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INSIDE: SAMOA'S NAME CHANGE UPSETS AMERICAN SAMOANS

PACIFIC ISLANDS

DECEMBER 1997

MONTHLY

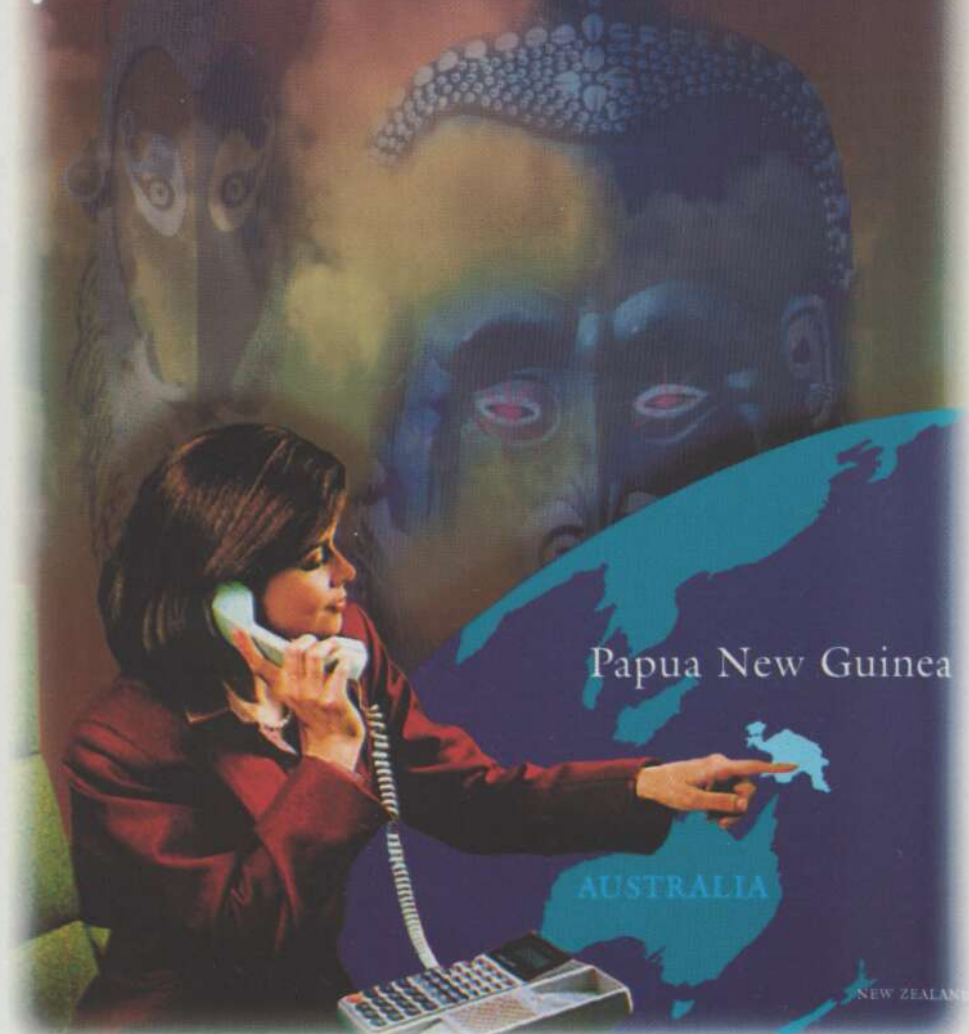
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Cyclone Martin's reign of death



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INSIDE



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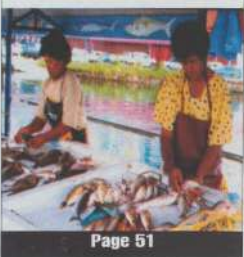
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EDITORIAL

Fiji welcomed back to the Commonwealth

Fiji's return to the Commonwealth of Nations is as welcome as it is overdue. The former British colony has always treasured its links to the crown there has been a certain yearning to return to the Commonwealth since Fiji's membership was allowed to lapse after the coups of 1987.

Renewed membership achieves a number of benefits - regional as well as global - for Fiji.

For a start Fiji has now rejoined most of its South Pacific Island neighbours - not forgetting Australia and New Zealand - in the 54-state grouping.

Though Fiji has always remained a leading member of regional institutions such as the South Pacific Forum, the country's return to the Commonwealth can only strengthen the region's standing in that organisation.

In world terms, Fiji again has access to a powerful grouping that has had direct influence on world events while providing a powerful voice for small developing nations.

Fiji's membership brings access to development assistance and to a shared experience of problems and how they may be addressed.

The Commonwealth is often criticised - by members and non-members - as being little more than a talking shop, a club for former British colonies. While there may be a grain of justification for that, the Commonwealth's achievements - in South Africa, for instance - cannot be overlooked.

Any grouping that brings together such a number and range of nations cannot help but have at least some influence on global events and development.

And renewed membership for Fiji is very obvious recognition of the nation's achievements and progress over the past 12 months.

At considerable political risk to themselves - a risk that has by no means diminished - the prime minister Sitiveni Rabuka and the opposition leader Jai Ram Reddy combined to break the logjam that prevented reform of Fiji's flawed 1990 constitution.

They deserve their moment on the world stage. ■

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Pound foolish: Forgetting the demand side

Dear Sir,

The subject of your article "Pennywise ..." (PIM Sept) is more than timely. Thank you for initiating what should become a more public discussion of the issues of education in all Pacific Island Countries (PICs). Although the article described many of the shiny "pennies" related to education, we need to pay more attention to its dull, but individually more valuable, pound notes, equitable cost sharing and employer participation.

First, equitable cost sharing. Fiji's private sector-led education system is arguably the best system within the developing PICs. A major reason for this is that the communities share the operating costs of primary and secondary schools (such sharing is a common practice with church communities as well as communities and governments throughout North America). The implication - the cost-sharing formulas used in PICs need to be changed so that more of education's burdens and rights, rest with local communities and their area of province.

In exchange for giving more responsibility to local cultures for their children's education, national funds can be applied to other forms of education.

Why change the formula? In most PICs, parents and communities see only the subsidised costs of education. This is artificial and not sustainable. Worse, it results in parents believing that the return they are getting (in terms of their children's improved earning potential) on the money they pay (their own investment) for school fees, etc., is very good. On that heavily subsidised personal level they are of course right. But for society as a whole, these subsidies have two key negative effects. The first is that parents and students become so addicted to this expectation of (artificially) higher returns that they strongly oppose needed increases in school fees. The second reality is that parents are not involved in looking for the most cost-effective ways to teach their children.

Cost-effective education for PICs will need mechanisms which are less formal than universities or university-focused secondary schools. Why? For two reasons. One, most of our children don't need such formal, academic, training because the

cash economy is not generating enough jobs for all the youths entering the job market. Two, less formal mechanisms are at least as effective in improving our children's earnings potential, but they cost less, sometimes a lot less. Less formal mechanisms include 'continuing education' (CE, using standard courses as and when a student has the time and money), non-formal education (NFE, less standardised courses as described in the September issue of *Islands Business*), and vocational-technical training (including apprenticeships).

Cost effective education can even be achieved in formal education. Fiji's experiences are not the only ones to show that community involvement in the real costs of education can be a way to make education cost effective. Trial projects undertaken by USAID and others in two African countries in the early 90s revealed that community run schools were able to operate for some 20 percent of the cost of government-dependent schools.

What is most important though, is that the students from those schools performed at or above the average of students at government dependent schools. Why was this? The report indicated that the increased parental and community involvement in the children's education provided students with more of the support and incentives for learning than government dependent schools provided.

Our nations' leaders need to recognise that by 'giving' a school or classroom to a community, or by giving tuition waivers to students, they are not necessarily helping them (other than helping them to continue a dependency). PIC leaders need to take the 'hard' initiative to tell parents that education needs to begin in homes and in communities, not in national capitals. They need to say, 'although education is very valuable for both social and economic nation-building, it is more valuable for household economic and community building. Therefore, national governments will do all that they can to help parents and communities to do their jobs, but that they should not be expected to do more than help. This is a 'hard' initiative for our leaders to take because, in doing so they run the risk of antagonising the nascent 'elites' that have grown up during the decades of high levels of Cold War-inspired foreign assistance and who, as a result, see such

subsidies for their children as an unearned right. The public needs to recognise this difficulty and compensate by increasing their demonstrations of support for a fair and equitable sharing of the costs of education.

While a dependency on subsidised education is found at all school levels, it is most apparent at university. Too often, students from PIC's are given tuition-free scholarships; many get both tuition and living allowances.

Often, these scholarships are not linked to performance criteria, so students keep studying regardless of whether they are learning (or what their grades are). Most students' performance is not sufficient to justify government paid living allowances; students should earn these or have them paid by their families and communities.

Second, employer participation. The point raised in the "Pennywise" article about the effects of decreasing budget priorities for education is relevant, but such decreases are most often due to the need to deal with self-inflicted economic wounds, like a national bank scandal, rather than dealing with any structural adjustment programme.

What is more important, there is another, and vital, aspect which you have overlooked: PIC's schools are supply-driven, not demand-driven.

That is, the suppliers of students (parents), of teachers (teachers' training institutions), of textbooks etc and so on determine the content and curricula of education. Parents believe that the curricula which will get their child to/through college are best - but only three to five percent of PIC youths will complete university. Teacher training and text books follow the models, curricula, paradigms current in production-based economies; those economies need much higher levels of university-educated people.

In the PICs, because the formal, cash economy is not generating enough jobs, half to three quarters of our youths will want or need to learn how to obtain increasing benefits (for increasing populations and expectations) from a subsistence economy.

The university-focused, supply side structure is not 'wrong': by putting so much of our resources where they cannot be fully used, it is lopsided and unsustainable. A sustainable balance can be obtained

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

by including the demanders of education in the teams designing educational mechanisms, content and curricula. These demanders include employers (who want workers who can do needed tasks), consumers (who want creative entrepreneurs and skilled workers to meet their demands for new or higher quality products), students (who want an education that will help them earn-a-cash or non-cash-living), and communities (which want an increase in their quality of life in return for supporting the education of their children).

It is important to remember that the 'demanders' of education must include subsistence agriculture and related basic marketing and value-adding production for rural island resources, as well as care giving for island communities.

In addition to having different content implications, the demands of these groups are not constant nor discrete one-off (eg. one course or program) events; they will result in frequent returns to education for short periods for new or updated skills. This is something that methods such as CE, NFE, and vocational/technical education address. Two, these methods better address 'supply side' issues, as people can study as they can afford the time and other costs, thus enabling them to continue to improve their income earning potential, or to maintain it during times of sudden economic shocks.

Our present supply-driven education system's focus on graduation from university or polytechnic wastes resources in other ways. A university should not be a place to send academically talented youths just to give them something to do, when they can be "doing" at home (and using CE, NFE, and so on) at a lower cost or at a higher profit. We need to direct scholar-

ships toward those fields of study that relate to our needs. We need analysts (as Dr Baba indicated) and teachers, even more, we need technical skills such as scientists and engineers (as Dr. Siwatibau mentioned).

Students wishing to study fields for which there is no present need should not receive scholarships except on exceptional merit. Scholarships should be awarded by non-partisan, autonomous scholarship boards comprised primarily of persons nominated by academic institutions employers and donors, with only one or two, ex-officio, government representatives. This is the way that many Southeast Asian economies (not to mention similar totally private systems in churches and North America) treat their university students.

This means that the students who cannot earn a scholarship, nor find a work-study program to help them to meet the costs of formal education (or whose families and communities cannot afford to support them in school), will also want to have alternative educational choices. This additional demand for alternative education is another reason for shifting our post-primary focus to the processes and forms of education mentioned above.

Other education cost-sharing systems have been shown both more cost effective and capable of meeting the demands of both the cash and the subsistence economies. Thus, they would also be a better national investment. Equally important, by including the demand-side of education in its management, students will better see how to earn an income (whether cash or non-cash), or otherwise contribute constructively within their familiar but changing environment.

Charles Kick,
Port Vila

Forum - a wasted opportunity

Dear Sir

I wish to comment on the recent forum meeting in Rarotonga, on which all our leaders attended.

I think that it was a great opportunity wasted. There were a lot of issues that could have been sorted out, such as the

Bougainville tragedy (I grew up in Bougainville). What to do with the island of Nauru now that it is almost uninhabitable by the phosphate mining and the wreck that several Pacific Island nations find themselves in economically.

Instead, the forum was wasted by discussing the impact of a theory that it not really provable (note the record low temperatures in North America and Russia as well as Europe). A theory of which the earliest mention of I can recall was in a movie called Soylent Green, alias the Greenhouse effect, or more appropriately, green hoax.

Yes, I think that our leaders have squandered a very good chance to help each other sort out pressing problems together. Our prime minister (John Howard) has already got into trouble over the summit. As for the rest of you leaders, I hope you had a good holiday at tax payers expense and I hope you get the good dressing down you so rightfully deserve.

Kisi Kilekili
Casuarina
Northern Territory
Australia.

Environmental concerns and cultures

Dear Sir,

In response to Peter Walker (PIM June), I still maintain that the intent of Walker's January letter was to belittle Islanders like me whose values clash with his. Walker does not need my permission to express his views as he very well knows. He is entitled to his opinions as I am entitled to mine. He said he has lived in Vanuatu for nine years and feels accepted by the people of that country.

That is wonderful. But does his nine years in Vanuatu makes him an expert on the rest of the Pacific Islands' environmental concerns and cultures? If the ni-Vanuatu are appreciative of what he has done and still doing in their country then all the best to him.

However, he should not tell the rest of us Islanders how and why we should take care of our natural environment. As I have stated in my previous letters, we have been living in the Pacific for hundreds of years. The accumulated knowledge and skills that have been passed on down to the present

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November, 1930

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Exodus from Hospital

The first plane to visit Torres Straits was one used by Captain Hurley during his expedition to Papua, in 1923, and the majority of spectators on that occasion were probably seeing for the first time in their lives. At the Thursday Island Hospital the patients, principally Aborigines, Papuans and other coloured odds and ends went mad with excitement on its appearance. Easy chairs and beds were vacated while their owners rushed outside to see the new "bird".

After circling around several times the plane gave a last waggle of its tail and shot off out of sight to take the water near the jetty. The crowd of the pyjama clad invalids and the crippled gaped at it open-mouthed; then with the single-mindedness of a mob of goats chased by a small dog,



Established 1930

followed it down the road, yelling and cheering. One solitary patient was left in the wards ... The AWL crowd returned, minus sundry bandages and poultices and resumed their aches ... prepared for the reprimand, which was withheld owing to the rarity of occurrence.

Not long ago another plane, this time bound for the Edie Creek goldfield, in New Guinea flew over, but the darkies did not turn a hair. Not so a white visitor to the island, hailing from the Cairns hinterland. He was a thoroughly interested spectator - but he confessed later, that it was the first plane he had ever seen.

Seaplanes for the islands

Outlying planters and traders will fly to such centres as Suva, or Tulagi, or Rabaul covering in an hour a journey that may now occupy a week. Seaplanes are now running a regular mail services between

Suva and the smaller Fijian ports; ... t"Air-travel for the Islands" - what a slogan for an advertisement! If only the copra market would buck up, there should be a great chance for an aeroplane salesman in the Pacific. But under present conditions he would have difficulty selling a planter the air that goes under a separate airplane's wings.

Mission vessel sinks

The mission vessel "Bromilow" owned by the Methodist Mission Society was wrecked at Amphettes near Samarai, Papua, recently and seven natives were drowned. The Rev. G P Lassam and one native were rescued from a reef, after five days' exposure, without food or water and two natives reached Salamo from the vessel. The "Bromilow" was a wooden auxiliary ketch of 14 tons gross, and had been in service in Papuan waters since 1917. She was named after a famous missionary, Dr Bromilow, whose death recently occurred. ■



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

generation have enabled the islanders to survive in their varied physical environments, which range from low-lying coral atolls to mountainous continental-type islands.

Walker asks "...why in every village we visit, many do not know that turtles do not breed until at least they are 20 and that two out of every 100 eggs survive?" So what if the villagers do not have this knowledge. Such knowledge does not concern the day-to-day life of a villager.

There are more important considerations in a villager's life, such as caring for and sustaining his family, than to bother about counting the number of eggs the turtle has or knowing the age of the turtle before it can reproduce. In traditional societies - such as those in most Pacific Islands - families help each other through the extended-family system and reciprocity. Therefore, detailed knowledge such as the biology of a turtle is not considered a priority.

I agree that passing on and sharing this knowledge is needed and is not culturally imperialistic. But I will question any initiative planned or organised by outsiders, which involves the Islands' traditions and

cultures. The initiative or idea for such an undertaking should come, in the first place, from the villagers.

I believe that besides environmental and other challenges facing Pacific societies today, one that is often overlooked, is the misguided attempt by some outsiders to try to conform Islanders to their view of the world. Walker should, therefore, leave the future of Pacific Islands' peoples and their environment etc., to us Islanders. Nobody should tell us how we should go about using our lands and marine's resources because it will be us who will face the consequences of our actions.

*Timeon Ioane
Honolulu*

Protect our children

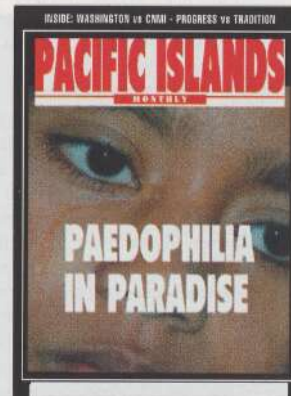
Dear Sir

The paedophilia epidemic was so well-reported in the October issue.

The undersigned is a grieving remorseful Hawaiian mother who failed to see what was happening to our six year old boy, an angel then and today a destroyed man. His godfather, a teacher has died of AIDS but

left a trail of broken-spirited boys to deal with severe psychological problems. Heaven protect my grandsons if we are fooled again.

*Clair Crockett,
Maui,
Hawaii.*



BRIEFS

PNG faces \$US4.2 m food bill

Papua New Guinea's provincial and local level government minister, Simon Kaumi, has said that a total of K6.4 million (\$US4.2million) was required every month to feed 650,000 people in the worst drought and frost-affected parts of the country. He said some of the worst affected areas were located in high altitude regions of Central, Gulf, Western Highlands, Chimbu, Eastern Highlands, Morobe and West Sepik provinces as well as coastal Madang. He said with the El Nino effect gaining momentum in the Asia-Pacific region, the drought situation in PNG was worsening. Kaumi said this had a great impact on the people who were affected in various areas and the demands for the provisions of immediate relief and assistance were increasing daily.

K146m farm losses forecast for 1998

The Rural Industries Council of PNG has said that government was expected to lose more than K146 million (\$US98 million) in revenue from the agriculture sector if the

continues. Council chairman Peter Colton said the shortfall from various industries included cattle K930,000 (\$US624,000); cocoa K36 million (\$US24 million); coffee K75 million (\$US50.33 million); copra K11 million (\$US7.38 million); oil palm K18.3 million (\$US12.28 million); rubber K3 million (\$US2 million); sugar K6.6 million (\$US4.43 million); tea K10 million (\$US6.71 million) and fruits and vegetables K3.5 million (\$US2.35 million).

Weekly newspaper launched

A weekly newspaper known as *The Fangufangumana*, has been launched in Tonga. Editor Inoke Masima said the religious based newspaper will avoid political influences and discussion. He said content will focus on women, youth, cultural issues and religious stories. The newspaper will be compiled in Tonga and printed in New Zealand by Kalafi Moala, editor and publisher of *The Times of Tonga*.

Chan wins order to halt Cairns report

Papua New Guinea's Ombudsman

Commission has been ordered by the National Court to stop the distribution and publication of its report into the K18 million (\$US12 million) purchase of the controversial Cairns Conservatory Building. Former prime minister Sir Julius Chan successfully sought an injunction pending judicial review of the report's findings.

Chan alleged the report obtained derogatory adverse comments against him and that he had not had any say during the investigation period.

Vohor rescinds plans to lease aircraft

Vanuatu Prime Minister Serge Vohor has instructed the management and staff of the national carrier, Air Vanuatu, to cancel plans to lease a Saab 2000 aircraft currently on hold for the airline in Europe. He has said to instead purchase a French made ATR plane for an estimated \$US15 million including spareparts.

Reports have said that the pressure from Vohor had worried some of the airline's management who said the offer on the SAAB was an excellent package including

BRIEFS

maintenance, spareparts and engineering. They said that the lease agreement would allow them to build up their market for a few years before deciding on a long term plan.

Two years ago, Vanuatu decided against buying an ATR aircraft on the grounds that it was unsuitable for the airline's future requirement. Reports said Vohor wanted Air Vanuatu to "buy French" to repay the French government for offering to finance a French university complex in Vanuatu.

CNM lawsuit against governor-elect

A lawsuit has been filed in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Superior Court challenging the eligibility of Pedro Pangelinan Tenorio to take office as governor for a third term. Tenorio, who served two terms in the 80s, took the position that since the two term limit amendment became effective at the same time as his second term (1986) it could not be applied retroactively.

