General appointed on the recommendation of the legislature every five years.

The official language is English although the most effective lingua franca is Pidgin. About 87 different vernacular forms of speech are used, with Melanesians living in villages only a few miles apart unable to understand each other. There is no vernacular common to the whole country.

Most islanders follow the traditional village life where every family produces its own food and builds its own home.

A major source of recreation for the islanders is the sea, where big, black, canoes may still be seen among motorised boats. The traditional canoe is made of bent planks with stern and sometimes bow carried high and decorative.

There is often much inlay work done with mother-of-pearl.

The people also take their soccer, rugby, tennis, cricket, athletics and basketball competitions very seriously.

In primary production of the country, the fishing industry is the largest export earner. The main commercial species are skipjack tuna, yellowfin, albacore and other tuna types suitable for the raw fish market in Japan. The fishing industry is managed by Japanese experts.

Timber is the second largest export





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earner for the country.

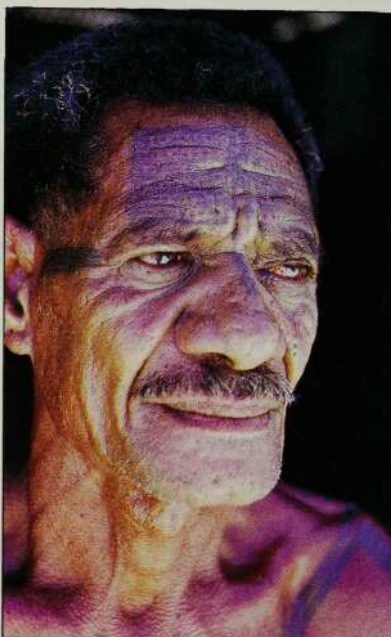
Logs form the bulk of exports with 95 per cent going to Japan and the rest to Korea, France and Germany. Sawn timber goes to Australia, United Kingdom, New Zealand and some of the South Pacific Islands. Cocoa is exported by a few individuals and organisations.

Tourism also is an important earner, drawing on plane and cruise ship services from Australia, Papua New Guinea, the US and New Zealand. Chief interest in recent years has been to see the major theatre of US operations in World War II, but conflict dates back earlier.

The Solomon Islands was discovered by Spanish explorer Alvaro de Mendana, who set out from Peru with two ships in 1567 to seek the legendary Isles of Solomon, believed to lie to the west of South America, and said to have been visited by the Incas.

Spanish and Dutch colonisation efforts failed after dissension and difficulties with the islanders. The fate of French explorer La Perouse in January 1788 generated an interesting mystery for 40 years until Irishman Captain Peter Dillon chanced on some articles on Tikopia in 1826. He learned that the two ships had been wrecked in a storm, the survivors had lived on shore for a time, and sailed away in a boat made from local timber, never to be heard of again.

Several months after Dillon's discoveries, French explorer Dumont d'Urville recovered several cannon and other relics from the inner wreck of the *Astrolabe*. In 1962 Reece



Ageless: the face of a Solomons man reveals a life in a country still rich in tradition

Picture: John Yates, Fotofie

Discombe of Vila, New Hebrides, discovered the remains of La Perouse's other vessel, the *Boussole*.

DEXPO ● EXPO ● EXPO ● EX

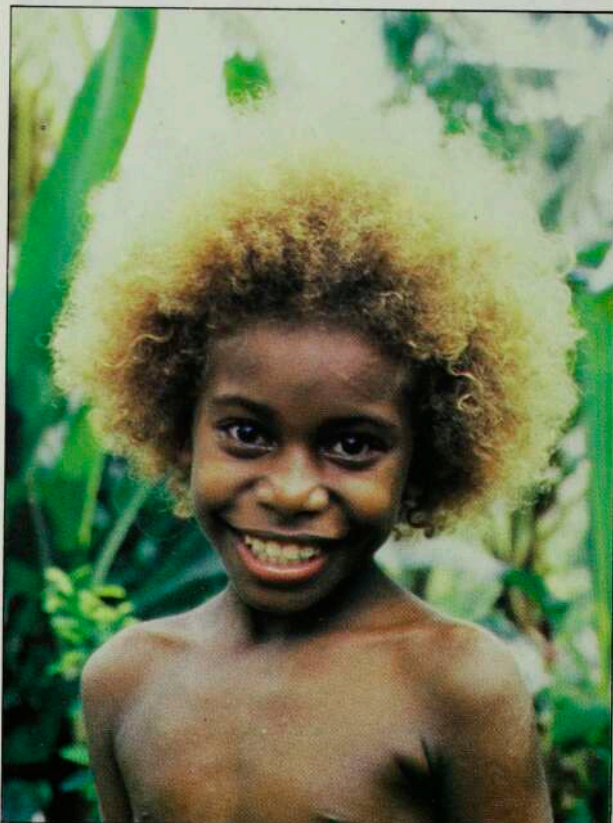
The discoveries focused some European attention on the Solomons, but there was little European contact with the area until the mid-19th century. Seven priests and six lay brothers of the French Marist order attempted to establish themselves, but four murders and one death of malaria led to abandonment of the mission in 1848.

In the 1850s the Anglicans persuaded islanders to go to New Zealand or Norfolk Island for training, and made progress after settling in the group themselves in the late 1870s. Meanwhile, labour recruiters had moved into the Solomons seeking labour for plantations in Fiji, Queensland and occasionally New Caledonia and Samoa.

