Vol. 65 No. 2 (Feb. 1, 1995)


PACIFIC ISLANDS
MONTHLY
FEBRUARY 1995
THINGS FALL APART
Fiji's discriminatory policies and mass emigration take their toll
FIJI LAW

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M O N T H L Y

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LETTERS

Hazardous waste disposal

Madam,

It's a problem that just won't go away – getting rid of the mountains of hazardous waste produced in the industrial world. In recent years there have been at least 10 different schemes by waste brokers to ship hazardous materials to Pacific countries for land-fill or incineration or just out-of-sight, out-of-mind storage.

As a result, Papua New Guinea initiated the idea of a regional hazardous waste convention at the 1992 South Pacific Forum in Honiara. When signed and brought into effect, the convention (known as the Waigani Convention) will represent a collective "no" to future hazardous waste import schemes.

As with most agreements dealing with global environment problems, the issue of technology transfer is important in the waste trade debate. The Waigani Convention is no exception. Industrialised countries such as Australia have argued that if it can assist with or ensure a hazardous waste reprocessing facility built in a developing country is up to standard acceptable to both exporting and importing government, then this type of technology transfer should not only be allowed but could be encouraged as a form of development.

Obviously, if a developing country is encouraged, with foreign assistance, to invest in capital intensive facilities for reprocessing imported hazardous waste, a continuous stream of hazardous waste imports is necessary to justify the investment. This leaves the developing country with toxic by-products, residues, emissions and removes any incentive for industry to reduce the production of hazardous waste at source.

While several Pacific countries on the working group of the Waigani Convention argued for a commitment not to export hazardous waste to other developing countries outside the Forum region (in recognition of the global regime established under the Basel Convention), Australia was adamant the international decision should not be reflected in the regional convention.

There is one more meeting scheduled to finalise the regional convention before it is due for signing at the next Forum meeting in September. There are three outstanding issues to be decided at the meeting.

❑ The Waigani Convention preamble still makes reference to the globally agreed Basel ban. While Australia is expected to try to have this reference deleted, it should be retained.

❑ The original proposal by PNG includes a ban on imports of hazardous substances and products which cannot legally be used in the country where they are produced. In 1991, for example, 42 pesticides which had been banned, restricted or unregistered for use in the US, were available in the Pacific islands.

❑ Another suggestion, from the US observer, would exempt military and other aircraft and vessels run by governments from outside the region from adhering to the Waigani Convention. The Basel Convention does not impose such a double standard and neither should the Waigani Convention.

The Waigani Convention is critical to protecting the South Pacific region from damage by imports of hazardous waste. It also plays an essential role in closing off options for cheap disposal of hazardous waste by its generators.

PNG deserves congratulations for recognising the threat to this region and initiating action within the South Pacific Forum. The Forum deserves congratulations for taking up the challenge and keeping it moving.

It is now in the hands of the Forum working group to ensure the spirit and integrity of the Waigani Convention is defended in the home stretch of negotiations.

Noni Keys,
Greenpeace Pacific Campaigner,
Canberra,
Australia

Unsuitable coverage

Madam,

Your coverage (*PIM*, October, 1994) of an incident in which a circus elephant escaped from captivity and was ultimately killed was one of the most disgusting examples of sensational, cold-hearted journalism I have ever had the misfortune to read.

To start with, the manner in which your correspondent wrote this story – comparing the incident to the film *King Kong* – was despicable. *King Kong* was a movie, that is fiction; this was a real event in which two living creatures were killed. It was nothing more than a cheap shot by your correspondent to liken it to a Hollywood make-believe drama.

Secondly, both your correspondent's and your magazine's editorial ethics must be questioned considering the almost humorous tone that this article has been written in. Why describe a horrific incident like this as a "melee" when this mild word means little more than a "scuffle" ? There are several sentences which I found particularly offensive due to the writer's pathetic attempts to include humorous prose into the reporting of an event which was anything but funny. The last paragraph is one example of this.

Thirdly, I found it incomprehensible that you could publish an article like this in conjunction with a colour photo of an elephant who is in obvious physical and mental distress. Where is your magazine's sense of compassion towards both the deceased trainer and the dead elephant?

Having travelled in the Pacific for my work as an author with the international guide book publisher, *Lonely Planet*, I am well acquainted with the Pacific, its people and your magazine. It is, therefore, with deep dissatisfaction that I write this letter complaining about your coverage.

Surely, you could have served your readers better by covering the incident in a different light. Instead of making a joke out of it, why not pass on the message that it is no longer acceptable for animals to be kept in captivity, whether it be in zoos or circuses.

No doubt if you had lived life behind bars doing stupid circus tricks like Tyke, eventually you too would be driven to the extraordinary lengths that this great creature was to free itself.

Leanne Logan
Brisbane, QLD,
Australia

Letters to the Editor must include the writer's full name, address and telephone number.
All letters may be edited for purposes of clarity and space.
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PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Pope for peace

Pope John Paul pleaded on January 17 that peace should come to the rebel, Catholic island of Bougainville as he arrived in Papua New Guinea amid a security scare that was later largely dismissed by police.
Police in the South Pacific nation were placed on security alert two hours before John Paul's arrival when they discovered that two Iranian men had checked out of their hotel and could not be found.
Initial police concerns were that the two might be connected to an alleged assassination plot uncovered in Manila last week at the start of the Pope's four-nation Asia-Pacific tour.
As the Pope addressed a 30,000-strong crowd at Jacksons International Airport in the capital, Port Moresby, security officials considered having the Pope travel in a covered car instead of the open-air utility truck "Popemobile".
At the time, a secret-service officer at the airport told the media: "We are treating this very, very seriously."
Despite the security alert, Pope John Paul travelled in an uncovered vehicle along the 14 kilometres of potholed road into the city centre to celebrate an evening mass.
The two Iranians, one involved in the carpet industry and the other in mineral exploitation, flew from Manila in December, but security officials in Papua New Guinea were not notified of their presence in the country until today.
"It was just a routine computer scan in Papua New Guinea and these gentlemen's names appeared," said police Chief Superintendent Denis Samin. "You don't get many Iranians here."
"Immigration alerted us because of the problems in Manila. There was speculation that they may have been connected to the four in Manila, but we don't think so at this stage," he said.
At least two people were arrested in relation to an alleged Muslim extremist plot to kill the Pope in Manila and police there are still looking for another 20 suspects. Samin said police were asking newspapers and radio stations to ask the two Iranians to contact police to verify their bona fides.
Police tightened security for the remainder of the Papal three-day tour."
Addressing the Bougainville war, the Pope said, "If you bear arms unjustly, I urge you to put them down and seek reconciliation," as villagers who had trekked to the airport climbed trees and onto roofs to get a glimpse of the man they affectionately call "Papa Santu".
The Pope told the crowd that it was a "joy to return to this beautiful country". He last visited in 1984. The highlight of his three-day visit was the beatification of Peter Torot, a catechist killed by lethal injection in 1945 by occupying Japanese forces for refusing to deny his faith.
Pope John Paul offered encouragement for the people on Bougainville, 800 kms north-east of PNG, before blessing the cheering throng in their language. He asked them to remove any bitterness from their hearts.

Aviation peril

Papua New Guinea's Department of Civil Aviation has begun scaling down operations by withdrawing certain services to the aviation industry.
Acting Civil Aviation Secretary, Sam Gono, said the "progressive withdrawal" started on December 31, with the closing down of control towers in Madang, Wewak and Goroka towns. Tokua airport, which was being used as an emergency airport following the volcanic eruptions in Rabaul, has also been declared "uncontrolled space".
He said that the declaration means there would be no communication between the tower and aircraft to direct the traffic and pilots would make the decision on whether to land or fly out.
Mototе airport in Manus and Kavieng airport have been operating under similar circumstances.
The trimming of aviation services was decided by the DCA last month as a result of the shortage of funds and was being implemented in close consultation with the 30 operators in the aviation industry.

Bloody polls

Police said two people died and many were injured as violence erupted in many parts of the Western Highlands province during polling in the provincial government elections on January 9.
Police and health authorities said there was widespread fighting in many constituencies, the worst affected being Hagen Town, the Anglimp, and another constituency in the Dei district.
Police confirmed the death of two men, one from Kindeng and the other from Dei, who they said were killed during polling.
Police expect the death and injury toll to rise when the situation became clearer.
Election winners were expected to be announced on January 10 and police fearing the worst, were keeping a close watch on the Central Tally Room and Hagen Town itself.

Government takes over education

The Papua New Guinea government has decided to vest total control of the entire US$30 million education subsidy allocation to the Ministry of Education and Culture.
This means schools in Papua New Guinea will no longer be getting their education subsidy through provincial education authorities.
The result is the national Education Department will decide what schools need, buy the supplies, and have them delivered.
Education and Culture minister Joseph Ongugio has welcomed the new system, saying the change had been necessary because most schools had misused or redirected the money for "other purposes". He said tenders would be called soon for local companies to supply school materials. He said centralised tenders would reduce prices and stop a lot of abuses. Only PNG-owned stationery and delivery companies would be allowed to tender.

FIJI

Economic growth wins over Sunday ban

Fiji's controversial Sunday Observance Decree has been repealed. A government statement said Cabinet reached the decision after careful consideration of the views of the various communities in Fiji.

It said Cabinet considered the views and concerns of the Christian churches also important, and that these are covered by existing laws and by-laws regulating the operation of business premises on Sunday which are adequate to achieve the present level of observance of Sunday as a rest day and worship for others.

The Cabinet decided the situation had improved a great deal since the decree was promulgated in 1988 following the 1987 military coup in response to the national security needs of the time to continue it.

Cabinet also decided that with the repeal of the decree certain legislative measures now in place will have to be enforced with a lot more vigour. These include a tightening of the relevant Suva City by-laws covering the issuance of business licences, to ensure that only those activities permitted in the pre-1987 period are to be continued and continued ban on consumption of liquor in public places.

The decision was given an open arm welcome by everybody except the Methodist Church president, Reverend Manasa Lasaro who said that members of his church would "lay down their lives" and go to prison if need be to have the decision overturned.

Opposition to mass migration of Chinese

Opposition is growing in Fiji to a plan being considered by the government to accept thousands of immigrants from Hong Kong.

Government backbencher Ratu Inoke Kubuabola has warned against the social and political impact of having large numbers of immigrants moving into Fiji's rural areas.

Government is considering proposals by two Asian companies for tens of thousands of rich and skilled Chinese and other Asians to resettle in Fiji within the next two to four years.

The one proposal reportedly most attractive to the government is from Hong Kong-based Asian Oceanic Development Company. It suggests that 40,000 people, including spouses and children, of 2250 individuals be resettled in Fiji over two to four years. Each family would contribute US$100,000 to a pool which would be kept in a bank overseas and controlled by the company.

President of the capital, Suva's Retailer's Association, Himmat Lodhia, warned that Fiji's infrastructure could be inadequate, saying the government might be "opening up a whole Pandora's box of surprises" if it went ahead with the scheme.

Some prominent Fiji Chinese businessmen have also expressed concern about the proposal.

The proposal offer lucrative deals for the indigenous Fijians by way of financial gain. The proposals state that the government would gain US$2lion for its coffers and the Fijian provinces US$50 million for investment purposes.

FSM

Fishing worry

A recently released fisheries report lists several major concerns and criticisms about the fishing industry in the Federated States of Micronesia.

The Micronesian Maritime Authority report covering 1992-1993 flags the decline in skipjack catches since the record of almost one million tons set in 1991.

MMA says that some of the decline can be contributed to a reduction in the Japanese pole and longline fleet operating in Micronesia, but it raises the concern that the decline might be attributed to "too much effort on the stock".

Another major concern raised in the 38-page report is that increased purse seine catches of the past five years, in addition to the heavy longline effort in place in Micronesia, are having a negative impact on the longline catches.

A third issue raised was the uncertainties of the bigeye tuna catch by the surface fisheries and the impact on the longline catches.

The report states, "We know very little about the population dynamics and stock structure of bigeye tuna at this point. This is due to several factors, one being the lack of separation by species in catch reports for the surface fishery."

It criticised tagging reports provided by the South Pacific Commission, saying no attempt had been made to break down the data by area or time. Instead, the data is lumped together for a regional view.

Furthermore, tagging results are based almost entirely on purse seiners. Longline returns have been very few.

"The concern here is that longliners catch a higher percentage of medium to large fish and lack of these fish in the tagging analysis might be creating some bias on the overall results," the report stated.

The Korean purse seine fleet operating in FSM waters during this time frame also get tagged for criticism because its date quality did not show improvements, despite repeated requests by various nations.

VANUATU

Minister calls for firm policies

The President, Jean-Marie Leye, signed the turnout tax bill into law, effecting it on January 1, despite a request from some expatriate businessmen to delay the implementation of the new four percent tax.

Finance Minister Willie Jimmy called on the government to be firm in its decisions regarding policy matters.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, Maxime Carlot Korman, Jimmy said the government should not allow the small number of colonial expatriates in the country to manipulate government decisions.

Jimmy was referring to the letter which a group of businessmen had sent to Korman in December requesting a delay on the implementation of the new tax. Jimmy says the new system would prevent importers from cheating through under-valuation on imported products, as was the case in the past. Despite the letter, the President went-ahead and signed into law the tax bill.

Sea World's Trevor Long (left) and two other colleagues carry a dolphin to safety (left); Marine life experts carry dolphins across land to the safety of

Saving the dol

By Patrick Decloitre

Thirty-six dolphins were trapped in Port Vila's Erakor Lagoon between December 19 and January 5, before most of them were finally rescued by an emergency Australian-supervised operation. And worldwide news coverage of the event gave Vanuatu more publicity than it could ever have expected.

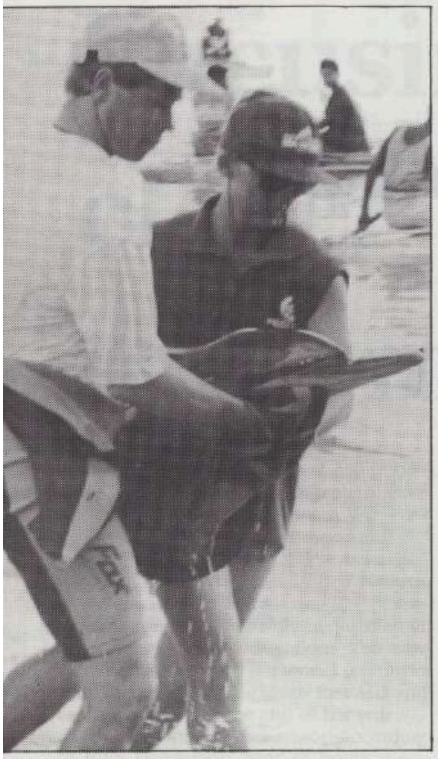
It all began like a well timed Christmas tale: in the early hours of December 19, a pod of dolphins was suddenly found at the entrance of Port Vila's calm lagoon. Soon the presence of the friendly mammals became a major attraction for the people of the island state's capital.

The dolphins seemed to have settled between tiny Erakor Island (where a resort is located) and the main island, Efate (where Port Vila is located).

Authorities first believed the dolphins had chosen the place to get shelter and to breed. Erakor Island resort manager Lynn Cowper said newborn dolphins were noticed among the group since Thursday, December 22.

Locals and Erakor villagers soon undertook to feeding the mammals with fish and bread and numerous locals and tourists began crossing over to the small island to enjoy the sight.

"Everyone's respecting them. We were told they might stay for a while and that they'll go when they're ready. I hope they stay. It's a beautiful sight to see them at night when the moon



ocean

hins

shines over the lagoon," Cowper said.

But earlier on, tourists and locals had tried to swim with the dolphins and approach them in their outrigger canoes.

"A lot of people came at first because they thought the dolphins were trapped," Cowper said. "They were banging paddles on the sides of the canoes to make the dolphins jump. Others would try to swim with them but the dolphins wouldn't come near."

Vanuatu Fisheries Department later advised people the dolphins were "gentle and harmless creatures" and no one was to frighten them because they are protected under Vanuatu laws.

But what tourists and locals saw as a sign of friendship from the dolphins soon turned into a nightmare for the mammals. It became more and more obvious that they had not really settled in Erakor lagoon of their own free will but that they were stranded there.

Marine experts from Sea World park in Australia's Gold Coast flew in at the request of Vanuatu authorities. They found the dolphins were starving because they could no longer come out of the lagoon; they could no longer rely on their natural sonar skills. "The dolphins normally use their natural sonar to navigate but the lagoon is so shallow and the entrance so narrow that they couldn't find their way out. We tried to herd them out by boat but they were frightened and wouldn't go," Trevor Long, Sea World's marine operations manager, explained. The mammals, therefore, couldn't find the fish they usually feed on.

On January 3, the scared mammals were becoming weaker by the hour. On the same day, one of the mammals died in the arms of a would-be rescuer after beaching itself and then refusing to eat proffered fish. Another newborn dolphin swam feebly to the beach near Erakor Resort where desperate efforts were made to save it, but in vain.

"It looks like we may be near the end," Long said at this stage.

The rescue team recalled its successful operation to free a trapped whale, nicknamed Willy, from Manning River at Taree (Australia) in 1993, in which Long and Peter Lynch, Sea World's senior animal behaviorist, were involved.

Long and Lynch were later joined by four other Sea World staff members. They had brought with them about 200 kilos of frozen fish, including tropical species caught off Queensland and favoured by these spinner dolphins, but the dolphins refused to eat this "dead" food.

The rescue was becoming urgent; most of the dolphins (mostly females and calves) would perish within the week, experts reckoned. It was on January 4, after two long weeks, that Sea World supervisors changed their strategy: two 350-metre long nets were flown in from Australia. They were to be used to circle the dolphins and bring them all together. Then, individually, each mammal would be carried through a small 25-metre piece of land on Erakor island to the ocean on the other side.

"The net was strung between two boats and the object was to herd them gently to the edge of the lagoon where they were grabbed and carried in blankets and beach towels from the lagoon across land and on to the sea," Cowper later explained.

Long had earlier pointed out dolphins were weakening because they were refusing the food brought to them. His team could not find the right kind of fish for them.

In the three days preceding the successful attempt, four dolphins had died of starvation and stress, a subsequent autopsy performed in Port Vila revealed.

Finally, on January 4 and 5, 32 dolphins were carried to safety to open waters by the rescue team.

"We had to keep mothers and babies together and at all times we had to keep the animals so that they could see and hear each other. There was to be no talk or chatter from anybody in the group (of rescuers)," Long explained.

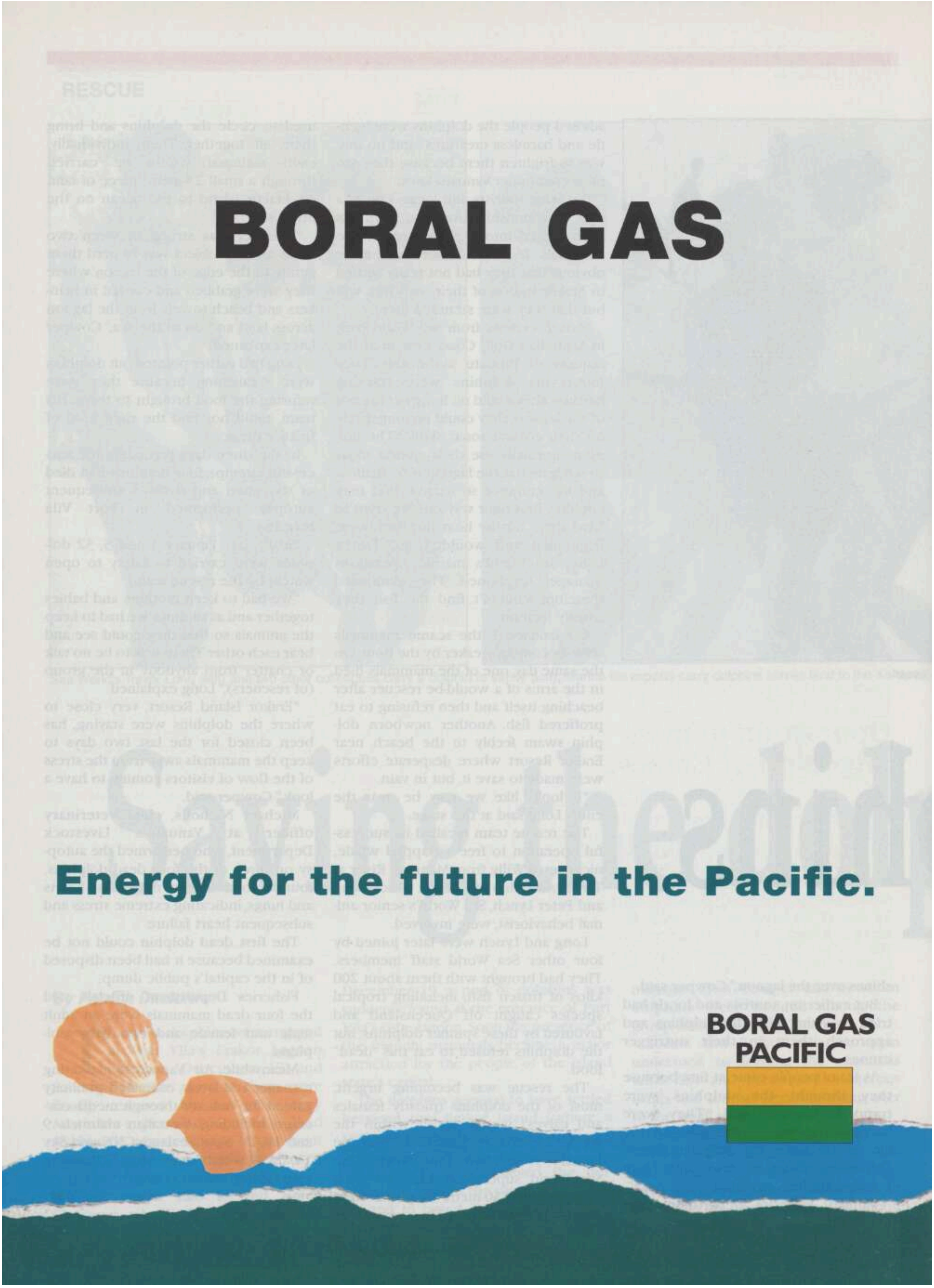
"Erakor Island Resort, very close to where the dolphins were staying, has been closed for the last two days to keep the mammals away from the stress of the flow of visitors coming to have a look," Cowper said.