The challengers have used the exact wording of the constitutional amendment that "No governor shall serve more than two terms" as the basis for their suit. In the November 1 election, former governor Tenorio took a commanding lead - 46 percent over his two challengers, incumbent governor Froilan Teorio, 27 percent and incumbent Lt governor Jesus Borja, 26 percent.

Inauguration of the new government, both legislative and executive branches have been scheduled for January 9.

Officer banned from village

A top Samoan government official has been banned from his village for ignoring a village council decision over a chiefly title. Deputy parliamentary leader speaker, Mulitalo Siafausa, a high chief from Lano village and several other villagers will be affected by this decision which came into effect immediately.

The action has meant that Siafausa's title and position as a member of parliament were no longer recognised by his electorate, although it is unlikely to affect his standing within the ruling party.

The village council said that attempts by Siafausa to overturn the ruling preventing him from handing titles to 11 members of his extended family, meant they were left with no choice but to ban him and his supporters.

Under the controversial Village Fono

Act, village councils have wide-ranging powers including banishing individuals or families which do not follow council protocol or decisions.

Hospital bailed out of financial problems

The Solomon Islands and New Zealand governments have rushed to the rescue of Atoifi Hospital, one of Solomon's biggest hospital, which was facing closure due to financial difficulties. The government has provided \$US28,000 as emergency funding to enable the Seventh-day Adventist Church run hospital to continue its much needed services to the people of East Malaita and throughout the Malaita province.

The New Zealand government provided \$US47,000 for the hospital's school of nursing. Earlier this year, doctors, nurses and other staff members from the hospital travelled to Honiara where they fundraised to keep the hospital from closing down.

PNG's new governor general

The Papua New Guinea parliament has elected Silas Atopare as the country's seventh governor general. Atopare 46, from the Eastern Highlands, replaces Sir Wiwa Koroi.

Five candidates, including Sir Wiwa who was seeking a second term, were nominated by various factions in parliament. Sir Wiwa was the first to be eliminated from the race because he could not muster the constitutionally required 73 votes majority to qualify for re-election. In the final vote, Atopare received 54 votes to win against the head of the Lutheran Church, Sir Getake Gam.

Opposition dumps leader

Cook Islands opposition party has dumped Norman George as its leader. Reports said the party dumped him following his refusal to apologise to a traditional leader in a debate over political reform.

Hardline leader re-elected

Caledonian Union, (UC) the main separatist party in New Caledonia has re-elected Bernard Lepeu as leader. The hardline Lepeu was re-elected during a congress of the party which was held ahead of a planned referendum over the political future of the country. The UC is the leading party in the pro-independence Kanak Socialist Liberation Front (FLNKS), which has been blockading five nickel mines in

the country run by the French nickel group Eramet.

The FLNKS is pressing for a nickel processing plant in the separatist controlled northern province of New Caledonia and want Eramet, which controls all the territory's nickel mines and its sole processing factory, to allow a supply for the second plant.

Lepeu and other leaders have been in the forefront of the protests, which led to the effective shutdown of Eramet's nickel mining operations.

Supporters of the campaign threw out from their posts FLNKS president Roch Wamytan and the vice president Leopold Joredie, who is also the leader of the northern province, following their opposition to the blockades.

The UC congress discussed tactics over the Matignon Accords, drawn up in 1988, which provide for a referendum on the future governing of the territory this year.

French company plans a resort in Fiji

French developers DB Group Asia Pacific Ltd has announced plans for a major resort complex on Fiji's famous Natadola Beach early this year subject to official approval. The Natadola Beach on the west coast of Fiji's main island of Viti Levu has been earmarked as a high priority tourism area in the country.

But tourism officials said they were wary of beginning any projects there unless it had a high certainty of being finished. They said that the area was of exceptional scenic and environmental value and a half finished scheme would irretrievably damage it. The tourism industry also believed a large scale integrated resort style development was envisaged by the French group would not suit the area which lacked good infrastructure.

But the DB group showed that they were anxious to go ahead with the project and its tourism and hotel investment consultant was in Fiji negotiating the purchase of land from the native owners for the hotel site. The group plans a \$US60 million upmarket hotel to be managed by the Four Seasons Hotel company which has already bought out the Regent chain of hotels.

The hotel is to be the first phase of a complex including two smaller hotels, an international standard gold course, a marina, condominium and a handicraft and entertainment village over a 30-hectare site. ■

COVER STORIES

Islands devastated in the wake of Cyclone Martin



Air Rarotoga pilot Shaun Willis wanders past the gutted administration centre of Manihiki atoll in Tauhunu village. (Picture by Jason Brown)

By **Florence Syme - Buchanan**

Martin was a huge, hungry animal who in a terrifying couple of days, devoured several defenceless islands, destroying lives and forever changing the lives of the shell-shocked survivors.

It was the worst cyclone to hit the South Pacific this century, snarling 2400 kilometres across the Pacific, wiping up huge waves which destroyed everything.

When it had gone, the Pacific was littered with bodies.

On Manihiki in the Cook Islands 30 people were left dead. Tragically, in a culture where the body is central to the griev-

ing process, many of the bodies have gone completely. Another nine were swept away in French Polynesia. It was also a story of remarkable miracles, of survival. There is also a terrifying familiarity about the stories.

The Pacific, heated by the El Nino, rose and in a blink, wiped away atolls. This was the grim reality of sea-level rising that only three months ago the Pacific's leaders met and debated on on Aitutaki just to the south of Manihiki.

Pukapuka in the northern Cook Islands was the first victim. At 2pm on Friday, October 31, the battering began.

Fortunately for the 600 or so Pukapukans, Cyclone Martin had not reached its intensity and only a few build-

ings were lost. There were no deaths. Martin rampaged on, veering south east.

Situated 160 kilometres south west of Manihiki and further still from Rakahanga in the late afternoon of Saturday November 1, Cyclone Martin was ferocious enough to wreck havoc on both islands.

All deaths and missing people in the Cooks are from Manihiki.

In the village of Tauhunu, nothing is left - homes, school, hospital, gardens - everything has been destroyed. Except for a few chickens, the Island's entire livestock was wiped out.

Rebuilding will mean starting from fresh plans for an entire village that will most probably be relocated to what higher

COVER STORIES

ground is available. Manihiki lies just five metres above sea level.

Chief meteorological officer Arona Ngari said had the cyclone actually struck Manihiki, the devastation would have been unimaginable.

"Nothing would have been left standing, not one tree, the death toll would have been much, much higher".

Just one massive 10 metre wave totally swamped Tauhunu village in a terrifying chaos of broken homes, vegetation and bodies which were then dragged into the normally picturesque lagoon.

An aching scene of destruction for the lucky ones who for hours huddled in fishing boats praying. The unlucky ones floundered in the dark, heaving lagoon, battered by wind tossed debris, trying to save loved ones, trying to save themselves, seven not succeeding. Three were children.

They had been given little warning by main island Rarotonga, where officials dithered for hours before finally setting up a hurricane centre at 5.45pm Saturday. But by that time Manihiki was already engulfed in Mother Nature's terrifying madness.

Communications with the Island were cut off at 4pm and for two days relatives all over the Cooks agonised, feared and prayed for their loved ones in Manihiki.

When communications were partially restored two days later, the news that three were dead, 20 missing and untold devastation was worse than what most Cook Islanders safe and dry in their homes could fathom.

Cyclone Martin continued to veer south east on November 1 travelling towards French Polynesia .

By November 4, Cyclone Martin reached the colder waters of the Austral Islands. He will never be forgotten. The Catholic Church recognises three Saint Martins and two of them are honoured with November feast days.

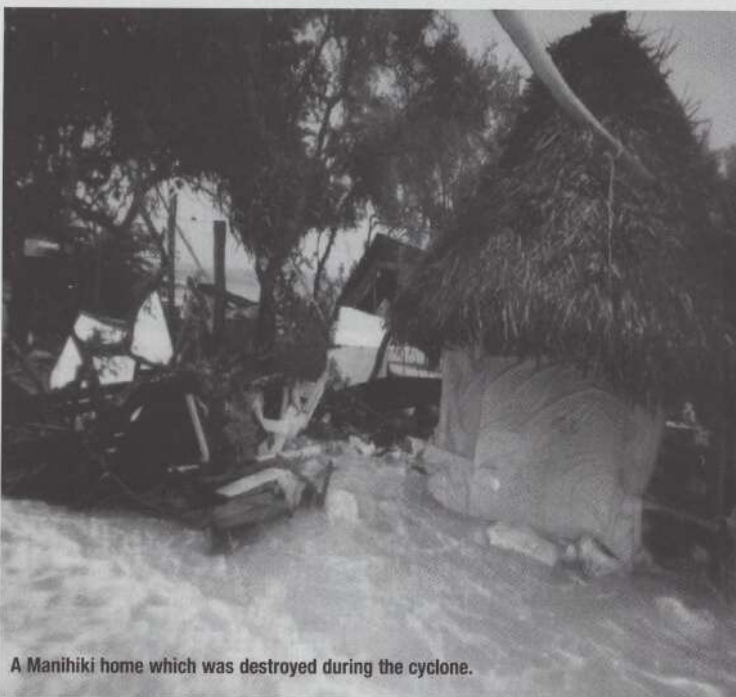
November 3 - the day the people of Manihiki were beginning to receive help from the outside world - is the feast day of St Martin de Porres.

Born in Peru in 1579 he spent his life in a Dominican Friary where he is reputed to have devoted himself to ceaseless and severe penances.

He is reputed to have been able to fly. St. Martin of Tours is the better known of the Martins, the patron saint of soldiers.



A Bible rests atop the pulpit of Tauhunu Cook Islands Christian Church which escaped structural damage but pews were smashed to bits. (Picture by Jason Brown)



A Manihiki home which was destroyed during the cyclone.

Born in 315 in what is now Hungary he was one of the first saints, ending up in France. His feast day is November 11.

Blessedly for their distant memory, there will never be another Pacific cyclone named Martin. ■

COVER STORIES

Sole survivor's nightmare

By Florence de Changy

Days after it had slammed into Manihiki and taken seven lives, Cyclone Martin moved on to the Leeward Islands in French Polynesia, about 500 kilometres northwest of Tahiti. On Bellinghausen or *motu* one, nine souls were swept away while on Mopelia 30 people had to be evacuated.

On Thursday November 5, Alice Haano was found alive but alone and haunted by what had happened. Two families lived on the atoll, traditionally uninhabited. There was the Taputu family, father, mother and their six children, aged between three to 20. And there was Alice and her husband, Jean-Pierre Haano. Together it was a simple life of struggling to produce copra which they would sell when they could convince a ship from Papeete to come and pick it up. It was a low lying atoll, exposed to the weather and well beyond help.

"We were well and happy there. We never thought of the danger of living on this Island," said Alice later at Faa'a Airport in Tahiti. On the night of Sunday, November 2, Cyclone Martin arrived and just as at Manihiki, it came with huge seas. Several waves crashed on the house the two families had gathered into. It collapsed on them. It went quiet for a little while then came a huge wave which wiped everything away.

They struggled to find some higher ground, calling each other's names to stay together. Alice took with her two *parcus* or wrap-around skirts so that she could tie herself to a palm tree. This is what saved her. She wanted to do the same for her husband but he had broken his leg and could not stand up. He was holding the Taputu's baby in his arms. The rest of the family had already disappeared into the ocean.

Alice described how once she had to grab her husband by his hair to save him from being washed away. But another treacherous wave swept in again and the baby was finally taken away. She was tied to the tree while at her feet her husband lay in agony. She could do nothing but pray for him. When he finally died, she lay his body on coconut leaves and she covered him with *niau* leaves. She kept praying for help. The

next day, a French search plane flew over the atoll and dropped a radio.

With the news of what had happened, a rescue operation was launched.

The naval ship *La Raileuse*, with territorial President Gaston Flosse aboard, headed towards Bellinghausen. They beached there and found Alice, the sole survivor. A relief team member described the scene: "There used to be 10 people here, a pig enclosure, a house, there was life. Now there is nothing. The coconut trees have been uprooted. The concrete copra dryers have been washed away too." Alice reckons two waves, each about three metres high, wiped the little community off the map. She said throughout Cyclone Martin there was only a little rain and the winds were only moderately strong. But the sea, the enemy, was fierce.

After a full day of search on and around the *motu*, the soldiers gave up looking for other survivors or bodies. It is still uncertain whether the bodies stayed inside the lagoon but Alice believes they did not. She believes that the strong winds took them.

LaRaileuse brought back the body of her husband while Alice was flown with Flosse from Bora Bora to Papeete.

The day before, November 5, the navy ship *Dumont D'Urville* had evacuated the 20 men and 10 women who lived on Mopelia. They were taken to Maupiti, further east where they would stay until the end of the cyclone season. *Dumont D'Urville* went on to bring food and rescue materials to Scilly, the third island in the same area.

When it was over, French President Jacques Chirac sent a condolence message in which he reminded the people of French Polynesia that "they could count on the full solidarity of metropolitan France".

The local government has declared a special state of "natural calamity" which provides for an indepth assessment of the damages caused, upon which compensations could be paid to both private persons and councils. But questions are going to be asked. Could the people have been better equipped and better warned? Did the forecast anticipate the disaster properly?

Could help have arrived earlier? But the ultimate question probably is, can a government forbid its people from dangerous islands or should people's freedom be paramount?

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COVER STORIES

The battle to survive

By Florence Syme - Buchanan

On Manihiki everyone has lost a loved one. Everyone is a hero. This is just one such story from that fateful All Saint's Day in Tauhunu, a tiny once neat village, now gone.

It was that Saturday afternoon as Anna Katoa and husband Willie were in discussion with another family whether they should leave their new beach-front home for a large boat.

The hot, El Nino afflicted South Pacific was rising angrily.

Suddenly they heard a loud thundering and turning, saw a dark wall of water racing towards them.

Anna and Willie grabbed their four year old daughter Katarina and seven year old Maureen and along with the other couple, ran for their lives.

There were terrible screams and suddenly they were all being dragged with tremendous force by the wave.

"I thought we were going to die, knowing there were houses and trees in front of us. I thought we would be bashed against them. But when I surfaced I knew it wouldn't be my end," said Anna.

Katarina had disappeared. Anna fought to keep herself and seven year old Maureen afloat in a salvage maelstrom of water and debris from their village now shattered into a million pieces.

Willie struggled in the churning sea to a boat still tied to a frangipani tree. He then helped nine year old Penina Simiona aboard followed by papa Teira Taana, an elderly man who kept crying that his granddaughter was missing. Anna and Maureen were next. Then the frangipani tree broke.

Nightfall came as they were swept across the lagoon. More vast waves came and lifted the boat with its fragile contents

and smashed them all onto the deadly coral. And then the sea swept in and tossed them into the Pacific Ocean.

Papa Teira, Maureen and Penina were gone.

"We called and called for her but there was no answer. We couldn't look for them,

strengthen to bail," said Willie.

"We grabbed coconuts, a sleeping bag and bits of wood that were floating past us. I opened the coconuts with my teeth and fed the water and meat to Anna and Penina. John and I chewed on the husk."

Willie packed the huge gash in his leg with chewed coconut. Using the sleeping bag and lengths of wood he made a sail. John had a plank of wood to row with and Willie steered using the same four by two.

Willie was worried too, Anna was six months pregnant.

"I had no time to be afraid. I just had one thought, to get Anna to safety as quickly as possible. I couldn't let her out for long because she would lose the baby, and if that happened, I could lose her too."

An experienced fisherman, knowledgeable on the currents and wind patterns in the area, Willie coaxed the tiny craft through the storm to Rakahanaga, another island about 40 kilometres from Manihiki.

Anna hoped help would come from outside.

"We waited and waited for the planes that we hoped had been sent out to find us but they never came. We did hear one for a few moments in the distance and then the noise disappeared ...

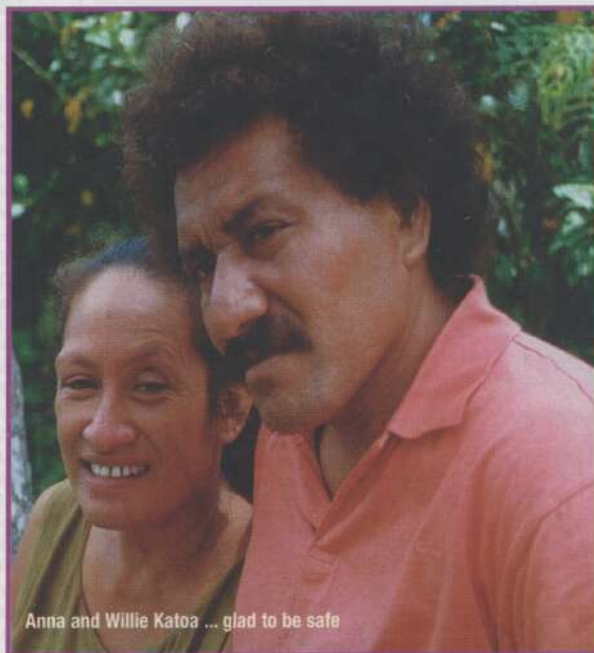
"But we never lost hope. I had faith in my husband Willie."

They reached Rakahanga almost five days after being at sea but waited until daylight to cross the reef.

"We were thrown over the reef by a big wave. It took us right up to the beach ... I cannot thank God enough."

They were to hear of another miracle too. Their youngest child Katarina, who had disappeared in those terrifying first few minutes, had been plucked from the waters by friends. In the big airlift that followed, the New Zealand airforce dropped them together in Rarotonga.

Maureen is still missing. Anna says that if the baby, which is due at the end of February, is a girl, she will be named Maureen, in honour of a beloved daughter, a little hero. ■



Anna and Willie Katoa ... glad to be safe

there were 40 foot waves and Willie was injured. "It was hell," said Anna.

Willie had gashed himself badly on the reef. And now Willie and Anna were alone clinging to the overturned boat.

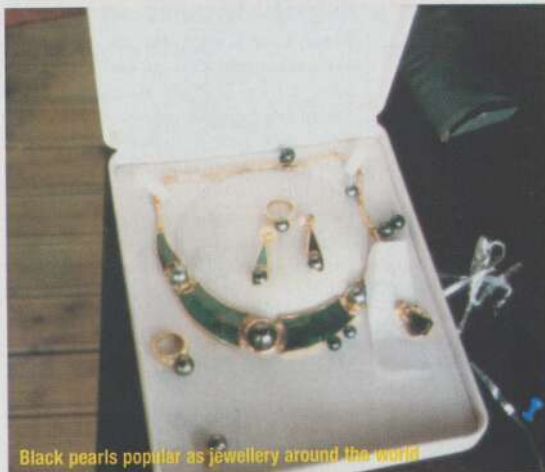
Miracles can happen anywhere, anytime. At about 5am Sunday morning on the storm battered high seas, they found John Solomona. He was floating on his back and had been in the water for 10 hours.

He had nothing to hold on to, just hope. Then another miracle. They managed to turn the boat over and under it, kept alive in an air pocket was Penina Simiona. But life was still in the balance.

"The boat was filling with water and the sea was still rough and windy, so I told John to untie the outboard motor. It was weighing us down and we did not have the

COVER STORIES

Pearl farming suffers because of cyclone



Black pearls popular as jewellery around the world

By Florence Syme - Buchanan

The people of the northern Cook Islands are used to hardship and isolation and they are tough. So when they say they will rebuild their homes and their livelihoods, count on it. But they have all taken a heavy blow. Cyclone Martin has savaged their lucrative pearl farming industry.

Although a glamorous industry down at the retail end, in Manihiki they had to work hard and long with fierce dedication to produce what was becoming a \$NZ4 million (approximately \$US2 million) a year enterprise.

"It's gone from the people who were earning very little from copra and government jobs and a little bit more from diving for wild shells to a million dollar industry," says Marine Resources secretary Raymond Newnham.

Newnham says it could take the industry a year to recover if the underwater pearl shell lines are okay, five years if they are damaged. Willie Katoa lost his seven year old daughter, Maureen, (see previous story), a new home and about \$200,000 (Approx. \$US118) worth of farm equipment and buildings.

"I'm going to go back, rebuild and carry on ... that's no problem."

Like a few other pearl farmers, Katoa will leave his family on the main island of Rarotonga, go back and start again. Separation could run for months. Sue Wootton says Manihiki pearls which make four percent of the world's black pearls, were just becoming accepted around the

world. "We were just beginning to get a firm foothold in the world markets. We had good grades, colour, volumes were increasing and the industry was really up and running," she said.

"The black pearls have been taken up by Tiffany's, Asprey's and Harry Winston, all big names." Her husband, Robert Wootton, the Manihiki member of parliament, and his brother Hurihia invested \$600,000 (approx. \$US353) into their farm. Their future is 10 metres down, the remains of the pearl farms. Everything on land associated with pearl farms - the seeding huts, boats, diving equipments, compressors are gone.

None of the farmers had insurance, nobody would cover such a high hurricane risk. "But I don't believe the industry is dead, unless there has been massive pollution of the lagoon and every oyster is dead," Sue said.

Tou Unuia who has been involved with the industry from the outset fears the lagoon could be polluted from fuel, chemicals, fridges and vegetation dragged into it by the cyclone. He says the huge amount of floating vegetation is preventing the lagoon from flushing properly.