Abuses by the labour recruiters, known as blackbirders, frequently led to murder. The evils of the labour trade prompted Great Britain to declare a protectorate over the southern Solomon Islands (Guadalcanal, Savo, Malaita, San Cristobal, and the New Georgia group) in 1893. The islands of the Santa Cruz group were added in 1898 and 1899, and others in 1900 by a treaty with Germany.

The economic development of the Solomons progressed sluggishly before World War II. The Japanese occupied the Islands soon after the outbreak of war. From May 1942, when the Battle of the Coral Sea was fought, until December 1943, the Solomons were almost constantly a scene of combat. This year the 50th anniversary of the landing at Guadalcanal will be commemorated.

— Compiled using the Pacific Islands Yearbook



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TOURISM



Picture: Anosh Kumar

Time to smell the orchids: tourists admire the blooms at the Garden of the Sleeping Giant in Fiji

In the giant's garden

By Aniltra Chaudhari

UP in the hills of Sabeto in Nadi, the fluffy white clouds provide a flimsy blanket for the sleeping giant. In the valley below his feet lie a profusion of orchid flowers, shrubs and pine trees.

This is the Garden of the Sleeping Giant founded by American actor Raymond Burr (*Ironside*, *Perry Mason*) in 1977 to house his private orchid collection. Since then, the collection has become one of the largest in the South Pacific with more than 20 genera and 200 orchid species on display.

The Sabeto Range is frequently referred to as a Sleeping Giant because of its form — like a gigantic man reclining, head placed well back, arms folded over chest and feet pointed into the clouds. He is considered to be the patron saint of the Fijians living in nearby Natalau Village.

The garden, just under 50 acres, lies just beneath the hills hence the name — Garden of the Sleeping Giant. In addition to raising dendrobiums for cut-flower sales, the Garden houses many

more varieties for display so it is a popular visitor attraction. One suspects even a sleeping giant doesn't mind the additional traffic when his garden is so

greatly admired. Because of the calming beauty of the Garden and its blooms there's a tendency to speak in hushed tones and, thus, there's little chance of disturbing the slumbering giant.

Children ask to see the Giant, but most visitors tend to simply wander and wonder at the garden's beauty.



Exotic beauty: a spray of tropical orchids flourishes at the Garden



TOURISM COUNCIL OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC

APPOINTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Applications are invited for the position of Head of Research and Statistics Division of the Tourism Council of the South Pacific (TCSP), a regional inter-governmental organisation of thirteen island countries of the South Pacific.

The main objectives of the Council are to promote, co-ordinate, plan and implement projects and activities designed to strengthen regional co-operation in tourism development of member countries. Most funding is currently provided by the Pacific Regional Tourism Development Programme financed by the European Community.

The Head of Research and Statistics Division will report to the Director of TCSP, and will be responsible to the Director for planning, organising and executing the research and statistics component of the work programme of the Council which includes:—

- .. collection, processing, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of tourism statistics;
- .. surveys, studies and other research activities;
- .. advice and assistance to member countries on research and statistics;
- .. operation and enhancement of computer data base system;
- .. any other research and statistic activities relating to tourism.

This position is restricted to nationals of the member countries* of the TCSP. Applicants should have relevant qualifications and experience appropriate to the post and a record of achievements in tourism in the region at middle and senior management level.

Interested applicants are advised to obtain a copy of further particulars of the post from the Secretariat (Phone: (679) 315277; Fax: (679) 301995) before applying.

Applications should include a detailed curriculum vitae and names and addresses of three referees with whom the applicant has been associated in a professional capacity, must be submitted on or before 30 April, 1992 to the Director, Tourism Council of the South Pacific, P.O. Box 13119, Suva, Fiji. Envelope should be marked "Professional Staff Application". The successful applicant is expected to take up his position as soon as possible.

★ Member countries of the Tourism Council of the South Pacific are: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tahiti, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa.

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6.7 km north of Nadi International Airport.

Upon entering the garden, visitors are welcomed with an ice-cold glass of fruit juice and given a brief introduction by one of the garden guides. Guests may explore on their own or with a guide.

Most of the orchids are grown under knitted shadecloth to protect them and their guests from the sun. An almost constant breeze from the Sabeto Range and frequent sprinklings combine to keep the orchids cool. With filtered sunlight, a cooling breeze, and just the right amount of water, the orchids grow lush and tall with many blooms.

Bright purple orchids blend smoothly with yellows, whites, oranges, reds, and other variegated colours.

Flowers hang from pots in sprays of blue, purples and yellows. Single flowers nod in the breeze while visitors enjoy the great variety of colour.

Other orchids fit snugly in rockeries and simply pour out of the natural crevices. Colourful epiphytic orchids with tiny flowers swarm over rocks and branches.

Most are hybrids. A great variety of genera are found in the garden. Most common are the *cattleys vandas* and *dendrobiums*.

"Temperature tolerant" *cymbidiums*

are a recent addition. Hundreds of *Cymbidium* Golden Elf line a path.

Dendrobiums are one of the largest tropical genera used by the garden, in a variety of colours, for both cut flowers and display. As cut flowers, they can last three to four weeks. Sprays are sold locally to hotels and restaurants. Orchid lovers also take sprays overseas.