Michael Nicholls, chief veterinary officer at Vanuatu's Livestock Department, who performed the autopsy on three of the four dead dolphins, found blood in the mammals' hearts and lungs, indicating extreme stress and subsequent heart failure.

The first dead dolphin could not be examined because it had been disposed of in the capital's public dump.

Fisheries Department officials said the four dead mammals were an adult male and female and two baby dolphins.

Meanwhile, Air Vanuatu's marketing manager, Ted Drew, estimated publicity gained for Vanuatu through media coverage, including Australian channels 9 and 10, TV New Zealand, CNN and Sky TV, was worth more than 50 million vatu (about US$0.5 million). ■


BORAL GAS
Energy for the future in the Pacific.
BORAL GAS
PACIFIC

OPINION

Focusing closer to home

From
DAVID BARBER
in Wellington

Why did New Zealand send 250 troops – the biggest military contingent to leave this country since the Vietnam War – to Bosnia on the other side of the world?

The official answer, of course, is to honour its obligations to the United Nations and the contribution to the UN peace-keeping force can certainly be justified in those terms. Those obligations also saw New Zealand military personnel serving in the Middle East, Africa, South East Asia and Central America at the end of last year.

But there was another reason, according to John Henderson, head of political science at the University of Canterbury: to gain favours with major allied powers.

And why is New Zealand doing that when it is a Pacific country and the end of the Cold War should have left it free to concentrate defence and foreign policy on its own regional interests?

Foreign policy is not a major topic of debate in New Zealand, involvement in the Vietnam War and the country's anti-nuclear stance being the only issues in that area to have stirred public conscience in recent times.

So Henderson's provocative comments, in a December speech to an international relations conference in Wellington, did not get a lot of publicity. It was not the stuff on which prime time television ratings are built.

But it raised an issue that is worthy of debate and one that may well be fired in the new political environment of proportional representation that is bound to produce coalition governments and the need for consensus politics in the future. For outside of the ruling National Party there is little enthusiasm for foreign affairs – the focus of all the opposition parties is very much closer to home.

Henderson's theme is simple: the Pacific island region is the one part of the world where what New Zealand does or does not do actually makes a difference. "In no other region is New Zealand's action or inaction likely to significantly affect the outcome of events," he said.

With the Cold War over, New Zealand need no longer feel in jeopardy because of its isolation and should be taking advantage of the freedom to pursue a more independent and regional foreign policy.

Henderson, it should be pointed out, is biased. He was head of Prime Minister David Lange's department when the anti-nuclear policy was produced in the mid-1980s. And he later chaired the South Pacific Review Group which made a persuasive case for a regional foreign policy in its 1990 report, Towards a Pacific Island Community.

But that does not make his ideas any less worthy of consideration. He rejects the claims of critics that a regionally-focused foreign policy reflects the views of "little New Zealanders", saying it would provide a firm base on which to pursue wider interests and points out that concentrating on the security of a region covering nearly 20 percent of the globe is hardly isolationist.

In his speech, Henderson argued it was important to New Zealand's national identity to recognise the geographic reality that it is a Pacific island nation. It is also increasingly a Polynesian country and it retains constitutional links with the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau.

These three points, he said, gave New Zealand a distinct relationship with the Pacific island region not shared by Australia, which has priority security preoccupations with South East Asia and the Indian Ocean.

New Zealand's more relaxed relationship with Asian countries, especially Indonesia, enabled it to serve as a bridge between the island states and Asia. "This would be in accord with the growing tendency of the Pacific island countries to look north to Asia, rather than their traditional southern friends of Australia and New Zealand."

While the region faced no direct external threat, potential threats to peace and security were internal, Henderson said.

He welcomed the Pacific island peace-keeping force that was established on Bougainville – short-lived as it was – as an example of what co-operation among the island states, together with New Zealand and Australia, can achieve.

But he noted it took considerable time to get the peace force together and said there was a need for contingency planning with the island governments earmarking and training sections of their forces for regional development.

A bigger New Zealand commitment to Bougainville – like the size of the force sent to Bosnia – might, he said, have helped promote a different outcome.

That is a questionable thesis given the New Zealand and Australian governments' anxiety for the peace-keeping force to be seen as a Pacific island body, not dominated by two white powers.

Henderson noted the dilemma New Zealand and Australia could face if, for instance, the Tongan government requested military assistance following a pro-democracy riot. Not to respond would appear to be letting down a friendly government – responding would appear to be suppressing the evolution of democratic government.

Similar no-win situations could arise in New Caledonia, East Timor and Irian Jaya or from further military coups in the region.

New Zealand and Australia should be guided by the Forum states in any action in the region, he said. Meanwhile, it was important the island nations develop and maintain the capability and will to resolve their own problems. "Not to do so is to invite other larger outside powers to intervene."

And that is food for thought for all of us. ■

Pacific islands monthly : PIM.

Colo
A New Year —

COLONIAL FIJI RESTRUCTURES

Colonial Fiji restructures in 1995 to serve its customers better.

Seasons greetings from the Colonial Mutual Board of Directors.

Message from Dr Isoa Bakani Chairman of The Board

Colonial Mutual acknowledges the importance of continuous improvement for its future survival and prosperity.

Organisations need to change to meet the changing needs of customers and take advantage of opportunities available in the market place.

Colonial Mutual has come a long way and has established itself in Fiji's financial community.

In recent years, consumer sophistication and pressure to maintain a competitive edge demand a continual review of the way we do things.

The review of Colonial Fiji's organisation structure marks the "cultural change" the organisation is undergoing to improve growth focusing on Customers.

Other significant changes are planned for 1995 including the completion of Colonial's computerised programme, new products and service innovation and the rationalisation of our cost structure for improved profitability.

The changes also affect Blue Shield, the leader in Fiji's Health Insurance Industry.

The Directors and I have confidence in Management and Staff.

The changes implemented will benefit customers and strengthen Colonial's growth in the coming years.

TQC COLONIAL'S FUTURE

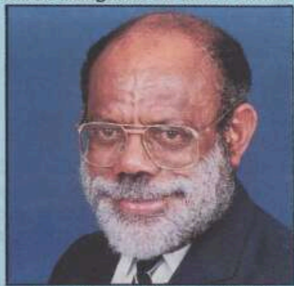
Colonial adopted **Total Quality Management** in 1992 and labelled it **Total Quality Culture or TQC.**

Colonial helped form the Pacific Quality Foundation in early 1993 with membership from major organisations in Fiji, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

Colonial's General Manager for Fiji **Mr. Tomasi Vuetilovoni** chairs the foundation.

Employees continuously improve current processes and are empowered to implement changes. Colonial remuneration practice is based on performance.

Seasons Greetings and a happy new year to you all from the management and staff of Colonial Fiji.



Message from Mr Tomasi Vuetilovoni General Manager for Fiji

We at Colonial greet — 1995 with optimism and greater commitment in response to the dynamic market trends and consumer demands.

Our aim is to continue to be the leading life, health and medical insurance provider for the welfare of our valued customers.

Colonial greets 1995 with the achievement of one of its strategic objectives, the repositioning of processes and human resources around customer needs.

1995 will be a year of strategic challenge.

We will continue with our human resource retraining and development programme. Our new information systems will be in operation early this year and will provide timely service to our customers.

We look forward to a challenging and successful new year.

COLONIAL GROUP LEADS CHANGES

Colonial steers its Group towards the dynamic global business environment focussing on the group's strength, security and long term growth to satisfy policyholders, employees and other stakeholders.

Throughout, Colonial Group has initiated these changes by streamlining its operations, cost, developing specialised human resources, improving its information systems and investing in technology to cope with the changes and offer quality services to its customers.

Colonial Group is diversifying its portfolio and will demutualise in the near future moving into financial products and services and other profitable business opportunities.

The recent acquisition of the State Bank of New South Wales marks a forward step into the banking industry.

COLONIAL FIJI FOLLOWS SUIT

Colonial Mutual Fiji is also heading towards the same direction with the Group and will spread its portfolio through investment in its human resources, technology, product variation and offer financial services to consumers.

This new wave of change is designed to increase the value of the company, optimise returns to customers and provide quality services.

To be effective, Colonial Fiji recognises that human resources need to be well trained and developed. Colonial pioneered Total Quality Management (TQM) in Fiji and implemented the concept internally in 1992.

3 years down the line, Colonial is beginning to reap the benefits of TQM. Employees are more involved with improving processes to achieve efficiency.

The dynamics of the changing market and consumer needs has prompted the repositioning of Colonial Fiji in 1995 towards quality customer services.

From the 1st of January 1995 Colonial Fiji has established 6 overall divisions to accommodate the 23 internal sections.

The restructuring places the customer as the focal point. The sections and divisions are re-arranged around customer needs.

Colonial's six divisions are Corporate Services, Life and Marketing, Finance, Asset Management, Information Services and Blue Shield.

The **Corporate Services** division is directly under Colonial's **General Manager for Fiji Mr. Tomasi Vuetilovoni.**

Section heads are Personnel Manager: **Stanley Nagatalevu,** Executive Secretary: **Fanny Tam,** and Total Quality Culture coordinator: **Annie Foster.**

Sialeni Vuetaki has been appointed the **new Life and Marketing Operations Manager for Colonial.**

He was formerly the head of Blue Shield. This division incorporates sales and marketing operations for Colonial and Blue Shield and new business, assessment and customers for Colonial in one process.

Reporting to Mr. Vuetaki are Sales Operations Manager **Peter Hughes,** Sales Operations Blue Shield **Ambika Nand,** New Business and the **new** Customer Services Manager **Joape Kuinikoro,** new Marketing Manager **Leba Tikoduadua** and Customer Services Project Manager **Peni Qarau.**

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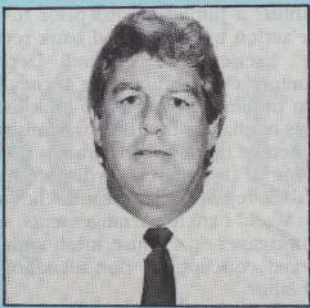
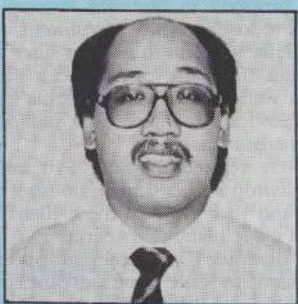


David Robertson is the Asset Management Manager. Sections are Properties headed by **Isiromi Bayameyame,** Investment **Rajindar Singh,** Support Services **Rajeshwar Singh, new** Product Development Promotion & Services Manager **Mahen Narotam** and Asset Management handled by the Asset Management Manager.

Malakai Naiyaga is Colonial's Finance Manager. Malakai's 6 departments are Accounting headed by the Accounting Manager **Asok Swami,** Corporate Management **Vueti Maraiwai,** Fleet and Remuneration — **George Thomas** and Supplies — **Alice Hefferman.**



Alex Ah Jack is the Information Services Manager.

Alex is responsible for Information Technology operations, Research & Technology operations, Business Analysis and Communications. His section is currently developing a database programme which will provide on-line information access and will assist a great deal with customer information services.

Rosemarie Mercado-David is the new Blue Shield Manager replacing Sialeni Vuetaki. Rosemarie's sections and heads of departments are New Business and Sales, Customer Services **Wilson Tokaora** and the **new** Administration/Accounting head **Unise Cawaru.**

Leba Tikoduadua
Marketing Manager

Unise Cawaru
Blue Shield's A/C's and Administration

Standing: L to R — Margaret Sadal (Sales), Atelina Muavono (Customer Accounts), Rosemarie Mercado-David (Blue Shied Manager), Leba Tikoduadua, Viki Tuxson (Customer Services). (Absent): Rajinder Singh (Investment)

Sitting: L to R — Roshni Lakhan (Information Services), Unise Cawaru (Blue Shield's Accounts & Administration), Swaran Rao (Accounts) Iva Codrokadroka (Marketing).

Absent: Alice Hefferman (Supplies), Fanny Tam (Executive Secretary, Martha Katoanga (Special Projects), Doris Domonatani (Underwriting), Anne Foster (TQC Co-ordinator).

COLONIAL PROMOTES WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT

COLONIAL PROMOTES WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT

Colonial Mutual values the contribution of women working in the Society and places 15 middle and senior management women within its new organisation structure.

The women's professions range from customers services to accounting, administration, underwritng, sales marketing and investment.

Managerial positions taken by women on repositioning are Blue Shields Accounts/ Administration **Unise Cawaru,** Divisional Head for Blue Shields Manager **Rosemarie Mercado-David** and Marketing Manager for Colonial **Leba Tikoduadua.**

Colonial fully supports the employment and development of women in management. Colonial employs about 50% women in its workforce.

Viki Tuxson, Vijay Prasad, Mosese Taga.

CUSTOMERS COME FIRST.

To provide better services to its customers, Colonial has appointed key knowledge people to its customer services area.

Viki Tuxson, Mosese Taga and Vijay Prasad are well known industry figures who will provide specific information and answer general inquiries.

The service representatives will be assisted by experienced clerks who in turn will rely on our new information system Consolidated Life Administration System (CLAS).

This is the one "stop-shop" concept where customers and consumers are served by the Customer Services department.

1995 will be spent on developing and completing this concept so that all clients are ably assisted by the Customer Services Department.

WITH COLONIAL MUTUAL

The banking dilemma

By David North

The president of the Chamber of Commerce and local bankers are mates, right?

They all want to boost business, lower taxes, and, when need be, fight off the labour unions. If they have any differences, they settle them quietly, right?

Wrong. That's not the way it is in American Samoa. Prominent businessman George Wray, president of the local Chamber of Commerce, is waging a very public war with the Bank of Hawaii.

Wray, once owner of the now inoperative South Pacific International Airways, is upset by what he regards as the shabby treatment of American Samoans by the big Honolulu-based financial institution.

Wray's complaint is that BoH happily takes deposits from the Samoans, but rarely makes loans to them, preferring to export the deposits to the much more prosperous Hawaiian islands, where it has an active lending business. Wray, more confrontational than some of his colleagues on the chamber's board of directors, persuaded a number of them to co-sign his letter to the bank. The exchange was printed in full and at great length in the *Samoa News*.

Using an approach more like that of an investigative reporter than a chamber official, Wray wrote:

"Consider the situation of a young man, 24 years old, five years on a job, who wants $3000 to build an inside bathroom for his family. Everywhere else in the Bank of Hawaii community he would have grown up exposed to the availability of BoH's home improvement loan offerings everyday in newspapers, magazines and TV.

"But not in American Samoa ... He would not have experienced a single marketing effort of any kind by the Bank of Hawaii to communicate ... that the Bank of Hawaii makes home improvement loans, or any loans.

"Consider that this young man had heard by word of mouth that BoH can make a home improvement loan. He goes to the bank's office in Pago Pago. He opens the door and is faced with a large lobby and an airline-counter array of teller windows. There is no sign anywhere that the bank makes loans. There is no indication of where he is to go, to whom he is to see about a loan ...

"The young man has to be lucky enough to find someone to tell him to go outside the bank building and ascend the outside steps to a second-storey mall area where the bank has a small office for loans."

Wray then went on to contrast the obscurity of the bank's loan operation in Samoa with its heavily promoted lending activities in the Hawaiian islands. "There appears to be a mind set ... that the bank somehow does not have to accommodate and treat the people here like a regular community served by the bank in Hawaii and other areas."

The bank, of course, disagreed and pointed out it does have a lending programme for homeowners and argued its ability to make loans to individuals in Samoa was hampered by massive loans it has made to the perpetually broke territorial government.

Wray, a lawyer, was tangling with another lawyer, Joseph T. Kiefer, vice-president and general counsel for the bank. The two had apparently met decades earlier. From the correspondence it was clear both were trying to establish a public record prior to further action by a mainland bank regulatory agency, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. That agency had been requested by Wray to look into a series of charges that BoH was mistreating people in American Samoa.

One of the matters in dispute has a broader, regional significance: how do First World banking arrangements, such as mortgages on a house, mesh with traditional concepts of non-alienation of that land?

In American Samoa, as in some other islands, families are prohibited from selling their land to outsiders. This is a problem, according to the bank. How will it foreclose on a house for non-payment of the loan if it is barred by law from owning land under the house?

In most First World countries this is no problem – if the loan is not paid ultimately the bank goes to court, secures a ruling and takes over the house which it usually sells to someone else.

The bank's lawyer, Kiefer, raised this issue, saying, "We believe that there is a very rational basis to conclude that members of the family of the borrower would be the only potential purchasers at any foreclosure sale. This is not a situation which would give any lender comfort, that a foreclosure of a mortgage might ultimately lead to insufficient funds to repay its debt."

What he did not add is that a mainland banker might suspect the family would close ranks and make no bids on the property in question, forcing the bank to lose its entire investment.

Kiefer went on to say that since BoH bought the Bank of American Samoa from Wells Fargo (the California bank) in 1969, it has made $10 million in mortgage loans.

Wray replied that the $10 million was a drop in the Samoan housing market, and that most of these loans had been made many years earlier.

When the FIDC examiners appear on the scene to settle these and other questions they will be facing some issues, such as the matter of land tenure, which will be new to them.

It will be interesting to see if the feds side with the bank or with the angry Chamber of Commerce. ■

Seven strategies for success

American Samoa's fish canneries have continued to remain reasonably prosperous despite growing competition. ***David North*** *examines their strategies and what they tell us about the industry*

Samoa Packing, the biggest tuna processing operation in the islands, has quietly changed ownership. The secrecy covering this corporate manoeuvre is typical of the industry.

The firm ships an estimated $150 million worth of canned product, mostly tuna, every year from its large plant on the shores of Pago Pago Bay. Only H.J. Heinz's StarKist Cannery, also on the bay, is larger (with an estimated production of $200 million).

Samoa Packing is the only factory owned by Van Camp Seafood company of San Diego, California. Van Camp used to be owned, in turn, by St Louis-based Ralston Purina Corporation, a US food giant. In 1988 Van Camp was sold to P.T. Mantrust, a major conglomerate in Indonesia.

At this point in the story a shroud of obscurity falls over the Van Camp operation. It is, according to Van Camp officials in San Diego, a privately owned US corporation based in that city.

One of them acknowledged that the huge Prudential Insurance Company, of Newark, New Jersey, had taken over the firm a couple of years earlier.

In Pago Pago Van Camp not only packs the tuna, which is largely harvested in the western Pacific (often in the EEZs of Papua New Guinea and Federated States of Micronesia) by US owned tuna boats, its also packs smaller quantities of salmon caught in the cold waters of north Pacific. It buys other types of seafood from other canners and it also buys tuna from non-US tuna boats.

Van Camp, like StarKist, formerly packed yellowfin tuna caught in the eastern tropical Pacific. But catching these fish caused a major controversy with mainland environmentalists. The yellowfin usually feed in waters immediately under schools of dolphin. Catching these tuna with the huge nets used by purse seiners often snared and killed dolphins.

Public outcry against the killing of dolphins, despite industry attempts to employ techniques that would release the dolphins, led it to reluctantly move to western Pacific to harvest skipjack.

It is canned tuna that dominates the economy of American Samoa. About 40 percent of the workforce are employed in the two canneries (another 40 percent works for the over-staffed American Samoan government).

But although the Pago Pago canneries are humming at the 'moment, and the American canned tuna industry is robust, the industry faces major and growing competition from foreign fish-packers.

How has the industry managed, despite flat sales and growing competition, to remain reasonably prosperous? Like an old warrior chief, who is aging but still wily and powerful, the industry has made some important allies and has used a number of different systems to stay on top of the heap.

These largely defensive strategies bear examination, not only for what they tell us about tuna packing, but about any mature island-based industry selling to the First World.

There appear to be seven strategies: keep the product attractive; keep it inexpensive; keep taxes low; keep wages low; play the tariff game; stay in touch with mainland environmentalists and diplomats; and keep as many secrets as you can.

Keep the product attractive. The canneries and the tuna boats have taken strong steps to keep the product attractive, through vigorous quality control. For example, a fish that has been cut in the process of seining, if identified, is sorted out of the packing process on the grounds that it will absorb too much brine used for freezing fish in tuna boats, and thus taste salty (which tuna routinely does not). This is also the reason one uses fresh water to wash fish. The use of salt water would add a saline taste to the canned product.

Similarly, some of the canners have changed the design of the small (3 oz) cans of tuna sold to be packed in lunch boxes. Since these will be opened away from home (and away from can openers) they are now equipped with pull tops that can be opened by hand.

Keep it inexpensive. In order to keep consumers from wandering off in the direction of alternate products, such as turkey, and to keep foreign competitors at bay, the industry has made a point of keeping prices low (while not threatening profits). The cutback in advertising budgets and the low-wage and low-tax strategies described below, all fit into this category.

Another part of the picture is the canneries' investment in more efficient technology. The 200-plus-feet purse-seiners, many of them large enough to carry a helicopter, have so much labour-saving equipment on board that they go to sea with a complement of only 18 men.

StarKist has recently announced that, in addition, it is equipping some of the helicopters with a "fish-eye" - a sophisticated device which can measure the temperature of the sea (apparently without touching it) and give the purse-seiner's navigator key information on where the tuna are congregating.

Keep taxes low. Like the wily chief who pays as little tribute as he can manage, the American tuna industry goes to great lengths to avoid paying taxes. While there is relatively little industry can do about mainland tax levels, it has played a remarkably effective role in limiting and nearly eliminating taxes that might be paid to American Samoa.

The threat, of course, is the tuna factories will leave behind their extensive holdings in Samoa, desert their workers and move their activities to a lower-wage location elsewhere in the Pacific. The threat has done wonders with American Samoan politicians, governors and legislators. No politician wants to eliminate 4400 jobs - or even run against an opponent who accuses him of risking such an outcome.