The industry which is the Island's economic lifeline and crucial to the financial



A wall clock stopped at five to mid night in the rubble of a house ripped half away by a huge wave. (Picture by Jason Brown)

well-being of the entire country, has taken a backseat with search and rescue operations and rebuilding of Manihiki foremost in recovery plans. Once the recovery of Manihiki is well established, Marine Resources will be assessing what damage may have occurred to the oysters.

Just about every farmer has a loan to repay, most with the state-owned Cook Islands Development Bank. Calls are being made on the government by the business sector for CIDB to issue soft loans so pearl farmers can rebuild an industry the financially stricken country desperately needs to get back on its feet.

Two hundred pearl farming permits have been issued by the Manihiki Island Council over the years. Not all permits are active but there were enough farms dotting the 48 square kilometre lagoon to raise concerns of the Marine resources that there could be an over population of pearl shells.

One recent survey estimated that the lagoon contained 12 million pearl shells including wild stocks which had quickly multiplied after a ban was placed on harvesting them by the Island Council some years ago.

Sue is confident. "People won't give up. There will be a dip and some changes in the way things are redone but they won't give up. We have put everything into the industry, people won't walk away from that."

COVER STORIES

Build on higher points

By Florence Syme - Buchanan

Prime Minister Sir Geoffery Henry estimates that it is going to cost at least \$NZ80 million (approx. \$US47 million) to reconstruct Manihiki, but there could be a clash between experts and the islanders over where best to rebuild.

Manihikians want to rebuild Tanhunu and Tukao villages in exactly the same areas, but Sir Geoffery has said that this may result in the loss of support from overseas donors who want a "sensible relocation plan". The villages are apparently built on the lowest lying areas of the two biggest atolls in Manihiki lagoon. At the highest point, the atolls are only five metres above sea water. "Cook Islanders and Polynesians as a whole have a very passionate relationship with their land and I don't know that the people of Manihiki would agree to a more futuristic, cyclone resistant town plan or they would simply want to rebuild where they have been stuck down by a cyclone," Sir Geoffery said.

The government is taking a long-term view on the reconstruction of the Island and wants to turn the villages into model atoll settlements built on the safest areas.

But the government has admitted that the Manihiki people can't be forced to build in a particular area. No one has been given the task of convincing the islanders that somewhere different to the previous village sites would be safer and more acceptable to donor agencies. They are still trying to assess how much damage to the cyclone battered northern islands will cost - what they already know is that reconstruction will run into tens of millions.

An immediate \$US200,000 has been made available by the United Nations for emergency relief to Manihiki. AUSAID and NZODA have indicated willingness to help and the Asian Development Bank has informed that government soft loans are available, said the Ministry of Finances Tupu Araiiti. The Cook Islands government already owes Asian Development Bank over \$NZ23 million (Approx. \$US14 million) and will most likely be reluctant to enter into further debt.

Setting up the Manihiki telephone system will alone cost well over \$NZ1 million, estimates Araiiti. ■

Region's first internet cyclone

By Michael Field

It is a smudgy, dark picture, but it is a remarkable symbol of the terrifying power of nature - and the way even a remote place like Manihiki is on the information highway. Cyclone Martin was the South Pacific's first internet cyclone and its horror was known around the world while the Cook Islands Government vainly tried to control what information was going out.

On Saturday November 1 Henry and Tarita Puna Williams were among nine people who jumped into a small boat as the cyclone tore their world apart.

Henry had with him a Canon waterproof camera and in a single shot captured the drama of the moment. Then for another 12 hours they drifted on the water. One of their number disappeared, later to be found dead.

By Monday November 3 Tarita Puna Williams was in Rarotonga and her family's survival story was picked up by *Cook Islands Press* owners Jason Brown and Barbara Dreaver. They are also stringers for *Agence France-Presse (AFP)* and within hours the first survivor story was around the world.

Then Henry's photos came to light and within days that single image appeared the *Times* in London, the *New York Times*, the *Australian*, the *South China Morning Post* and dozens of other newspapers around the world. The speed with which the world learnt of Martin is remarkable.

For Alex Sword, editor of the daily *Cook Islands News*, Martin was example of ridiculous political attempts to control the news. His staff, for example, were not allowed to photograph people working at the cyclone centre in Rarotonga. Neither his paper nor the *Cook Islands Press* were allowed to go on the early rescue flights.

The Cooks might be independent - but colonial cringe saw the Cooks government let the *New Zealand Herald*, state owned Television New Zealand and Canadian owned TV3 from New Zealand to the

Island. Even a week after the cyclone the news was being kept out and was finally using a local stringer, Ruhau Tomaunu. Sword felt the government constraints on information were a deliberate ploy. "They were being secretive and trying to control everything because we would have shown them to be incompetent in their cyclone disaster management plans," Sword said. Dreaver agreed. "The people overseas were getting much more news and much faster than the Cook Islanders were," she said.

"And anyway the government really didn't know what was happening - we were well ahead of them but they would close off our information sources behind us."

Cook Islands Television won praise from Sword for struggling against the odds to keep people informed while privately owned Radio Aktiv is in everybody's bad books. Although their signal is only vaguely heard in Manihiki - they declined to broadcast a cyclone warning because a string band had paid for a live broadcast instead.

An official cyclone warning instead had to go out over Radio New Zealand. Brian Mason of the Prime Minister's Office was the media spokesman, and he admitted that even before the cyclone there was a degree of tension between the government and the media that was "not helpful".

He said there had been early concern about the media coverage going to the world so quickly and comprehensively. "It was of some concern about how it would affect the tourist industry," he said.

"But by telling the truth you get more sympathy from people You have to wear the down-side." Cook Islanders in Australia and New Zealand had the right to know what was going on.

Mason found himself fielding a flood of international media calls. "I think the media was pretty good. I didn't get the feeling that I was dealing with a bunch of bozos.

It caught the imagination of people, this remote and tiny Island." ■

■ SPECIAL REPORT

SPC becomes Pacific Community and hopes for a new start

By Florence de Changy

Three unusual things happened at the 37th South Pacific Conference in Canberra. It was the 50th anniversary meeting of the South Pacific Commission (SPC) and the first odd thing was that Britain, less than two years after it left, announced it was coming back. Then this old organisation (one of the oldest of its kind) changed name to the more inspiring Pacific Community. And, to complete a hat-trick of surprising events, the director-general Bob Dun presented the account books showing a solid financial situation.

The oddities, and the intelligent debate at the meeting, produced an unexpectedly up-beat mood at the landmark meeting. It did not start like a celebration though. A chilly Sunday evening, a large and very modern hall in the new Canberra Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (otherwise known as DFAT) building ... No decoration, no heating, and a rather sad entertainment programme did not augur very well. A modest group of Aboriginal children performed, with little enthusiasm, some basic dances, while at the other end of the stage, stood a rather white choir (Aborigines, Torres Strait and Pacific islanders were absent from their ranks) of neatly dressed children with nice looking hair who sang patriotic and children songs. It was a rare event, an Australian guest at the ceremony told us that Australia does not usually use Aboriginal groups in important international gatherings.

But most delegates found the whole exercise perfectly boring, all the more for those who still had in mind the vitality of the September opening of the South Pacific Forum in Rarotonga in the Cook Islands. Some others felt that the striking contrast between the two groups of Australian children on the stage was not a happy one at all, reminiscent to some extent of the late 40s

when the SPC was created as a very colonial institution. If it had not been for Fijian President Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara's speech and some interesting comments from other speakers, most guests would rather have observed their tradition not to work on a Sunday. But Australia is not exactly a Pacific-style country and the assembly's boredom with the whole opening proceedings became a common joke for the rest of the meeting which was to be a rather constructive and well organised one.

The first good news of the evening was to come a bit later, during the ANZ Bank sponsored cocktail. An Encyclopaedia of the Pacific Islands was under way, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer announced. He said it was expected to be ready in the second half of 1998 and was meant to become the most important information about Pacific Islands life, history, institutions and cultural experience.

Judging from the impressive diversity of contributors and the wide variety of topics raised, this could become a very important work indeed to deepen and clarify knowledge about this multi-faceted region.

The Australian government, through AusAID, the Australian aid programme, is allocating A\$109,000 (approx. \$US72,000) to meet a substantial proportion of the production costs, while the

School of Asian and Pacific Studies at the Australian National University, Canberra, has invested more than A\$100,000 (approx. \$US66,000) in the work, which will also be available in a multimedia format (CD-Rom). The real work got under way next day with the conference opening, but things did not go at all as planned by the officials who had tried to set things up a week earlier.

The conference looked at its name. South Pacific Commission did not fit any more with members located in the North Pacific, including the Northern Marianas

and Guam. At morning tea break officials told *PIM* the word "Commission" was to remain as a historical reminder of the ancestor institution; by midday, the former SPC would be called the Pacific Islands Commission. The acronym SPC would remain as PIC might be confusing as it is often used for Pacific islands countries (and Pacific Island Church in New Zealand).

The acronym Compac (for Commission Pacific) was widely argued for and against but the computer-like short name did not reach unanimity. The question of the acronym was to be put on the back burner, until the next conference, to give people time to see how do they naturally refer to the SPC... All therefore seemed to happen as planned, the chair woman endorsing after half an hour of pseudo-debate the Pacific Islands Commission new name. But



■ SPECIAL REPORT

in came Fiji's foreign affairs minister Berenado Vunibobo apologising for his momentous absence. He had had to take his president to the airport. I would have lost my job otherwise he commented before relaunching the (thought to be closed) name's debate, giving it an unexpected new twist.

He came up with the idea of community which struck a cord immediately as members came to accept how institutional "Commission" sounded. Vunibobo also declared that islanders did not like to be called islanders. Not only patronising, the reference to islanders did not make much sense as every people in the Pacific are by definition islanders. Further more, Kiribati and other members had earlier said they did not see why the founding members, such as France, United States, Australia and New Zealand, would not be referred to as in the Pacific Islands Commission name. In a very convincing way, Vunibobo managed to have the (second) final decision postponed until after lunch and finally got his idea adopted.

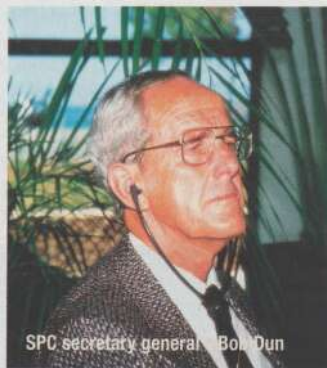
The irony was that this spontaneous debate and its achievement were so unexpected that 6000 maps and 15,000 leaflets with the pre-organised new name had been printed, AusAID having provided A\$26,000 (approx. \$US17,000) for the work. The presentation of a framed version of the bilingual map to Bob Dun was cancelled. And, even though the map is still an excellent tool, as first of its kind, its reference to the nonexistent Pacific Islands Commission, makes it an embarrassing promotion product.

The director-general later suggested the maps be distributed for free in schools around the region. Much ado about a name some may think, but it was surprising to see how enthusiastic most delegates were once it was decided that the community of the Pacific ("*Communauté du Pacifique*" in French) should be the new name of their old lady friend, as Roch Wamytan, from New Caledonia, put it "It was as if every thing could start again now that the country were part of a formal Community even though nothing of the institution itself, apart from its name, was changed". Some could not help draw a parallel with the European Community and the possibility of further regional integration in a not-so-far future. Optimism had actually begun to spread earlier in the day when Britain announced its comeback to the organisation,

less than two years after its withdrawal. By the early 1990's, we became increasingly concerned by the way in which the SPC was being managed. We perceived a lack of direction, a lack of vision and clear objectives, and in our view, an alarming proportion of the members contributions being spent on management declared the acting British High Commissioner, Andrew Pocock.

"We felt that fate had dealt us an unfortunate hand when the expiry of our notice coincided with the appointment of Bob Dun and his very able deputies". But other delegates were not so diplomatic. They abandoned ship when it was sinking. Now that is doing fine again, they come back. There is nothing to be proud of there, said a Papua New Guinean delegate who thought Britain had been given an extremely good deal when they withdrew but put in their seat Pitcairn Island, home to 47 people, whose contribution is thus very modest. Aid recipient countries were nevertheless hopeful that the British move should translate into more money for the SPC budget - London's last contribution was US\$1.1million. Incidentally, several delegates expressed privately the feeling that the big powers which had distanced themselves from the Pacific with the end of the cold war were showing signs of a renewed interest but it was certainly too early to bank on it.

SPC deputy director-general Lourdes Pangelinan said no one knew yet how much was England ready to contribute. Dun himself acknowledged Britain's comeback as a clear vote of confidence. Pangelinan reported to the conference that for the first time in six years, the independent auditors had given the SPC a clean bill of health with no qualifications and said the financial news was comforting and reassuring in time of scarce resources. The splendid performance in Pitcairn's words, with administrative costs already down at 13.6 percent and still to be reduced to 10 percent, was one of the reasons for the re appointment of Dun as director-general. He suggested his second term be reduced to two instead of three years, to make it coincide with the biennial conference cycle. French Polynesia has offered to welcome the next conference, in late 1999. The minister for health, Patrick Howell, modestly promised to the new Pacific Community the best conference ever held to celebrate the entry into the next millennium. Looking forward to it !



SPC secretary general, Bob Dun



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■ SPECIAL REPORT

SPC - A historic perspective

The South Pacific Commission is the oldest and largest regional organisation.

It was established in 1947 under the Canberra agreement, which first set it up as a South Seas commission, signed by Australia, New Zealand, France, the United States, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Its aim was to promote economic development and social stability in Pacific Islands territories under the colonial administration. It quickly became committed to encourage some island participation through a South Pacific conference which would provide advice to the Commission, but as Fiji President Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara reminded in his opening address, the discussion of politics was very firmly banned.

The first conference was held in 1950, with 14 Island countries and territories participating. Two conferences have been of particular importance. In 1965, in Lae (PNG), the island nations were asked to contribute to the SPC's budget. "When we have paid our entry fee to the club, I hope the member governments will invite us to sit with them as equals," Ratu Mara commented at the time. From there on territories shared more of the decision making process, even though most were only taking part to the conference, which was always followed by the meeting of the commissioners. By then, what was formally accepted as paternalism began to be interpreted as arrogant and even autocratic. And the continued ban on political discussion (mainly French testing at the time) which exhausted out patience eventually provoked the creation of the South Pacific Forum.

In 1983, all previous associate members of SPC became full participating and contributing members and the conference itself became the supreme governing body of the SPC. Today, 26 countries, territories or associated states have a seat at the Pacific Community conference, with every member having an equal vote whether it is Tokelau or the United States.

The SPC has dedicated a lot of time and energy to fighting mosquito-borne diseases, promoting welfare of mothers and children, nutritional and dietary issues, and to eradicate agricultural pests and diseases such as the rhinoceros beetle, fruit fly and taro leaf blight. ■

■ DEBATE

Chinese influx fuels Marshalls' debate

Fears are rife that Chinese businesses will wipe out Marshallese-owned firms resulting in a disastrous impact on the economy

By Giff Johnson

The influx of Chinese into the Marshall Islands during 1997, the result of large numbers of passport sales in the People's Republic of China, dominated the debate in the *Nitijela's* (parliament's) September-October session, so much so that after weeks of incessant and often rancorous criticism one cabinet minister finally chastised opposition senators for "nit-picking" on the government on passport/Chinese concerns.

A significant jump in the numbers of resident Chinese in Majuro has sparked an unprecedented backlash in the community, with concern about a flood of Chinese the mainstay of discussions among rank and file Marshallese.

Those concerns kept the daily broadcasts of the *Nitijela* spiced with harsh criticisms about the Chinese.

Leading government officials, and even a few local businessmen, defended the Chinese.

The government's position regarding the Chinese is understandable in view of the fact that during the past two years, passport sales have netted the government at least \$US10 million, money which has covered government payroll, subsidised Air Marshall Islands operations, and paid for other government activities.

The debate centres on the concern that aggressive Chinese armed with Marshall Islands passports that exempt them from immigration control, will simply put Marshallese out of business and into the unemployment line.

"My concern is that in the next 10 years

even Gibson's and Robert Reimers Enterprises (the two largest local retail businesses) won't be able to stand up to this competition," said Charles Domnick, a leading businessman who owns a variety of firms, including a large construction, dry dock and car rental business. "Sooner or later, they'll own everything."

Domnick said that he didn't hold the aggressive, hard working nature of the Chinese against them, but that in the context of the Marshall Islands, dozens of Chinese businesses will put Marshallese-owned firms out of business, having a disastrous impact on the economy.

Resources and Development minister Jiba Kabua, who told parliament that passport sales had brought in \$US10 million, said he doubts that the concern for a Chinese "take over" is valid.

In the past year, the Chinese influx brought new currency into the country at a crucial time of need for the aid-dependent economy of the Marshalls, Kabua said.

"I suspect strongly that the economy was active rather than in a state of withdrawal (because of Chinese investors)," Kabua said.

"This addition infusion to the cash circulation was from Chinese investors."

Not all local businessmen share Domnick's pessimistic assessment. RRE chief executive officer Ramsey Reimers said that while there have been obvious problems in the same situation in other Pacific Islands, "it is too early to tell here."

A locally-based fleet of Chinese longliners does a substantial amount of provisioning and fuelling business locally, and recently two Chinese restaurants have

DEBATE

leased space at RRE's commercial centre.

Reimers primary concern is that the economic pie in the Marshalls is getting smaller, but the businesses fighting for a piece of it are increasing. Chinese emigration to the Marshalls, however, is basically a government problem, he observed. "If they have passports, they have just as much right to do business as we do," Reimers said.

That's exactly what worries Kwajalein Senator Ataji Balos, chairman of the Nitijela's foreign relations and trade committee.

Balos said that the problem might seem small now, but it could develop into a major problem in the future if the numbers of Chinese moving to Majuro continued to rise.

He said that Chinese are increasingly occupying jobs that Marshallese could hold. Foreign Ministry officials claim that about 1000 passports have been sold, mostly to PRC nationals.

As an indication of how strongly anti-Chinese sentiments have risen, Bikini Senator Henchi Balos accused the Chinese of having yellow skin, being ignorant of island customs, and of having no "jowi" (the "lineage" that is the traditional claim to being a Marshall Islander).

Another senator, Aur Atoll representative Norman Matthew, retorted that the new Chinese Marshallese were an extremely positive development and valuable addition for the Islands.

And the debate rolled on, day after day, at the parliament. Near the end of the session, in late September, Senator Ataji Balos made a point of saying that the *Nitijela* should strike all references of senators saying they don't like Chinese because this wasn't the point of what was being said.

"We welcome them coming but we have to protect the interest of the people from the Marshall Islands," he said.

"The Marshallese people can't compete on this level."

Domnick said of the competition that is pitting Marshallese against Chinese in formerly Marshallese-dominated industries, such as taxi businesses, small retail take-out stores, restaurants, and auto repair shops.

"Who's going to protect the Marshallese? It really bothers me because I don't think that people understand the enormity of the damage that has been done (through passport sales).

I'm not against the Chinese as a people. I'm concerned about what's going to happen to Marshallese."

Before the Marshalls recognised the PRC in the early 1990s, there was a relatively large contingent of Taiwanese present in Majuro.

But their numbers, and all Taiwan government personnel, dwindled as an immediate consequence of PRC ties. Prior to 1997, there was only a handful of Chinese in business in Majuro.

You could name all the Chinese here; they'd been here for a number of years and people knew them.

The start of big time longline fishing, with Ting Hong operating the fish base in the mid-1990s, brought dozens of Chinese longliners to Majuro, with the number of fishermen here at any one time peaking at about 700 in 1995.

Americans aside, the largest residents non-Marshallese community in the country are Filipinos.

Filipino staff medical and nursing posts at the hospital, are accountants and teachers and are the backbone of the local construction industry.

Many have married Marshallese, started families and become naturalised citizens (through lengths of residency, not by purchasing passports).

There is an active Filipino association in Majuro, which sponsors a variety voluntary efforts for the Island. In short, their connections to the community are solid and longstanding.

And despite all of this, they are the subject of derision by many Marshallese, being criticised for everything from not being Americans (who, among Marshallese in the community, are generally favoured foreigners) to taking jobs away from Marshallese (though only in the very recent past have younger Marshallese begun returning with some of the technical skills that the Filipino community brings to the country).

But with the arrival of what is in actuality probably only several dozen Chinese (nobody, least of all immigration, seems to know exactly how many Chinese are in Majuro now), the antagonism has taken a marked shift away from the Filipinos.

For many Marshallese, the chief complaints against the Chinese are that they can't communicate (few of the new arrivals speak English) or mix, and that they are rude and oblivious to the offence they give Marshall Islanders.

Passport sale debate continues

By GIFF JOHNSON

Despite claims that the Marshall Islands suspended its controversial passport sales to Asians in August 1996, a cabinet minister claims that the sales continue and that money from the sales is going into the personal bank accounts of the agents. And in an unrelated effort to shut off the apparently continuing sales programme, a leading government member of parliament introduced legislation to ban all future sales of Marshallese citizenship, a bill that was shelved until the January session of parliament.