As you wander around lost in your own world of contemplation, you come to feel almost like a giant yourself. In the blooms around you find tiny ballerinas in full skirts, and tight bodices of different shades dancing on the whims of the wind. Botanists call them *Oncidiums*; the guides say they're dancing ladies.

And then a trelliced boardwalk led us on towards a tropical jungle at the very edge of the mountains. Along the way, well tended gardens offered displays of bamboo, palms, frangipani, gardenias, breadfruit, mangoes, bananas and plants indigenous to Fiji.

We crossed a lily pond quietly opening its red and hot—pink petals to the sun. And as we slowly climbed through the jungle shade, flowering vines, ginger, heliconia and bromeliads punctuated its lush greenness. As we left the garden, the Giant still slept — maybe unaware that we had tiptoed through his garden. Or maybe he knew; and was very proud. □

Papua New Guinea ...

PAPUA New Guinea lies wholly within the southern tropics. It consists of the eastern half of the island of New Guinea and many other offshore islands including New Britain, New Ireland and Bougainville. The total land area is 461,690.33 sq. km.

It is an independent state and a member of the Commonwealth and its capital is Port Moresby.

The inhabitants include a large diversity of types although some ethnologists make a distinction between the Papuan-type people, who are believed to have been the first arrivals, and who now tend to inhabit the interiors of the mainland and big islands; and the Melanesians who are the people of the coasts and offshore islands.

But there had been much mixing of people before Europeans made their first contacts, and the indigenous people of PNG can be considered to be related to those other Melanesians

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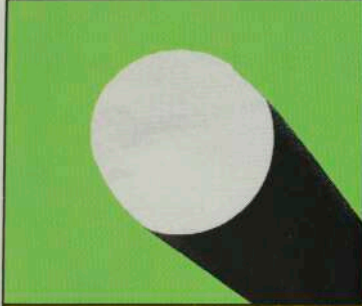
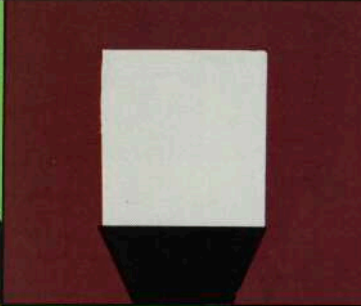
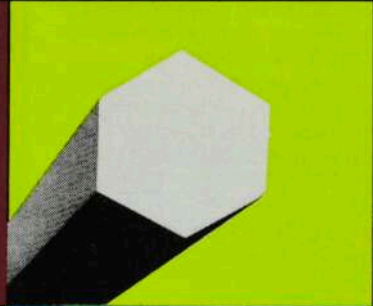


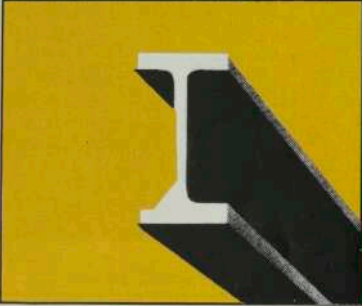


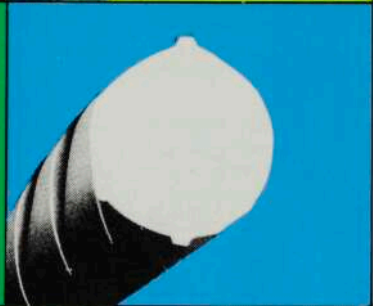
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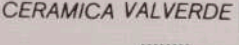
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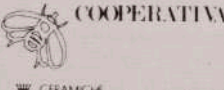

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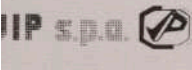

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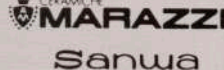

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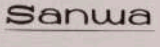

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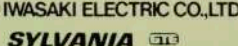

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who occupy the greatest part of the West Pacific.

The people of the North-Western Islands of the Manus Province (which are closest to the Caroline Islands) are basically Micronesians although they now have been subjected to incursions of Melanesian blood. The people of Takau (Mortlock) and the Nukumanu (Tasman), are predominantly Polynesian but mixed now with New Britain and Manus and Caroline Islands are practically pure Polynesian.

However, the above people are very tiny minorities in the predominantly Melanesian scene, which also contains such diverse types as the black-skinned people of the Trobriand Islands and the coast near Port Moresby.

There is a great multiplicity of languages, in all there are probably 700—800.

Changes in the social structure have come as a result of contact with outside influences but the social set-up in native life is still as varied as the people themselves.

Dwellings are often made of local materials and therefore vary in type, size and material according to environment, although this, like everything else, is modified by European contact.