As a result, according to Samoa's member of the US House of Representatives, Eni F.H. Faleomavaega, the tuna canneries pay virtually nothing in taxes. He suggested during the last election campaign that the least the companies could do would be to pay about $6 million, between them, for medical costs.

> *The threat that the tuna factories will leave behind their extensive holdings in Samoa, desert their workers and move their activities to a lower-wage location has done wonders with American Samoan politicians.*

Currently they provide no medical insurance for their workers. When workers and their family members are sick they go to the island's public hospital where they usually pay nothing for treatment. It is unlikely the local legislature, the Fono, will have the courage to take Faleomavaega's suggestion.

Gus Hanneman, subsequently defeated for re-election to the Samoan House of Representatives, had suggested during his campaign that each can of tuna leaving the harbour be taxed two cents. This would produce about $7 million in taxes, he had said. Nothing happened to that proposal either.

In fact, the whole issue of cannery taxation has been largely obliterated by a series of 10-year tax holidays which have been quietly negotiated with governors Coleman and Lutali over the years. These holidays handle some of the canneries' tax obligations, but not all of them. When taxes for the Samoan government are not eliminated, they are delayed, amid dispute and more negotiations which are not public.

A vignette on the canneries' tax-paying habits could be gleaned from the *Samoa News* (October 5, 1994). The lead was about another cliff-hanging story of government finances - the government had just barely met the deadline to pay $1.3 million on a bond issue. The story concluded: "The task (meeting the payment) was made easier this year because StarKist Samoa reached a final settlement with ASG on the Tax Office's audit of the company's 1986-1990 tax returns. Part of the final settlement includes a payment to the Tax Office. The amount of the settlement is confidential and cannot be legally disclosed by either side."

So, whatever StarKist paid, three things are clear: the company paid something less than $1.3 million, what it paid it had owed for four to eight years, and how much it paid was clearly not the kind of information to be shared with Samoan taxpayers.

Keep wages low. The tuna canneries have followed a three-part strategy to keep their wages low. They use foreign workers, break up union-organising attempts and play the US minimum wage system.

Using foreign workers, from Western Samoa, is a basic part of the strategy. Western Samoans, though of the same ethnic group (and sometimes the same extended family) as American Samoans, cannot become citizens of American Samoa and cannot vote in ASG elections and, therefore, have no ability to influence the governor or the Fono.

The industry has from time to time been challenged by union organisers arriving from the mainland, usually from the big and controversial Teamsters Union. The plants always manage to get both the governor and the traditional leaders to rally around to fight the union. (Neither the chiefs nor the governors want to see a new and powerful organisation created that might complicate their lives.)

With the island establishment solidly against the union, and with little continuing local support for it, the union always loses.

Meanwhile, every two years, under mainland law, a system is set in motion to review the perennial request of America Samoa for a minimum wage under the mainland level of $4.25 an hour.

Six people are chosen to set the wages: two from industry, two from labour and two from the public. One of the public members is appointed by the US Secretary of Labor and one by the governor. Since it takes four votes to make a decision, and since the governor's representative always sides with the companies, the tuna factories, in effect, set their own minimum wages.

The last time around the wage was set at $2.97 an hour. In June or July there will be another round of wage-setting.

Play the tariff game. The tuna companies came to American Samoa for one reason – it was the lowest wage location under the American flag and thus behind US tariff walls. These walls, however, are not terribly high and may be crumbling.

As is usually the case with trade barriers, the significance is in the details and the details are complicated.

Tuna packed in oil has a high tariff (35 percent of its value) and very little foreign-packed tuna in oil arrives in the US as a result. Unfortunately for the industry, it thought tuna in oil was more important than tuna in water and agreed to the current set of rates many years ago when the spring-water pack was less popular than it is now.

Tuna packed in water has two levels of tariffs: 12 percent most of the year and six percent of the value on January 1. This is how it works, not how the law is written.

The law says that 20 percent of the previous year's domestic consumption of tuna can be admitted with a six-percent duty rate, but above that quota, duty is levied at 12 percent.

The US Congress recently ratified the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs, but that document left fish tariffs in place to the relief of tuna packers. They are much more worried about the North American Free Trade Agreement which covers exports from Canada and Mexico.

The Mexico tuna industry is the problem. It has ships working tuna and has even mounted some efforts to avoid killing dolphins. It has tuna packing plants, all of which are much closer to the mainland than those in Samoa and its wage scale is lower than Pago Pago's. Further, NAFTA will, over the next 15 years, reduce the existing tariffs by one-fifteenth a year.

NAFTA also has a complex set of provisions that discourages the US from enforcing legislation, like the "dolphin-safe" provision in the Marine Mammal Act, that might be viewed as inhibiting free trade between US and Mexico.

At the moment Mexico is not pressing the issue and is not seeking to either comply completely with US "dolphin-safe" requirements nor is it seeking to over-rule the Marine Mammal Act. But should the Mexican industry take either of these courses, the US tuna industry might be in trouble.

Stay in touch with environmentalists and diplomats. Just as the wily aging chief has to maintain alliances with external powers, so does the industry. Although it does not talk much about the very real sacrifices it made to end the dolphin controversy, it clearly won friends in environmental movements and created a set of allies who may be useful in the future.

The time may come when Mexico wants to enter the US canned tuna market and when the "dolphin-safe" issue may be the only real barrier to the shipment of tuna from Mexico. The tuna industry will then need allies among the dolphin lovers.

Further, although the industry does not regard the $12 million a year paid by the US State Department to island governments for fishing rights as a subsidy to it, it welcomes the peace that has followed the negotiation of the tuna treaty. In earlier years tuna boats would be found in the islands' EEZs and were sometimes captured by island police forces. Solomon Islands and Kiribati levied substantial fines on boat owners before releasing the vessels. The diplomats who handle the tuna treaty are important allies of the industry.

Keep it a secret. While it may not be good for the broader public, tuna canneries have clearly benefited from their policies of secrecy. No one knows how much taxes they pay, how large their profits are or, in the case of Samoa Packing, who owns the company.

A couple of years ago this policy of secrecy was preserved through the unlikely intervention of the Big Daddy of US Senate liberals, Senator Teddy Kennedy. Through some legislative accident the law that once applied to Puerto Rico about the minimum wage had been extended to American Samoa. It said corporations, like the tuna canneries, seeking lower than normal minimum wages had to open their books for public inspection. This had been the case for years in Puerto Rico and had not caused problems.

The tuna industry, however, was furious and mounted a major lobbying effort – threatening to open up the whole question of the recently enacted minimum wage on the mainland if its secrecy could not be preserved. Kennedy did not want to revisit and defend the then new minimum wage, and so he and the rest of the Senate and House Democrats quietly caved. A small bill drafted by the industry moved through both houses of Congress and the canneries won yet another round for secrecy. ■

The paycheques of CEOs

No matter what the exact relationship between Samoa Packing and Prudential Insurance, one thing is clear: Pru's chief executive officer has a more modest remuneration package than Tony O'Reilly, CEO of Heinz which owns American Samoa's Starkist operation.

A couple of years ago O'Reilly had a particularly good year, drawing $75,084,622 in various forms of compensation (salary, bonuses, fringes and stock options). To provide a frame of reference, it was more than twice the entire gross national product of Kiribati in a recent year.

In contrast, in the last year for which we have data, 1993, Prudential's since-retired CEO, Robert Cushing Winters, pulled down only $2,290,000 in salary and bonuses.

Winters thus earned considerably less that year than the payroll of the Samoa Packing plant (which we estimate at about $12,000,000). The figure assumes a $3.00 average hourly wage, a 2000-hour work year and employment of 2000 people.

O'Reilly, on the other hand, in his $75,000,000 year, earned five times as much as the 2400 workers at StarKist, whose earnings we estimate in the $14,000,000 – $15,000,000 range.

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Phasing out the pineapple

Tourist resorts are replacing Hawaii's pineapple plantations as Dole turns its attention to the tourism market.

Uncle Sol Kaupuiki stretches his arm in front of the expanse of dry brush and orange clay.

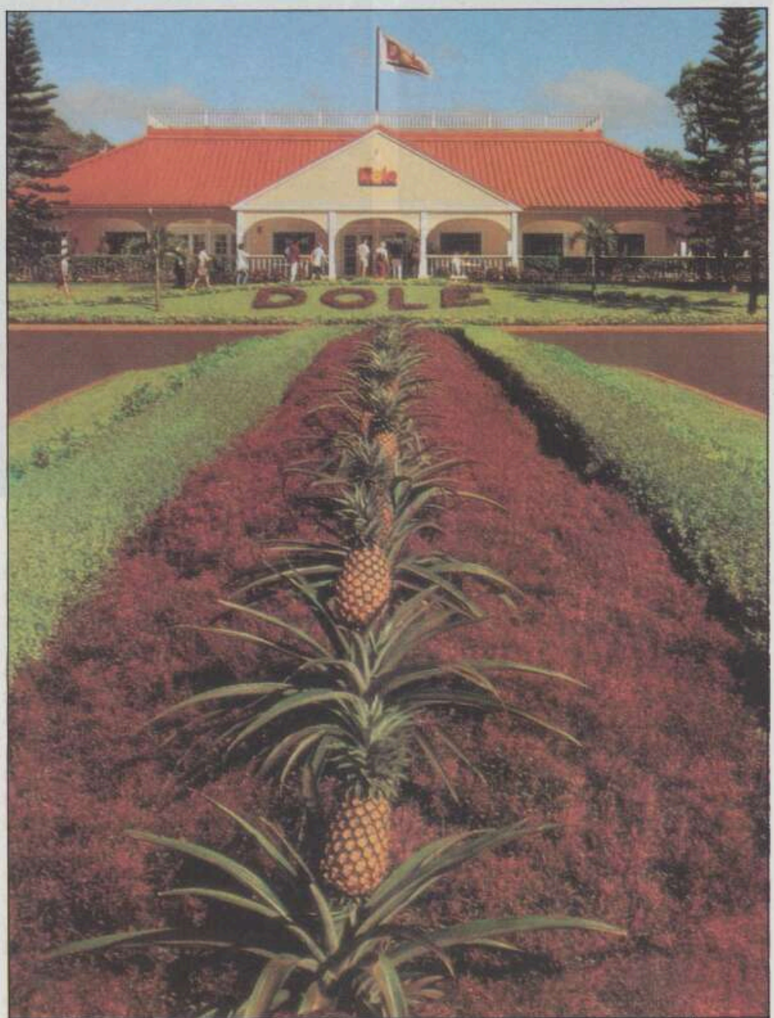
"All of this used to be pineapple," he says, a proud smile on his brown crinkled face.

An oblong oasis of perfect green grass appears in the middle of the neglected fields. That, says Kaupuiki, is the 18th hole of the Manele Bay Golf Course. The barren land and manicured greens represent the past and future of Lanai, a tiny Hawaiian island just a 30-minute plane ride from Honolulu.

Hundreds of Lanaians who spent hot days bending over spiny pineapple plants now work in the air-conditioned comfort of two luxury resorts.

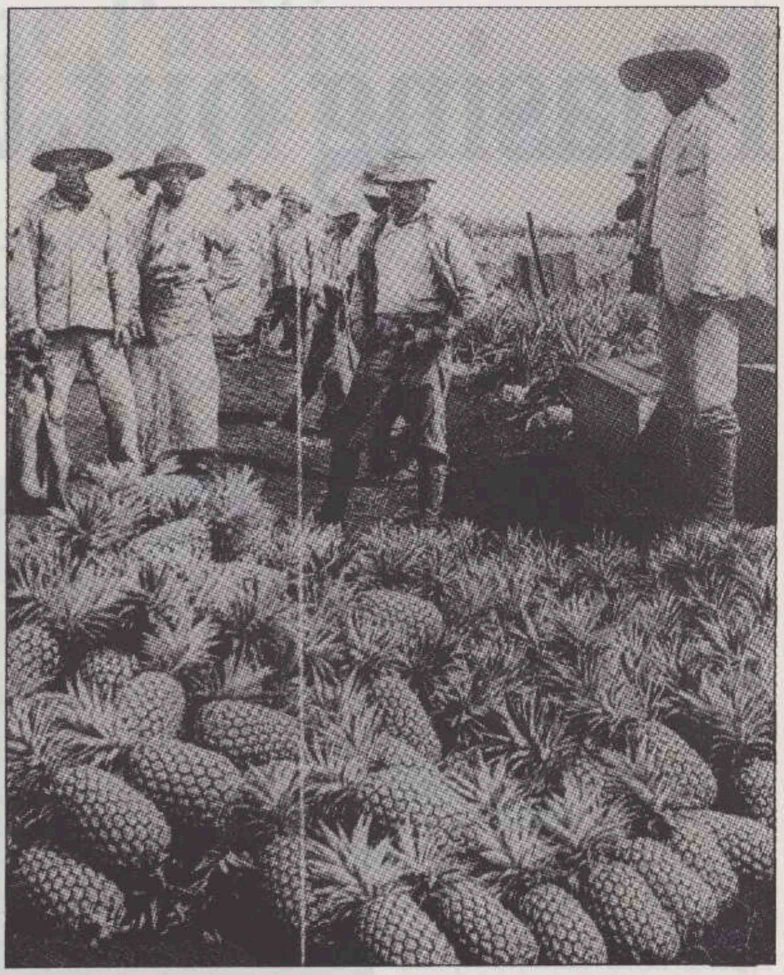
In 1990, the Dole Food Co., which owns 98 percent of the 360 sq-km island, announced it would phase out its pineapple crop to enter Hawaii's tourism market with the resorts.

Lanai, named "Pineapple Island" in the days when as many as 5700 hectares of land blossomed with the fruit, had its crop reduced to 40 hectares surrounding the airport. At the time, 90 percent of the island's



Dole plantation in Hawaii: also a popular tourist attraction

The way it was: a look back at Dole during its heyday as leading pineapple plantation owner and cannery.



jobs were linked to pineapple. In April 1990, the elegantly rustic The Lodge at Koele opened amid the whistling pines of Lanai's cool highlands. A few months later, the slick Manele Bay Resort opened on the coast, overlooking one of Hawaii's most beautiful beaches. Both were accompanied by championship golf courses.

For the first time, residents had to share their roads with rental cars, their beaches with tourists and their jobs with outsiders.

The company said all pineapple workers, mostly first – and second – generation Filipinos brought to Hawaii to work in the fields, would be considered for jobs without losing their pensions and health benefits. But the workers, some with Dole for 20 years and more, would have no seniority in the hotels which are managed mostly by newcomers to the close-knit community.

The changes this transition made to the island and its 2500 residents are seen in various faces and places around Lanai.

Butch Gima points to the cars passing as he stops at one of the community's few stop signs. Traffic lights are nonexistent.

"I had to wait for six or seven cars the other day! Before the hotels, you never had to wait for more than two or three," he said.

But Gima said he wishes such minor inconveniences were the only problems he had to deal with as Lanai's lone social worker.

The new industry, he said, has ushered in new social problems, such as increases in divorce, family violence, depression, crime and alcohol and illegal drug use.

Father Bob Schwarzhaupt has lived on the island for five years and ministers to more than half its population through his Sacred Heart Church.

"Sunday is no longer the family day at Church. It's the day they work," he said. "At Christmas, half of my congregation is working."

Schwarzhaupt said he has witnessed spiritual and emotional changes in his congregation since the hotels took over.

Plantation workers once gained spiritual satisfaction from working closely with the land and growing "the sweetest pineapple in the world," Schwarzhaupt said. "They were proud of what they did," he said. "Now, they're janitors and bartenders."

Kurt Matsumoto, the general manager of The Lodge, remembers the summers he spent in the fields growing up on Lanai. Pineapple-picking is

performed in gangs of 15 or 16 workers who stay together for years in a kind of second family, Matsumoto said. But in the hotels, these workers now usually operate alone.

"One of the most popular departments to work in is the laundry because they still have that group atmosphere," Matsumoto said. "They work together. They all break at the same time, start at the same time, so people like it in there."

Matsumoto said the least favourite jobs are those with a lot of personal contact such as in restaurants, despite the high earning potential from tips.

The face-to-face contact with tourists is uncomfortable for some Lanaians who grew up in a community where everyone knew everyone else.

The new mix of people is most evident on the roads, where passing someone formerly meant a smile and a wave, said Kaupuiki, an island resident for most of his 73 years.

Today, he sees few waves and has almost been run off narrow roads by visitors unfamiliar with the custom of pulling aside to let a car pass.

Still, Kaupuiki said he knows the situation could be worse, since other pineapple and sugar plantation closures have stranded thousands of people around the state. "People on this island are proud," he said. "They want the jobs."

Matsumoto acknowledged the transition has not been totally smooth, but he too sees the brighter side now that the hotels are in place.

"At least we're talking about a future," he said. "At least we're talking about something we can work toward.

"Despite some of the difficulties, I think we are fortunate to have what we'll have. The alternative picture is pretty bleak." ■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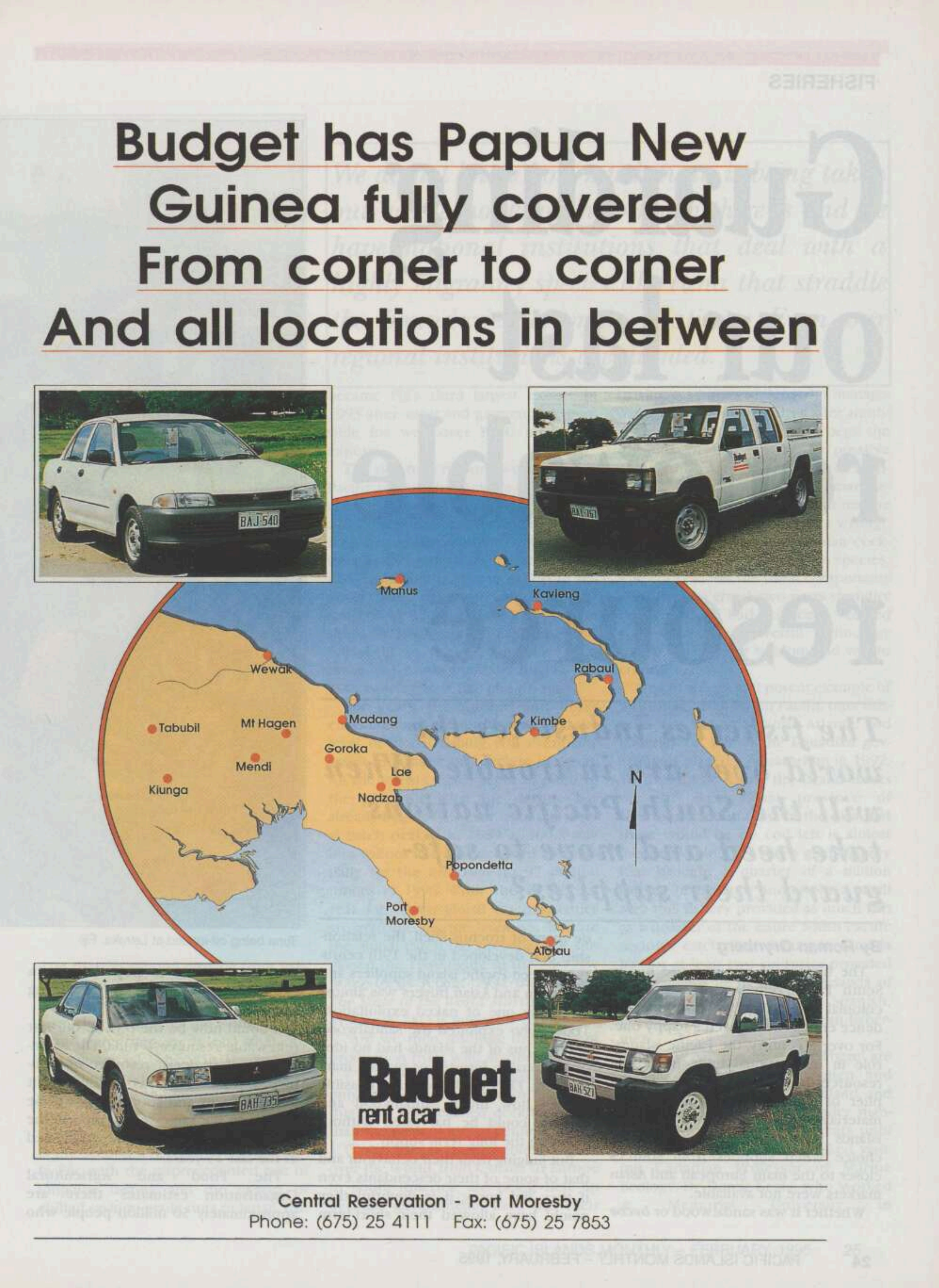
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Guarding our last renewable resource

The fisheries industries the world over are in trouble. When will the South Pacific nations take heed and move to safeguard their supplies?

By Roman Grynberg

The history of resource use in the South Pacific whether it was under colonial rule or in the post-independence era has never been a happy one. For over a century, the Pacific islands' role in international trade in natural resources has been as a peripheral supplier of some very insignificant raw materials. And even then the Pacific islands have only been suppliers of choice when supplies from sources closer to the main European and Asian markets were not available.

Whether it was sandalwood or *becbe de mere* or trochus shell, the relationship that developed in the 19th century between Pacific island suppliers and European and Asian buyers was almost invariably one of naked exploitation. Those who exploited the sandalwood and trochus of the islands had no idea of sustainable forestry or marine management. They could not have possibly known how much sandalwood and trochus could be harvested without affecting the long term supply.

But judging from their behaviour and that of some of their descendants even if they did know, it is doubtful they would have allowed their short-term financial interests to stop them from exploiting and eventually destroying the resource.

Tuna being off-loaded at Levuka, Fiji

It could now be the turn of our last renewable resource - tuna. The seemingly endless ocean resource of commercial tuna is not as limitless as it would appear and soon it too will be subject to the same sort of rape as the forests of Melanesia have experienced in the last 15 years.