Criticism of Marshall Islands passport sales came from an unexpected source during a nationally broadcast session of the *Nitijela* (parliament) in late September when government minister Litokwa Tomeing asserted that the controversial government passport sales program had not stopped in 1996, as claimed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"We heard that the sale of passports ceased a year ago, but some people are still selling passports," he said. "The money generated from the sale of passports is for the public and people deserve to benefit from this revenue. But the people who are still selling passports are putting this money into their personal savings," said Tomeing, who did not name names or provide more details. "These people should be prosecuted and punished."

Tomeing's allegations were countered by foreign minister Phillip Muller who said emphatically that "not one passport has been sold since a year ago August," and urged his *Nitijela* colleagues to stop "nit-picking" on small issues like passports since the nation was facing many more serious challenges that need to be addressed by the leaders.

Almost every day of the most recent 25-day session, critics ragged government ministers about the passport program and the sizeable influx of Chinese carrying Marshall Islands passports. The local newspaper repeatedly had letters to the editorial criticising the government over the pass-

■ DEBATE

port program, letters claiming, like Tomeing, that the money from the sales wasn't going to the government but was falling "in the pockets of just a few individuals in the higher echelon of the government who have become overnight wealthy people and do not want anyone to bash about the Chinese." There has been unconfirmed speculation that the sales have continued but with the government backdating the passports sold to August 1996. Cabinet members said that \$US10 million had been earned from the sale of passports in the past two years.

In a culture that favours the oblique, the foreign minister couldn't have been more to the point. "I said it during the August (1996) session, I said it again in January, I said it at the beginning of this session and once again I'm saying it that after the cabinet halted the sale of passports one year ago, not one passport has been sold since," Muller said.

Still, Senator Ataji Balos, the chairman of the parliament's Foreign Relations Committee, introduced a bill to amend the citizenship act that would repeal the government's authority to sell passports, banning all future sales. Legislation in the 1980s authorised the government to sell up to 3000 passports.

Muller said that late last year, cabinet recognised the problems with administration of the passport program and decided to halt sales. The US which had repeatedly raised concerns about the program, is satisfied with the full explanation the government has provided, and "now they don't have any more problems with it," he told parliament. During the early and mid 1990s, there were repeated and unsuccessful attempts by Asians to enter the US using purchased Marshall Islands passports.

A treaty with the US, while allowing Marshall Islanders visa-free access to America, explicitly bars naturalised citizens who haven't met minimum five year residency requirements from using their passports to enter the US.

Muller said he wanted to clear up the passport issue because the *Nitijela* has been focusing on it for a long time, despite the fact that "we have other issues which are more important than passports."

He said the country needed to focus on climate change, sea level rise, and economic development, among others, instead of "nit-picking" on passports. ■

■ ECONOMY

Women and fisheries

By Kalinga Seneviratne

The small island nations of the South Pacific may not have abundant natural resources, but one thing they have in plenty is seafood. For generations, both men and women have played a key role in the subsistence fisheries economy which has provided plenty of nutrition for its people.

Today, with economic restructuring the buzzword in the region and fish-export income its priority, women are being marginalised from this industry as foreign aid-driven development schemes focus on training the men for deep-sea fishing and other technology-driven fish-processing skills. Estimates from the Honiara-based Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) show the South Pacific supplies half the world's canned tuna and between 30 to 40 per cent of the fresh tuna imported into Japan – a catch estimated in 1995 to be worth about \$US1700 million. Foreign fishing vessels, however, paid only \$US60 million in licensing fees to Pacific Island nations to fish in their 200-mile exclusive economic zones during the same year. That, according to the FFA, is a mere 3.52 percent of the value of the catch.

If you take into account the income Pacific Island countries get from port calls by foreign fishing vessels, the income earned by locals – mostly women – working in foreign-owned canneries in countries such as Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Western Samoa and Solomon Islands, the total export income from fisheries for the South Pacific could be around \$US100 million a year.

While this income is important for the cash-strapped economies of the Pacific, there's very little attention paid to the development of subsistence fisheries as an important protein source for its people, as well its role in saving precious foreign income, which would otherwise be allocated for food imports.

Subsistence fisheries still provides the main source of protein foods for the coastal communities of the Pacific Islands. Studies commissioned by the Noumea-based South Pacific Commission (SPC) have shown

declining fish catches by these subsistence-fishing activities. In many countries, this is blamed on commercial over-exploitation of particular species, sometimes by licensed foreign fishing vessels.

In a book published by SPC on women's role in Pacific development, Claire Slatter, a University of the South Pacific lecturer and a founding member of the Women in Fisheries network based in Suva, noted Pacific governments were trying to maximise export income not only from deep-sea tuna fisheries, but also from inshore fisheries.

"Instead of supporting or shoring up the inshore fishery, thereby protecting this vital resource base which is sustaining thousands of Pacific people who are primarily dependent on semi-subsistence livelihood, governments have been unwittingly encouraging intensified exploitation of existing inshore commercial species," she said.

Slatter pointed out that while numerous studies had highlighted the central role women played in providing protein to the communities from subsistence fisheries, had not resulted in official recognition of it and support for women's fisheries activities. This view is shared by Patricia Tuara, the women's fisheries development officer at the SPC. A former head of the fisheries management section of the Ministry of Marine Resources in the Cook Islands, she says the women's fisheries development programme was set up at the SPC after many studies found that, although women were involved in fisheries in many ways, they were not given the necessary support by governments.

"The type of fishing a woman does is that which will not take her away from home for a long period of time because of domestic responsibilities," she explained to *PIM*.

"They are involved in harvesting as well as processing. Once its [fish] landed by men, a lot of processing is carried out by women," Tuara notes, adding that, in countries such as Fiji, even the new canneries set up by foreign companies employ mainly women.

However, she points out, it's in the marketing of fish domestically that women play a major role. "Markets in all the coun-

■ ECONOMY



Fisherwomen play an important role in subsistence fisheries economy

tries are mainly occupied by women," Tuara says, but she complains that when it comes to providing training and technology, it's the men who get it.

"The kind of harvesting women do is in the lagoons – very basic, pull and lining equipment," she says. "Often the kind of assistance they want is not great technically."

Tuara says what the fisherwomen of the Pacific want is better market facilities, training on income-generating projects for themselves (from fish) and how to get into business. "They want training in food processing because they not only provide food for their families, but also make food to sell. So they want to know what other things they could do with shellfish, seaweed, and so on." While the SPC set up the Women's Fisheries Development Project (WFDP) in 1991, headed by Tuara, SPC's main coastal fisheries training programme still gives priority to training fishermen in the region.

"The objective of the coastal fisheries programme is to move people off-shore into the more lucrative resources like tuna resource," says Lindsay Chapman, an Australian fisheries development adviser at SPC. "One of the areas is to develop domestic long-line fleets and domestic inshore operations to try and increase the tuna catch."

The programme's objective is to equip local fishermen with the technology and the resources (boats) to capitalise on the world's never-ending appetite for tuna – so the region's governments and their people may get a better return from their own fish resources. "In a lot of cases, lagoons and rivers have been overexploited and the people are losing their nutrition source,"

notes Chapman. "So we are trying to get people to go further out to target the large resource in tuna."

"[To exploit our marine resources], you need advanced technology and investments, which we don't have; not possible in this day and age by indigenous nationals."

The only way people in our countries can develop capabilities and opportunities in large-scale fisheries is by working with foreign partners," says Richard Kaltonga, former director of the Vanuatu Fisheries Department and now the president of the Port Vila-based International Tuna Services, a private joint-venture company with the Japanese.

Kaltonga argues that while you can train people to fish and market their products locally, it's not a viable development strategy for the islands because most countries in the Pacific have a small population base.

"The Pacific has a predominance of subsistence fishing activity," he points out. "So there's no big population or markets to sell [fish to]." It is arguments like these, from foreign advisers and local industry managers, that have led to the establishment of the WFDP with a view to increase the involvement of women from coastal fishing communities in national and regional fisheries-development activities.

"I provide technical advice to governments, run workshops, provide training materials, videos and manuals," explains Tuara. "One of the main tasks of my work is to link up women with government departments."

Fisheries is traditionally believed to be a male area. When I was working in Cook Islands, money would come and it was not

specifically targeted for women. Governments in the region [see] priority areas as deep-sea fishing – tuna fishing – as it brings in money. That's where all the support must go – whether it's training, equipment or whatever. "In my project, I have proved that women do provide for the economy." To do this, Tuara has segregated the fisheries income of various countries. For example she had done a study of how clamp fisheries contributed to their national economy. This is an activity done mainly by women. In her calculations, she included the contribution this industry makes to supporting families.

Tuara believes that until this type of segregated data collection is developed, it will be difficult to convince governments to support women's fisheries activities.

In the meantime, the WFDP is conducting workshops around the region training women in book-keeping, developing new recipes for seafood preparations which will increase the nutritional value of the catch for their families, as well as food processing and preservation techniques and how to find credit to start a fisheries business. She has produced a manual on "setting up a seafood business" which shows women where to go for credit and what their options are.

"The workshops I run are short, for a few days only and very practical. Because women have family responsibilities, I don't run workshops which take women out of homes for a long period of time," she says.

Tuara agrees there is a big demarcation line between men and women when it comes to fisheries in the Pacific islands. Where men are seen as the ones who do deep-water fishing and bring the export income for the country, women's role in marketing it domestically is not usually recognised in terms of national economic development. However, Tuara argues this traditional wisdom needs a rethink. As she points out, "a lot of deep-water fishing is done by foreign vessels. They pay licence fees to the government and actually take the tuna out. It's not sold in your own country."

In addition, the possible introduction of cannery ships – large 120-metre-long processing ships that follow foreign commercial fishing fleets around the Pacific fishing zones – may further marginalise women from the commercial fishing sector. The jobs created for women in onshore canneries will then disappear. ■

■ ECONOMY

Home discomforts

Rent on state housing goes up causing concern among NZ's Pacific Islands community

By Atama Raganivatu

Sir Winston Churchill once claimed "There are three kinds of lies - lies, damn lies and statistics." Thankfully, official statistics have become far more reliable and gained greater credence since Churchill's days and the following statistics adequately explain why Wellington's policy of introducing market rents for state housing is causing immense concern among members of the New Zealand Pacific Islands community.

The statistics show that 35.6 percent of Pacific Island people in New Zealand reside in state houses; 70 percent of the Pacific Islands community live in the greater Auckland area; the average rent for a two bedroom state house in the greater Auckland area is approximately \$US114 per week, compared to the average for houses outside Auckland of approximately \$NZ76 per week and the overall cost of living in Auckland is approximately 10 percent higher than the rest of New Zealand.

Wages in the Queen City reflect this difference, however welfare benefits (and a large proportion of state housing tenants are beneficiaries) do not.

State housing in New Zealand began with the country's first Labour government, which was in power between 1935 and 1949. During this time 32,000 dwellings were built with the purpose of providing affordable accommodation for low income families. Initially, the jobs created by their construction also helped New

Zealand emerge from the great depression.

Since 1949, the conservative National Party has formed the government more often than not, however the original principal of fixing state housing rents at levels required to recover costs rather than make a profit was maintained until 1991.

Then, the National administration announced it would gradually increase state house rents until they reflected those in the private sector.

During the past six years, numerous horror stories have been recounted about the deteriorating housing situation in New

Zealand emerge from the great depression. Since 1949, the conservative National Party has formed the government more often than not, however the original principal of fixing state housing rents at levels required to recover costs rather than make a profit was maintained until 1991. Then, the National administration announced it would gradually increase state house rents until they reflected those in the private sector. During the past six years, numerous horror stories have been recounted about the deteriorating housing situation in New Zealand. The media regularly chronicles case of families living in cars, garages and squalid, cramped buildings obviously unfit for human accommodation. Opposition politicians claim that these instances are all the direct consequence of state houses being unaffordable for a significant number of people. Of course, New Zealand is not alone in suffering from a shortage of adequate housing and, even today, the homeless there are not as conspicuous as their unfortunate counterparts in the United States and Britain. But, what makes the circumstances in New Zealand particularly poignant is that previous generations of Kiwis regarded access to suitable accommodation almost as a birthright. In the run up to the 1996 general election every major opposition party pledged to introduce income-related rents for state houses if becoming government. When the election produced a stale-

mate each party represented in parliament agreed to a rent freeze. But, upon National and New Zealand First cobbling together a coalition agreement early this year, the previous government's policy prevailed and the freeze ended on July 1. At the same time, the coalition government boosted the accommodation supplement, a benefit available through the Ministry of Social Welfare to low income families in both the public and private housing sectors.

However, the supplement in most cases, did little other than partially alleviate the rent increases.

In Auckland, the average state house rent (covering all building sizes) is approximately \$US155 a week and the average supplement of approximately \$US44 a week.

"The housing picture is far from satisfactory and administration of the accommodation supplement is questionable," Arthur Anae, National's single Pacific Island member of parliament acknowledges. "Every one is looking at solutions to it."

Not surprisingly, Taito Phillip Field, the Labour Party's spokesman on Pacific Island affairs is less measured in his criticism: "Many people in state houses have known for a long time that state housing is unaffordable.

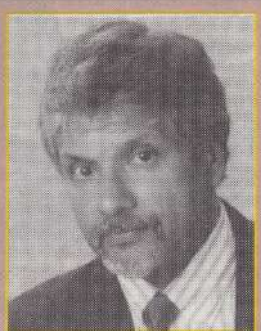
This has resulted in overcrowding and there are several other problems which are repercussions of the government's policy, including health, education failures in the Pacific Islands community and escalating crime.

Housing New Zealand (the government organisation which administers state housing) made a profit of \$US66,000,000 last year.

That profit was at the expense of low income people and the most vulnerable, including the old and children. The only fair means to access state rents is to make



Left: Labour Party's spokesman on Pacific Island affairs Taito Phillip Field



Right: Arthur Anae, National's single Pacific Island MP

■ ECONOMY

them income related." Anae too obviously has misgivings over Housing New Zealand's declared profit, but points out: "The government is allocating approximately \$US500,000,000 to the accommodation supplement this year.

"We are also promoting a home buy scheme, which I believe Pacific Island people have not been informed sufficiently about. All our people should take the opportunity to own a house. If we are to get away from dependency, we must own our own homes.

This can be done by converting rent into mortgage payments." Field admitted to sympathy for this concept before adding: "Unfortunately, home ownership is not feasible for many people at the current time. They find rents beyond their means, so they can't possibly meet any mortgage demands."

At least 46 percent of the Pacific Island community already own their own homes and, doubtless, many others would wish to do so. Home ownership is an important facet of "the better life" Pacific islanders yearned for when they left their home countries for New Zealand. For the majority, though, rental accommodation was the sole option. With state housing's problems, it is little wonder that an increasing number of Pacific Island people are turning to private landlords to provide them with a roof over their heads. Now 18 percent rent in the private sector.

"With the price of state housing going up," Anae observes, "Many are now finding that private landlords offer a better overall deal than Housing New Zealand."

The fact that, despite the continuing demand for rental residencies, 1800 of Housing New Zealand units nationwide are currently unoccupied gives further credit to the widespread belief that the move towards market rents has been, at worst, ill-conceived and, at best, hasty.

The coalition government, though, remains committed to market rents and state housing tenants can not anticipate any relief until the next general election in 1999, at the very earliest, and then only if opposition parties win and pre-election promises become post election actions.

It's now generally forgotten that it was the last Labour government which first mooted market rents for state houses. The greatest likelihood is that the days of governments heavily subsidising rental housing in New Zealand are gone forever. ■

■ BOUGAINVILLE

Declaration of truce

By Sam Vulum

The peace process on Papua New Guinea's trouble-torn Bougainville Island has taken another encouraging step forward with the recent declaration of truce on the island. PNG's Defence Force Commander Brigadier General Leo Nuia announced on October 24 that all restrictions imposed by the security forces on Bougainville had been lifted as of October 10, the signing date of the Burnham Truce in New Zealand. He said this had been done to honour and comply with the truce and further enhance the peace process.

This now means that people who want to travel in or to Bougainville no longer need clearances from the security forces. People are free to move anywhere, at any time; shipping companies and third-level airlines are free to operate throughout Bougainville. General Nuia urged all Bougainville traditional border crossers to report to Torato Island for immigration and customs formalities before entering the Solomon Islands territory. He also directed that the PNGDF vacate its camp in Buka to allow the Iata people to resettle in their village. The truce was signed by government officials, Bougainville Transitional Government and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army in a two-week meeting to prepare an agenda for the third round of peace talks.

The talks envisaged another leaders' meeting which PNG Prime Minister Bill Skate is expected to attend. The meeting has been scheduled for January 1998.

However, a Reuters report quoted NZ government sources as saying that two further sets of talks are set to be held in NZ during the coming months. The first round, to take place before Christmas, would involve a handful of officials representing the various factions on Bougainville. "They all feel comfortable here. For the BRA, Burnham is almost like a second home," one source said.

NZ Foreign Affairs Minister Don McKinnon confirmed a meeting of officials was the next step, but said arrangements were up to the parties to the talks. Government officials did not expect pro-independence rebel leader Francis Ona to

be involved in the talks. They said he seemed to be becoming marginalised, although it was difficult to assess how much influence he retained.

The truce calls for a commitment that all parties refrain from all acts of intimidation; lifting of all internal restrictions on Bougainville enforced by the security forces, BRA or any other groups on the island. Skate said the truce formalised the desire for peace by all parties on Bougainville. Skate said the national government would also consider entering into a formal ceasefire agreement supervised by a neutral third party and all parties involved in the conflict after a proper investigation of cost and implications of such an arrangement was completed.

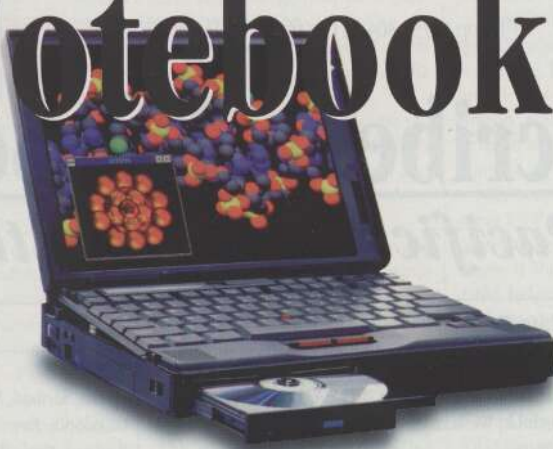
In a first test of the truce, notorious separatist rebel leader Sylvester Vane, who was involved in a motor vehicle accident, has been treated and set free. Vane, one of the most wanted rebels prior to the truce, was injured in a car accident at Tinputz on October 21. Although his injuries were minor, he was nevertheless rushed to Sohano Hospital for medical treatment.

Vane had been considered by security forces and government authorities as a notorious rebel materinding activities in the northern part of mainland Meanwhile, a delegation of Australian and NZ experts on monitoring peacekeeping visited PNG in October to assess technical requirements for agreed peace monitoring arrangements for Bougainville.

Bougainville Affairs Minister Sam Akoitai, announcing the visit, said it was part of the follow-up to agreements reached between parties to the conflict on Bougainville when they met in Burnham, NZ in early October.

"The Government is pleased with the way that the Burnham truce and removal of internal restrictions are working," Akoitai said. "We need to move quickly to provide the sense of security that the people of Bougainville need, by getting the truce monitoring group into place as soon as possible." The Bougainville conflict, which has claimed thousands of lives, began when landowners revolted in 1988 over damage caused by the huge Panguna copper mine and the royalties they received from it. Bougainville has been a huge political headache for PNG. ■

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■ MEDIA

The NBC crisis

Wrongful dismissal of employee becomes a costly affair

By Sam Vukun

A minor administrative failure by the executive management of the government-owned National Broadcasting Corporation came close to severing a vital communication supply line for 85 percent of Papua New Guinea's rural population in October.

It also threatened the jobs of hundreds of others in the corporation's 19 provincial radio stations and the future of government assets valued at more than K7.3 million (approx. \$US4.2 million) at the Port Moresby headquarters.

The properties were ordered to be auctioned or sold following the NBC's failure to honour a court order to pay K160,000 (approx. \$US92,000) to a former broadcaster, Peter Koringo, for wrongful dismissal in 1995.

In the event of a closure the only means of communication for people in some of the most isolated parts of the country, where there are no telephones, two-way radio systems, roads and proper shipping services, would be severely affected.

They rely heavily on the NBC through the provincial radio stations, for news, weather reports, shipping and airline movements, programs on education, health, agriculture, business and other important government services which directly affect their lives.

Koringo was a senior broadcaster with Radio Morobe in Lae, Morobe province when he was terminated. After two years since his dismissal, he successfully sought the help of the National Court sheriff's office to order the seizure of the properties and put them up for sale unless the corporation paid up the damages claim.

The NBC management and staff were caught by surprise when a notice of the

seizure was posted outside the NBC headquarters on September 18.

The notice meant that the sheriff had legally seized possession to the studios and vehicles which would be sold off if NBC did not pay up or suggest alternative means about meeting the payments by September 19.