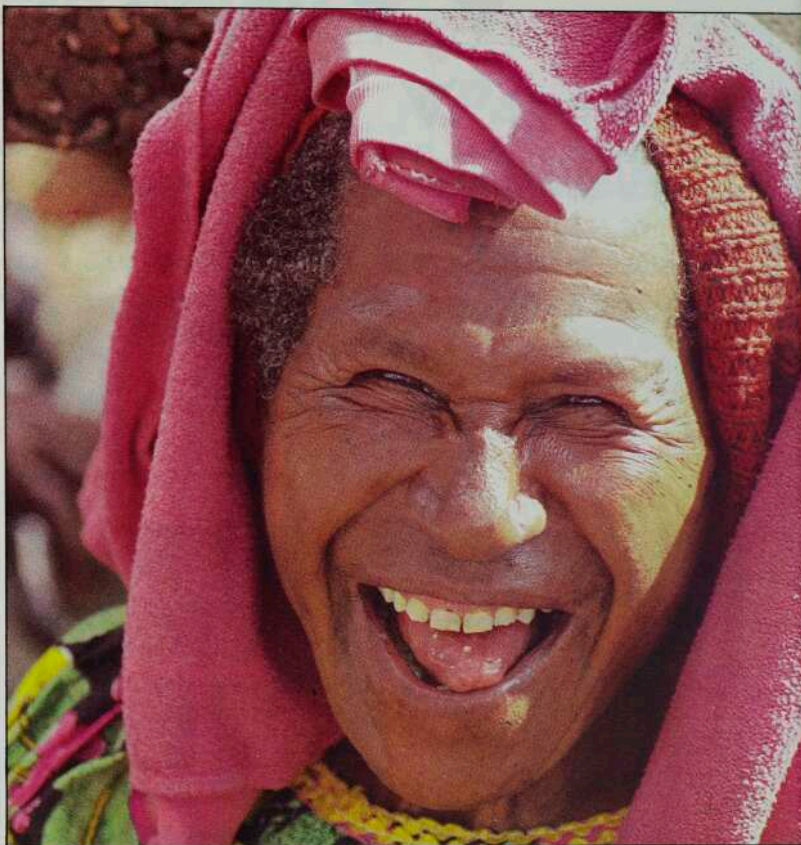
Papua New Guinea is very sports minded, and most sports are played by all races. Football is a national enthusiasm. There are some excellent playing fields, sports grounds and golf courses, probably the finest being the one at Lae. Bowling clubs flourish, as do clubs for yachting and power-boating.

The central core of the main island of New Guinea is a massive cordillera 2500 km long that stretches from one end of the big island to the other. It is one of the world's great mountain systems and forms a drainage divide between rivers that, so far as PNG is concerned, flow north into the sea off the north coast and those that flow south into the Gulf of Papua.

Primary Industries are the largest market for labour. Apart from copper and concentrates, PNG's main export industries now are coconut planting, cocoa, coffee, palm oil and palm kernels, rubber, timber, milling, plywood and veneer manufacture, tea planting, gold mining and also tuna, prawns and crayfish.

PNG has had casual visitors for almost a century but only in recent years has it become interested in organised tourism and even now, with so many other important industries, this still has a minor place in the economy.

American tourists visit parts of the country as part of Pacific circle tours and there has been increasing interest from Japanese tour groups. □



Picture: Liz Thompson

The bright side: beauty in the culture, natural attractions and people

A land of many faces

By Liz Thompson

PAPUA New Guinea is one of the few countries which brings life to the jingo designed by the tourist industry to promote it.

Lines like, "Land of the Unexpected", pasted across images of dense green rainforest can only begin to prepare you for the country's cultural wealth and physical beauty.

The media continually provides negative images of Papua New Guinea, but it fails to put them in context. A country undergoing the most radical social, political and technological changes inevitably confronts enormous social problems. However, alongside these problems culture remains, as do many areas of great beauty.

Extravagant and incredibly diverse body decoration is a well-known and continued practice. Posters display faces painted with vivid reds, ochres and umbers. Men wander with pig tusks through their noses, hats made of human hair and decorated with dried yellow daisies on their heads. Women wear strands of tiny grey seeds, or jobs tears around their necks, huge ivory

white kina shells sit upon their pendulous breasts.

Cascades of cassowary feathers, iridescent blue Bird of Paradise wings and emerald green beetles are all used to decorate their headdresses. Bodies are painted with charcoal and pig fat or oil from local trees and dances follow the sounds of flutes or the beat drums.

The annual Gorōka Show is an event once seen, never forgotten. A performance in which representatives from many of Papua New Guinea's tribal groups come together to dance for two solid days.

The smell of sweat and pig fat mingles in the air as the dust rises and bodies move to the rhythmic sound of snake skin drums.

Equally beautiful and diverse is the environment. The winding Sepik River in the heart of East Sepik Province meanders through numerous villages and the homes of some of the country's most rewarding diving spots.

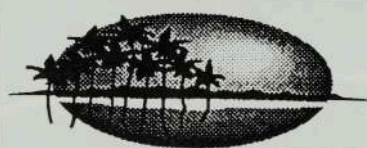
Underwater coral gardens and schools of tropical fish introduce you to another dimension of the landscape. Bensbach in Western Province trans-

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As part of the Pacific presentation at the Seville Universal Expo 92 in Spain, the trade and investment potential of the region will be promoted through a structured Business Promotion Programme.

Applications are therefore invited from interested individuals to manage and implement the Pacific EXPO '92 Business Promotion Programme.

The Expo will run from April 1992 to October 1992, and it is envisaged that the successful applicant will be engaged for up to seven months. Salaries and conditions will be negotiated and will commensurate with qualification and experience.

Applications close on 6 April, 1992 and should be addressed to:

**The Commissioner General
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In Central Province, the famous Kokoda trail leads you through mountainous terrain. Numerous Highland climbs lead you above the clouds to look out across the country's spinal ridge.