The Food and Agricultural Organisation estimates there are approximately 50 million people who

We do not know how much tuna is being taken out, we do not know how much there is and we have national institutions that deal with a highly migratory species like tuna that straddle the boundaries of many nations. Even our regional institutions are divided.

gain their livelihood directly from fisheries and a further 150 million are dependent upon the income generated from the industry. In the South Pacific island states there are at least 3000 jobs in commercial fishery in Fiji and the Solomon Islands. Soon the fish cannery in Papua New Guinea will also export tuna.

In the Solomon Islands canned tuna is the second largest export after logs. In Fiji, with the unprecedented rise of long-line fishing and the export of chilled sashimi grade tuna to Japan, fish became Fiji's third largest export in 1993 after sugar and garments, responsible for well over F$50 million in exports.

The rich tuna resources of the South Pacific remain the region's only renewable resource, especially in Micronesia and Polynesia where there are virtually no other resources. Aside from tourism tuna is the only resource the region can reasonably expect to export in relatively large quantities. However, the state of world fisheries is such that in the next few years we can expect an onslaught of fishing companies that make the sandalwood traders of the 19th century look like choir boys.

For years Greenpeace and other environmental groups have warned the level of global fishing will eventually result in a disastrous decline in catch. All the statistics now seem to point to the possibility that the decline has already begun. FAO estimated the global catch peaked in 1989 at 100.3 million tonnes and had declined substantially for the first time to 97 million tonnes in 1990. While this is the last year for which global catch statistics are available, marine scientists indicate the global catch has probably not surpassed the 1989 figure in the past few years. In its recent 1994 publication, *The State of the World Marine Fishery Resource* FAO is unusually blunt.

"Are we then reaching the limits of production from wild marine resource …? The answer to this question is not only affirmative but for many resources this limit was reached decades earlier than the peak of global landings."

Global fishery is in trouble. Fleets all over the world, from Canada to Europe to South America, are being tied up because governments have put their marine resources under strict management. One marine resource after another has been depleted. This begs the question of how all this is possible given the very sophisticated techniques we employ in fisheries management. How can politicians and marine scientists get it so consistently wrong?

The answer lies in the human cocktail that makes us a dangerous species. The cocktail has the usual components – three parts greed, two parts stupidity and a dash of bad science – coated with extremely powerful technology that is beyond our wisdom and will to control.

A most recent and potent example of what may befall South Pacific tuna fisheries was the great North Atlantic cod fisheries on which the Canadian government placed a moratorium in 1992. To those who know the Grand Banks off the East Coast province of Newfoundland in Canada, the idea that there would be no cod left is almost inconceivable. This was a giant fishery that brought a quarter of a million tonnes of fish per annum. In a small area this fishery provided as much fish as a quarter of the entire South Pacific region's catch. Cod fishing in Canada has for at least two centuries provided employment for tens of thousands of Canadians, as well as for Spanish, Portuguese and other European fishermen.

This is all history now. There are 20,000 unemployed fishermen and related workers in Newfoundland, and the Grand Banks will be under management for at least seven years until the stock is replenished. I asked visiting Canadian Professor of Marine Ecology, Dr Derek Keats, who worked at Memorial University in

Newfoundland during the 1980s, how this occurred. "The Canadian government set the total allowable catch at 260,000 tonnes of cod per annum. The actual level should have been set at half of this."

Professor Keats was adviser to the Newfoundland Inshore Fisherman's Association during the 1980s and prepared a report which predicted the stock would be destroyed within six years. The Canadian government dismissed his report. Dr Keats was out by only one year on his prediction about when the stock would be exhausted. I asked him how it is that scientists get their estimates wrong. "The stock assessment techniques we use that tell us how much fish there is are simply poor. There are just too many variables for us to know with any great precision how much we can taken from the seas."

What went wrong in Newfoundland is exactly what could go wrong in the Pacific. The fishing industry with its high technology and governments willing to err on the optimistic side when it comes to fish stocks will set catch levels that are unsustainable. The combination of greed, high technology and scientific ignorance are what so obviously destroyed the Grand Banks cod fishery.

The FAO report suggests the South Pacific is one of the last remaining under exploited fisheries in the world. In 1992 approximately one million tonnes of tuna were taken out of the waters of the South Pacific. This constitutes a little over one percent of the total world marine catch. However, what we are increasingly being told officially by the South Pacific Commission is member nations can produce at least two million tonnes of tuna per annum without seriously affecting fish stocks. Just 10 years ago the SPC was saying unofficially, in what until very recently were called "preliminary estimates", we could catch three to five million tonnes of skipjack. Clearly those estimates were optimistic.

I asked Dr Derek Keats what he thought of the accuracy of these estimates. He said, "I don't know enough about Pacific tuna to say, but I don't know how anyone can know this either. In Canada we had decades of experience, massive amounts of funds for research and some of the very best scientists and yet we got it wrong by a factor of two. In the South Pacific it could be a much larger factor."

In reply, SPC Co-ordinator of Oceanic Fisheries, Dr Tony Lewis, said, "Tuna and cod are as different as zebras and monkeys." He will argue that while over-fishing appears to be a problem in temperate waters, we cannot find a case of over-fishing of tuna in tropical waters.

"We could look at the oft-quoted example of the Philippines where hunger and the press of people overrides economics, and where tropical tuna (skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye) are harvested at a size of 20 to 30 centimetres, the size of sardines, and yet it is still difficult to conclusively demonstrate that biological over-fishing is occurring."

The up-shot of the SPC argument is clear – over-fishing happens in temperate waters but is unlikely to happen to us.

In the South Pacific we have a situation where the existing tuna fisheries are clearly out of control. The SPC has no idea where fish are being caught in the waters of the South Pacific because the Taiwanese and Korean tuna boats massively under-report their catch. The SPC thinks they know the total quantity because they can get landing figures in Thailand, Korea, etc. However, these are also under-reported for commercial reasons.

It is also readily admitted the level of scientific research is inadequate to know with certainty how much tuna can be safely caught in any year. The distant water fishing nations pay us a pittance for our tuna. Korea, Taiwan and Japan pay between four to five percent of what they declare, the US purse-seiners pay nine percent and some nations are paying 11 percent to Australia.

There is clearly a need to protect our tuna resources from over-fishing. We do not know how much is being taken out, how much there is and we have national institutions that deal with a highly migratory species that straddle the boundaries of many nations. Even our regional institutions are divided – the SPC deals with scientific issues and the Forum Fisheries Agency with political, legal and increasingly economic issues. It would seem only logical that fisheries management be brought under one regional umbrella.

The Forum Fisheries Agency appears the right umbrella because it can deal with highly political issues the SPC cannot. We must also soon come to terms with foreign nations fishing in our waters. They must either sign fair multilateral agreements and report accurately on their catches or fish elsewhere.

In the end however, no matter how well we manage our fisheries, we are unlikely to ever know with any accuracy how much tuna we can harvest from the waters of the South Pacific.

How then do we fish? Dr Keats replies, "We have fished the marine resources for as long as man has been on the planet. We can only continue to do so as long as we employ those technologies that do not result in the destruction of the fisheries – the same simple technologies we used for centuries. We cannot use huge purse-seiners in increasing numbers with spotter helicopters, radar and sophisticated technology and not expect to ultimately destroy the commercial tuna resource. We must replicate the technologies that we knew were safe in the past."

In the end there is little optimism for the management of the fisheries, there is only hope that there will not be one last great rape of our resources. This will take an unusual measure of good sense and restraint – something we have almost never experienced as it relates to our natural resource. ■

Maori cross swords with TVNZ

By Martin Tiffany

Maori activists are threatening further protests if their demands for more Maori programmes on television are ignored.

On January 2, activists stormed TVNZ's central Auckland studio forcing the 6pm news - the day's main news - to be delayed for 10 minutes. The dozen or so protesters, led by activist Ken Mair, tricked a security guard and entered the studio. They lined up behind the news readers as supporters in the street outside chanted and waved placards.

Mair said they took the action because the Maori were fed up with programmes in their language being sidelined. The Maori news programme, *Te Karere*, was cut off completely over the Christmas holidays. It was expected to return to air in the first week of February.

Mair said they wanted more air time for *Te Karere* and other Maori programmes and support from TVNZ was needed for a separate Maori broadcasting station. He said under the Treaty of Waitangi TVNZ had an obligation to provide quality Maori programmes. The protesters also want more of these programmes to be shown during prime time.

TVNZ met the protesters the day after they infiltrated the studios. Mair said he had a promise at the meeting that further talks will be held with "decision makers", including the Minister for Broadcasting.

A TVNZ director, Rod Cornelius, said they had listened to grievances during the three-hour meeting with the group. He said he pointed out that *Te Karere* was funded by the Maori broadcasting agency, Te Mangai Paho, for a limited number of programmes a year.

Last year Te Mangai Paho gave TVNZ $5 million for all Maori programmes on the network. TVNZ says it asked for more funds to continue *Te Karere* over the Christmas period but were told funds were instead being used for an infotainment programme on cable television network Sky.

According to TVNZ, *Te Karere*, with a regular audience of about 50,000, is not commercially viable during prime time. However, they say they have six dramas by Maori writers with Maori themes which could become regular features if they prove popular.

The protest has been successful in that the grievances have received national attention and TVNZ has given an undertaking to look into them. Whether this will be enough remains to be seen.

Mair has threatened more of "these types of actions" if demands are not met.

The TVNZ protest is the third high-profile act by Maori activists against the system in recent months. Last year an activist attacked an Auckland landmark - the pine tree on One Tree Hill - with a chainsaw. This was followed by the beheading of a statue in Wanganui. The statue was of one of the men responsible for land sales in the area.

Charges have been laid against those responsible for the attacks on the tree and the statue. But no charges have been laid against the protesters at TVNZ.

A radical Maori group is behind the three attacks. Their action is causing splits in the Maori community.

Mair has publicly said he wants an end to white rule by the year 2000 and his meetings around the country will look at mechanisms and systems to enable such a move.

"By the year 2000 the liberation of the Maori people will occur in this country," he says. They want to be able to make all immigration decisions. But not all Maori agree with Mair's stand and many prominent Maori leaders are distancing themselves from Mair.

Northland Maori leader Dover Samuels warns against extremism and acts of aggression, saying they hurt Maori chances of winning equitable Treaty of Waitangi settlements. He said while he supported a call for a better coverage of Maori issues by television, the radical approach was not the way to go about things. He said following established procedure would achieve more.

Other Maori leaders disagree, saying the radical approach is the only way.

Muriwhenua leader and Alliance Maori Affairs spokesman Matiu Rata says the Maori should maintain pressure even to the point of civil disobedience. He said Maori had genuine grievances and valid complaints and had to get unruly to draw attention to them.

This year is the year of Maori language. One thing is certain - more than their language will make news this year. ■

OPINION

The Forum comes of age

From
ALFRED SASAKO
at the Forum Secretariat

The South Pacific Forum is now an observer at the United Nations General Assembly. One hundred and sixteen countries co-sponsored the South Pacific Forum resolution seeking observer status. It was eventually adopted by consensus at the 49th General Assembly in New York on October 17 (New York time), October 18 (Pacific time).

For an organisation such as the South Pacific Forum, which has barely crossed the 20-year mark of existence, it was a historic event. South Pacific Forum Secretariat's secretary general, Ieremia Tabai, echoed that sentiment when he thanked the world body.

"This is an historic event for us, marking (yet) another milestone for our small organisation as it tries to expand its role in representing the joint interests of its 15 members in the international arena.

"Our desire to be part of the General Assembly process stems not only from the South Pacific Forum's own growing contribution to representing the region's collective concerns in a rapidly changing environment, but also from our support for the expanded and invigorated role being played by the United Nations in the post-Cold War era."

What does observer status at the UN mean, especially for island members of the South Pacific Forum? This is probably a difficult question to answer in terms of quantifying benefits that Forum Island Countries will derive.

Many of the 13 FICs, by virtue of their membership of the UN, are already benefiting from various programmes administered by UN agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme and the World Health Organisation, to name a few.

One of the immediate benefits to the region is the South Pacific Forum now has a permanent seat at the UN General Assembly.

Under mutual agreement, the seat will be filled by members of the SOPAC group (South Pacific Forum island countries with permanent UN missions in New York) when the UN General Assembly is discussing matters of direct and immediate relevance to the Forum.

FICs with UN missions are Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Western Samoa.

The importance of the formal links with the UN cannot be over-emphasised. Developed properly this link can be an effective avenue for making Pacific voices heard at the international arena on Pacific issues with international dimensions – population, disarmament, global warming and fisheries resources.

Until now only Pacific countries who are members of the UN were able to raise these issues at the world body and at other international forums. So the South Pacific observer status will be useful for those island members of the regional organisation who are non-UN members.

Tabai has already hinted at issues critical to the survival of many FICs – issues which the UN is equipped to tackle. "Development and its sustainability are critical issues for our region," he said. "From the earliest days of the South Pacific Forum, economic growth and how to achieve it in small island countries with limited resources have been high on our agenda. It is still the most important single problem for all of us and is increasingly linked to sound environmental management because of the fragility of the resource base in most countries."

South Pacific Forum's efforts to work with other extra-regional bodies in exchange of ideas, joint collaboration in technical, trade and other areas will not stop with the UN. In many instances, this co-operation is already in full swing through the South Pacific Forum Secretariat's participation at meetings of technical bodies such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation Forum. and the Pacific Economic Co-operation Council.

Indeed, the observer status at the UN General Assembly has given impetus to the South Pacific Secretariat to vigorously pursue co-operation with other international organisations. A staff member of the South Pacific Forum Secretariat was in Jakarta, Indonesia, last month on an attachment with the Secretariat of the Association of South East Asian Nations.

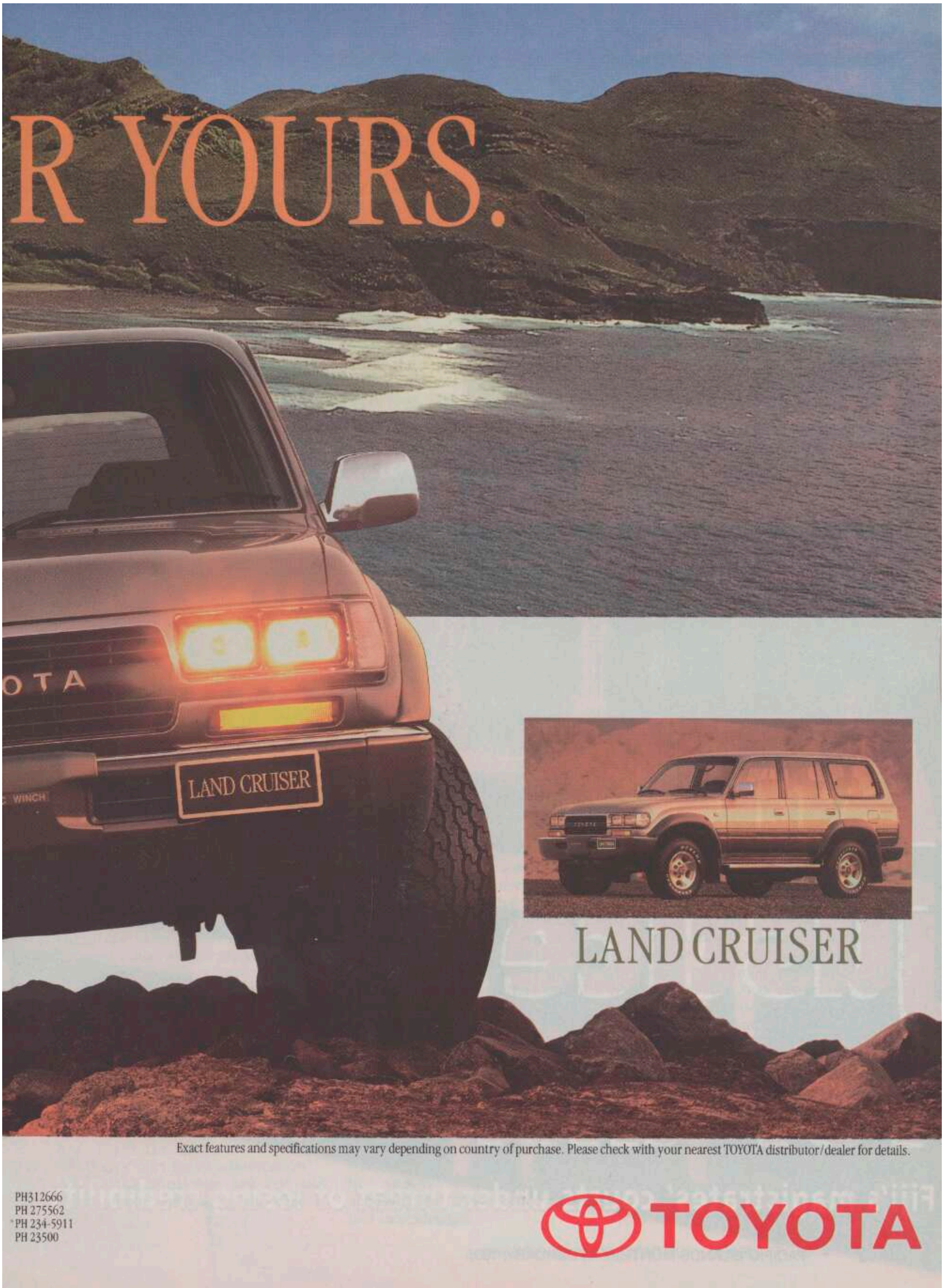
In many ways, the South Pacific Forum has come of age. Its admission as an observer at the UN General Assembly is no mean feat. But nor are its successes in other equally important areas.

It was just two-and-a-half decades ago that what is now the South Pacific Forum came into being. From that first meeting in Wellington, New Zealand, of the seven founding members – Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru, New Zealand, Tonga, Western Samoa – the organisation has grown into a towering body.

The seven have been joined by the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Its membership now stands at 15 with political influence over about 30 million square kilometres of the Pacific Ocean. With the admission of Palau as a full Forum member later this year almost a certainty, the organisation's sphere of influence will be even larger. ■

The founding fathers of the South

Pacific islands monthly : PIM.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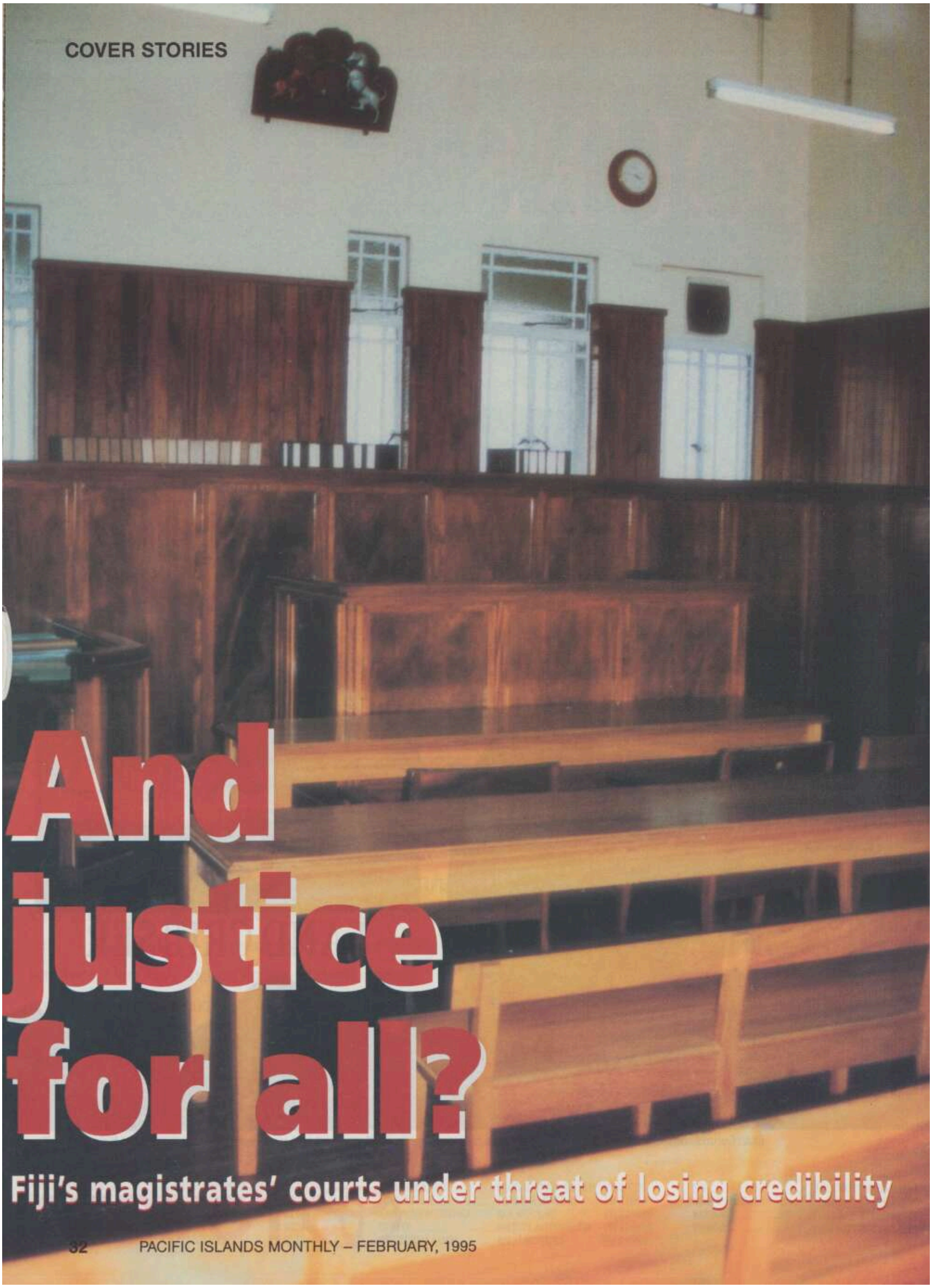


And justice for all?