The deadline lapsed without any payment being made, but the corporation's lawyer successfully sought and was referred to the Supreme Court to determine whether the National Court's decision to award the damages could be stayed and whether leave could be granted for a judicial review of that decision.

What followed, were a series of court challenges while confusion reigned at the NBC headquarters.

The properties again came close to being sold on October 20 when officials from the sheriff's office confiscated and impounded the corporation's vehicles from the headquarters.

The NBC faced double trouble on the day. While the vehicles had been confiscated, for the second fortnight in a row workers' pay was not ready in time because no money had been allocated - and neither the managing director Renagi Lohia nor his deputy Tony Boski could be found to sort out the problem.

The vehicles were returned late that afternoon with the sheriff Lawrence Newell saying the impounding had been a mistake. The pay problem had also been sorted out.

However, when this issue went to press, NBC and Koringo had yet to settle the dispute.

The situation then was that the Supreme Court, on October 29, had again ordered the NBC to pay K160,000 (approx. \$US92,000) as surely to the court by October 30.

The money would be kept pending determination of an application by NBC lawyers seeking leave for a review of the 1995 National Court decision which awarded Koringo this amount plus other additional costs.

If the NBC fails to pay, the court will discharge the writ for stay of levy of the properties at the NBC headquarters, giving Koringo the liberty to auction the properties and recover what was owned to him with eight percent interest and costs, the amount owed has increased to about K260,000 (approx. \$US148,000).

The writ for stay of levy of the proper-

ties was granted by Judge Kubulan Los in September following an ex-parte application filed by the solicitor-general acting for the NBC.

In early October, Judge Salamo Injia, sitting as a one-man Supreme Court judge, referred the matter to the full bench of the Supreme Court.

On October 29, the full bench, comprising Chief Justice Sir Arnold Amet, Justice Moses Jalina and Justice Gibbs Salika, which heard substantive matters on the application for a review of the 1995 decision, ordered that the NBC must pay the judgement debt.

It is likely that the government will foot the bill to save the corporation.

Acting Prime Minister and Provincial and Local-Level Government Minister Simon Kaumi on October 30 ordered finance secretary Isaac Lupari to pay the amount.

He was carrying out an earlier commitment by Prime Minister Bill Skate that the government would pay off the damages claim if the Supreme Court review of the 1995 judgement was denied.

Skate had earlier said that government would not allow the sale of NBC under any circumstances.

"NBC is more important than most Papua New Guineans realise. The average villager relies on NBC for information, education and entertainment, and it has a loyal and steady following.

"Radio is the only national communication network that reaches the majority of our remote rural areas, as well as our city residents," he said.

Earlier in the year, before the Koringo case broke out, speculations were rife that Telikom was going to take over the corporation's commercial arm, Kalang Advertising Pty Ltd, after it failed to pay up a K1.5 million (approx. \$US860,000) debt for telephone, broadcast and facsimile lines which had accrued since the 1980s.

The speculations were put to rest in October following the announcement by communications minister Simeon Wai that Telikom would not take over Kalang. Instead, it would be given a period of six months to see if it was profitable.

Wai said he had discussed the issue in a meeting with Telikom managing director Gerca Aopi and NBC chairman Renagi Lohia.

He said that it was agreed that Kalang Advertising would be given time to pay up the debt. ■

■ ENVIRONMENT

Solomon Islands calls on Japan to remove war relics on Guadalcanal

Oil leaks from relics pose danger to the



One of the many World War II Japanese war relics in the Pacific

By Michael Field

Something is killing the reefs along the coast of western Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands and it is feared it is the precursor of an environmental disaster 55 years in the making. The menace is from oil leaking in increasing quantities from at least 50 ships sunk in brutal naval action between Japan and the United States and its allies.

From battleships to destroyers and patrol boats the ships have been untouched graves for thousands of men, but now Solomon Islands Prime Minister Batholomew Ulufa'alu wants it cleaned up.

"Our environment and the entire marine life is under serious threat," he says. Although the US has previously removed abandoned mustard gas shells from the Solomon's battlefields, the experience of

other Pacific countries suggests little will be done about the newly emerging menace.

A large US Navy oil tanker, for example, sits in PagoPago Harbour, American Samoa, with all its cargo aboard after it sunk during the war and despite local urgings nothing has been done.

Successive Tuvalu governments have urged the US to do something about the enormous pits dug to build the military airstrip on Funafuti. The pits have damaged the water table and faced with rising sealevels, they have having an impact on taro growing. Nobody cleaned up Tarawa after World War II although the Kiribati government is quietly dealing to history. Red Beach Two, where the US Marines waded ashore taking fearsome casualties, is now to be turned into a garbage dump.

But the scale of the disaster facing the Solomons may be more significant and

more long term than any of the others.

Guadalcanal marked the southern most expansion of Imperial Japan's Greater East-Asia Co-prosperity Sphere. They were outflanking Australia, New Zealand and Fiji prior to their later invasion.

The US deemed that Guadalcanal was where the Japanese had to be stopped, and then rolled back. The land battles have become part of legend and coincidentally a US film company has begun filming the movie *The Thin Redline on Guadalcanal*. Based on the James Jones novel of the same name, it tells the story of a marine rifle company in action. What is less well known though is that more men died on the waters off Guadalcanal than on land.

The Japanese navy would head down New George Sound to first stop the US Marine landings, and then to re-supply the Japanese soldiers on Guadalcanal. The Sound became known as "The Slot". The

■ ENVIRONMENT

"Tokyo Express" as the ships became known, terminated their missions in Iron Bottom Sound, a vast placid sea of water between Guadalcanal and the Florida Islands. Entry to the Sounds is dominated by the volcanic Savo Island.

The Battle of Savo Island on August 9, 1942, between Savo and Cape Esperance, was one of the most humiliating defeats in US Navy history. Four heavy ships were lost, including USS Quincy and the Australian heavy cruiser Canberra. The Japanese got away undamaged.

American revenge came in the two battles collectively known as the Battle of Guadalcanal between November 12 and 15, 1942. The Japanese lost an aircraft carrier, *Kinugasa*. Also lost was the Japanese battleship *Kirishima* which ended up upside down on the sea floor following one of the last battleship-to-battleship encounters ever to take place.

When it was all over both sides had each lost 24 combatant ships, as well as dozens of patrol boats, auxiliaries and transports.

The affair stirs deep American emotion and their celebrated naval historian has written of it that Guadalcanal is not a name

but an emotion. "Tactically, Guadalcanal was a profitable lesson book for the US navy, army and marine corps. Strategically, it stopped the enemy in his many-taloned reach for the antipodes ... The jagged cone of Savo Island, forever brooding over the once blood-thickened waters of Iron Bottom Sound, stands as a perpetual monument to the men and ships who here rolled back the enemy tide."

In 1992, American oceanographer Robert Ballard mounted a multi-million dollar exploration of Iron Bottom Sound. He made his name with his discovery of the wreck of *Titanic*. He located 13 of the wrecks in the deep sound which is swept with strong currents.

"We found wrecks in remarkably good shape, given the beating they took, and wrecks blasted into pieces almost beyond recognition," he writes in his book *The Lost Ships of Guadalcanal*. He said the Iron Bottom Sound was as chaotic and confused as the battles themselves.

"No one has turned the graveyard into a well-manicured park, or etched inscriptions on its gravestones. But it is a quiet and contemplative place." That will change if the new Solomon's government

gets its way. Minister of State Alfred Sasako told *PIM* the reefs were dying around western Guadalcanal and the problem was spreading towards the Russell Islands.

"We can't pinpoint it to anything else, there is no industry there, and so believe it must be the ships," he said. "We can't sit and wait for anything more to happen, something has to be done."

Ulufa'alu raised the issue initially in a letter to the Japanese government while he was in Tokyo for the Pacific Summit. He is also taking it up with the US. His government could not handle it, although the country was facing an environmental disaster of phenomenal proportions because nearly all the warships had begun oozing oil. Fish and marine life were beginning to die.

"It the biggest environmental threat my country will face and there is no way that we can handle such an emergency on our own," he said. He did not want those responsible for the ships to act only after the disaster had become obvious. "I am therefore calling on the allies and Japanese government to start doing something before it is too late." ■

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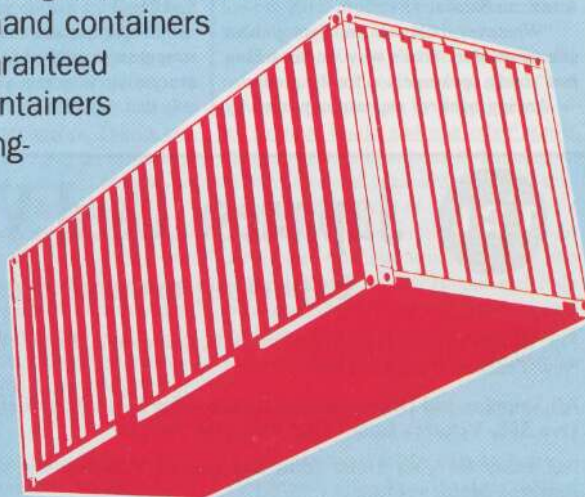
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■ POLITICS

Protest march earns a fat zero

But patience with a government largely out of touch with the common Samoan is wearing out

By **Chris Peteru**

Samoans rate patience as the guiding principle in any kind of disagreement. That patience turned to protest when in an unprecedented move a 5000 strong demonstration called for the ruling Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP) government to step down.

Organised by the Tumua and Pule, a traditional coalition of chiefs and orators, their leader Faamatuainu Mailei says frustration over the soaring cost of living, hefty taxes and eight years of unaudited public accounts from treasury, had led to the coalition protest taking place.

On a dry, hot morning villagers from both main islands assembled at Vaimoso village, about two miles from Apia. Joining them were a group from neighbouring American Samoa.

"Whatever happens in Samoa also affects us here. That's why we are taking part" said a spokesperson for the group.

Waving banners and accompanied by

brass bands, the procession slowly weaned its way to the government complex in the middle of town.

Escorted by dozens of police on the streets and hundreds more at the rally point, no arrests were made, even at one point when acting prime minister Tuilaepa Malielegaoi drove his land cruiser alongside the march in what seemed to be a flaky attempt to ridicule or intimidate. Least impressed by his antics were a contingent from his own electorates on the front line of the demonstration.

As the protest entered the frontage to the government complex, which was cordoned off to isolate the procession, scuffles involving several protesters and police broke out. No arrests were made.

"We want you (the government) to resign, the reasons are already clear," Mailei told Malielegaoi and cabinet members at the steps of the seven storey state building.

"People are tired of the never ending struggle, the political scandals and lies that everything is going alright because it's only that way for very few people. The rest

are paying for them," he said afterwards.

A deadline of 14 days was requested for the government to respond to the seven page document handed to them.

Traditional courtesies of quiet respect were replaced with dissent as jeers and cat-calls from the crowd peppered Malielegaoi's replying speech.

"You are not controlling your people Faamatuainu," he said as marshals called for calm.

Cabinet needed time to discuss the proposals then give their response, said Malielegaoi, adding he had given up an important meeting in Africa because of the protest.

In the weeks leading up to the march, the HRPP launched a propaganda campaign that verged on overkill. While taking every opportunity to publicly label the protest a flop, backstage they acted more like a sequel to Tiananmen Square was about to descend on the Chinese bankrolled complex they now inhabit.

Days before, the Public Service Commission released a four-part internal memorandum, on how the several hundred employees should react if the building was taken over by protesters.

Signed by the secretary to the commission Dr Luaiufi Moli, it stressed undivided loyalty to the government "by refraining from interfering in any way with the orderly process of government, even if it might be in his personal interest to do so."

The tacit warning was obvious enough. March and you may not have your job or future prospects much longer.

With Prime Minister Tofilau Eti Alesana overseas, Malielegaoi lost no time taking centre stage. For days he splashed himself across state television and radio with a mind numbing tirade about the futility of the demonstration. A one time



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■ POLITICS



Protestors at the march

finance secretary for the opposition, he said the Samoa National Development Party and Tumua and Pule were collusion big time. Although he never specified how, it is widely known that Mailei and SNDP opposition leader Tuaitua Tamasese are relatives from the same electorate.

"This is a typical attempt to evade the issues by attacking the opposition through misrepresentation and innuendo" said Tamasese who declared earlier his support for the march as an individual.

Easily taking out any literary awards for science fiction seminars was Alesana who seemed to have lost some of the game plan. In an interview with the *Sunday Newsline* he claimed Tumua and Pule was being bankrolled with a \$US1,000,000 dollars by Taiwan, with more expected. An SNDP member was questioned by police in New Zealand for carrying US\$250,000 when returning from Taiwan last year.

"I have it from very reliable sources that the government of Taiwan is pouring money into the Tumua and Pule protest campaign."

Taiwan was irked at Samoa for its recognition of China and it was pay back time, gushed Alesana. This was flatly denied by Taiwanese officials in New Zealand, who said they had almost little contact of any sort with Samoa and did not know what Alesana was talking about.

The prime minister labelled leaders of Tumua and Pule as failed members of par-

liament "who lost in the general elections and are looking at a way to get back at government," and were not attempting to stir up the peace.

Claims that police or military assistance was available, also raised some eyebrows from officials there.

A spokesman for New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said there was no request for help.

"Our understanding is that this a domestic political issue."

Not for the first time, Malielegaoi said, "The prime minister chosen by God" had been quoted out of context by overseas media. However the HRPP have yet to produce any concrete proof of their leaders assertion.

Banned from state media, Tumua and Pule used private radio and press releases in the left leaning *Samoa Observer* to encourage people onto the streets.

Their platform was a government largely out of touch with the common Samoan. And that touch in power seemed more keen on looking after their own interests than those of the country.

However, the 100,000 turnout organisers had hoped for was never going to happen, though a million dollars would have helped.

Other set backs also put holes in their drive to increase numbers. The major one was a refusal by the Public Service

Association to rally its membership of thousands behind the Tumua and Pule banner. By taking individual action in 1981, over poor wages the PSA had played a key role in ushering in the present administration.

Even so fewer than a hundred people turned up to a meeting to decide what action they would take this time. Increasingly, its influence since those heady days, has been reduced to little more than a social club say sources.

Earlier hopes for the influential teachers and nurses associations, among the lowest paid professions in the country banding together, also fell apart.

In 1994, Tumua and Pule lead several marches against a 10 percent goods and services tax. Attempts by the prime minister to have Maile and one other leader charged with sedition brought international attention to the issue and were later sensationally thrown out of court.

Although the conviction of those who participated this time was undeniable, the likely outcome of the Tumua and Pule demands on the government seems headed for a big fat zero, simply because there is still not the political will to influence change.

But the notion that patience is beginning to wear thin among some sections of the community, is unlike treasury finances transparently clear. The first stone has just been thrown. ■

■ COMMONWEALTH

Region faces security problem



By **ASHA CHAND**

The smaller South Pacific nations face a more uncertain and unstable world than they did 10 years ago, says a book titled *A Future for Small States - Overcoming Vulnerability*.

The book was launched at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland in October.

Written by a Commonwealth Advisory group, the book said so far the Commonwealth small states had managed to survive while some even managed to thrive.

"But the stresses are real enough and in many instances not directly of their own making. The environment can be cited as a particular case where external factors play a significant part in increasing risk.

"The international community has acknowledged that Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are especially vulnerable, but has failed to put in place the measures or provide the resources which would significantly diminish the threats to which they are exposed," the book said.

Another set of threats arise from the international economy.

The book said that although globalisation may provide some benefits, it could also lead to the marginalisation and impoverishment of small states, particularly those that are the least developed and least capable of making the changes needed to take advantage of new opportunities. However, the small states can not evade their own responsibilities for managing change.

A special section of the book, devoted to The Political Dimension: Analysis, said vulnerability of small states to threats depended to a considerable extent on the security environment in which they are located.

The book claims that certain metropolitan states were systematically deporting to the region a significant number of drug-related and other violent criminals who are Caribbean nationals.

"The effect has been to deepen the sophistication of criminal activity in concerned countries and territories, with the local police often being at a disadvantage in terms of the weapons used.

"A regional source has commented," they leave our islands as high school criminals and return to us as postgraduates," he said.

The United States is also a significant source of firearms which are illegally diverted to other countries, the book said.

"Thus both with drugs and refugees,

two cases where the destination which generates the market is the regional great power, that power seeks to use offshore small states as a buffer in managing the problem, adding unnecessary and expensive burdens to these societies," the book said.

It said Jamaican officials had estimated that security measures by the garment industry to combat drug smuggling added eight percent to operating costs. "They have also been the major recipient of deported criminals," the book said.

And on security in the South Pacific, the book says that over

the last decade the challenges have been a mixture of conventional issues and environmental ones.

"Fiji and Papua New Guinea are the only two states with significant military establishments and it is these two states which have had major security problems. The former was the only case of a successful take-over of a government by military coup in the region in contemporary times," the book said.

The book suggested an individual configuration of political threats facing any small state as at the same time it is evident that many small states share similar if not identical security profiles.

"It therefore still remains possible to identify a small state security problem in a political and military sense.

This derives in large part from weakness in relation to other powers and instability in its social and political institutions. The former appears to be of less relevance than it was a decade ago.

"Small states then had to be mindful of the interests of superpowers and while they still need to be aware of great power manipulation it has been largely absent from the threats identified above.

"The most pressing threats small states face in the international system have been from the growth of transnational activity which has multiplied the number of non-state," the book said. ■

■ COMMONWEALTH

Happy to be back

By ASHA CHAND

Fiji's re-entry into the Commonwealth fold after a lapse of 10 years has set the ball rolling for the country in terms of technical aid packages and training programmes under the Commonwealth banner.

When membership lapsed soon after the 1987 military coups which were staged by then brigadier-general and now Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka, Fiji was shut out from all Commonwealth programmes. A popular sporting nation, she could not even participate in the Commonwealth Games. But with the return, the Commonwealth Games in Malaysia next year would perhaps be the first major event the country will participate in after the re-entry. And Fiji's high commissioner to the United Kingdom, Filimoni Jitoko, is busy arranging meetings, forums, study attachments and visits by technical cooperation groups to Fiji.

Even Rabuka regrets the failure to rejoin the Commonwealth 10 years ago.

"My only regret is that we did not come back then," he said during the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in October. He said no efforts had been made because at that time Fiji was being led by two paramount chiefs who did not see it fitting to return. We did not make any efforts in the past 10 years because it would have been unchiefly to go back into a home from where they had been ... I can use the word expelled from," Rabuka said.

He said there was an underlying regret even in leaders of the other CHOGM members that Fiji was not approached to seek re-entry. Rabuka compared the Fiji situation 10 years ago to what is happening in countries like Nigeria which has several political prisoners. He said compared with all these other nations, Fiji's situation was at least reasonable - there was no blood shed during the two military coups and a few weeks later the country had returned to civilian rule. "Our example can never be emulated by anyone ... perhaps we are small enough to be so close," he said. He said Fiji was given a warm reception at the Commonwealth. "Fiji is very happy to be back in the Commonwealth. Now we want to be an example to the world," he said. "I still think Fiji is the way the world should be," Rabuka said. ■

■ POLITICS

What's in a name?

By CHRIS PETERU

Few would have thought discarding the Western from Samoa would be seen as cultural genocide mixed with top of the line treachery.

However, those are the kind of charges being put to the Samoan government by their American Samoan counterparts residing 80 miles to the east.

As far as the United States territory is concerned, they have been sold down the river by their cousins, leaving them with a half baked identity and hurt feelings to boot. It's all set to turn even more unsavoury soon.

The rumbling began back in August when Prime Minister Tofilau Eti Alesana pushed the third parliamentary reading of an amendment saying Western Samoan was to be no more.

Since 1976, the country been called Samoa at the United Nations. To avoid further confusion it is time to make it official, Alesana told the 49 seat parliament where the ruling Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP) hold a huge majority. Historically, both names are a colonial throwback under the 1899 Berlin Treaty between the US, Germany and Great Britain. With the Americans and Germans carving up the 17 mainly uninhabited islands lying to the east and west of the group, Great Britain was compensated in the Solomons.

Samoa National Development Party opposition leader Tuiatua Tamasese argued American Samoa would get riled over the Island state's new identity without being consulted first. "There might be a thought in Tutuila (American Samoa's main island) that we are being arrogant" SNDP member Fuimaono Mimio told parliament.

They were right. Following an escalating war of words both sides have now positioned themselves to play hardball over who gets to be called what. Little room has been left to back down. Long before any cock had crowed three times, Seti Lopa from American territories house of representatives was denying that the HRPP government had exclusive rights to the Samoa designation.

In a drink, this move care initiated by Lopa, American Samoa is in the process of

finalising some prickly legislation of its own. If passed next month it means any passports and official documents will get bounced back from the US territory.

"We are just as 100 percent Samoan as they are, we are non-*palagis* (Europeans) but only they can be called Samoans," he told his fellow representatives.

Feelings of a looming identity crisis increased, during the South Pacific Mini Games hosted by them in August this year. There for all to hear was the name Samoa being announced publicly he added. It was gold medal humiliation.

"Where are the official steps that should have been taken to find out how Tutuila and *Manus* would feel about the change?"