Hidden pockets provide rest and relaxation. Waitapi, 1500ft in the mountains, sits in a green valley. The lodge houses a roaring wooden fire, strawberry dachquies are made with locally grown produce, and food is superb and endless.

Islands are easily accessible. Golden, palm-fringed beaches and aquamarine ocean are another of PNG's many faces.

Amidst all this a nation is constructing a new identity, building, amongst scattered tribes and over 700 tribal languages, a sense of unity. There is a great sense of pride in Papua New Guinea. It struggles in the face of unemployment, urbanisation and it's ensuing alienation, a new urban poor and numerous other problems change brings. But the country is rich and vibrant and very beautiful. □

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Helping hand from within

AS Forum Island Countries push for economic development to help support growing populations, one costly destructive force remains at work: cyclones.

Each year, many countries in the region are buffeted by destructive winds of up to 150kph, leaving behind a swathe of destruction costing lives and local economies hundreds of millions of dollars. In many instances, such catastrophe caused untold hardships to thousands of lives.

In almost all instances, it takes years for Forum Island Countries to recover from devastation. Despite technological advances or early warnings about its formation and movement, a cyclone is a destructive force that will remain with us.

It is perhaps with this in mind that the founding fathers of the South Pacific Forum established what is now known as the Regional Disaster Relief Fund (RDRF) administered by the Forum Secretariat.

The RDRF was set up on the recommendation of the Forum held in Nuku'alofa in 1974. Its purpose was to provide immediate relief assistance through the governments of Forum island countries in the event of a major disaster caused by cyclones, flooding, earthquake, drought and so on.

The concept of the RDRF is as old as the recommendation of the Forum Pacific itself — 21 years old this year — when at the first meeting of the Forum in Wellington in 1971 it was thought that such a Fund would help meet the needs of Forum island countries in the event of a major disaster. It was also thought that establishing such a Fund would be a practical demonstration that the region was prepared to help meet the needs of Forum Island countries in the event of a major disaster.

It was also thought that establishing such a fund would be a practical demonstration that the region was prepared to help itself — hence a manifestation of regional co-operation.

At the second Forum in Canberra in 1972, one of the founding members, former Nauru President Hammer de Robert, once again emphasised the need to establish the RDRF as one way of demonstrating regional co-operation. Two years later, Hammer de Robert presented a \$A250,000 cheque as Nauru's voluntary contribution to get the fund off the ground.

It was agreed that each Forum member country, excluding Australia and New Zealand, would contribute \$5,000 a year for 12 years to reach the target set at half a million dollars.

The Forum leaders also agreed that grants from the fund were to meet immediate cash needs for relief purposes, pending the arrival of relief aid from international sources. Thus, its purpose is to respond quickly with critically needed funds.

In establishing the RDRF, Forum founding leaders set three basic criteria for its disbursement. These are that:

- the disaster must be natural with extensive damage used;
- a national disaster must be declared and appeals for international help lodged and;
- funds are disbursed at the discretion of the Secretary General.

Over the years, payments have been made, initially at \$10,000 per disaster, to Forum Island countries affected by landslides, cyclones, typhoons and hurricanes, droughts, earthquakes and fire disasters.

Since 1985, this amount has been increased by \$5,000. Today, the pay-out figure from the fund is a maximum of \$20,000 per disaster.

The first to benefit since the inception of the RDRF was

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Tonga when on July 21, 1977, it was paid the initial maximum \$F10,000 followed by Solomon Islands in March 1979, Fiji twice — the first in April, 1979, and the second time in September the following year, Niue in January, 1981, and the Federated States of Micronesia in March the same year.

In the 13 months of February this year, some \$12,000 from the Regional Disaster Relief Fund (RDRF) had been paid out as relief grants to Forum Island countries following devastation by cyclones.

Prior to these payments, the RDRF stands at more than \$800,000. In recent years, options were looked at, including a regional insurance scheme to replace this fund.

However, a study by UNIDO recommended against a regional insurance scheme and this was accepted by the 22nd Forum last July.

Although relief grants from the fund look rather small, it seems that the foresight of the founding

Forum members is paying off for today's generation and those to follow.

The success of RDRF can only be gauged from letters from recipient countries thanking the Secretary General of the Forum Secretariat for how much cash grants from the Fund have helped.

In January this year, for instance, the President of the Federated States of Micronesia, Bailey Olter, wrote:

"I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of myself and the people of FSM, to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the generous donation of \$US13,550 given to us in response to our request for typhoon relief fund."

In the nearby Republic of the Marshall Islands, President Amata Kabua wrote after receiving funds from the RDRF following a typhoon in February this year:

"I wish to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, to extend my heartfelt and sincere thank you to the South Pacific Forum for your disaster relief assistance following our recent Government and people."

In 1990, Cyclone Ofa wreaked havoc in Western Samoa. Having received a request from the Apia Government, the Forum Secretariat responded by providing \$F15,000 towards relief efforts there.

Prime Minister Tofilau Eti Alesana wrote: "I wish to acknowledge receipt of the Secretariat's \$F15,000 for the purchase of emergency relief supplies for families who were severely affected during Cyclone Ofa."

"On behalf of the Government and people of Western Samoa, I appreciate very much your ready support."