Fiji's magistrates' courts under threat of losing credibility

By Yunus Rashid

On November 11 1994, a 15-year-old girl, was the victim of a sexual attack by six men, one of whom was her boyfriend. Charges of rape and defilement were subsequently laid against the six – rape because the six allegedly took turns at holding her down and covering her mouth, and defilement because the girl was a minor (under 16 years old). When they appeared before Labasa (a town on Fiji's island of Vanua Levu) Court , the men pleaded guilty to both charges, but magistrate Moses Fernando pointed out they could not plead guilty to both because rape is "carnal knowledge" without consent while the defilement charge is irrespective of consent .

The men were given an option between rape and defilement. The men opted to plead guilty to defilement.

The facts of the case were read out and the men verified them. The crunch came when it was time for the men to make their statements in mitigation. They said they had not realised the girl was under 16 and that she had looked bigger than her age.

Fernando called the girl before the court. After seeing the victim, he acquitted all six and commented that the girl "looked hefty for someone her age".

Statements of shock and horror flooded *The Fiji Times* which first reported the case. Women's rights movements, politicians and lawyers criticised Fernando's decision. Lawyers argued that if the men had said the girl looked older for her age then the magistrate should have entered a plea of not guilty and proceeded with a trial. A more disturbing question is how the accused, who all pleaded guilty to the charge, could be acquitted?

Director of Public Prosecutions Nazhat Shameem and the Permanent Secretary for Justice and Solicitor-General, Isikeli Mataitoga, called for more details of the case so that an appeal could be lodged. (It has since been filed). The matter is now before the High Court for its adjudication.

After the initial hue and cry subsided, public attitude to the case is one of "but this is nothing new". And indeed it is not.

Three days before the end of 1994, Suva magistrate Syed Mukhtar Shah, in a custody battle, threatened to send a 10-year-old boy to prison if he did not go with his father who had divorced his wife seven years ago. The father had been a stranger to the boy. The boy had lived with his mother after his parents divorced in 1986. His father sought custody for the child on December 28, 1994. The father told Shah he wanted to keep his son until the custody application was heard on January 25. Without calling witnesses, Shah ordered the child go with his father. The child said he wanted to be with his mother, to which Shah replied, the boy could be sent to prison if he fussed.

The mother made an application before Suva High Court judge Mr Justice Scott who said of Shah's decision: "In my judgment this order by the Resident Magistrate was seriously at fault. Not only had no evidence been heard before the order was made but also the Welfare Reports on file were completely ignored. There is no proper judgment and no reason shown at all why the obviously disturbing effect of separating a small child from his mother and grandparents should so immediately be taken, given the long period during which he had not seen his father. The Resident Magistrate's order was, I am satisfied, made without jurisdiction, was premature and unwise. The order is revoked." At least a happy end - for a while anyway.

Let us consider the case of Epi Nakanacagi, a policeman. Nakanacagi was charged with abuse of office and larceny in 1991 and has been appearing before the Suva Magistrates' Court for mention since. On December 20, 1994, when his trial was scheduled to begin, magistrate Salesi Temo could not find the charge sheet because it was not placed in the court file given to him that day. Temo discharged Nakanacagi, saying since the charge sheet was not available, there was no case and ordered the DPP's office to file new charges.

The immediate reaction from prosecutors was: how can a man not charged be discharged? If the magistrate saw there were no charges then he should have acquitted the accused. The DPP's office has since laid new charges.

In Nadi, a town on the western coast of Fiji's main island, magistrate Naresh Prasad blamed a victim for being raped because she got drunk and fell asleep at a party and sentenced the accused to a lenient three-year term . "The situation could have been avoided if she was sober," magistrate Prasad said. "The behaviour of the complainant on this occasion leaves me to take a somewhat lenient attitude in sentencing the accused." He even added the victim was "the author of her own vulnerability" and the rapist was tempted by the sight of a sleeping girl.

This is another example of the type of judgments handed down in the magistrates' courts which deal with 95 percent of the cases registered with the police. Decisions such as these have led to a lack of faith in the integrity, impartiality and wisdom of the judiciary.

Some informed sources put the blame on lack of training, lack of supervision and, in other instances, simply a lack of ethics. But surely people who have the ability to obtain law degrees should not be totally devoid of common sense. But cynical lawyers simply say, "Wise people do not become magistrates". Perhaps better pay for magistrates would be an answer in attracting senior members of the bar to sit on the benches.

But the situation is further compounded by the fact that a decree was passed in 1988 removing the criterion that one had to have qualifications as a lawyer before he/she could be appointed a magistrate.

Three magistrates have since been appointed to Fiji's bench who do not have legal qualifications. They are Aminiasi Katonivualiku, resident magistrate in Tavua, Viliame Nadakuitavuki, resident magistrate in Nausori and Eroni Sauvakacolo, magistrate at Suva Domestic Court. (Sauvakacolo was reportedly moved to the domestic court in September 1993 after a public outcry over manifestly lenient sentences given while presiding over criminal cases.) The three who had been civil servants prior to their appointments as magistrates (two were teachers and one an administrator) had also acted as mediators in Fiji's traditional court system which deals with minor disputes at the village level.

But in all fairness to them, while they may take more time to unravel legal technicalities, the first two have not given any reported controversial decisions – not yet anyway. They are able to hear trials which the Chief Magistrate, a graduate from the University of Papua New Guinea, rarely has time to do.

It is difficult to understand how magistrates seem to have the leeway to act on their own, sometimes even in breach of the law, without any apparent repercussions. Recently magistrate Shah held proceedings at a suburban police station in Suva during a public holiday. Shah remanded four alleged rapists, one murder suspect, and nine others – in the absence of any defence lawyers, interpreters or court clerks – during the Christmas holidays. The court sitting was reported in the media which praised Shah's initiative. The media also carried a picture of Shah apparently hearing the cases with divisional prosecuting officer Jahir Khan looking over his shoulders.

The DPP consequently wrote to the Chief Registrar, the Chief Magistrate and the Police Commissioner objecting to the sitting on the grounds that it compromised the court system . She said the sitting had violated fundamental concepts of the law – where the prosecution and defence are given equal weight. The hearing, she claimed, was not held in a neutral setting.

If this is so, Shah has set a dangerous precedent whereby defence lawyers could, by the same token, ask magistrates to hold hearings in their offices in the absence of prosecutors. While holding special hearings on holidays is not new in Fiji, these have until now been held at the court complexes.

Shah's response to the queries has been that he had gone to the police station to remand suspects and no court was ever held. This statement is contradictory in itself – how can Shah remand people without the jurisdiction of the court? In most instances a magistrate can only exercise his vested powers within the confines of the court , that is, in the presence of both parties and court officers.

There were no defence lawyers and no court clerks. Every accused brought before Shah's "court" was remanded in custody, some until December 28 while the others until January 6.

The obvious question raised is whether there is any safeguard against collusion between a magistrate and police to the detriment of the accused? It unfortunately appears that despite everyone knowing about these incidents, no action seems to be taken to discipline those at fault or to prevent further violations of justice.

Responding to *PIM's* questions, Chief Magistrate Sekove Naqiolevu admitted there were lapses but said not all magistrates gave controversial decisions. He blamed the government for a lot of the problems within the magistracy, saying that while the country's population had grown considerably since the establishment of the court system, the number of magistrates and their pay-packets had not been increased accordingly. Naqiolevu defended his magistrates saying they did their work diligently despite being under constant pressure. He said where magistrates used to hear 100 to 200 cases per week 10 years ago, they were now having to hear at least 500 to 700 cases.

"We can't attract seasoned lawyers to come and sit on the bench because there is more money to be made in private practice," he said.

Perhaps the greatest laxity in the judiciary arises from the fact that it is not independent. The Public Service Commission has to have a say in how the budget is spent and what appointments are made.

Sir David Beattie, a former Governor-General of New Zealand, conducted a Commission of Inquiry, at the request of the Fiji government, into the court system to streamline the entire operation. Sir David has compiled his report and handed it over to government which is expected to implement some recommendations and shelve others until funds are available. No recommendations appear to have been implemented.

The Chief Justice, Sir Timoci Tuivaga, had made recommendations to the Beattie Commission that the judiciary be independent, but this was knocked back in favour of the Attorney-General's submission that this was not possible on the grounds that it would be too expensive. Hence, Sir David Beattie's report on the court system has come under attack as being dictated to by the government.

While the public is outraged, by the number of complaints and appeals lodged against magistrates' decisions, Sir Timoci, a highly respected judge, attributes this to "ignorance". Asked why such criticisms rarely existed before the coups, Sir Timoci said the criticisms originated out "of utter ignorance on the part of the public about the processes of law" and the increasing criticism was a result of "increasing ignorance".

Responding to what *PIM* described as "controversial" decisions, Sir Timoci said, "All cases are controversial". He said he could not comment on the Labasa rape/defilement case because it was before the courts. On magistrate Shah's custody case, Sir Timoci said he was away in Lau (an outer island group) and had not heard of the decision. Asked if it was ethical for magistrates to hear cases where their personal friends appeared for one of the parties, Sir Timoci said the judicial system in the country was based on ethics and it was improper to allege unethical conduct on the part of "My Lords" without any evidence. He said people should realise that if they were dissatisfied with a magistrate's decision, they could go further up by way of appeal.

Sir Timoci said it was difficult to analyse decisions because such an analysis could take up to a year and could only be done by a professor of law, who may eventually get it wrong anyway.

Sir Timoci said he "could not see what the excitement was all about".

It is worth repeating here Sir Timoci's points relating to judicial ethics which he made during a magistrates seminar on November 5, 1991. He had said a magistrate should "disqualify himself in a proceeding in which his impartiality might reasonably be questioned". And a general observation he had made then was: "It was no secret that some judgments had been inadequate because they lacked cohesion and coherence."

Another warning given to magistrates was that they should not mingle in civic and charitable activities if this would reflect adversely on their impartiality or interfere with the performance of their judicial duties. It was unethical for them to serve organisations conducted "for the economic and political advantage of its members".

He said magistrates should not solicit funds for any organisation "or use or permit the use of the prestige of his office for that purpose". They should not be guest speakers at fund raising events.

PIM was unable to get any views from Fiji Law Society president Ram Krishna. ■

The economic bubble bursts

By Roman Grynberg

The rapid recovery Fiji experienced following the 1987 coups was always going to be a hard act to follow. Few in Fiji could imagine how hard. Immediately following the coups the government implemented policies that hurt the pocket in a way beyond what most Fijians had ever expected. But the massive 50-percent effective devaluation of the Fiji dollar in 1987, which slashed living standards, also stimulated economic growth beyond all expectations.

The devaluation was not intended to stimulate anything. The Reserve Bank of Fiji, when it devalued, was not following policies of international competitiveness - it does not and has never really believed in a vigorous competitive exchange rate policy. The devaluation was undertaken with the standard and conservative economic objective of halting the haemorrhaging foreign exchange reserves caused by the outflow of capital by terrified Fiji citizens. It was a matter of stability - not competitiveness - but the 1987 devaluations changed relative competitiveness.

The standard of living and real wages in Fiji plummeted in what was the most painful economic contraction in the history of post-independence Fiji. It was the unemployment, low real wages and the paradoxical rise in income of Fiji sugar farmers (who saw the value of their earnings increase by 30 percent in three years after the coup) that caused the economic recovery and change in direction of the economy.

The Fiji dollar in the post-coup era decreased in value much more substantially against the British pound and the European ECU than it did against the value of the Australian and New Zealand dollars. As a result there was a sharp increase in the dollar value of sugar exports to the UK. As a result the prices of imported consumer goods from Australia and New Zealand did not rise as sharply as the value of earnings and sugar cane farmers saw an increase in their living standards directly as a result of the devaluations.

What also caused the transformation of the economy was the creation of the tax-free factory system. These factories offered not only lower taxes but a way in which local investors could get their money out of Fiji. This was because of the relatively weak exchange control regulations in that sector.

The third important factor that created the very brief "Fiji Miracle" was the liberalisation in 1987 of New Zealand and subsequently of Australian garment import regulations. This allowed duty free import of garments from Pacific island countries under the terms of the SPARTECA treaty.

Between 1988 and 1991, the garment export industry grew from virtually nothing to peak at exports of $131 million. The industry created the most rapid growth in manufacturing employment in the history of Fiji, with employment in the sector growing from 13,000 in 1987 to almost 23,000 by 1991. A substantial part of the growth in employment was in low-wage garment factories.

In many ways the growth of the garment industry was a vindication of the tough policies recommended by the World Bank and the IMF. While parts of the government of Fiji supported these policies, in particular the Trade and Finance departments, these views were not by any means accepted by the rest of the government or by the political leadership.

All 13 Forum island countries could have benefited from the Australian and New Zealand liberalisation in garment imports, but it was only Fiji that had done the difficult things in 1988 to create a competitive environment that would make investors want to invest in the country. No other country benefited from the liberalisation in Australian and New Zealand trade. The Cook Islands, in fact, lost garment export capacity to Fiji.

Since 1990, however, the economy of Fiji has stagnated. Employment in the country's manufacturing sector has gone nowhere and there appears to be little growth in other sectors, with the exception of tourism and fisheries. There has been a continuous increase in tourist arrivals (as depicted in chart).

The tourism industry is now complaining its growth is being hampered by the absence of five-star accommodation. The top-line hotels, including the Sheraton, The Fijian and the Regent, are fully booked for months in advance. However, there have been no takers for the substantial investment needed for a large five-star hotel despite the obvious growth in demand.

The one truly miraculous sector of the Fiji economy in the last two years has been the unprecedented growth of the chilled tuna export market. From virtually nothing in 1992, chilled sashimi-grade tuna is being exported to Japan and the United States. Exports in 1993 are expected to be in the vicinity of $18 million and by 1993 this had grown to some $30 million, rivaling the importance of Fiji's state-owned PAFCO cannery which exports canned tuna to the United Kingdom and Canada.

The sugar industry has exhibited almost no growth since the huge rise in earnings caused by the 1987 devaluation which, ironically, benefited the Indian-dominated industry.

The sugar industry now faces major adjustments as EU sugar prices are set to drop by some 15 percent by the year 2000 as a result of the closure of the Uruguay Round of GATT. The other source of trade preference for Fiji's economy has been the US sugar quota and this too is under a cloud as a result of US commitments to the creation of a free trade area in the Americas by the year 2005. The situation is further compounded by the absence of an agreement on the renewal of land leases in the sugar belt, which are scheduled to begin expiring by 1997. Due to the sensitivity of the subject, the government has been reluctant to move quickly on the issue.

In January, sugar cane farmers threatened to boycott the 1995 harvest unless there is some resolution on the issue.

Investment in Fiji has been declining dras-

tically. This is in no small part a result of the recession in the country's main trading partners, Australia and New Zealand, but it is also a result of several internal matters that the government has failed to address. The Fiji Trade and Investment Board's figures paint a gloomy picture of relative economic decline. Investment has slipped away in the last five years.

The $64,000-question is, why? Why, after a period of rapid growth in the late 1980s, has Fiji settled into a slow growth mode. The government's official explanation is the loss of trade preference in the garment industry caused by the lowering of tariffs in Australia and New Zealand. The other explanation offered for the decline in investment stems from the prolonged global recession. Both explanations are correct and there is no doubt that to some degree external factors beyond the control of the government are at play. Governments throughout the ages have blamed external factors when things go wrong and their wisdom and good management when things go well.

But there are a number of internal factors that could have improved the situation. The first is the political situation. Critics of the government have said one of the reasons investment has been so low is because the Indo-Fijian community is waiting for an acceptable resolution to the 1992 constitution. The government in reply points to the fact that investment in the late 1980s, at the height of the coups, was led by the Indo-Fijian community, especially in the garment factories.

The difference, of course, is that the devaluation and the liberalisation in Australia and New Zealand garment imports made Fiji's tax-free factories (TFFs) very profitable. As the Indo-Fijian business community could not shift its money abroad, the TFFs made an excellent way of getting money out as well as being profitable.

However, the relative competitiveness Fiji had gained through the devaluation was not followed through. The extraordinary growth in garment and other tax-free exports caught the government by surprise. There was almost no response from the government to the growth of the sector. The problem with the garment factories is that most were simple-cut, make-trim operations with no expertise being developed locally. Once New Zealand and then Australia began to lower tariffs to Asian imports the Fiji exports could not compete. The industry was never given a fighting chance because the government was unwilling to follow through with substantial support for the sector.

The free market ideology had permeated through to the government and senior officials who were unwilling to make any serious commitment to the sector. One of the advantages of the free market view is that government officials need not take any professional risks by committing themselves to a particular industry - the market has to choose winners. And the market is choosing to locate more garment manufacturing in South East Asia where wages are lower.

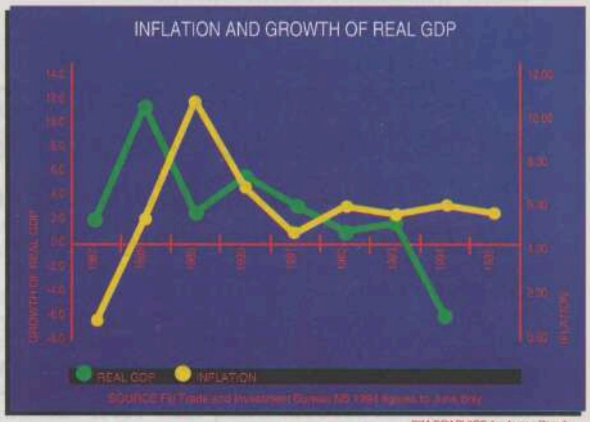
It is widely expected that by 1997 there will be a substantial decline in garment exports as the full effect of the liberalisation measures of the Button Plan (where tariffs on garment imports to Australia are gradually lowered) are felt in Fiji. The consensus in the industry appears to be that the garment industry will contract, and only those firms which are branches of larger multinationals will survive in Fiji because they have the marketing connections in Australian and New Zealand markets.

The other factor that has caused the decline of the garment industry and the failure of investment is the policy of the Reserve Bank of Fiji which refuses to adjust the value of the currency to the competitive needs of the export sector. The Reserve Bank sees its role as maintaining the stability of the currency and foreign exchange reserves. With the recovery of tourism the Reserve Bank could sustain its policy of currency stability because Fiji's chronic trade deficit was always funded by a surplus on its service account by the large tourist numbers. As long as this situation continues, the Reserve Bank will simply not agree to a currency adjustment even though there has been a 12-percent appreciation of the real exchange rate since 1988.

What has also changed in Fiji is the government's resolve to tackle difficult problems. Probably one of the clearest manifestations of the government's unwillingness to make tough decisions was the reversal of the wage order, which was to hold the line on public sector wages, announced during the November Budget. The Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Berenado Vunibobo, attacked the government's own wage and salary review of the public sector and stated his commitment to holding the line on wages. The result was the threat of a general strike by public service unions. While the minister was out of the country, Cabinet decided to reverse the order and the outcome will likely be a rise in taxes in 1995.

While the Fiji economy is growing, albeit slowly, Fiji has all the outward manifestations of economic decline. Employment is growing slowly while the crime rate, the obvious sign of economic decline, is accelerating. Foreign investment is declining sharply .

The other important manifestation of the failure has been an increased concentration on Fijian-Indian distributional issues which have become more prevalent in 1994. The question of which race is getting what share of the pie is dominating the nation's agenda rather than the question of how to make that pie bigger for everyone.



PIM GRAPHICS by James Ranuku

As the Minister of Finance said in his 1995 Budget speech, Fiji is failing to create employment for the 10,000 school leavers every year. Employment has only been increasing at a rate of slightly over one percent per annum and the percentage of the work force in formal sector employment is declining steadily.

To create rates of growth of employment that Fiji wants will require tough policies of competitiveness which the government has demonstrated it is politically unwilling to pursue. If Fiji does not seriously address the problem of lack of competitiveness that plagues the sugar and garment industries, then the forces of international competition and global trade liberalisation will make them address them in an even harsher way in the years to come. ■

And never the twain shall meet

Despite a century of living together, Fiji's two main racial groups still lead separate lives with no indication their ways are going to meet in the near future. As our Special Correspondent points out, the differences are more ingrained than any law could have created.

It was on a bright sunny day walking down Deuba beach ata Pacific Harbour when the obvious facts of life in Fiji came to light. The previous day Adi Kuini Speed, widow of deposed Labour Prime Minister Timoci Bavadra, had announced the disbanding of Fiji's last remaining multi-racial party - ironically called the ANC (All Nationals Congress). The Labour Party still lamely professes to be multiracial but is now simply an alternative voice of the Indian cane farmers. It was the Fijians (soon to be called *Taukei*) playing rugby in their isolated group on the beach next to the Indians (soon to be finally called Fijians) playing soccer in their equally isolated group that made it dawn on me finally.

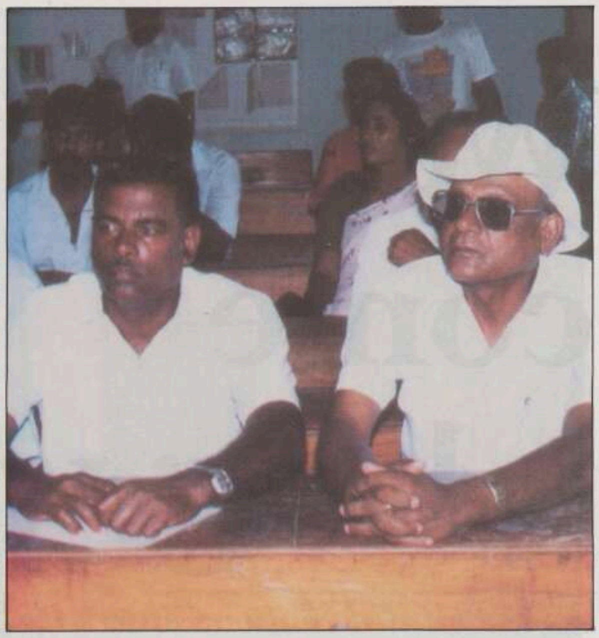
It reminded one of the South Africa of 20 years ago - the South Africa of Grand Apartheid where races never mixed. It was like walking down similar beaches in Natal province but there the separation of the races was done by the force of laws and policemen's truncheons. In Fiji it became obvious at that moment that we have succeeded in creating a far grander apartheid of the mind and spirit - an apartheid so strong that it could never be created or dismantled by law-makers. This is a voluntary apartheid created by two groups that have been thrown together by what both generally view as the unfortunate circumstances of their history.