He received support from house speaker Mailo Nua and other members, including district governor Sauvusa Tauileva a son in law of Samoa's head of state.

"It makes us feel only half Samoans, not full blooded" insisted the governor.

With that emotional ground swell the legislation sailed through the 21 member lower house. But the main play comes next month when the bill comes before the 18 seat upper house senate. If passed, there it all but turns the bill into law.

The sense of a Judas type betrayal heightened when a group of American Samoa officials including Lopa flew into to Apia to try and reach an understanding with the head of state Malietoa Tanumafili II and deputy prime pinister Tuilaepa Malielegaoi. As it turned out the highlight of the trip could have been the plane ride. While talks with Malietoa were cordial enough, the pleasantries ended there.

When tricky situations arise, Malielegaoi often takes on the characteristics of a US Navy SEAL, specifically an ability to dive to great depths effortlessly, plus a talent for armed and unarmed combat. The grim silence as the American Samoan representatives came out of his office said it all. They had taken one in the forehead.

"What has happened shows the arrogance of the leaders of Samoa," a vexed Lopa said after the 45 minute meeting. Tuilaepa (Malielegaoi) told us he sees no reason why American Samoa should be affected with the changing of Samoa's

■ POLITICS

name. He also said we can go ahead with the bill, but to keep in mind that Samoa will retaliate." Alesana, a native of American Samoa told *Tala Nei* news agency that kissing cousins aside "I feel (the bill) is a rash thought, irresponsible. "We are an independent state, they are a territory of America. That means that if we talk about this matter, we talk to America."

However, the opposition have offered some qualified support to the American Samoan legislators.

"For Samoa to claim exclusively the name Samoa implies an inferior status on American Samoa. And because of reservations expressed earlier, I strongly advise government to consult with the people of American Samoa," says Tamasese.

About 165,547 other people who weren't consulted namely the rest of Samoa, have taken scant notice of the latest government public relations disaster.

Conspiracy theorists believe the suddenness of the name change could be tied in with a passport scandal that has caused plenty of political embarrassment and finger pointing. A loss of goodwill with kinsmen is the least of the two Samoa's wor-

ries compared to the potential financial problems from a successful senate vote. Money is one factor as to why the odds of the two groups of islands ever uniting remains steadfastly remote. With little in the way of a domestic commercial of manufacturing sector, American Samoa relies heavily on the millions of dollars each year from the US Federal budget. In contrast, Samoa has several times found itself almost bankrupt since independence 35 years ago, and suffered from a history of self inflicted financial mismanagement second to none.

Nevertheless treasury now reports steady growth of around five percent since 1995, and an emerging entrepreneurial spirit augurs well for the future (see feature). Large numbers of Samoans though still shop on the US territory where goods are a lot cheaper than their own staggering cost of living and low wages.

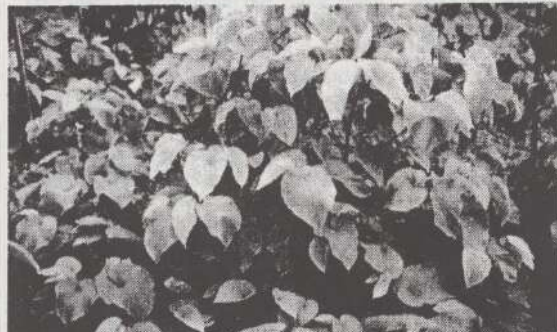
The Samoa Chamber of Commerce estimates that in 1996 its citizens poured \$US14 million into their economy. Thousands of menial jobs often shunned by American Samoans have been snapped up by Samoans and other Pacific Islanders

looking to support their families back home. Despite the common heritage there remains a competitive edge between the two islands as to who is really cutting it in the region. For years the more affluent American Samoans dismissed their western relatives like poor country hick cousins.

For years thousands of Samoans visiting the territory have had their passports confiscated by smug immigration officials to ensure they return home once their visas expire. No reciprocal arrangement has been enforced. Stories of patronising treatment are common. Now with increasing US indifference to American Samoa, the swing toward island states opting for independence, and a Samoa on the rise, the tables have in a sense been turned.

"We hate to see this bill passed because we are all Samoans, where is the traditional customary formality?" says representative Lopa. Final approval from the US Interior Secretary is needed to give the anti Samoa law a full set of teeth. Failing that Lopa says they are prepared to go to the United Nations. No doubt Samoa's lone Navy SEAL has been alerted. ■

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■ ADVERTISING FEATURES

Samoa's economic recovery



Reports by **Chris Peteru**

The come from behind approach that has brought Samoa's economy back to health, comes from a background of hard times since the financial crisis that lasted for much of the 1980s.

At one point petrol was rationed to US\$3 per vehicle, shops sold meat offcuts few other countries would consider and people queued for food.

The vulnerable economy was rocked again by a series of cyclones in the early 90s which devastated the mainly agricultural based export revenues and wiped out plenty of infrastructure.

This was followed in quick succession by a *taro* blight and an infestation of plant-eating African snails.

But latest figures from the Central Bank indicate an economic resurgence. The total value of exports for the first nine months of 1996 is up 33 per cent to US\$7.69 million (SW11.00m) because of expanding exports of copra, coconut oil, timber and bananas.

"Government believes the main challenge now is to consolidate the economic gains achieved in recent years to promote further measures that will enable the fledg-

ing private sector to grow," says finance minister Tuilaepa Malieleagoi.

Early in the year he announced the Western Samoan *tala* (dollar) would be available for the first time in commercial banks around the region.

Approval was given to banks in New Zealand, Australia, Tonga and Fiji who make up the Island state's main trading partners, to offer the service on a limited scale initially.

The bank is also removing the practice of releasing foreign exchange in instalments for larger overseas bank remittances.

In September the Central Bank also removed its control on bank interest rates and credit limits.

"The Central Bank will closely monitor these developments and will determine when full conversion can become viable," said Malieleagoi.

"It will encourage greater competition in the financial sector, the development of new financial products and eventually a reduction in financial mediation costs.

"As a result, savers will have more investment opportunities and borrowers will have greater access to funds.

It means the Central Bank must release the control of money and leave it to the

forces of supply and demand. And we will do exactly that.

"There is an international trend towards removing customs duties, and shifting revenue raising in the direction of consumption taxes. What we have done is lay the foundation for the eventual shift in our revenue base. Australia doesn't have a VAGST scheme, we have had it for four years.

"The country is doing as well as can be expected, and if no unforeseen disasters occur, we can expect to see these improvements remain."

He cited major financial support by the World Bank, The Asian Development Bank and the European Union, plus bilateral aid in getting Samoa back into the kind of shape that attracts overseas investors.

"I must say too that Samoans are resilient, resourceful people, and they are now proving that they know a thing or two about business."

It has also given many the incentive to get busy.

From running roadside stalls to building fishing boats in their backyard the scores of first-time business owners have sprung up.

"A lot of people now believe that it's better to work for themselves, to be their

own bosses, than working for the government or whoever. The difference now is that people are willing to take a risk, now everyone wants in," says store owner Pat Bentley.

"People now know that if they apply sound business practices, and are thoroughly prepared there is every chance things will happen for them," says Audrey Aumua formerly a consultant at the Small Business Centre, a hands-on training facility initially set up by the New Zealand government.

In a rapidly changing world tiny developing states in the region have often had to move at double time to stay afloat. In Samoa the government has positioned the country to become more market driven promising a gradual deregulation in the economy and more opportunities for those with drive and initiative to prosper.

The government has already signalled its intention to lead the way in freeing up the market, with the sale in the last 24 months of government shares in the national bank, now ANZ owned, and the post office banking division to private local interests.

While importance is still attached to agriculture, the latest development being a budding beef industry, diversification and producing quality products in any market has become today's new standard.

"We believe that the economic future of our country lies more in tourism and in manufacturing."

The moves show the government's confidence that the economy is entering a period of sustained growth. To ensure fair play, the Central Bank has warned the local business community that it will come down hard on those selling acquired foreign currency on the black market instead of to local banks.

"We are getting reports now from the banks about how much firms are cashing in. There is a very small amount going back into banks," said bank Governor Papalii Scanlan.

A senior bank official says that using the black market and illegal money changers cost the country "hundreds of thousands of dollars a year."

If the situation did not improve, public notices and the on-site inspection of business houses would be carried out, said Scanlan.

Businesses and hotels were obliged to trade foreign exchange at bank rates, and to make sure the banks received the money.

■ ADVERTISING FEATURES

The growing industries

Despite Samoa's geographically isolated position, a diversified industrial base made up of several local and overseas ventures

are turning up trumps for the Islands new economic direction. The biggest of these is the arrival of Japanese company Yazaki in 1991 to produce wire harnesses for cars.

Yazaki employs some 2000 people, mostly female in a labour intensive operation. By relocating from Australia the company has made a significant contribution to local incomes and the trade balance. Tax holidays and costs were two incentives offered by the government, which also

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built the factory and has allowed Yazaki to use it rent free. Managers in Australia and Japan have had their hands full encouraging a young work force to adapt to the industrial work ethic.

But the results stand as an example of turning an economic advantage into a source of income and prosperity in a developing country. It also marks a major success for an on going co-operative project said a Bank of Hawaii report.

The value added by just that one plant is roughly the equivalent of our total agricultural exports in 1995-96. So you can see the importance of the manufacturing industry for us," enthuses Malielegai.

It is widely held that if Samoa had four companies employing the same number of workers as the Yazaki operation, Samoa's estimated US\$185m public debt would soon be a non-event. Two hundred metres down the road at Samoa Coconut Oil products Limited, export quality coconut oil is being manufactured on a scale and quality never seen before.

"Oil is the backbone of the country. It is easier to make money from that than growing *taro*," says company CEO Tuaopepe Wendt. With three partners Wendt has brought a once dormant industry back to life. Having taken on a lease for a run-down government plant in 1995, the former university professor turned oil into the most valuable export earner in 1996 bringing in US\$2.7m.

Latest Central Bank figures show coconut oil brought in almost US\$1m dollars for the June quarter. Local soil content has meant the oil is of finer quality with overseas demand exceeding the supply.

"We are confident there is a future in the oil industry. The future in coconut oil lies in the public's growing awareness of environmental and health issues.

"This plant can process a hundred tonnes of copra a day, but we are only getting in between 50 and 70 per cent of that." With copra exports having trebled in the last quarter sourcing from nearby Tonga is being considered as an option.

With the Punja's operation in Fiji the only other business manufacturing oil in the region, SCOP has found itself well positioned to take advantage of a potentially huge market. Interestingly, women and children have played a vital part in the oil industry revival.

Asserts Wendt: "It's our guess that this industry is sustained by women and children, who do most of the gathering and



Yazaki - one of the fast expanding businesses in Samoa.

drying. Really though it is a part and parcel of the Samoan way of life."

Meanwhile copra exports have trebled, easily passing pre 1990-91 cyclone levels for the first time.

Several processing plants have been set up by private interests to cater for a growing market in the United Kingdom. For the small businessman the action has been out on the water.

The local fishing industry has been the success story of the year, with new boats hitting the water nearly every week and exports booming.

Last year almost US\$1m in revenue was collected, more than the four previous years put together. While the industry is still small by international standards the potential is enormous.

The Central Bank calls it "a major industry in the making." "There has been a huge explosion on the market and there's certainly a big future for Samoa's fishing industry," says exporter John Luff of Apia Export Fisheries.

His company has lead the way in exports since opening a processing plant and cool store in April allowing local fishermen to have their catches sold in fish markets in Hawaii and nearby American Samoa.

If an arrangement to bring in a further freight carrier is finalised, up to 20 tonnes, compared to the current nine tonnes will head north.

"Why this did not happen earlier I'll never know," said local fisherman Moelagi Sapolu. The rapid involvement of these industries has meant that thousands of jobs have been created and millions of dollars earned. "What we are witnessing here is a real get up and go attitude by Samoans.

We could say that our time has arrived and we are either going to take it or watch

as it sails past us," says Manufacturers Association president Eddie Wilson. The owner of Wilex International, an award winning business producing chocolates and cocoa by-products, Wilson says the entrepreneurial climate speaks volumes for the concept of unity and diversity. The government is trying to pave the way with private sector development. A large labour pool and a steady climate were other plusses.

"I believe we can build a manufacturing sector in line with the progress that Fiji has made. Things in the country are looking better. It won't happen overnight but it will happen." The same could be said for tourism which has provided an opportunity to rural villages up with the play to benefit.

With tourism earnings last year contributing almost 20 percent of the estimated US\$176m GDP, marketing and promotions manager of the Western Samoa Visitors Bureau Alise Stunnenberg believes they are on to a winner.

"We have more finances now. People and the government are now saying "tourism is viable and we need it." With the emphasis on low impact eco-tourism to complement the landscape and pace of life, what is needed is more accommodation outside of the capital Apia where 65 percent of the hotels are located.

Many coastal villages have, with funding from the Visitors Bureau, built beach huts and facilities for tourists to enjoy. A number of villages such as Lefaga on the southern side of Upolu have been so successful, the village council has allocated finance to provide village children with subsidised health care.

"People call Samoa the different destination in the South Pacific, because of the variety of things to do and see. But it's people who really make our culture." ■

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■ PRODUCTS IN THE PACIFIC

Stamps for rugby victors

Fijians are renowned for their prowess in sevens rugby. Since the first Hong Kong Sevens in 1976, the world never stopped marvelling at the uncanny understanding Fijians have for sevens. Today, Fiji is considered one of the world's best. It has been a drawcard in Hong Kong since day one.

Noticing the changing trends in world rugby, the International Rugby Football Board finally approved to sanction a Sevens Rugby World Cup. The hosts won the first World Cup, which was held in England in 1993.

At the second tournament held this year in Hong Kong, the Fiji team, led by their captain, the magical Waisale Serevi set the crowd alight from day one with their own brand display of world class rugby.

On the sevens field, the Fijian is said to be wild, intuitive, artistic and a joy to watch. Serevi first played in Hong Kong in

1989 and has never missed a year since. he captured Hong Kong by surprise and the rugby world has been fascinated by the man ever since.

He won the player of the tournament in 1989 and 1990.

As the Brazilians are to soccer, the Fijians are to sevens rugby.

Fiji won the finals in 1977, 1978, 1980, 1984, 1990, 1991 and 1992. With a four year lapse leading up to the 1997 World Cup, the Fiji teams dedicated itself to months of unpublicised mental, physical and spiritual preparation.

In the finals against the South Africans, the Springboks raced to an early two tries but the Fijians romped back in style to beat them 24-21, sending a thunderous applause from the 40,000 crowd while triggering a frenzy of wild celebrations back home.

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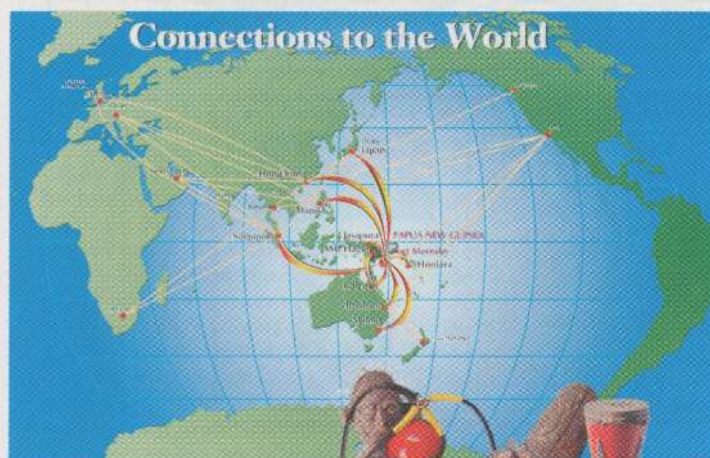
Fiji. They accepted it as one of the greatest sporting achievement in the history of Fiji sports.

Winning the cup was the culmination of 21 years of tough competition among the best rugby nations on Hong Kong soil.

To commemorate this achievement, Fiji's philatelic bureau has released a miniature sheet consisting of 11 stamps, showing the 10 players and the officials. The price of the souvenir sheet is \$F6, first day cover for \$F6, \$F2 and the presentation pack for \$10.

These stamps are for sale at the Philatelic Bureau in the post office building in Suva.

But those living abroad who would like to purchase the stamps can write to the bureau on GPO Box 100 Suva, Fiji, to acquire application forms and payments can be made by British postal order, bank draft and bank cheque or major credit cards. ■



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■ ADVERTISING FEATURE

Taste of Papua New Guinea

Blending and bottling alcoholic spirit beverages in Papua New Guinea for the past 12 years has earned Fairdeal Liquors a respected international reputation among its peers. The company's success began with the introduction of its first generic spirit range Gold Cup in 1986 which still today is clearly recognised as PNG's number one selling spirit range.

Gold Cup products are blended from high quality imported spirit concentrates which are compounded with locally produced alcohol. This is then reduced to the correct strength using ultra high purity water to produce the six varieties of the range. They are brandy, whisky, red rum, white rum, dry gin and vodka.

Gold Cup brandy has a sweet fruity aroma complemented by a deep amber colour. Brandy is Gold Cup's flagship in terms of its highest selling variety and has a lively spirited taste and finish. The

whisky is blended from a choice of malt and maize whiskies which are supplied from Scotland. This product remains second to the brandy in sales. It has a malt aroma and its light amber colour has the appeal which is important to traditional Scotch drinkers.

The company's gin also boasts an excellent aroma which has been classed as characteristic of the world's leading gins. The fragrances of juniper, coriander, angelica and its other natural ingredients simply bloom from this traditional London dry style gin.

Like all its other drinks, Fairdeal Liquors' rum is also an upmarket product.

The rum is distilled from molasses and boasts a sweet fruity aroma which is characteristic of a sweet rum. Its spirited taste and finish make this product very popular with the mass market.

The most recent addition to the range of drinks was Gold Cup red rum which was released in the market in 1997. Styled after

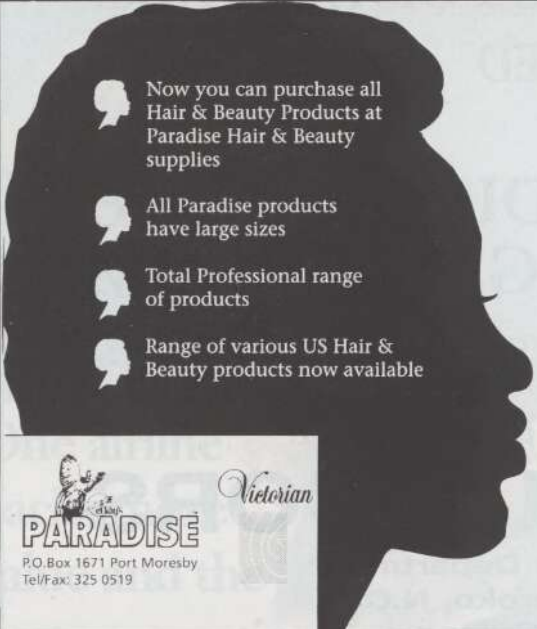
Jamaica rum, the Gold Cup red rum has the same reminiscent sweet aroma and a deep reddish amber colour appreciated by rum connoisseurs.

All of the Gold Cup range are produced in both 175ml and 350ml size bottles and have an alcohol volume of 38 percent. These smaller sizes enable Fairdeal to produce top quality products at affordable prices. They are all specifically blended to suit the taste of the Melanesian market and continue to enjoy brand loyalty. Looking into 1998, Fairdeal has many new projects in store. Their main aim is to continue to build and maintain market share in PNG while also looking to develop new markets for export. Having completed a major expansion project of their production plant in October this year, has paved the way for new market development and expansion.

Fairdeal Liquors are confident of being able to meet the high volume production demands that such market development would place on its capacity.

Meeting such challenges, while ensuring that everyone gets a "Fair Deal", has always been Fairdeal Liquors motto and they intend to continue to adopt that strategy well into the Year 2000. ■

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Authorities in France and New Caledonia recently formed ADECAL : THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUREAU OF NEW CALEDONIA. Member of the "Invest in France Network", ADECAL advises foreign investors and entrepreneurs on doing business in New Caledonia, from tourism to industry.

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Promoting New Caledonia as an ideal destination

With a per capita GDP much higher than the neighbouring Pacific Islands, New Caledonia being under European influence is different from the rest of the South Pacific.

Its high level of infrastructure together with the French touch, makes New Caledonia more modern and dynamite.

French affluence in business environment makes it the technical base for French companies in the South Pacific area.

Therefore, by being the South Pacific outpost for France, New Caledonia can draw on a wide range of technologically advanced skills and products. In addition to this, as a French Territory, New

Caledonia is also associated with the European Union which means its exempted from customs duties on original exported products to European Union member countries. Thanks to these advantages, New Caledonia is experiencing a significant expansion of the daily used services and technology. The reached level of quality in these areas will, from now on, allows firms and institutes in the territory to look abroad, indeed some already have references in the Pacific region.

This has incited various companies to come together with the GEST (Group for the Exportation of Services and Technology in New Caledonia) which comprises 30 or so firms and organisations.

This group is active in sectors such as energy, public construction and works, research, engineering, finance, telecom-

munications and various other services and technology.