Two years earlier, a landslide buried the PNG's then High Commission in Suva, the Secretariat sent \$F15,000 to help in relief efforts by both the Morobe Provincial and the PNG National Governments. Paul Bengo, the then Chairman of the National Disaster Committee wrote acknowledging the gift.

In the same year, Cyclone Sally devastated the Cook Islands, leaving about 1,000 people homeless and causing extensive damage to commercial, Government and School buildings. Again funding from the RDRF was promptly arranged.

The then Prime Minister, Dr P. Robati, wrote: "On behalf of the Government and people of the Cook Islands, I wish to take this opportunity of expressing our gratitude for your organisation's thoughtful and much-needed assistance given after Cyclone Sally struck the Cook Islands." □

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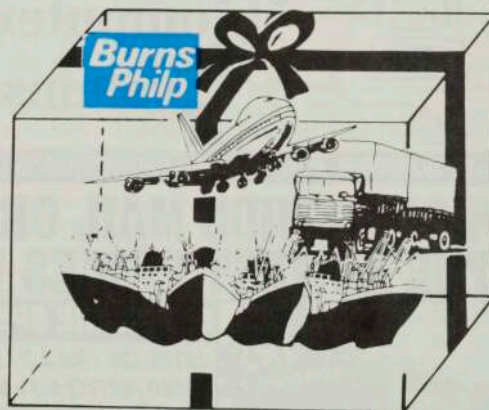


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ARTS

Ancient seafaring skills revived

By Angela McCarthy

THE challenge went out from Rarotonga a year ago: show the world Polynesia's ancient seafaring skills are not forgotten; build a replica of a *vaka* (traditional sea-voyaging canoe) and sail it to Rarotonga for the October 1992 Festival of Arts.

The outer Cook Islanders of Atiu, Mitiaro, Mauke, Mangaia and Aitutaki have taken up the challenge with zeal. They have finished their double-hulled *vaka* and have been studying the traditional navigation techniques they will need to travel the 260 odd kilometres from their islands to Rarotonga.

Sea-voyaging *vaka* have been obsolete on these tiny islands for many generations so the islanders have had to rely on a hotchpotch of information to create the canoes. They have used oral histories, books and photographs, the recollection of the elderly, and improvisation by today's fishing outrigger builders.

The *vaka* projects all began with tree-felling ceremonies. The Gods were asked to bless the trees to give them protection and ensure that they would not crack

when falling or split during construction, and would sail well. The participants say that a lot of the present ceremonies have been improvised because details of old tree-felling ceremonies are no longer fully known. Today, too, the Christian influence has meant most blessings had to be asked of the Christian god rather than the pre-missionary deities.

After the prayers and chants, the trees were felled by chainsaws and then stripped of branches, and pulled along log rollers out of the swamp or coral to a roadside where trucks could take them to their carving place. Throughout the whole procedure, chants of encouragement were sung, usually accompanied by impromptu dance.

Each felling was followed by a feast prepared by the women. In Atiu and Mitiaro the women were not allowed to watch the felling but, while preparing the food, they danced and chanted their support for the men.

In Mitiaro, some members of a family which owned the biggest mango tree on the island were in disagreement over whether it should be felled because of its age and fruitfulness. The story told is that

the tree refused to fall because permission had not been given properly. A member of the family had to say a special prayer over the tree before it would come down. The same tree's timber later gave off such bad vibes to the older carvers that they refused to start carving until the family's blessing was unanimously given. It eventually was!

The original *vaka* were enormous double-hulled craft that carried hundreds of people, livestock and plants the width and breadth of the Pacific. The islands haven't attempted to reproduce *vaka* of that size — they no longer have the right-sized timber or the time to do so. However they have put a strong emphasis on making the *vaka* as traditionally as possible. It has not been easy!

The island councils and *tuagas* (canoe-makers) succumbed to chainsaws donated by the Cultural Development Department for the tree fellings, and to modern chisels and axes, but the materials and method of construction used have been traditional.

In Mitiaro, four mango trees were used to make the hulls — one of which is 27 foot and one slightly less. The *vaka*, which is waist height and very rounded, is joined by *sennit* (coconut husk) and



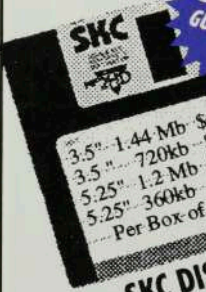
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ARTS



Revival: a vaka being fashioned the old way for this year's Festival of Arts

ke (wooden) nails. Nothing modern or artificial has been used — even the nailing has been done with a breadfruit. The sails will be woven out of pandanus leaves.

When I visited Mitiaro to find out about their vaka, a pair of old seafaring vaka prowheads that had been long well preserved under an old house had just been unearthed. The *tuangas* decided to copy these mastheads for their vaka rather than use the precious original heads.

At a distance the Mitiaro vaka looked very graceful, smaller than I had expected but every bit beautiful. No-one was allowed to photograph it until it had been completed, and as a woman I was not permitted to go too close to it.

The Atiuan prowheads represent the work which is an Atiuan good omen. Their vaka have fish and birds as prowheads.

These islands have spent many hours of unpaid work time on their vaka.

The outer islands of Mangaia and Aitutake have built similar vaka, although their attitude to traditional procedures has been more relaxed. Aitutake, another northern island, has also built a double-ended vaka.