At no point is there the faintest inkling that these two groups have the slightest bit in common. By and large Fijians and Indians may occupy the same country but not the same space.

When the Indian soccer ball landed in the middle of the Fijian rugby field it was politely returned with and English thank you. These are two groups that largely do not speak each other's languages, do not play the same games, do not have the same interests and by and large do not appear to like each other very much.

The two groups do not even cross at the level of love and marriage. After 100 years of Indian presence in Fiji it is rare, very rare, to see a mixed race Indian-Fijian, but not rare to see a mixed race European-Fijian or Indo-European.

How is it that after a century of living together the main impact of



one group on the other appears to have been Fijians developing a taste for curry and Indians developing a taste for yaqona? It is difficult to imagine two cultures more different - one culture communalist and the other individualistic and entrepreneurial - but nothing really adequately describes the profound gap between the two communities.

All this would be of no interest or importance if it were in Sydney or Los Angeles. There communities with nothing in common live in relative peace not communicating with their neighbours. This is after all the way of immigrant communities the world over. However, Fiji is not the western suburbs nor, unfortunately, is it L.A.. Indo-Fijians and *Taukei* are the two dominant communities almost equally divided numerically. When this matter is raised with both Indians and Fijians they cannot see it - it only seemed natural, it is Fiji after all.

If the danger of a complete separation of two dominant communities is not obvious then the coups of 1987 should have made it very clear indeed. The change in the ethnic balance of power that was created by the results of the 1987 election was what triggered the coups. The change in the ethnic balance that followed the Fijian reaction to the 1987 elections - namely the 1992 constitution - was as unacceptable to the Indians as the result of the 1987 elections was to the large sections of the Fijian elite.

Each imbalance in Fiji's post-independence power structure has had damaging effects. Now we have what many, inside and outside Fiji, call an apartheid system - a system of separation of the races.

Of course we have nothing that even begins to rival what white South Africa managed to construct and yet Fiji's separateness will be ever more difficult to dismantle. To the outsider the most open manifestations of our system of separation are political - only Fijians and "others" in government and Indians in opposition. This system can be changed in the way that great men change bad laws - the same way Mandela and de Klerk deservedly got their Nobel Prizes.

As President Mandela is now discovering, economic apartheid cannot be so easily eliminated and its removal will only be the product of a long transition. The political system of racial separation that we have managed to create in Fiji has its analogue in our business community which is almost as devoid of Fijians as the government's front bench is of Indians. Therein of course lies much of the nation's problem - as former Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew said of Fiji, it is a country trying to resolve its economic problems by political means.

This cannot be done. A situation has been created a situation whereby the Indian community, which still largely dominates commercial activities, quite rightly perceives that it is "second class" and no amount of name changing and banal jingles on the national television station about Fiji being "one great family" will convince them otherwise. Feeling second class and threatened, they do not invest.

The Fijians feel they have no access to business and in response have traditionally resorted to their domination of political institutions to resolve the problem. It is only in the last year or two, however, that there have been the early rumblings of a legalised system of business preference for *Taukei* - much as exists in Malaysia. But rather than resolve the problem, their total domination of political power and forced entry into the business community only weakens the economy because it further serves to alienate the Indians and decrease their interest in any long-term investment.

Only in a real dialogue will the two dominant races in Fiji come to an accommodation. But the apartheid that we have created here cannot be erased by two men - it will take the Nelson Mandela and de Klerk inside all of us to talk to each other with mutual respect. ■

We've come a long way

*As the United Nations enters its 50th year, **Ian Williams** takes a look at the Pacific states representated there and how we have fared.*

At the end of last year, Palau became a UN member and New Zealand ended its highly regarded two-year term as Security Council member. This year's 50th anniversary of the United Nations will be celebrated across the world with varying degrees of enthusiasm, but in the Pacific there are perhaps more reasons for celebration than for many other regions. For half a century, the Pacific has been spared the pain of being a battleground for the great powers, and its small and defenseless nations have generally benefited from the partial triumph of international law and order represented by the UN.

The Pacific islands were the subject of the UN's attention, even at a time when few of the inhabitants were aware of it. In particular, the island territories, conquered by the US from Japan in the closing days of World War II, were the subject of an almost equal bitter diplomatic battle during the negotiations on the UN Charter. While the US State Department was trying to use the Charter to dismantle the European colonial empires, the US Navy fought hard to keep its unfettered control of the islands.

But within that battle, the Trusteeship section of the Charter was written by American statesman Ralph Bunche, who made sure "independence" was written into the aims of trusteeship, while the section dealing with colonies, or "non-self-governing territories," drafted by less-determined US State department officials, omitted to mention it.

The last official decision made by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt before he died was about the Pacific Trust Territory – as it was to become. He approved the compromise between the various factions of his administration and with the other signatories of the Charter – that the islands would become the one and only "Strategic Trust Territory" to be administered by the United States and decisions on which would be made, not in the UN Trusteeship Council, but in the Security Council where Washington had a veto.

The downside of that was soon discovered by the inhabitants of the Marshall Islands. The US Navy conducted its devastating series of nuclear tests, which some historians claim had more to do with a budget battle between the Navy and the Army than it had with frightening the Russians.

Although these happened under UN Trusteeship, it would be difficult to blame the new organisation for the radioactive disaster which befell the islanders. After all, the US would have had its way whether the UN was there or not. And one has to doubt whether Washington would have contemplated giving independence to the Marshalls, Micronesia and Palau if it had not been tied by its trusteeship agreement "to promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants ...and their progressive development towards self-government or independence".

For the Pacific, the turning point was clearly the decision by the Nauruans to go for independence in 1968. Like the radiated Marhsallese, they may have wished for a stronger supervisory hand from the UN while their phosphate assets were being extracted by the British, Australians and New Zealanders, but the new international order of the UN gave them an independence that would probably have been inconceivable without it. Indeed, even with it, the Australian government clearly did not have independence on its mind. It was pushing for relocation of the Nauruans to an offshore island.

Nauru's first president, Hammer De Robürt, caused consternation when he declared that his 3000 people wanted independence, but the colonialist members of the UN were tied by their own Charter to advance self-determination, and its doctrine of national sovereign equality had no lower size limit to it. Any such reservations had been swept aside by the flood of newly independent nations in the 1960s who used the US as a lever to get colonies their freedom.

While Australia and New Zealand had been founder members of the UN, it took them almost two decades to be joined by other South Pacific nations. Samoa, the first trusteeship territory to become independent, did not join the UN until 1976. Nauru still hasn't. Papua, which was a Trusteeship territory, joined New Guinea to become a member as PNG

A view of the United Nations building: from the East River, New York

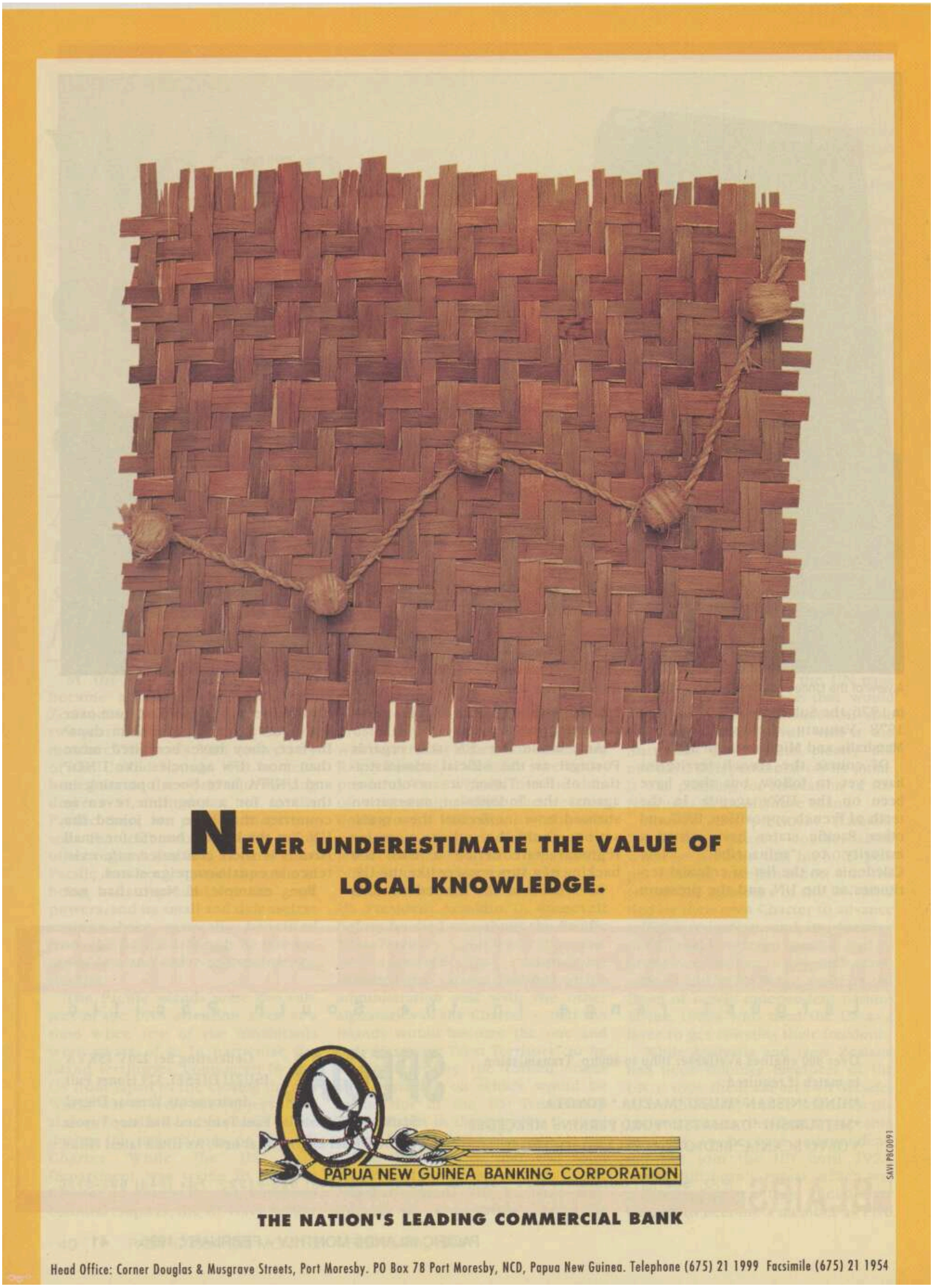
in 1976; the Solomons in 1976 and in 1978 Vanuatu, followed by the Marshalls and Micronesia in 1991.

Of course the French territories have yet to follow, but they have been on the UN's agenda. In the teeth of French opposition, PNG and other Pacific states have rallied a majority to "reinscribe" New Caledonia on the list of colonial territories at the UN, and the pressure has helped the Kanaks in their negotiations with Paris.

And while the UN still regards Portugal as the official administration of East Timor, its resolutions against the Indonesian annexation showed how ineffectual the organisation could be when a major regional state defied it with the backing of a superpower like the US.

So what's in the United Nations for the Pacific states, apart from over $100,000 a year in minimum dues? In fact, they have benefited more than most. UN agencies like UNDP and UNFPA have been operating in the area for a long time, even in countries that have not joined the UN. But the biggest benefit for small islands is their continued safe existence as equal sovereign states.

For example, if Nauru had not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taken its case to the World Court, it is difficult to believe it would have secured the compensation it did from Australia last year. Under what other circumstances would one of the world's smallest nations have been able to challenge one of the biggest?

In general, most Pacific states feel free not to waste their money on defence, confident that the UN Charter protects them. Indeed, one of the few nations with a defence force, Fiji, earns a substantial amount of foreign exchange by making half its army available to the UN for peacekeeping operations around the world. Just in case, the General Assembly has mandated the Secretary-General to draw up a report on the special defense needs of small island states following the invasion of the Indian Ocean state of the Maldives by an armed group that wanted to use it as a base.

On issues like this, the Pacific states have been relatively adept at relating their local concerns to global issues. It was Vanuatu, joined by its neighbours, which played the major role in developing the Alliance of Small Island States. AOSIS, through last year's Barbados conference, has ensured the particular vulnerabilities of small island states are taken into account in decisions on the global environment. Even earlier, at the Rio Earth Summit, the presence of a large bloc of small island states exerted significant pressure on the larger nations.

The various conventions on greenhouse gases, marine dumping and so on, negotiated under the UN aegis, benefit the maritime nations of the Pacific much more than the major industrial nations.

Last year saw the end of the decades-long saga of the Law of Sea which is, in its own quiet way, perhaps the biggest step forward for island states. Finally, coming into force last Autumn, in enshrining the 200-mile exclusive economic zone, it made tiny islets into huge territories. If the talks on "straddling and migratory fish stocks" come to fruition, they will help ensure the economic future of many.

Small countries are not always independent in their voting. Beijing and Taipei have both discovered that a reasonably big aid cheque buys votes at the UN, while the former Trust Territories sometimes follow Washington when not even America's closest allies will. And while in the aftermath of the recovery of Kuwait from Iraqi invaders many small states rushed to take advantage of the insurance policy that UN membership seemed to offer, events in Bosnia seem to have added small print to the effect that "only small states need apply".

Even so, the Pacific presence at the UN has made a distinctive mark, and keeps the other nations of the world aware of their existence. It would be almost inconceivable for the world body to allow a successful military invasion – and it is looking more probable that the nations of the world will take action to stop an invasion by rising sea levels. For all its failures and bureaucratic problems, there is little doubt that the UN has been a good thing for the Pacific. ■

Palau – the newest recruit

By Ian Williams

In the middle of December, the Pacific's ranks at the UN gained a new recruit with the 185th member state, the Republic of Palau. The raising of the country's flag outside UN headquarters in New York marked a new beginning for the country and the end of a 50-year saga of three-cornered relations among the UN, the US, and the Pacific which began when US marines stormed ashore in 1944 and the UN was established in 1945. In fact, Palau President Kuniwo Nakamura referred to his country's independence as a "symbolic end to World War II".

Palau, the 10th South Pacific Forum nation to join the United Nations, has had the most involved relationship of almost any nation with the world organisation. It is the very last UN trusteeship territory and so one would expect the Trusteeship Council to be wrapped up. But anything Palau touched seems tied up in procedural wrangles. The council will be moth-balled, not abolished, because, as one French diplomat warned, to close it down would require an alteration to the UN Charter which could have "dangerous consequences". By this he meant other countries might ask questions about the other World War II relic in the UN Charter – the permanent Security Council seats still held by former great powers like Britain and France.

One other wrangle has been avoided. As President Nakamura explains in his interview with *PIM*, the long-lasting court case between a consortium of banks and Palau has been settled satisfactorily. The banks sued over a dubious loan made 10 years ago, which, with interest, would have crippled the newly independent state with a debt of somewhere in the region of a $100 million. The case had been bouncing between the State and Federal courts in New York for the past 10 years until the President intervened in 1993.

But, of course, the mother of all procedural wrangles has been the series of referendums over amending the Palauan constitution's anti-nuclear provisions to suit US objections. In 1983, the US delegate told the UN nuclear weapons were "necessary if the United States is to meet its responsibilities for the defence of Palau".This highly dubious claim was, however, backed by the indisputable fact that US money was indeed indispensable for the survival of the fledgling republic, which, after 40 years of Trusteeship, had almost no other resources or income.

Successive Palauan governments tried to get their hands on the funds that would be available under the Compact of Free Association with the US, but Washington was adamant the non-nuclear provisions had to go first. Vote after vote failed to raise the 75-percent majority needed to overturn the constitution until last year when the clause specifying the 75-percent was amended by referendum to allow a simple majority.

After Spanish, German, Japanese, and American rule, one of the most colonised territories in the world now seems set for a prosperous independent future. The Compact assures a once off payment of \$190 million, and then annual payments of \$18 million for 14 years, which per capita for the estimated 15,000 inhabitants must make it the most heavily aided country in the world.

However, such largess could breed dependency, and President Nakamura's government has to develop the indigenous resources to bridge the gap when the Compact funds run out. Agriculture, fisheries, textiles and tourism are the major possibilities, but the latter especially has potential to cause dissent. Many islands have suffered as much as benefited from tourism, and it will need tight control if Palau's fragile environment is to be preserved. As he told the UN General Assembly, despite its size, possibly the smallest member, "we are large in things that count: a strong cultural heritage; a commitment to human rights and a democratic government; resources – both human and marine – which we are particularly proud of; and most of all, the support and friendship of our brothers and sisters in the international family of nations."

Every press release and speech about the accession of Palau to the UN seemed to give a different population figure. President Nakamura is equally vague, hazarding that "if you include everyone, inside and outside of Palau, I'd say about 40,000. About half in Palau and half outside, even in New York".

Will there soon be a permanent mission in New York to add to the expatriate population there? "We haven't decided yet. To begin with, our UN affairs will be handled by our Washington office, and I haven't named anyone for that yet."

It looks as though Palau would have been crippled at birth with huge debts from the Ipseco power station scandal. How did he get that millstone off his neck?

"Well, we had no ability to pay that kind of money," President Nakamura confessed, "so as soon as I took over office, I told them I wanted to resolve it. I immediately contacted the banks and asked for a renegotiation of the loan, which as you know, we defaulted on some time ago. They agreed to meet us, so I went to London in June 1993, along with other leaders of Palau, and we were able to strike a deal to reduce the debt to \$20 million, interest-free, to be paid within five years with the first installment of \$2.5 million to be paid on or before January 9, 1995. The final agreement was signed in June. Since the principal was \$32 million, this was a good deal. We have already secured the money and we will be remitting the money, \$22.5 million, to Morgan Grenfell of London. It is interest-free so we want to wait until then to pay. But the problem has been resolved. We are very glad to get this out of the way before we begin a new chapter of our history."

Asked about the difficulty of settling, the President said, " They too realised that they had to meet us half way. We had very frank discussions – about our ability to pay for example. I told them that I cannot settle on something that we cannot deliver."

Apart from the debt, the other obstacle for Palauan independence has been the non-nuclear provisions of the constitution. What is their present status? "The nuclear provisions are suspended for the duration of the Compact, for 50 years, and will be revived, reactivated afterwards. Of course, the Compact can be terminated any time."

Has the referendum finally settled the issue? "Well we got 68 percent in the last one, which was also on a very high turnout of about 80 percent. In 1992, we had a referendum to lower the test to a simple majority and last year we had the referendum to suspend the constitution. In fact, we have good turnouts in votes. In the last presidential elections we had over 90 percent turnout."

So is there any more litigation pending on it? "Not as of today," he chuckled indulgently.

Some other countries have complained that Micronesia and the Marshalls vote with the US on issues like the Middle East where the rest of the world opposes it. Will Palau have an independent foreign policy? President Nakamura chuckled knowingly, and cautioned, "You know, the US is a very influential country, and given our historical relationship with the US, I think we'll continue to have a good relationship and we will co-ordinate with them. I think we will work very closely with the United States."

He added that of course, Palau will be joining the South Pacific Forum soon: "We will be a member – an active member – and of course of the AOSIS. There are a lot of regional issues to be addressed".

In his speech to the General Assembly he referred to rebuilding infrastructure. Apart from tourism, what is there to develop? "Next to tourism, our biggest asset is our exclusive economic zone, the offshore fisheries, longliners from Japan and China and the US – with whom we have a regional agreement."

"We also have a plan for small-scale industries including garments. But it's highly labour intensive and we'd have to import labour so we are looking very carefully at it."

There have been fears the rush for tourist dollars would destroy the very environmental assets that attract tourists. Could he reassure people about that?

"We are very aware that our environment is very sensitive and very important for our economic development. It's the only thing that we have really. It's something that we want to share with the rest of the world, but we do have to be careful. Tourism has been growing at an annual rate of between 18 to 20 percent for the past three years. It is very small compared with, say, Guam but we want to concentrate on quality tourism. We don't want mass tourism, we want tourists with lots of money to spend who won't affect our environment."

Whatever the country does with its economy, for the foreseeable future it is going to be one of the largest per capita recipients of aid in the world. Was the President worried Palauans would be highly dependent? "That's one area that we have to continue to educate our people in. You have to think differently before you can act differently. For 50 years we have been provided with practically everything by the United States. We need to change the attitude, especially for our young people."

The biggest asset is, he says, the people, "You know, I'm amazed by the strength of our cultural values. I think our values are still strong and will continue to be so."

How did he account for the resilience of that culture in the face of successive waves of colonial cultures? "That's a very interesting question. I think it has to be, to some extent, because of traditional control over the land and over a lot of even daily functions in our society. For instance, if a man builds his house, all his relatives will contribute to buy it. We call it *ocheraol*. It means, literally, "something to be purchased". It's not practised anywhere in Micronesia except Palau. And we have good houses in Palau generally, very very good, even for unemployed people."

With all the bitterness of the Compact wrangling, how do Palauans look at the UN trusteeship system and the US administration? "We consider ourselves fortunate to have been put under the UN Trusteeship system and under the US as an administratering authority. One of the best things that happened was the introduction of democracy, which is alive and working in Palau, and fortunately meshes perfectly with our traditional values and system of society.

In general I can say that although it took a lot longer than the UN originally anticipated, – after all we were the last trust territory in the world – the achievements that we have accomplished together are generally acceptable and have brought us to where we are now.

We have a solid foundation – small government, small country. We can sail our ship along with the other bigger ships on this ocean knowing that everything will be OK. Fortunately, we have the Compact relationship with the US and I believe that they will continue to give us the type of help they have been giving us for the past 50 years." ■

Johnston Atoll revisited

As the disposal of chemical weapons on Johnston continues amid a series of accidents, concern is being raised over the programme's safety

By Ed Rampell

On January 3, the US Army announced it was seeking an extension and an additional US$650 million to fulfill its mandate to burn up to 6.6 percent of the US chemical weapons stockpile at the US$240 million at Johnston Atoll Chemical Agent Disposal System's incinerator complex.