This association is without doubt the preferred way of providing a response to the growing demand and expectations of countries in Asia-Pacific zone.

One of the GEST's assets is the excellence of French technology thanks to the coordinated participation within its subsidiaries of world famous French films and efficient Caledonian companies.

Different promotional campaigns will be organised beyond their borders, such as specialised expositions and conferences, in order to make the different partners and their services known to others.

One of the aims of ADECAL is to promote New Caledonia as a very good destination for investors by facilitating their implementation. ■



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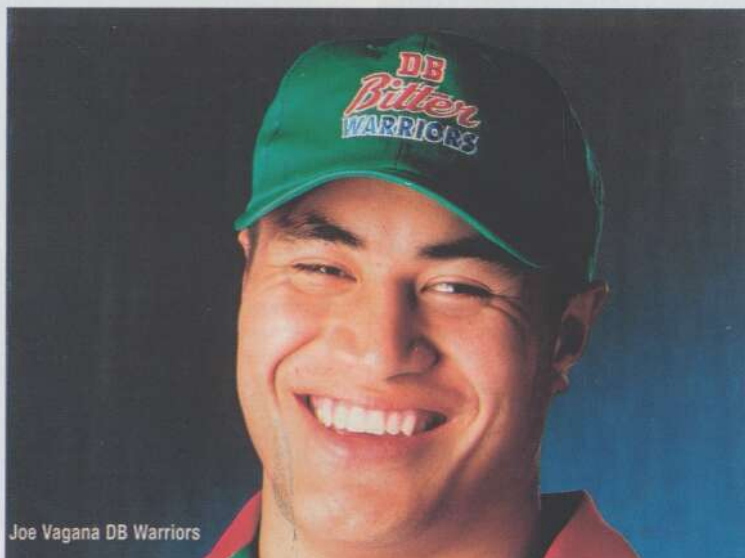
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■ SPORT

Jolting Joe comes of age



Joe Vagana DB Warriors

By **ATAMA RAGANIVATU**

The New Zealand rugby league team's extraordinary 30-12 demolition of an Australian side, many regarded as invincible, revealed several things. Perhaps the match's most significant aspect was the emergence of the Kiwis' 22 year old Samoan prop forward Joe Vagana as a genuine world class player.

Nobody had ever doubted the potential of Vagana, who was an exceptional performer at junior level.

However, a much publicised (and self-confessed) loathing of training, a love of partying, a perceived lack of hunger for success and an all too obviously abundant hunger for unhealthy foods threatened to conspire to ruin any prospect of him fulfilling that potential in the senior ranks.

As well, an introverted personality allied with a zany sense of humour often misled people about his commitment.

Vagana initially came to the notice of New Zealand's rugby league fraternity when starring in the St. Paul's College XIII which dominated national schoolboys tournaments at the beginning of this decade. He made his debut for Richmond in the Auckland first grade club competition at

the age of 16, was drafted into the Auckland senior team when he was 18 and is among a very exclusive group to represent the New Zealand under 19 selection for three successive seasons. In 1992, he played a key role in the junior Kiwis' first ever win over their Australian counterparts.

The year 1992 also saw Vagana make his senior international debut in the rather unlikely colours of American Samoa. Vagana, nor any of his team-mates, had any connections with the United States' most southerly territory though.

The organisers of that year's Pacific Cup in Auckland found themselves with an unwieldy nine original entrants and, to rectify this, they added a quickly assembled combination of (Western) Samoans not required by their own country. To enhance the event's international flavour, the late entrants were designated as "American Samoa".

The honorary "Americans" gained just a single victory (over Norfolk Island), however, Vagana caught the eye with some storming displays. Among the spectators he impressed at Carlaw Park was Tim Sheens, the then coach of the star studded Canberra Raiders club.

Sheens attempted to sign the 17 year old for Canberra, however, Vagana

resolved to stay in Auckland for family reasons.

Sheens was soon to regret his inability to lure Vagana across the Tasman Sea. During the 1993 World Sevens, staged at the Sydney Cricket Ground, Vagana brought 30,000 spectators to their feet with a barnstorming run which created the try that enabled (Western) Samoa to eliminate Canberra and reach the semi finals.

Vagana's decision to turn Sheens down as rendered easier by the knowledge that an Auckland side would compete alongside Canberra in Australia's premier competition in 1995. The Auckland Warriors were actually given the green light to enter the Winfield Cup in May 1992 and his was among the earliest signatures the new club acquired.

Prior to the Warriors formally becoming an entity, Vagana spent the 1994 season with the North Harbour Sea Eagles and gained a New Zealand Premiership medal during his brief stint with them.

Things were never going to be easy in the Winfield Cup, though, and Vagana struggled during the early part of that historic 1995 campaign. Midway through it he, at last, began to produce glimpses of his best form only to break an arm playing against Western Suburbs.

He missed the climax of the Warriors' original season, yet had done enough to secure a place in the (Western) Samoan squad which travelled to England for the Centenary World Cup.

When Vagana returned to Auckland, he discovered John Monie, Warriors coach at the time, to be demanding a vast improvement in his exploits on and off the pitch in 1996.

"I had severe misgivings about both Joe's fitness and attitude," Monie remembers. "One of the major problems was the company he kept.

There was a group of young warrior players who were little more than "party boys".

I got rid of them all except for Joe, because I knew he was capable of better things. Without these disruptive influences and aided by a pep talk delivered by me, he turned up with an improved attitude.

He showed that he was prepared to pay the price required to be a success. The turning point was the change in his attitude to his weight and training."

The "new" Vagana shed 14 kilograms as he slimmed down to his ideal playing

■ SPORTS

weight of 114 kilograms. Even so, he was far from an automatic choice for the Warriors at the commencement of the 1996 season and, for a while, cousins Linda and Nigel Vagana threatened to overshadow him.

Linda is a prominent member of the New Zealand national netball team and Nigel, her brother, has created considerable waves in rugby league too. He was top try scorer in the 1997 European Super League.

By the end of 1996, Vagana was enjoying more time on the pitch and less on the replacements' bench. Early the following season, he won a regular place in the Warriors' first grade starting line up and then went about consolidating his reputation.

A constant improvement was underlined with dynamic performances for New Zealand against Queensland and New South Wales in Super League's inaugural tri series and in the stunning test defeat of Australia.

After the later, Australian coach John Lang stated "Joe Vagana is well on the way to becoming the world's best prop".

Although Monie is keen to take credit for Vagana's transformation, the true reason, according to the player himself, can be found closer to home.

"My mother died two years ago and that forced me into reassessing things," he explains. "I decided then that I had to give myself every opportunity in rugby league for her sake. Now, I play for my family really."

They were never a rich family, but they supported us as we set out. There were no scholarships for us, or anything like that. I want to put something back into the family. Once I've done that, it would be nice if I could make a comfortable living for myself."

There is no doubt that Vagana has already made his family proud. Anybody requiring proof of that need do no more than go to the village of in Samoa's Aleipata district.

It is here that Vagana's father, Sonny, has retired to after 25 years working as a carpenter in Auckland.

His house is easy to find for, above the building, a Warriors flag flies on permanent display! ■

United, we stand

Getting the region on the ball

By **ATAMA RAGANIVATU**

Any observer of the Australian soccer scene would be forgiven if believing Les Murray was omnipresent. He seems to be everywhere – on television, in magazines, on the radio, in newspapers ...

It is almost a surprise, when entering an Australian soccer stadium, to discover that Murray is not there to take your admission money.

Murray has his detractors. His guttural Hungarian accent is not ideal for match commentating, he is perceived by many to be arrogant and he certainly does not adhere to the old adage about being nice to people on the way up because you might meet them on the way down. However, nobody can dispute Murray's encyclopaedic knowledge of international soccer or his perceptiveness. Therefore, when he called, in the migrants' newspaper *Il Globo*, for Pacific Island nations to field a combined team in the World Cup, the concept should be given more than a cursory glance.

Murray claims that, individually, the small Pacific Island nations simply cannot compete due to their sparse populations. His article, published just before Tahiti and the Solomon Islands met Australia in World Cup qualifying series matches in Sydney, stated: "They [Tahiti and the Solomons] are trying, in total futility, to make their mark."

They will be walloped; sent packing back to their sandy beaches with a sackful of conceded goals matched only by the coconuts that await them. Their morale will, again, be shattered leaving them only to ask, why? What is the point? Why are we bothering? Of course, there is no answer to that. There is no point. The soccer region of Oceania at large has to take a deep look at itself and its future.

"It is clear that the nations of Polynesia and Melanesia, as individual nations, in a game as internationally competitive as soccer, have no future. Oceania, as it is now, has nowhere to go. Nations with pop-

ulations in the thousands, or tens of thousands, cannot compete no matter what the levels of coaching or funding."

According to Murray, the Pacific Island minnows should either "give it away", and leave Australia and New Zealand as the sole contestants in subsequent Oceania World Cup qualifying tournaments, or field a combined team or teams. He muses briefly over the possibilities of a united Polynesian selection and a united Melanesian combination, without realising that the former would, beyond much doubt, consist solely of Tahitians; all the other Polynesian nations having little interest in soccer.

As Murray points out, "A soccer combination of all South Pacific nations, properly coached and adequately funded, would surely be a lethal force." He then goes on to cite New Caledonian Christian Karembeu, a French international who is now one of the game's superstars, as proof that the region is capable of producing players of exceptional quality.

Indeed, such a team, which Murray dubs Pacific United, would have immense potential but several complications need to be conquered before it comes to fruition.

Murray himself mentions one. FIFA, international soccer's ruling body, only recognises nations as entities for competitive international matches and not regions. Its constitution would have to be amended if a combined team is to get off the ground.

Karembeu is among a handful of players from New Caledonia and Tahiti who have represented France.

Would the French Football Association, one wonders, be prepared to allow equally promising individuals to represent the combined team in future rather than "the Tricolours"? Without Tahitian and New Caledonian talent, a united selection would find credibility much harder to achieve.

The greatest obstacle to any combined side materialising, though, is the probable lack of will for such a development among local officials.

Officebearers of our administrative bodies enjoy travelling to regional tournaments, rubbing shoulders with their Australian and New Zealand counterparts and savouring the bright lights of the cities hosting those events.

The emergence of a combined team would greatly reduce such opportunities. However, if the will exists, the way should

SPORTS



be achieved without a huge number of logistical difficulties having to be surmounted. FIFA will enter a new era next year when its long-standing president, Joao Havelange, steps down.

The probability is that Havelange's successor (Sweden's Lennart Johansson heads the likeliest candidates) will be keen to revamp international soccer as the next millennium approaches and regional combinations may soon be encouraged.

The French, if they are genuinely eager to mend the fences shattered at Mururoa, would have no quibbles about forfeiting

the services of rising New Caledonian and Tahitian players. Once these problems are overcome, the mechanics of getting a combined team on the field should be relatively simple.

Thanks to the money the individual national associations will soon obtain from World Cup receipts and the Oceania Football Confederation's sponsorship deals, sufficient funding would be available to identify the best talent in the region, bring them together at one centre for training and coaching and to appoint a competent coach from overseas capable of

grooming them.

The fact that Australia was able to appoint renowned English coach Terry Venables for a salary reputed to be in excess of \$US500,000 a year illustrates just how unbalanced the contest between the Australians and small Pacific island nations has become.

It is doubtful that the combined team would initially have sufficient resources to match Venables' income. However, a young, well-qualified European coach wishing to make a name for himself should be within its budget.

As well as enjoying much greater financial reserves, Australia also had the advantage of including 13 overseas-based professionals in the team that faced Tahiti and the Solomons in June.

Due to the majority of people in Australia being of European extraction, most able young Australian players experience comparatively little difficulty in obtaining work permits in the Old World and, consequently, opportunities to hone their skills in some of the world's leading domestic professional leagues.

In contrast, no Pacific Island players, with the exception of those born in the French territories, have progressed beyond the semi-professional competitions of Australia, New Zealand and Canada. To redress this handicap, Murray suggests that any combined team be based in Noumea, which, as the site of the South Pacific Commission, must be regarded as an appropriate home anyway.

After three years' residency there, the players could apply for the French citizenship which would make them eligible to join any club in the European Union.

Between World Cups, the team could engage in friendly internationals at home and abroad which, hopefully, will make it financially self-sufficient in time. Home games could be shared among Noumea, Papeete, Suva, Port Vila and Honiara.

The individual island nations would retain their own entities for regional competitions like the South Pacific Games and provide 'feeder teams' for the combined unit. Of course, such a side will only eventuate should our soccer fraternity have the desire to make it happen.

But they must realise it presents a genuine opportunity to ensure that no further humiliations like the 13-0 hammering recently dished out to the Solomons by Australia are endured again. ■

■ CULTURE

The festival of the dreaming

Story and photography **LIZ THOMPSON**

There were several dance performances at the Sydney Festival of the Dreaming and most of them combined some aspects of traditional influence with contemporary ideas, movements and music. *Mimi* was one of the most magical. Located in Centennial Park, the stage was open air and set amidst a series of huge and ancient trees.

As you approached the performance area the hill dropped away behind the stage and exposed a panoramic view of the suburbs, tiny houses and a million lights stretched in the darkness towards the coast. On both sides of the stage the trees which stood further away were gently lit by stage lights.

As the music and performance began, there was a sense of being wrapped in a fairytale in which strange creatures from another world were about to emerge from behind rocks or beneath the ground. This was indeed a setting for the emergence of spirits, the *Mimi* spirits, who lived in the rocky escarpment country of Western Arnhem Land. The *Mimi*, according to Thompson Yulidjiir from Kunbarllanjnja in Arnhem Land, arrived on the earth after the ancestral creator of beings who had first brought the features of the landscape into existence and before the first humans, a time when the world was soft.

The *Mimi* taught the old people important law and were known to visit artists and musicians often through dreams, giving inspiration for a song cycle or showing how to paint a particular picture. In the performance of *Mimi*, the spirits appeared to the left of the stage, from amidst the trees. They were all on stilts, extremely tall, they look like giant insects making their way down the slope of grassland, their flowing costumes like wings about them.

The production was performed by members of Stalker Theatre Company (initially a stilt based company), contemporary indigenous dancers and musicians from Western Australia and traditional dancers, musicians and painters from the Kunwinjku tribe of Arnhem Land. The concept was initiated when in 1994 and 1995, members of Stalker and the performers from Western Australia travelled to Kunbarllanjnja community in Arnhem Land where the traditional owners of the *Mimi* stories live.

Kunwinjku elders gave permission for the retelling and reinterpretation of the *Mimi* stories in the form of a cross cultural performance. According to the program which accompanies the performance, they also gave the name Marrugeku, which means clever people, to the newly formed company. To the Kunwinjku, clever people are humans who communicate with the spirit world.

The process of collaboration between Marrugeku and the



The *Mimi* performance at the festival of dreaming.

Kunwinjku elders and the community took over four years. When the company had prepared an initial performance of *Mimi* they took it back to the community and showed it to the elders.

According to David Clarkson, one of the performers, they got a feedback from the on their interpretation of what they were seeing and so that allowed for a further layering and development.

"So there was the initial base of the traditional stories, there was then our reinvention of those stories and then a reinterpretation of our reinvention."

Apparently the elders felt it was a good idea for the shows to be performed in the community, says Clarkson, because it showed the people their own culture and made it a discussion point.

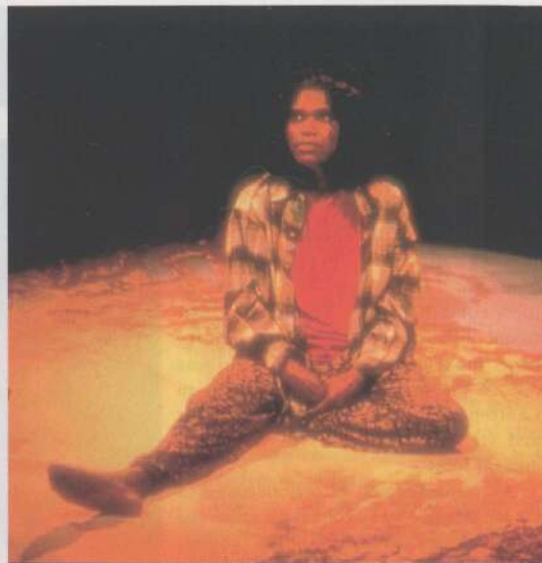
While most people in Kunbarllanjnja community have not seen the *Mimi* spirits, they tell that their parents generation saw them. The production of *Mimi* within the community prompted a great deal of discussion about them, the kids drew *Mimis* at school. According to Yulidjiir, the performance of *Mimi* went some way to keeping the spirits alive. "We're keeping him alive now with this dance and song."

To the musical accompaniment of *didjeridoo*, clapsticks and guitar the *Mimi* appeared and moved across the stage. A young man began to tell the story of the spirits. As the performance unfolded the *Mimi* and *Binninj* (Aboriginal people) travelled together during the course of a single night. This according to the director Rachael Swain, represented the meetings of significant points across history since the time of the great creator beings. The *Mimi* both taught and teased the *Binninj*. Together they faced

■ CULTURE



More than feathers and beads - a solo performance at the festival.



Ningali wimens business

other forces or spirit beings who came into their world. Their path on this night echoed the path many of our cultures face in the 20th century, reconciling the assumed differences between the human and the spirit worlds.

As dusk fell the *Mimi* blew light through the rock face and the *Binninj* woke up. The *Mimi* then taught the *Binninj* how to dance, to hunt and gather. The *Mimi* women go hunting for wild *yams* (sweet potato) and the men for *goanna*.

According to Yuldjirri, *Mimis* come out to hunt for kangaroo, but when that wind come up, they go back to that big rock place. "*Mimi* can take you there. Inside you can see all that *Mimi* dancing and singing. They have big mob tucker (food) in there. They have live one (rock wallaby), rock python, quiet one (Echidna), in there like pets. When you go in there that *Mimi* teach you how to paint in old way. Now we are using different way."

As the night wore on, the *Mimi* meet several other spirit beings, the first were the *Yawk Yawk*, water spirits from western and northern Arnhem land, from the creeks and water holes of the river flood plains heading towards the sea.

The *Yawk Yawk* were mermaids, half woman, half fish who traditionally lived in trees by the rivers and they were the daughters of Ngyalod the rainbow serpent. Ngyalod, the rainbow serpent was angry at the *Mimi* for teasing her children and created a strong wind to break the *Mimis* long skinny necks. A large structure which inhabited the centre of the stage provided a climbing frame for the dancers who stretched their long legs as they rose higher, hooking themselves onto trapeze lines they leapt from the frame and sway precariously back and forth, bouncing and turning in the wind, an extraordinary feat wearing stilts.

As they struggled to return to the familiar rocky terrain, *Namorrodoh*, a huge and fearsome spirit arrived. He towered above the *Mimi* spirits and he swept across the stage, hunting the weak and dying, stealing their souls to put in his dilly bag. *Namorrodoh* is a dark spirit believed to steal the souls of the dying and take them to another place. As the dawn approached the *Mimi* appeared

to retreat back into the rock, leaving the *Binninj* with their songs and dances. But the spirit of the *Mimi*, says Swain, is kept alive through these art forms. *Mimi* successfully combined traditional dance and modern theatre, stylishly blending the influences of two worlds. The dance they were making, says Yuldjirri, was a *binninj* and *balanda* (white person) mix of dance. The dance will help people from Australia and all over the world understand more about Kunwinjku culture.

Quite different in production and content was *Fia Ola* performed by the Black Grace Dance Company from New Zealand. The company is made up of Maoris, Pacific Islanders and one Kiwi.

Unlike *Mimi* which drew specifically on traditional spirits and stories, *Fia Ola* was a contemporary exploration of the plight of one gay man and his friend, Iosefa and Ioane, growing up together in a village in Samoa. The gay man's confusion and his friend's attempts to deny his likely homosexuality were set against a backdrop of community intolerance.

The negative attitude towards homosexuality lead to a beating which resulted in the gay man's death. According to the company it was, through the eyes of Iosefa and Ioane that the audience saw the epic struggle of a nation and the realisation of a minority.

The birth of an eternal friendship, the journey of self discovery, and the desire to live. This explanation seemed a bit thrown together and the performance rarely moved from what was essentially a very simplistic story line with any real emotional depth.

Black Grace is an all male company and there is a feeling of aggression in much of the performance - perhaps this was due to the storyline of *Fia Ola* but it became a little tedious. The choreography lacked grace and the movements, often running, jumping or crashing across the stage bordered were repetitious. No doubt there was talent among the group but *Fia Ola* did not bring it to fruition. There was ample evidence of the dynamic energy contained within Black Grace but an overall sense that the company was still in the process of refining it. ■

LITERATURE

An oral history

... brings back the feel
of early 20th century
Nukua'alofa



By **NICOLAS
ROTHWELL**



The nostalgic press of history upon the present: the constant, unquiet heartbeat of memory visitors to the Kingdom of Tonga recognise these sensations. They are abroad everywhere in Nuku'alofa, one of the rare Pacific capitals where tradition is not being wholly swept aside by the onrush of modernity. Memory forms the central strand, the structuring theme of "Malo Tupou," an unusual, and unusually charming, oral history of a remarkable Tongan woman, Tupou Posesi Fanua.