In Rarotonga, where the Arts Festival

will be held, the two tribes of Tikitumu and Uritaua are also building canoes. The Uritaua tribe have not got very far with their vaka yet because they decided to build an *orau* (canoe house) first. "Our objective is to bring various strands of the Uritaua tribe together. You see, the word vaka also symbolises the gathering of the tribe — so, motivated by the festival, we are building a home for our (wooden) vaka and vaka family," says Mata Andrew.

Their vaka will be a replica of the Oteahite Tahitian War canoe that Captain Cook documented in 1772.

The Takitumu tribe is also building a planked vaka based on the famous Takitumu vaka after which their district is named. The vaka, of Samoan origin, came to Rarotonga over 650 years ago and eventually sailed to New Zealand in a migratory move by Cook Islanders about 1350 AD.

Sir Tom Davis says that, so far, he and his son are the only ones working on the vaka, although the tribe helped with cutting trees and planking, and will be involved again when it's time to treat the planks with epidure. It has been Sir Tom's dream for a long time to build a replica Takitumu and he says the festival has given him the opportunity through sponsorship by a private Cook Island

company, whose one stipulation is that the vaka become a museum piece once sailed.

Sir Tom, who has sailed extensively around the Pacific and Caribbean, aims to sail the vaka by retracing the original routes she followed. However, before such journeys are re-enacted, the vaka will be in the lagoon for the Festival of Arts along with the Uritaua tribe's vaka.

Aside from the Cook Islands vaka, the Canoe Committee for the festival is expecting traditionally styled vaka to voyage from the Marshall Islands, Tahiti, New Zealand and Hawaii. The Hawaiian contribution will be the Hokule's vaka, which was built in 1975 by the Polynesian Voyaging Society.

For the Cook Islands the 1992 Festival of Arts seafaring theme has given the inspiration, aided by a government-sponsored conference on seafaring oral traditions.

Tua, like other people, hopes that once the festival is over the skills learnt will be used with the canoe, so that the art of such vaka building and sailing will be a proper revival and not just a temporary thing. He says; "If a living thing is cut down to build another living thing it should be kept alive. To put it in a museum it just sits would be a terrible waste." □

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BOOKS

More than a record of culture

Ethnology of Vanuatu, by Felix Speiser, published 1991 by Crawford House Press, PO Box 143, Bathurst, NSW 2795, Australia. \$A129.

Acquirer of one of the world's finest Melanesian ethnological collections, Felix Speiser lamented that "no island will be represented by the whole range of its cultural possessions, for the traveller cannot rely on the initiative of the natives but will, as a rule, manage to see only what he wants to see, and will therefore be able to acquire only what he has actually set his eyes on, either through chance or through systematic research."

For all his doubts, the author of this classic text on Vanuatu art and culture has produced an extraordinary masterpiece of anthropological inquiry. *Ethnographische Materjalen aus den Neuen Hebriden und den Banks-Inseln*, first published in 1923, is now translated into English, thanks to the support of the Pro Helvetia Foundation in Zurich and the Swiss Academy of Humanities.

Speiser saw himself chiefly as the mere recorder of the complex world he found: his accounts of the mental realm of his subjects are filled with a sense of wonder and enthusiasm. Both summary of the work of earlier anthropological investigators and overarching account of the intricacies of grade-economies, magic and life-cycle rituals, Speiser's survey leaves little hidden.

It is studded with more than 1600 of Speiser's own delicate photographs. Thorough, sometimes ghoulish accounts of poisons and hunting techniques mingle with recondite ideas about Vanuatu religion: "It is clear that the notion which the natives have of the soul is not very different from those of the European except perhaps that it is even a little more vague ... the soul can leave the body without necessarily entailing death."

Speiser was clearly an intriguing combination of artist and scientific investigator. He was both fired by the excitement of the New Hebrides, which he described in a Mills and Boon volume, and appalled by the demographic collapse under colonial rule, which he recorded in a scientific paper, *Decadence and preservation*.

After establishing the pioneering Basel Ethnographic Museum New Hebrides collection, largely based on his stay in the Vanuatu archipelago from May 1910 to July 1912, he continued his Melanesian field trips, devoting special attention to the lower Sepik. During his later years, he developed an intriguing interpretation of Vanuatu art, which is briefly sketched in an essay in this volume by

Christian Kaufmann of the Basel Museum: "It was Speiser's contention that deeply linked as it was with religion and ritual, art always started from images, a form close to nature, representing the apparent shape of the being to which referred ... art forms that were meaningful would degenerate into those that were meaningless and evolve no further, unless the society to which their authors belonged regained its creativity and invented new links between its religious ideas and new images."

Speiser emerged as one of the principal European scholars in the field of Melanesian art, codifying and documenting its achievements against the more accessible, better known works of neighbouring Polynesia. Yet Kaufmann reminds his readers that the technical specialism was balanced by Speiser's vivid humanity, a "commitment of mind to the peoples of the Pacific", which breathes still from his pages, for "in their more recent history he had seen too many of them desperate throes when the very roots of their existence had been destroyed in the clash with the colonial system".