Why is the Army asking for a modification to its August 30, 1995 deadline to incinerate 400,000 weapons, including mustard gas and 400 tons of nerve gas shipped from Germany to Johnston? And how safe is JACADS?

According to the Army, delays have been caused by "unexpected operational problems" which include:

❑ A fire in the explosive containment area of the experimental plant on March 14, 1994 of Johnston, where the US Army incinerates much of its chemical weapons arsenal. According to US Environmental Protection Agency spokesman Ray Fox, "Rockets are chopped, then dropped down chutes of deactivation furnaces. There was a misfortune – a spark went up through the chute and ignited a rocket. Although there was some damage and shutdown for a few days, there was no nerve agent release or injury."

❑ An accidental release of live nerve agent GB from a JACADS smokestack on March 23,1994. This 25-minute exposure was at least 10 times greater than EPA's allowable levels. There were no injuries, but JACADS was shut down until July 12. (EPA also reports there was another accidental release of nerve agent GB since JACADS burning began on June 30, 1990.)

❑ Hurricane John forced the evacuation of 1105 civilian and military personnel from Johnston Atoll on August 25, 1994.The JACADS plant ceased burning chemical agents for up to three months, according to various estimates, and the Army reported "infrastructure ... damage."

❑ Another fire and an explosion in the explosive and agent containment room at JACADS on November 19, 1994, during the shearing of a rocket that had been drained of nerve agent GB M55. The shearing machine was damaged and chemical rocket processing was halted at Johnston until December 5.

❑ A fire at JACADS caused by "a coolant line that came apart, spraying coolant on the hot surface of the deactivation furnace (on December 24, 1994). The fire lasted until the coolant burned out. There was soot, but no damage to equipment. Operations resumed Dec. 26," according at EPA's Fox.

This is not the first major delay for the facility. Activist Craig Williams of the Chemical Weapons Working Group and the Kentucky Environmental Foundation alleges, "I don't know how often JACADS has ceased operation because there have been so many shutdowns. JACADS is down more than 50 percent of the time." Indeed, the Army's own public notice regarding its extension request states that from June 30, 1990 to August 31, 1994, there were no hazardous waste operations at JACADS for 660 days, or about two years! And the above incidents are not the only accidents at Johnston Atoll.

According to the US magazine *The Progressive*, JACADS's "test period was supposed to last about 16 months, from the middle of 1990 through late 1991. But work had to be halted on 65 of the first 85 days of scheduled operations in 1990 because gas-leak monitors sounded false alarms, conveyor belts melted, the incinerator overheated, and mechanical equipment failed. Major repairs and modifications required a protracted shutdown".

But Johnston's calamities started long before construction of JACADS began in 1985, located outside the area covered by the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and not subject to all US environmental laws. According to New Zealand journalist David Robie in *Blood On Their Banner*, "At Johnston, US Air Force planes dropped two thermonuclear bombs in 1958, and then used missiles to launch a further 10 bombs into space four years later," before the US-USSR 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty went into effect.

The Johnston Atoll facility of the US Army for the destruction of chemical weapons

New Zealander Owen Wilkes, a long-time disarmament advocate, writes in *Tu Galala*, "On Johnston Atoll in 1962 the US shot nuclear warheads out into space to study the effects of nuclear blasts on radio, radar and satellites. The first missile was partially successful. The next went off course and plunged into deep water, from which its nuclear warhead was never recovered. The third blew up immediately overhead and falling debris injured two workers on the atoll. The fourth ... exploded in space and caused a brilliant artificial aurora that was seen from Alaska to Antarctica. Many people thought it was the end of the world; it also put out streetlights and triggered burglar alarms in Honolulu ... it had generated the world's first electromagnetic pulse ... The fifth blew up on the launchpad ..."

During the 1962 atmospheric test at Johnston, plutonium – the deadliest element known to man – was released at Johnston, which is 0.8 kilometres wide and 3.2 km long. According to "Mr D", a defence industry source knowledgeable about JACADS, who agreed to speak on condition of anonymity, a nuke "went off the launch pad and cracked ... The missile did not go off, but it cracked the casing, releasing plutonium." The radioactive area is "off-limits via a chain link fence". The world's first and largest plutonium mining plant is separating contaminated soil in a US$10-million clean-up programme at the atomic atoll. Mr D says the plutonium poisoned area will be decontaminated in 1995.

Plutonium is not the only lethal substance to leak at Johnston. In the 1970s, the US shipped millions of gallons of dioxin-contaminated Agent Orange, the birth defect-causing defoliant used in Vietnam, to Johnston. According to Mr D, "The Agent Orange was stored in 55-gallon drums, which rusted, and the Agent Orange leaked into the soil." (This still contaminated area is also fenced off.)

According to Wilkes, the herbicide was finally burned on Vulcanus *II*, the incinerator ship, which Wilkes calls "notoriously inefficient", offshore of Johnston in 1976. Diesel fuel has also leaked from storage tanks into Johnston.

Wilkes goes on to say in *Tu Galala*, "Johnston Atoll is a microcosm of the backside-of-the-Earth syndrome. Here, to an extreme degree, the US military does anything that is too unpopular, too dangerous and too secret to do elsewhere in the Pacific." Robie says, "Johnston is also probably the most bizarre US military installation in the Pacific."

Greenpeace Pacific coordinator Sebia Hawkins adds, "I have to believe there are inherent flaws with the JACADS design. There are problems with most incinerators – everything f... up all the time. Johnston is one of the most contaminated places on Earth."

Is Johnston the same atoll described so glowingly by US and defence industry spokespeople? Mr D declares: "JACADS proves beyond a doubt you can safely, environmentally, destroy chemical weapons. There's never been any violation of safety procedures." Pro-JACADS sources cite a noble cause – ridding the world of terrible weapons of mass destruction.

John Fairbanks, a civilian who has been to Johnston 12 times, says JACADS "stoppages have not been due to mechanical failure," and points to Hurricane John as an example of a shut-

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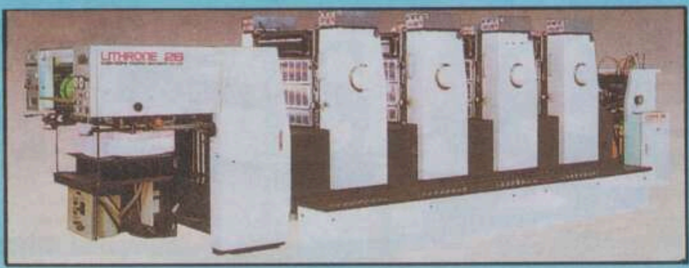

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Bunkers used for storing chemical weapons

down not owing to operational problems with the installation. Fairbanks adds, "There have been glitches all along. We learn from the problems."

EPA's Larry Bowerman states: "In general, JACADS does a pretty good job. Trial burns are better than safety requirements. JACADs has a conservative attitude regarding safety."

Pro-JACADS forces assert the safety of the chemical incineration plant. Following Hurricane John, a US Army Public Affairs Office press release announcing the end of the emergency said: "The dining facility was one of the most severely damaged buildings, and will require about a month to repair ... The dining facility was damaged when the roof cover was stripped away and the interior ceiling collapsed into the dining area. The other critical casualty was the salt water pumping station which supplies water for fire fighting, flushing toilets and cooling of the Joint Operations Centre and the JACADS plant. A wall exposed to the lagoon was torn away and the electrical system was contaminated with salt water."

The same Army press release makes a point of stating, "During the storm, the island infrastructure experienced damage to buildings and facilities but the plant and the storage areas were undamaged. There was no leak of chemical agents." According to the news releases, safety procedures were followed: "The JACADS plant was destroying chemical rockets containing nerve agent GB prior to the approach of Hurricane John. The plant ceased operations, the agent in the plant was incinerated, lines and tanks were purged of agent residues and unprocessed rockets were returned to the igloo ammunition storage bunkers."

Mr D contends JACADS is composed of "concrete reinforced with steel. There was no JACADS damage. Not a wind in the world could hurt the incineration plant."

Safety again is stressed in a November 20, 1994 press release on the explosion (which it describes as "a low order detonation"): "The detonation occurred within the explosive and agent containment room which is designed to sustain explosive pressures and to contain the agent within the facility. There was damage to the shearing machine. The rocket had previously been drained of chemical agent. There were no injuries, nor escape of chemical agent from the plant. The plant is designed so that no workers are within the destruction area. The process of rocket demilitarisation is mechanically controlled with video visual monitoring."

The safety issue is bolstered in another press release by Marilyn Tischbin, Public Affairs Chief of the US Army Chemical Stockpile Disposal Program at the Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, which announced, "Chemical rocket processing resumed today at Johnston Island following a detonation that damaged equipment in one of the two Explosive Containment Rooms ... Damage was limited to the immediate area and agent operations have continued in the rest of the facility, including the liquid incinerator. The Dunnage Incinerator has also been operating ... The Johnston Island facility was designed to handle explosive materials and contain chemical agents ..."

But separately interviewed, pro-JACADS sources don't always see eye-to-eye. As for release of a nerve agent from the smokestack, Mr D proclaims: "This is technically impossible. Nerve agent can't be released from a smokestack. I'm positive." On the other hand, army spokesman Fairbanks says: "There was a stack emission of a recordable amount. The smokestack is scrubbed out, and goes through a liquid scrubber system ... It did register positive for 18 seconds." Fairbanks adds the episode did "not cause a shutdown, but (the system) was not operating at the time because it was switching from one munition to another and refiguring the system." EPA confirms nerve agent release through a stack, adding it caused a shutdown for more than three months.

Mr D, Fairbanks, and EPA also disagree on fires at JACADS, (in particular after the November 19 explosion. Mr D insists, "I'm 100 percent sure there was not another fire." But Fairbanks says there was, "minor dripping of hydraulic fluid on a hot incinerator. They let it burn off, then started up." EPA confirms a fire took place December 24, 1994, shutting JACADS down for two days.

There is also disagreement on the benefits of locating JACADS at Johnston. Mr D says, "Johnston is the ideal place to incinerate chemical weapons. There's no indigenous population, and nobody downwind. If everything explodes, in 10 miles it will dissipate. There's no harm to any personnel downrange – grandmothers, couples are safe, and not in risk."

Fairbanks differs: "The location is far from ideal. JACADS is extremely costly. It's in a hostile, salt-laden atmosphere. The plant will be ready to come down due to corrosion ... You have to ship in fuel, pay excess money to workers (who are shipped in and, by the way, forbidden to unionise), pay for a desalinisation plant and power plant. It's very expensive to operate."

The defence industry, Army, and EPA spokesmen also disagree on when – and if – JACADS will shut down. JACADS is now mandated to cease operations once the munitions already stored there are incinerated. When US President George Bush held a rare summit with Pacific representatives on October 27, 1990 in Honolulu, he "assured the leaders that we plan to dispose of only the chemical munitions ... found in the Pacific islands and those relatively small quantities shipped from Germany ...We have no plans to use Johnston Atoll for any other chemical-munitions purposes."

While Fairbanks raised the possibility that JACADS might continue operation as far into the future as 2010, he said, "but as stated now, (no additional chemical weapons) from the mainland" will be shipped and incinerated there. "The plant will be disassembled and Johnston will revert to a bird sanctuary," under the jurisdiction of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

But Mr D is more bullish on JACADS and its possible future. "The shutdown date was never reasonable. The army was under pressure, due to the treaty that (ex-USSR President Mikhail) Gorbachev signed with President Bush", banning further production of chemical weapons and creating a timetable for eliminating most existing arsenals by the beginning of the 21st century. "JACADS won't make the date. It's too far behind."

Mr D adds, "It's ideal for all nerve agents to go to Johnston to be incinerated. It makes most sense to continue" operation of JACADS. Mr D confirms JACADS is mandated to be dismantled after completion of the elimination of the chemical weapons already there, but, significantly, goes on to say: "Oh sure, you can make a law, and you can unmake a law."

EPA's Fox says, JACADS's "original permit was August 1985 to expire August 1995". EPA's Larry Bowerman says, JACADS "can apply for a permit (extension) from a few months up to 10 years." Bowerman adds JACADS's concern with safety is "why it has been slower than originally planned ... Various operational problems and time to fix them" add to the delay.


Chemical warheads at Johnston Atoll

According to Craig Williams of the Chemical Weapons Working Group, which has members in the US, Russia and the Pacific, the big picture is about "money, vested interests, like Raytheon (the defence contractor at JACADS). Defence contractors are gauging the taxpayers. With the end of the Cold War, suddenly they're environmental disposers. It's the same people, with a continuing relationship with the military. It's a revolving door."

Alternative technologies could dispose of the chemical weapons more efficiently and cheaply and at the site where they are stored, charges Williams, who is also national spokesman for the Kentucky Environmental Foundation. Why is a resident of this East Coast state so concerned about distant Johnston Island? Four miles from Williams' home, 1.6 percent of the US chemical arsenal is stored at Lexington in Kentucky, one of eight states where chemical weapons are stockpiled and proposed JACADS-like plants may be built in order to burn the weapons there.

Since these states have - unlike Johnston - resident populations, community protests in the 1980s forced the US government to postpone building untested plants in these states. Instead, the incineration was relocated to Johnston, which, Williams says, is supposed to be a "showcase to prove it can be done. The best people were put on it. JACADS is supposed to be the crown jewel demonstrating the viability" of the incineration of chemical agents.

Williams points out that if JACADS proved to be successful, not only would eight other incineration plants then be built in America, but plants could also be built in Russia.

Thus defence contractors stand to make billions – if JACADS is a success – which may explain why so much is riding on the facility, information is so limited and the operation so secretive.

A second plant is being prepared at Tooele, Utah, where 42.3 percent of US chemical weapons stock is stored. Williams asserts Tooele is troubled and has been the subject of many media exposes, adding "If you think Tooele is bad, JACADS must be a nightmare. At least there's some oversight at Tooele – at JACADS, only JACADS is doing it. God knows what's happening."

Williams and Mr D agree on one point: 100 workers are at Johnston for repair purposes.

Johnston Atoll Chemical Agent Disposal System opponents are, as of this writing, considering formally requesting major investigations of JACADS by independent sources, the Department of Defence's Inspector General, and/or the Army's Inspector General. ■

Typhoid scare in New Zealand

By Martin Tiffany

On the surface, the several cases of typhoid reported in Auckland, New Zealand last year do not appear too much to worry about. But scratch the surface and a bigger problem emerges.

Fresh fish from Western Samoa seems to have been the likely cause of the disease in at least two cases. The problem, therefore, is food and people entering New Zealand without undergoing thorough screening and, in the process, bringing diseases in as well.

Central Auckland's Medical Officer of Health, Dr Lester Calder, says, cases of the potentially fatal disease can be linked to a typhoid epidemic in Western Samoa in 1993.

He said it was hard to say for certain where a person contracted typhoid and it often took a bit of detective work to trace it to a possible source.

"Typhoid is uncommon here. It is usually contracted when people travel overseas. But when people have not travelled, we have to inquire what they have eaten," said Dr Calder.

He said two of the cases seemed to have been caused by fish from Western Samoa, and there was a possibility a third case could stem from the same cause.

According to figures from the Communicable Diseases Centre in Wellington, 23 cases of typhoid were reported last year. None was fatal. Although this may seem nothing to get excited about, it was enough for Dr Calder to broadcast, on Auckland's Pacific Island Station, warnings of the dangers of bringing in the disease through fresh fish.

New Zealand's Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries allows dead fish from Western Samoa and other Pacific countries into the country.

Dr Calder said he had asked the New Zealand Ministry of Health to put up warning signs in airports and distribute pamphlets to the various island nations but had not received an enthusiastic response. "They seem worried about it being a political thing," he said.

Dr Calder also wants to take up with MAF the case of regulations on seafood coming into New Zealand being so lax.

He said people needed to know about the infection, the symptoms – stomach pain, fever – and the fact that because it is a gastrointestinal disease, it can kill you.

"People have to take it seriously."

Typhoid is a bacterial infection of the intestines caused by contaminated food or water. Often patients who have recovered become carriers.

Dr Calder is also concerned about the time and money spent when a person is found to have typhoid. There are lengthy tests that have to be carried out on the infected person and relatives, and a course of expensive antibiotics have to be prescribed.

Dr Farhat Mahmood, South Auckland's Medical Officer of Health, is also concerned about the risks of typhoid. He, like Dr Calder, was glad when *PIM* contacted him to highlight the problem.

"I am glad you called, I have been trying to get this problem into the paper," were Dr Mahmood's first words. He said everyone bringing fish into New Zealand was taking a risk as there was no way of knowing if the fish was contaminated.

He was unhappy there were no restrictions on bringing fish to New Zealand and believed the only way to tackle the problem was to educate the people.

South Auckland is the area most at risk because of the high concentration of Pacific Islanders – especially Western Samoans. Most of the fish brought from the Pacific is given as gifts by visitors or returning residents.

Typhoid is not the only disease causing concern in New Zealand's Pacific island population – especially in South Auckland. Tuberculosis rates among Pacific Islanders are high, compared to Europeans and other races.

According to Dr Calder, TB among Pacific Islanders in Auckland is 30 times that of Europeans in Auckland. He blamed overseas travel by Pacific Islanders and Asians for the number of TB cases in New Zealand remaining static.

After World War II, the rate had declined steadily until the early 1980s when it levelled off and remained so for the past 10 to 12 years.

Dr Calder sees the end of the welfare state, with its increase in poverty, another factor affecting the number of TB cases.

The TB problem is more difficult to eradicate. Health checks are compulsory only for Pacific Islanders seeking residency, but people from Niue, Tokelau and the Cook Islands enjoy New Zealand citizenship and come and go as they please.

The New Zealand government is reviewing its health screening procedure for immigrants following concerns raised. But this has already been criticised as being a breach of human rights.

The battle against diseases being brought into New Zealand is a difficult one to win. ■

A hasty departure from Lord Howe

By Sally Andrew

Sandy sighed as she gave us an *Australian Geographic* article on Lord Howe Island. "I've always wanted to go there." It looked fascinating – a sub-tropical isle with interesting people, unique wildlife and picturesque topography. But it seemed a risky place to bring a yacht.

It was a slow passage from Sydney. Light winds gave way to no winds which gave way to noser'ly winds. We kept beating to windward, unable to keep our rhumb-line and ended up 60 miles north of Lord Howe after seven days and 400 miles. Finally, our luck changed and the wind shifted. With a full moon and clear conditions, I spotted the island when we were still 25 miles out to sea. Mt Gower and Mt Lidberg, two bumps in the distance, rose off an obscure horizon.

Shortly after dawn I heard Lord Howe Radio on VHF. The *Firefox*, a small bright red runabout, was ferrying people from Australia's sail training ship, *Young Endeavour*, to shore. We stood off, lined up the range and *Firefox* piloted us in through the narrow pass. The skipper pointed out our mooring just inside the pass. There was enough water at low tide to float our two-metre raft.

After lunch we walked to Ned's Beach, a special marine reserve on the windward side of the island, where colourful reef fish have been hand-fed for many years. You can stand in the water knee-deep and feed the fish or go snorkelling. Fishing is banned off Ned's Beach but the surrounding waters are home to both tropical and temperate fish. Offshore fishing trips to Balls Pyramid are popular as are glass-bottom boat trips in the lagoon.

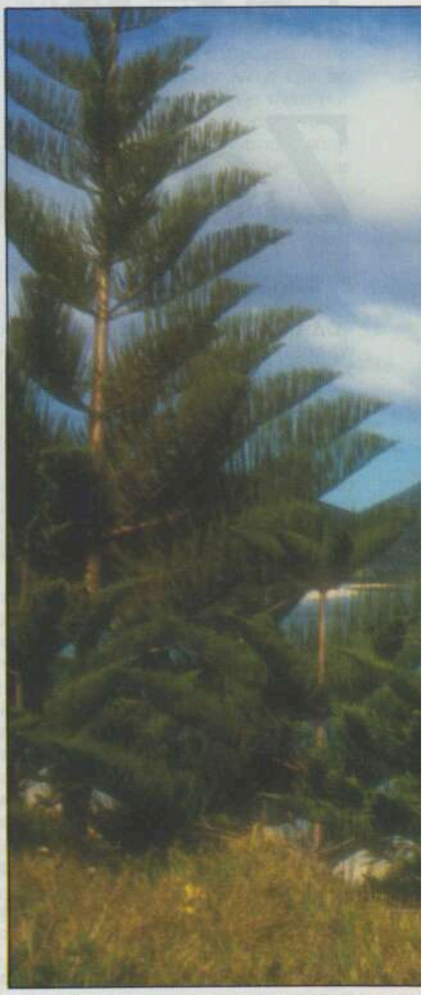
Thanks to warm tropical waters that flow south-east from the Great Barrier Reef, Lord Howe boasts the world's southernmost coral reef. About 75 percent of the island species of seabirds visit seasonally, most coming to breed during the summer months. All plants and wildlife are protected at Lord Howe, Australia's first World Heritage Island.

Settlement is restricted to the centre of the island, so it was easy to track down and share a cup of coffee with an amateur (ham) radio acquaintance, Dick Hoffman (VK9LH), who has lived on the island for 24 years. His wife Noelle is an artist and runs an all-Australian arts and crafts studio, Sea Spray. Dick works with the island's satellite link to the outside – television.

Most of the islands' 300 residents work in the tourist industry which caters to the upscale market. The other economic mainstay is the sale and export of thatch (or kentia) palm, the world's most popular ornamental indoor palm.

When the wind started to increase, we scuttled back to the beach where we had left our dinghy. Here we met a fellow who remembered our Canadian friends, Kevin and Laurel, who nearly lost their boat at Lord Howe Island two years ago when a demonic low materialised. Eighty knot winds blew *Copacetic* and her crew right off the mooring. They bounced across the lagoon and were about to be shipwrecked when someone, somehow, threw them a heavy mooring line from the wharf which they wrapped around their mast.