Speiser saw his work primarily as document, a tribute to cultures slipping into the shelter of memory, rather than part of the living tradition that sprang up once more in the independent Republic of Vanuatu. He would doubtless be surprised if he learned that the Ambrym and Pentecost slit drums he describes are once more part of social life. Speiser's sketches of upright hollow drums from the Banks Islands served as the basis for a project by the Vanuatu Cultural Centre to restore the making and use of these *Timiat Wos* on Vanua Lava and Mota Lava in the Banks group during 1987.

Speiser, by virtue of his work in Basel, stands as one of the chief initiators of modern Europe's encounter with Pacific culture. Each of the pieces Speiser collected in Basel are displayed in settings that communicate their spiritual charge; the piece illustrated on the cover of *Ethnology*, a southern Malekulla skull statue, remains a deeply potent image.

The Swiss Government remembers its New Hebrides connection, and in the year of Vanuatu's independence, 1980, funded the present translation. With its reports and legends, its careful descriptions of tree-ferns and tapa mats, dancing grounds and pig sacrifices, rock drawings and painted trees, the book is a testament to its author's painstaking effort and to the universe of traditions it helped preserve.

YACHTING

Where the wind blows

By Martin Tiffany

SAILING a 46-foot ketch across the crystal clear waters of the South Pacific, with a parrot on your shoulder and a future plan as flexible as your sails, seems like the start of a good day-dream.

Add to this stops in countries like Fiji and French Polynesia to play a bit of jazz, and the dream only gets better. But for 37-year-old German jazz trumpeter Peter Malycha, this is reality.

The native of Cologne, with Russian ancestry, studied classical music in Cologne from 1972 to 1976. He played in a few orchestras before concentrating full-time on his true passion — jazz.

Malycha has played in a number of jazz and rock bands, done a lot of studio work and, with the help of a saxophonist, created a new sound using electronics.

Apart from playing all over Europe, he wrote a theme for a television sports programme and played in the famous musical Cats in Hamburg for a year. Although considered one of the top trumpeters in Cologne, he felt he wanted more out of life.

Having sailed since an early age, he indulged this passion by buying his 46-foot ketch *The Jonathan* in 1981 and made a number of trips around Europe. He also visited the Caribbean, Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands.

In 1988 — the last time he was in Germany — he set sail for the South Pacific. He arrived in Papeete in French Polynesia and stayed in the country almost a year, cruising a lot around the Society Islands. He fell in love with the country and found it hard to leave, but he wanted to see more of the Pacific.

He travelled to Niue, on to Tonga and



Travelling trumpeter: Peter Malycha is a long way from home

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then to Fiji, where he is currently sitting out the hurricane season.

Because of the rigours of yacht travel, Malycha only brought an old jazz trumpet with him to keep him in practice and while away some long nights at sea. He played a little in French Polynesia and Tonga, but it was not until he got to Fiji that he got some real practice.

At the Traps bar in Suva, he heard local jazz band Tui Ravai and the Freelancers. He introduced himself and now plays regularly with them. He has become a close friend of band leader Tui, and wishes he could take the band to Europe to give them some exposure.

The Freelancers are hoping to do a South Pacific regional tour some time this year.

He feels the same way about Fiji as he did when he left French Polynesia — sad. Sad that he will have to leave new friends and the beautiful country, but he knows in his heart he will return.

Later this year he plans to return to French Polynesia via Western and American Samoa and then go on to Brazil. Enroute he hopes to fulfil a lifetime dream — to sail around Cape Horn.

When does he plan to return to Germany? "Some time" — he plans to leave his yacht in the Mediterranean in August-September next year and fly

home to experience the new unified Germany. Unification will open a new market for musicians and he would like to experience the East's new freedom.

Although a sociable person, Malycha prefers to sail on his own with just his pet parrot for company. He says he enjoys the freedom that sailing gives him, and wants to be on his own so he can make the decisions he wants.

But what are his long-term plans? "To travel and to play more music." □



Tui Ravai and the Freelancers: Tui, second from left, with Paul Stevens, Manoa 'Twisty', Pete Malycha and Vili Tuilaula

Lure of the sea proves irresistible

BBRITISH media magnate Robert Maxwell's death last year could have been caused by calenture, an impulse to jump into the sea which has been known to mariners for centuries.

Dr Sandy Macleod said the condition was identified by two early French psychologists who described it as a delirium produced by fever, usually in hot, clear, calm weather.

But Macleod did not associate it with sunstroke, infection or a suicidal urge. Serving as a ship's medical officer, he found half the crew had experienced it. One felt "entranced" by the vessel's movement, one felt "lured", and another "hypnotically attracted". Solutions? Stay away from the rail, in company, or below deck in calm weather. □

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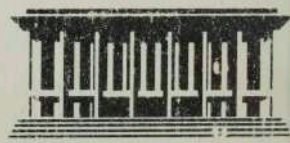
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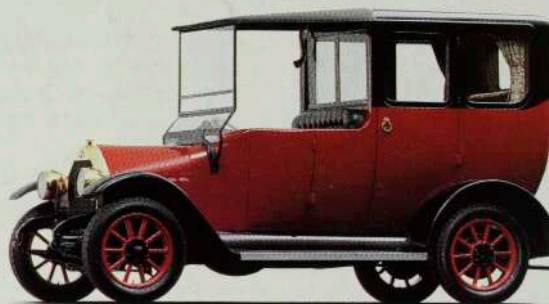
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