The wind began gusting up to 30 knots and higher offshore and I was afraid we might get blown out to sea



Lord Howe's Lagoon: seen from Signal Point is only since our inflatable dinghy was lifting off the water – with us in it. But we made it back to *Fellowship* and filled the dinghy with water so it wouldn't twirl in pirouettes off the stern. Thick and heavy rain fell, washing all traces of salt from our passage. It blew hard all night long, with a couple of 180-degree wind shifts and more than once we were layed on our ears. It was frightening. If we broke loose or dragged the mooring, our "home" would be a total loss in mere seconds.

We would have felt better if we were on our own ground tackle in a nice patch of sand but anchoring, which is very damaging to the coral gardens which abound in the lagoon area, is prohibited. Lord Howe's coral reefs and colourful marine life are protected and are a source of livelihood for the locals. In such an environmentally sensitive area moorings are the only option.

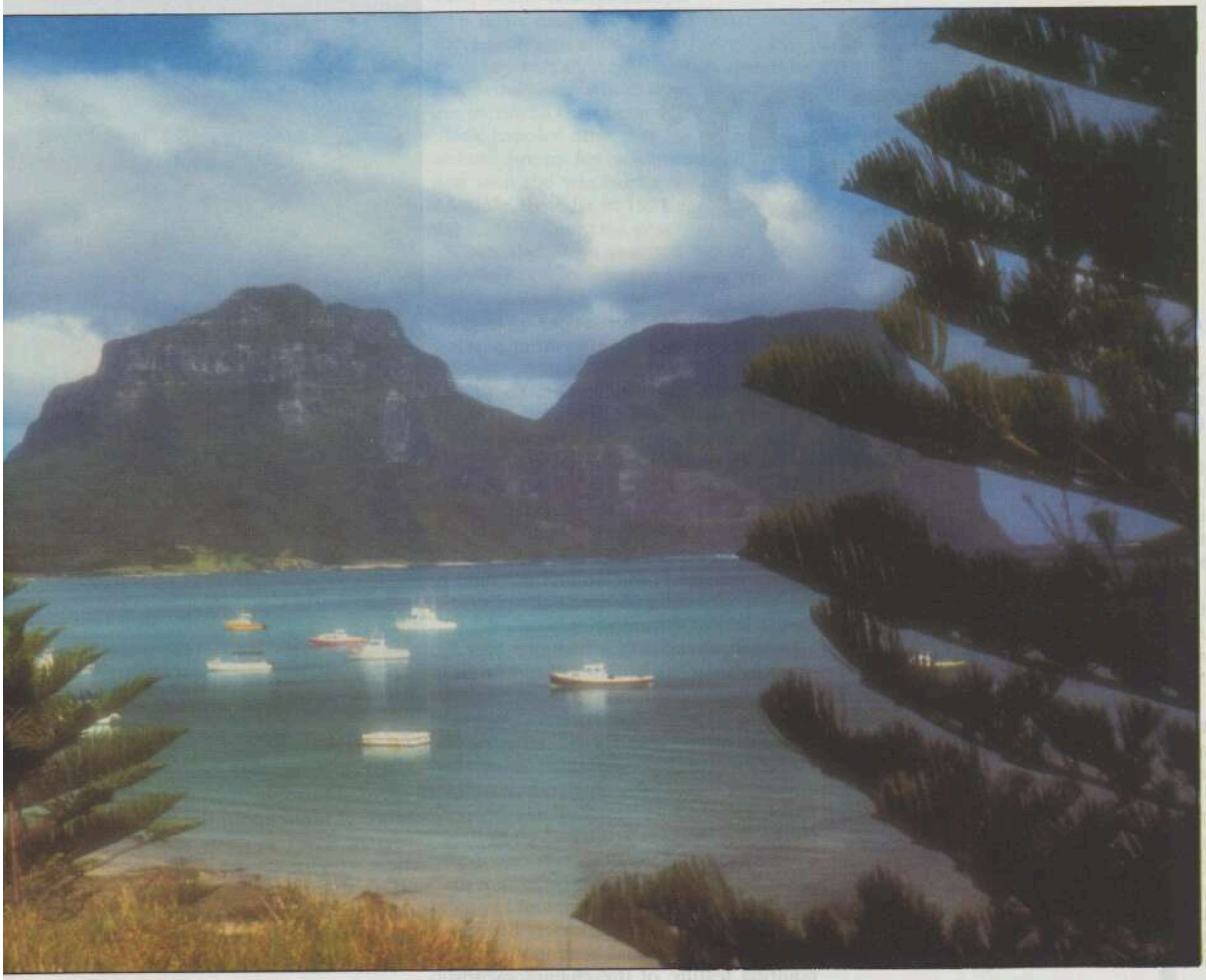
Never had we been in a more uncomfortable anchorage. At high tide, the swell rolled in over the reef while the current pinned us sideways to the incoming swell. The only time that we could sleep was two hours either side of low tide.

High tide rolled us out of bed in the morning, and while the boat rolled gunwale to gunwale, I strapped myself in the galley, made breakfast and packed a lunch. Cooking and living aboard was easier on the open ocean.

Lord Howe has trails to keep any hiker busy and views galore. We followed the advice of two spunky Tasmanian lady-friends full of glowing reports of their hike up to Mt Eliza and Malabar. We crossed a paddock full of cow dung near a Catalina crash-site before climbing to the cliff tops of Mt Eliza, an excellent vantage point from which to view the many visiting seabirds that nest on the island.

The most challenging hike on the island takes you to the top of Mt Gower, whose black basalt cliffs rise steeply from the sea to 875 metres. A difficult climb, the trail is steep and overgrown and requires a guide, a fit body and about nine hours. On the summit, we were told, is an enchanted world of gnarled and mossy rainforest.

A photographer's dream and a hiker's paradise, Lord Howe was, however, a disappointment to us. In addition to the tenuousness of the anchorage, the fees assessed by the Lord Howe Island Board were unconscionably high. So we made a hasty departure and never got the chance to hike up Mt Gower. ■



one to three metres deep

Fiji's lone surfer

By Shailendra Singh

Fiji's Tony Philp's rise to fame as a world-class champion windsurfer is seen as a boost for the sport in Fiji and the South Pacific.

Philp, 25, won his fourth Windsurfer One Design world title in January, 1995 at Deuba, Fiji. His victory, against a strong international class of competitors, has increased an awareness of the sport in his country.

Spurred on by the success of the first international event, the Fiji Windsurfing Association (FWSA) is looking at hosting another one this November in the Mistral Board class, with cash prizes.

It will add one more competition to the South Pacific windsurfing calendar, apart from the South Pacific Games and events hosted by New Caledonia.

Organising committee member John Philp said they wanted to get the International Yacht Racing Union (IYRU) to recognise the proposed competition so as to get world ratings for participants. This would make it easier to find sponsors and make the event more attractive for competitors. "We are looking at a quiet tourism period to get free or concessionary rates from hotels and airlines," he said.

The event will be the first to offer prizes in the Mistral Board Class.

Immediately after the January event, FWSA membership doubled to 60. Less than two weeks later, 35 of the 50 boards used at the championships had been sold.

"A lot more people have some awareness of the sport now," said John, unfolding plans for national championships to keep the momentum going.

The Fiji government, which provides a grant to Tony, has promised support for national championships.

The 21st Windsurfer World Championships that Fiji hosted attracted more than 70 competitors from 11 countries – Australia, England, Austria, Israel, Italy, France, New Zealand, Japan, Netherlands, South Africa and the United States.

For the first time, Fiji sports fans got to see Philp's performance live and appreciate the calibre of windsurfers he was competing against and beating. A disappointing feature of the championships

Tony Philp competing in Fiji earlier this year

was that there were no competitors from island nations. It could have been a chance to build up for the SPG.

For the sport to grow in the region, where conditions are great for windsurfing, there has to be more participation when international events are held, said John.

New Caledonia and Tahiti are the only

other island countries which see regular competition and play host to some big events.

John said they did not come to Fiji because they used Olympic Class boards. Competitors from both countries, and Papua New Guinea, Guam and the Cook Islands, are expected for the November championships.

The progress of the sport in the South Pacific pleases Tony Philp. He dreams of more islands holding regular international competitions. While conditions for windsurfing are perfect in the South Pacific, its isolation is a setback.

"It's hard for people to get proper competition or keep pursuing the sport," Tony said. "We have to hold more competitions and get top windsurfers to compete here. It'll just snowball from there."

For Tony the struggle to become world champion was especially hard. Initially he had to do without the kind of government support and corporate sponsorship that comes easily to windsurfers from more developed countries.

It has been a lonely ride, admits Tony, who has been Fiji's only competitor at many of the championships.

An unyielding love for the sport and sheer determination to achieve his goals saw him through. Having captured four windsurfer world titles, Tony feels the sacrifices have been worth it.

He's happier now that his country is waking up to his achievements. Tony first won the windsurfer world title in Adelaide, Australia, in 1991 and repeated the feat the following year.

When the news reached home, few people knew much about him or his sport. 1993 was again Tony's year in South Africa but he lost to Australian Beau Moulson at Illawara, Australia last year.

By the time Fiji got to host the championships in January, Tony was a well-known sporting figure to local fans. At the end of the week-long event, he emerged a national hero.

"I was really happy with the way it went," he said. "Just incredible. Local support was great and winning, on top of that, was the icing on the cake."

It was Tony who proposed to the IYRU that Fiji should host the championships.

"I always knew Fiji had the potential to hold such a big event, given the location, the facilities and the weather," he said.

There was tremendous expectation and he said he felt the pressure. The media scrutiny on him was intense throughout the championships.

Australian Lars Kleppich, who won a bronze medal at the 1992 Olympics, was Tony's biggest threat. Kleppich was having a great race in the lightweight division, beating Moulson cleanly in two disciplines, but his performance tapered off on the final day.

Tony surged through, winning the freestyle brilliantly, to add to his first place in the course racing and the slalom in his middleweight class.

"The freestyle comes naturally to me," he said. "I was doing it as soon as I could windsurf." Tony is the first windsurfer to equal American Matt Schweitzer's four world titles.

"It's a great honour," he said. Apart from his performance, Tony was delighted with the organisation.

"The overseas windsurfers had a good time in Fiji. The organisers did a fantastic job," he said. The opening of the championships was an elaborate affair, steeped in culture and tradition. A *drua* (double-hulled Fijian canoe) was sailed to the venue with Moulson, Kiwi windsurfer Aaron McIntosh and Philp on board.

Escorted by traditionally dressed Fijian warriors, the party presented a *tabua* (whale's tooth) to the traditional owner of Deuba, Ratu Isei Saketa, asking his permission to land and for the use of the sea and surrounding areas.

This followed the ceremony of *Vakasobo* and *qaloqalovi*, which is equivalent to being granted permission to land.

The competitors were then invited to participate in a yaqona ceremony, known as *sevusevu*, prepared by the hosts.

On a sour note, however, Australian windsurfers Adam Quinn and girlfriend Susan Calvert became victims of Fiji's burgeoning crime rate when thieves broke into their villa and stole personal belongings valued at $1000. Police caught the culprits and some of the items were recovered.

There were some complaints about "outdated" equipment after a few boards broke. But Philp said that was to be expected, given the demands placed on the boards by some very strong and agile windsurfers. "It happens when you have a lot of good windsurfers around."

Philp is now eying the SPG in August where a clash looms between him and New Caledonian star Micel Quitin. Quitin, who is on the French national team, was the Olympic Class champion for three consecutive years. He always participates in the SPG.

"He beat me in 1987 and 1991 so, naturally, I'd like to turn the tables on him," Philp said. His ultimate aim is a medal at next year's Olympic Games. He finished 10th at the 1992 Olympics. ■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Sofrana Unilines operates a fully containerised/ breakbulk service every 21 days from Auckland, Tauranga, Lyttleton to Suva and Lautoka. Loading every 21 days, ro/ro service, containers - reefer. Contact Sofrana Unilines, Sofrana House, 101 Customs Street, Auckland, PO Box 3614, Fax (09) 393874, Ph (09) 773279, Tlx NZ 2313. Direct toll free line 0800 659-922, Contact Alan Foote. Compass Shipping Agencies, PO Box 921 Wellington, Tel (04) 382 8206, Fax (04) 3828239, Tlx NZ 4769 Contact Steve Brannigan. Sofrana Unilines Agencies, PO Box 22046 Christchurch, Tel (03) 366 7180, Fax (03) 366 8868, TLX NZ4769, Contact Tony Newell. Carpenters Shipping, Private Mail Bag, Suva, Fiji, Tel (679) 312244, Fax (679) 301572, Tlx FJ 2199. Sofrana Unilines, Suva, Fiji, Tel (679) 315645, Fax (679) 300057.

Australia - Fiji direct

Sofrana Unilines operates a container breakbulk service every three weeks from Melbourne, and Sydney to Lautoka and Suva. Contact Sofrana Unilines (Aust) Pty Ltd, PO Box Q136, Queen Victoria Building, Sydney, NSW 2000, Australia. Tel (02) 2648944, Fax (02) 2676547, Tlx (71) A170090, Contact Sam Attaway/ George Lopez.

Delams Australia Pty Ltd. 474 Flinders Street, Melbourne. Tel (03) 614 1344, Fax (03) 629 4957.

Carpenters Shipping, Suva, Tel (679) 312244, Fax (679) 301572. Sofrana Unilines Suva, Tel (679) 315 645, Fax (679) 300057. Carpenters Shipping, Lautoka, Tel (679) 663988, Fax (679) 664896. Sofrana Unilines, Lautoka Tel (679) 662921, Fax (679) 664896.

Australia - Fiji monthly service

Sofrana Unilines (Australia) Pty Ltd operates a regular monthly service with *MV Capitaine Wallis*. Contact Sofrana Unilines, Sydney, Tel (02) 2648944, Tlx AA170090, Fax (02) 267-6547. Carpenters Shipping, Suva, Fiji, Tel (679) 312244, Fax (679) 301572, Sofrana Unilines, Suva, Fiji Tel (679) 315645, Fax (679) 300057. Carpenters Shipping, Lautoka, Tel (679) 63988, Fax (679) 664896. Sofrana Unilines, Lautoka, Fiji, Tel (679) 662921, Fax (679) 664896.

Far-East - Fiji Service

New Guinea Pacific Line (NGPL) operates a monthly service accepting containerised and break-bulk cargoes from Manila, Keelung, Kaoshiung, Hong Kong, Lae to Suva, Lautoka (via Suva).

Contact Carpenters Shipping Suva, Fiji, tel (679) 312244, fax (679) 301572. New Zealand Unit Express, Maritime Building, 2-10 Customs House Quay, PO Box 890, Wellington. Tel 727865, Cables Enzue Man, Wellington, Tlx NZ31340 Nedlnz or Nedlloyd Swire Pty Ltd, Sydney, Tel 20522.

Japan - South Pacific Service

Same as Burns Philp

Japan - South Pacific Service - Kyowa Shipping Co Ltd

Kyowa Shipping, Shipping Co Ltd provides a monthly service from Hong Kong to main ports of Japan, Saipan, Guam, Island ports, Lautoka, Suva via Nukualofa to Pago Pago and Apia. Contact Carpenters Shipping, Neptune House, 3/4 floor, Tofuaa Street, Walu Bay, Suva. Tel 312244, Fax 301572, Tlx FJ2199.

Europe - Pacific Service

Bank Line offers a monthly service to and from Europe for containerised breakbulk and bulk vegetable cargoes. Calling Papeete, Apia, Suva, Lautoka, Noumea, Port Vila, Santo, Honiara and PNG. Main ports to and from major northern Eurpoean ports. Contact Bank Line, South Pacific Office, Central Court Bld , 7th Street, Lea, PNG,Tel 422925, Tlx NE44265.Carpenters Shipping, 3/4 Floor,Neptune House, Walu Bay, Suve, Fiji, Tel (679) 312244, Fax (679) 301572, TlxFJ 2199.

Nedlloyd offers cargo services from Continental ports to Papeetee, Fiji, New Caledonia and Doniambo on slot basis with Bank Line. Contact Carpenters Shipping, Suva, tel 312244, Tlx FJ2199, Fax 301572. Carpenters Shipping, Lautoka, Tel 663988, Tlx FJ5215, Fax 664896.

South East Asia - Fiji Service

Nedlloyd Lines Service (NZEAS) Service operates regular fast cargo service from Jakarta, Pt Keelang, Singapore, Bangkok, Surubaya via Auckland to Suva and Lautoka. Contact Carpenters Shipping, Suva, Tel 312244, Tlx FJ2199, Fax 301572. Carpenters Shipping, Lautoka Tel 663988, Tlx FJ5215, Fax 663988. Nedlloyd New Zealand, Wellington Tel (04) 472 7864, Fx (04) 473 9201

Far East - Mid South Pacific

China Navigations New Guinea Pacific Line in association with Bank Line, operates a regular container and breakbulk — heavy lift service from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Manila, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand to Port Moresby, Lae, Rabaul, Kieta and Honiara. Cargo from the same eastern ports to the South Pacific Ports of Noumea, Santo, Vila, Papeete, PagoPago, Apia, Nukualofa, Rarotonga and Tarawa will be shipped via Japan or Busan on the monthly Bali Hai Service. Contact Steamships Shipping, Port Moresby, PO Box 634, Tel 220283 or 220289. Tasman Asia operate a 20-day frequency fixed date service, shipping breakbulk and containerised cargoes from Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong to Suva and Lautoka (via Suva). Fiji agents are Forum Shipping Agencies in Suva, Tel 315444, and Lautoka 660577.

Australia - New Caledonia - Fiji - Samoas - Tonga

Pacific Forum Line operates a fully containerised service (general, reefer and ro-ro) from Sydney and Brisbane to Noumea, Lautoka, Suva, Apia, Pago Pago, Nuku'alofa, Sydney. Cargo centralised from Adelaide and Melbourne. Contact: Pacific Forum Line, PO Box 796, Auckland; Union Bulkships, 333 George St, Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne; Union Co, Lautoka; Pacific Forum Line, Suva, Nuku'alofa; Pacific Forum Line, Apia; Polynesia Shipping, Pago Pago. Sofrana Unilines operates a roro/container

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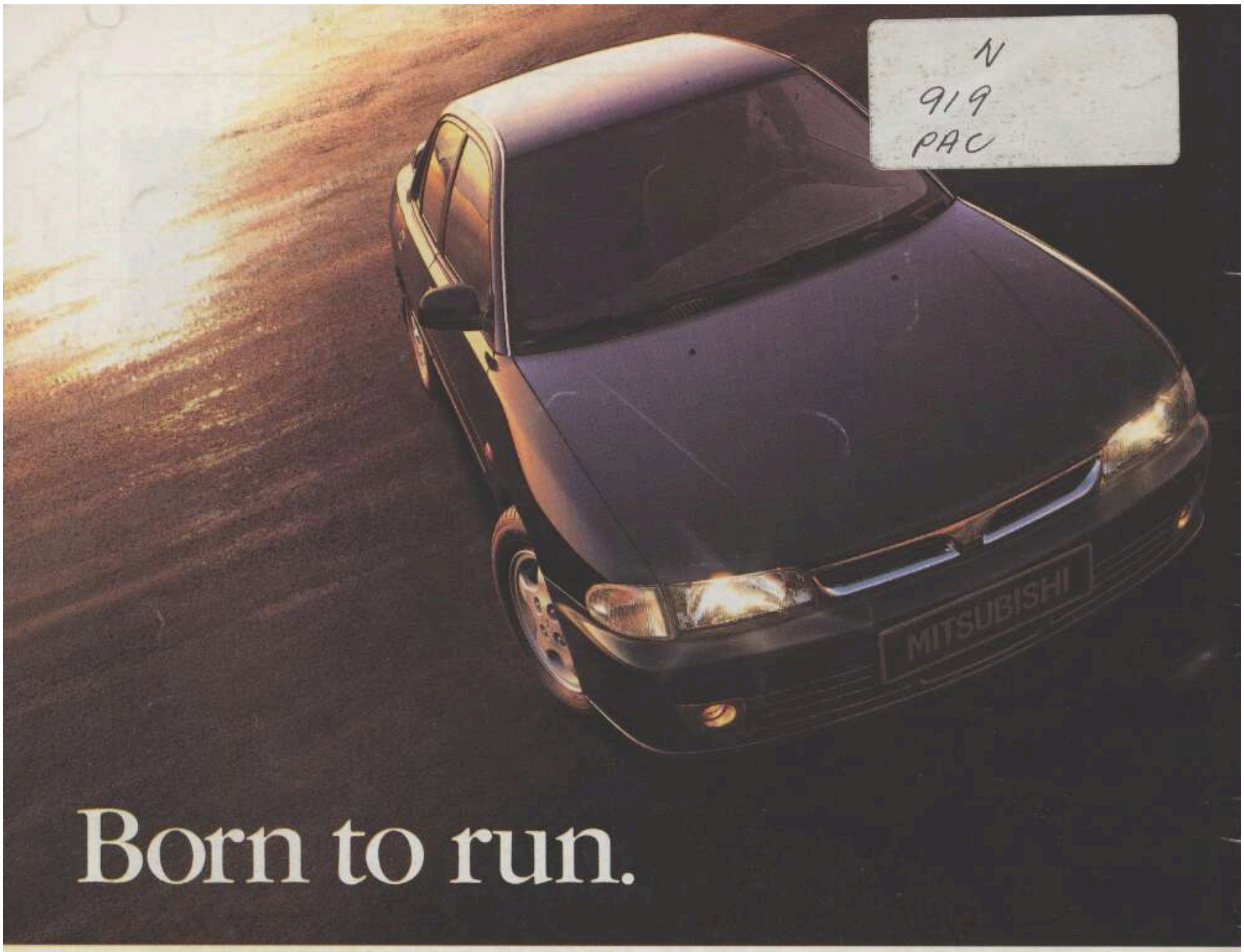

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