Her recollections, from the vantage point of 81 years, recounted to the ever-diligent Lois Webster, bring back the texture, tone and colour of early 20th century life in Nuku'alofa. The reader, at first startled by the vividness of her memories and their almost casual presentation, eventually becomes familiar with the twin attributes of the narrative: its episodic style - things turn up, just as in life - and its crystalline, wondrous clarity.

Well connected, spirited, quick-thinking and much loved, Tupou was steeped in both Tongan and western cultures. She was by turns student and teacher of nursing, interpreter, legal practitioner, broadcaster, United States Peace Corps trainer, and

member of the Tongan Traditions Committee - but all these achievements came after the days recollected in this volume, which gives us the flavour of childhood and adolescence as lived by an extremely unconventional young woman: a self-described "spoilt brat" with an enthusiasm for genealogies (but not dates), an inquiring cast of mind and a pronounced penchant for reading. The story begins on the first of November 1913, and ripples outwards swiftly to embrace a range of other tales and characters. Daughter of an eminent Tongan teacher, and niece of the Premier, Polutele Kaho, Tupou received her nickname from the Queen. In her early years, her life intersected with a wide range of both Tongans and Europeans: the anthropologist A.R.

Radcliffe-Brown has a surprising walk-on part to play in the dramas of her childhood. Tupou's mother dropped dead in front of her when she was only five years old. The funeral and the impressions of the loss made are poignantly described, only to give way eventually to an enraptured account of the making of Tongan oils. Tupou's father, gifted and elegant, liked to tell his only daughter mythological stories that now live on in her imagination: "My father's ways took hold of me, as his father's took hold of him. I became interested in knowing about history, about the stories of the past and the people of those times, just like my father. And, like my seafaring ancestors, I became interested in something else - roaming."

Her education involved repeated changes of institution, until Tupou settled at the European school, as the only full Tongan there until the arrival of the future king, whom she befriended

("He was a funny little boy, you know") - she even helped him with his visits to the bathroom, a favour still remembered with a flood of giggles by the King at their encounters much later in life during a Royal visit to Australia.

Way-stages of change marked Tupou's equally unconventional adolescence. She spent a year in Brisbane living with the family of Ragnar Hyne, the principal of Tonga College, who, together with his wife, acted almost as foster parents to the young girl, whom they were keen to adopt. Hyne's departure to enter the British diplomatic service saw Tupou asserting her independence: she began working for Burns Philp, took up amateur dramatics

and discovered the difficulties of wearing lipstick without smudging it. Much of the sweetness of these reminiscences stems from the very distance of the remembered event from the narrative present; much, too, from the almost archival presentation, complete with photographs of early 20th century Tonga, footnotes on the historical background and copious, well-annotated street maps.

Even without such aids as these, though, the central adventures in this colourful coming-of-age drama would have a specific, highly charged resonance. One hears, for instance, the authentic tone of status and lineage-conscious Tonga emerging in the concern of Tupou's family over her early romantic dalliance. "They probably began to realise," she says, "that, since I was the only one of my kind, that it was important to keep my particular 'blood' running through what they saw as an appropriate marriage."

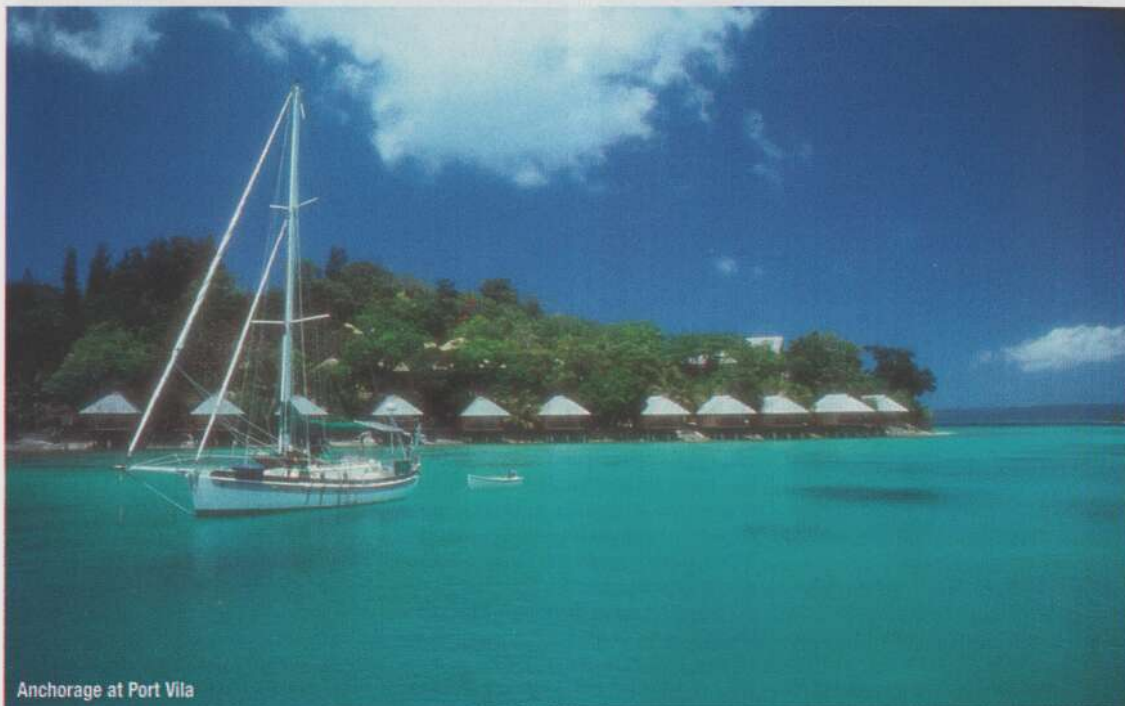
Perhaps a more tragic victim of the Kingdom's liking for arranged marriages was "the beloved Princess Fusipala", Tupou's friend, who was "so very upset about the marriages that had been planned for her" that she ran away and hid with one of Tupou's family. How sadly does the evanescent personality of this young and ailing character illuminate the tale: "The very last time I saw Fusi was at a celebration, a jubilee made for Tonga College. Fusipala was there representing Her Majesty. She didn't look at all well. You know Fusipala was always a thin girl, but this time she was very, very thin ... very frail. It was very soon after that concert that Fusi left for Australia. She died there, you know." The next, unbearably sad pages tell of her funeral and of the all-night vigil held in the palace on the occasion of her death.

Tupou herself, however, true to type, is bursting with robust health as this volume ends; so far from being forced into an unwanted marriage, she elopes with the husband of her choice: "One thing, for sure, I was at the side of my husband, Posesi, and the world and everyone in it was kind from my eyes and from my heart ..." Such were Tupou's first, youthful years. How much they call out for a narrative continuation - and, in the meantime, 'Malo' - thank you - "Malo Tupou."

Malo Tupou, an oral history' - by Tupou Posesi Fanua, published by Pasifika Press, NZ. NZ\$ 29.95.

■ YATCHING

Venture to Vanuatu



Anchorage at Port Vila

Story and photography by **SALLY ANDREW**

The islands of Vanuatu offer some of the greatest adventures in the world - ringside seats at active volcanoes; hot springs and blue hole that bubble out of the bowels of the earth; *kastom* dancing in the shadow of huge banyan trees; crystal cool waterfalls that splash into remote bays and anchorages; villages where you are swept up in the love that everyone gives so freely.

No wonder more and more yachts venture to Vanuatu each year.

Vanuatu is a very traditional country. Bride price is still paid in tusked pigs and red mats; wooden slit drums or *tamtams* sing out strong in custom ceremonies; magic stones cast their spell on sacred dancing grounds; land divers freefall to earth using vines to soften the blow; and pockets of people still wear little more than penis wrappers. Best of all, Vanuatu boasts

the strongest *kava* in the South Pacific.

In Vanuatu, though malaria is a significant health problem for the population and a consideration for every visitor. The risk is reduced by visiting during the cooler winter months, avoiding the hot and rainy season.

These seasonal fluctuations are amplified by the geographical location of islands in the group. Quite simply, it is less tropical in the south. As a result there is less malaria in Efate and the southern islands of Tafea province.

When we arrived in Port Vila this year, we checked with public health officials regarding the current situation on the incidence of malaria.

Dr Kazuyo Ichimori, scientist from the World Health Organisation (WHO) told me that the number of cases of malaria in Vanuatu has been steadily decreasing due to a successful programme which has increased the availability of insecticide-impregnated bed nets.

Over 90,000 bed nets have been dis-

tributed in the islands which means, taking into account the fact that couples and small children often sleep together, these nets protect more than 125,000 people or 73 percent of the population. These nets are available free to the old, the young, and the sick. They are sold to the general public for 500 vatu (about \$US5).

I immediately purchased one and modified to cover all opening port holes, hatches and companionway. It's great! Not only does the impregnated bed nets keep mosquitoes out of our living quarters, it discourages them from trying a second time by knocking them dead! Additional bed nets made great trading items.

We had first heard of Vanuatu's bed nets through Tony Stewart, medical epidemiologist and vector-borne disease project leader, at the South Pacific Commission in Noumea.

The programme which started in 1988 has reduced the transmission of the disease by minimising man-mosquito contact. Tony was a mine of information and had

■ YATCHING



Sailing canoes



Asanvare waterfall

good advice for people cruising in Vanuatu: Know the symptoms of malaria, take precautions to avoid getting bitten, and, if you are cruising away from the main centres, carry a course of treatment. No prescription is needed for malarial pro-

phylactics or treatment doses and the local pharmacies in Port Vila and Santo are a great help. Willing to help in any way we could, I visited George Taleo, head of the Malaria Control Unit of the Department of Health, Port Vila. "Can we help with net

dipping or by delivering bed nets to the more remote islands?" I asked. After outlining our planned passage north towards Santo, George asked if we could deliver a case of permethryn insecticide to the health centre in southwest Ambrym. "It would be a our pleasure," I replied.

Delivering the goods was easy, but we never imagined that the diversion to Craig Cove would involve two big battles. The first was a skirmish with a giant swordfish that we hooked between Epi and Ambrym Islands. Nearly two metres in length, he was too big to board on our small boat and looked lethal. Sailing at six knots, we could not spit out the hook.

So we slowed the boat down by reducing sail. Still no luck. We could have cut and lost our line, but I'm sure the fish didn't want to tow around several metres of stainless leader and cord for the rest of his natural life. Finally, after a two hour fight, the swordfish threw the hook. We pulled in all our line and lure, and breathed a sigh of relief.

The following day we hooked another fish almost immediately. I couldn't believe our luck. I gave the line a tug to see what size. It felt like a nice small one, so I hand-over-hand pulled it up to the stern of the boat - then looked. Oh my god! It was a black marlin. I fed the line back out quickly while we thought about our predicament.

So began another long duel, after which both we and the fish were tired. We towed him close behind the boat for about an hour, then I pushed a looped rope down towards his sword.

Failing that, we decided to pull him alongside and try to get a line around his tail. In the end, Mr Marlin found a wee burst of power and leaped out of the water. With one terrified twist and a tug, the hook broke away at the crimp in the leader.

This punk marlin now sports a shiny stainless hook in his lip. The next morning, by radio, we learned of instances where billed fish had actually holed two cruising yachts, one was a wooden boat, the other was built of aluminium. Boy, were we fortunate! So if you plan to sail or travel in the South Pacific, don't let your fear of malaria (or fish) keep you from visiting Vanuatu. During the dryer winter season our battles have been with fish, not mosquitoes. And unlike us, maybe you'll be lucky enough to land a big fish and have more than a tale about the one that got away ... ■

■ OPINION

Land of the long white or the long grey cloud?



David Barber
WELLINGTON

It is 650 pages long and although it's all about New Zealand it is also a warning to every country in the Pacific.

"It", is a report called State of the New Zealand Environment, and the picture it paints in its thousands of words is not a pretty one.

It shows that New Zealand, which has long promoted its tourist attractions and food exports overseas on the strength of a "clean and green" image, is not the paradise most New Zealanders like to think.

It shows, in fact, that we are a grubby little nation, daily contaminating our soil and the air we breathe, polluting our rivers and the ocean around and hounding our native animals and plants into extinction.

Even the Kiwi, New Zealand's national symbol, is at risk. Numbers of the northern brown Kiwi, the most common type found all over the country, are declining by almost six percent a year, one of 800 animal species identified as being threatened with extinction.

Aotearoa, it seems, is not so much the Land of the Long White Cloud as the land of the Long Grey Cloud.

It is a report that should be read and studied by political leaders and officials of every Pacific Island country who will find invaluable pointers to help in formulation of their own environmental policies.

For if they do not learn what they should be doing from this report, they will certainly pick up some tips on what not to do if they want to avoid the New Zealand experience.

And that should be a major aim for all the island states, who with little else to provide a sustainable economy, must, like it or not, increasingly rely on tourism for their survival. The simple fact is:

The tourists come to the Pacific to escape the overcrowding and polluted environments of their more developed homelands. They will not come if they fail to find the pristine conditions they expect. The New Zealand Ministry for the Environment's report is the first comprehensive study of the country and how it has been changed by human habitation.

Among its major findings are:

- Only 54 percent of the population has safe water supplies and nearly one in four New Zealanders have borderline or unsatisfactory water;

- more than 7000 sites could be contaminated with dangerous chemicals;

- a fifth of all hazardous waste is dumped into public tips with no controls; and

- air pollution from home fires and vehicles in some cities exceeds health safety guidelines.

As environment minister Simon Upton put it: "We've lost huge areas of indigenous habitat, placed many native animal and plant species at risk, enriched our shallow lakes and lowland rivers with agricultural discharges and showered domestic and industrial waste around the landscape with gay abandon.

"Because there are only 3.6 million of us and quite a lot of land to go round, with plenty of wind and rain to dispose of the mess, it still feels a pretty clean place to live.

"We would be fools, however, to let that impression lull us into a false sense of security."

The government released the report, the result of four years work to shock New Zealanders who have come to believe the clean and green myth into changing their lax attitudes to environmental protection.

The report noted that since the first Polynesians settled here 700 to 800 years ago, 85 percent of the country's lowland forests and wetlands have been wiped out. Farming, forestry, transport and urban development now occupy nearly two-thirds of New Zealand's total land area.

What's left is insufficient to guarantee the survival of many unique plants and animal, the report says.

Of the original 93 kinds of birds unique to New Zealand, 43 are extinct and 37 are now endangered. A total of about 1000 animals and plants are threatened, nearly double previous estimates.

Much of the damage has, of course, been done in the name of economic development and here again is a warning to the island states: "There is an environmental price to pay for progress. Replacing forests with farms has led to serious soil erosion and some of the country's best soils are being degraded through intensive farming."

Although New Zealand's water quality is high by international standards, it is affected by sewage and factory effluent discharges direct into streams, rivers and the sea.

Contamination in rainwater runoff from farmland and roads is hard to control and, the report says, needs to be urgently addressed.

The status of more than half of New Zealand's commercially exploited fish populations is unknown. Stocks of orange roughy, the most valuable fish on export markets and a species that can live for more than 100 years, have been driven below the maximum sustainable level in just 20 years.

A recurring theme throughout the report, and a worrying one, is that despite the 650 pages very little is actually known about the state of New Zealand's environment. The report makes it clear that much more needs to be done in monitoring and collecting information.

Despite the battering to the country's postcard image, the report notes that New Zealand's population problems are in fact less severe than many other countries.

But it stresses that they are still serious and could worsen without action.

It's a sobering thought that if New Zealand, with its small population and large land mass, cannot maintain a safe and clean environment then no country can.

■ OPINION

Asia's woes and us



Jemima Garrett

SYDNEY

As the aftershocks from the Asian currency crisis and Wall Street's big stock price fall on October 27 continue to reverberate across the Pacific, it is worth considering what the long-term fallout might be for the Forum Island nations.

To the extent that the crisis is still to unfold cannot be known but, as Pacific Islands Monthly goes to press, it seems the region is likely to emerge relatively unscathed. It is Japan that is pivotal for the Island nations. It is the biggest source of Asian tourists and by far the biggest Asian destination for Pacific exports. It is also the principle Asian aid donor.

Those countries most affected by these events are mainly in South East Asia. Thailand was the first to suffer. It has seen its currency drop by more than 30 percent against the US dollar and has been the subject of a multi-billion dollar rescue package by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Indonesia has also had to call on the IMF and Malaysia and the Philippines have endured major currency devaluations.

The other country witnessing domestic economic meltdown is South Korea. Although the Korean economy is much larger than those in South East Asia (its GDP is roughly equal to that of Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines put together), by mid-November it was also wilting. The Korea composite stock price was down well over 20 percent for the year and the won had fallen 14 percent against the US dollar. While each country has its own specific problems, one of the themes to emerge from Asia's woes has been the weakness of its financial sector in which many banks are carrying a very high number of bad loans.

It is now clear that Japan, which has a big investment stake in many of the most affected countries, will at the very least catch an economic cold. According to the OECD, Japan's growth which was already expected to be a sluggish 2.3 percent, will be revived down "substantially". OECD chief economist, Ignazio Visco, told a news conference in Paris that Japan could lose just under 0.5 of a percentage point of growth - and that assessment was made before the Korean economy started its slide. Japan has had a growing role as a trading partner with the Pacific but it still only makes a small contribution to the region's GDP. In many of the smaller countries aid makes a bigger contribution to GDP than trade and, even in countries with quite significant trade with Japan, that trade tends to be in commodities which are little affected by economic downturn.

Tonga is a good example. On the face of it Tonga looks vitally dependent on trade with Japan, 70 percent of its export income derived from that one source. Look into it a bit more closely and you will find Tonga, in fact, earns more from remittances sent home by expatriate Tongans. Aid also plays a big part in the

Tongan budget and its exports to Japan are mainly in the form of squash pumpkins - an item which will remain affordable in any recession. It is gold and tourism that are most likely to be affected by the roller-coaster ride unfolding on international stock markets. Gold prices have fallen significantly and, with major international institutions announcing plans to sell-off some of their stocks, are likely to remain depressed - a worry for countries such as Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands where gold is an important source of revenue. Tourism, however is another story.

In the past decade tourist numbers from Japan, and more recently South Korea, have grown rapidly but, despite that, they still only account for less than 15 percent of the total - and a high proportion of those go to New Caledonia and French Polynesia. Far more valuable to the Forum Island nations are the large numbers of Australians and New Zealanders and, the not so numerous but big-spending, Europeans and North Americans.

The tourist industry is sure to suffer reduced numbers from Japan and South Korea and increased competition from a more competitively-priced Asia but it may be able to make up for those losses with strategically placed promotional campaigns in more lucrative markets. Light manufacturing and the garment industry in the Pacific could also be hard hit by the increased competitiveness of the Asian economies in the wake of their huge currency devaluations. Initial reactions from the Fiji garment industry, however, suggest Fiji may gain as much as it loses with more manufacturers turning to Fiji because of its relative stability and the ease with which product can be moved off-shore. While some industries will be slow to be affected by movements on international stock markets, the same can not be said for the trust funds which provide important revenue in some of the smaller Pacific nations.

Tuvalu's Finance Minister Dr Alesana Seluka calculates his country's Trust Fund has lost 10-15 percent of its value or \$US3 million. But he is philosophical. Since the 1987 stock market crash the fund has been much better protected and Dr Seluka has the satisfaction of knowing that this year's major draw-down (\$US7 million) was completed just weeks before the markets plunged. In PNG, the giant among Pacific Island economies it is not the Asian currency crisis, but a far more human tragedy, that is having a major impact on the economy.

The drought there, brought on by the El Nino weather phenomenon, now threatens the lives of a quarter of a million people. Mike Manning, director of the Institute of National Affairs, estimates it is costing the PNG government between approximately \$US98,000 and \$US130,000 a day to provide minimum food rations to the starving.

On top of that, the government is losing \$US182,000-a-day, in revenue it cannot collect because low river levels have forced the closure of the huge OK Tedi copper mine. If rain falls before the beginning of December coffee crop will be possible. If it does not, additional losses will be counted in the tens of millions and the cost of feeding the hungry will also escalate. In Australia, economists estimate the impact of the events of the past six weeks will take less than one percentage point off economic growth. If the situation in South Korea and Japan again deteriorates significantly - a possibility given the difficulties being faced by the finance sector in both countries - things could be very much worse. In that eventuality the Pacific, and indeed the whole world, would feel the ill-wind of recession. ■

■ OPINION

Commision gets new name



Debbie Singh

SPC

The South Pacific Commission (SPC) has a new name. Yes, from February 6, 1998, it will be known as the Pacific Community, following the endorsement of the name by the South Pacific conference in Canberra, Australia, in October. The new name is supposed to reflect membership of the Pacific's northern countries and convey the organisation's role in partnership with Pacific Island governments and administrations. The conference overwhelmingly decided on the new name despite having "Pacific Island Commission" as its early favourite. The Canberra venue was decided upon in keeping with celebrations to mark the organisation's 50th anniversary celebrations this year; Canberra being the birthplace of the SPC - the site where the original agreement establishing the Commission was signed.

And, in the words of Fiji President and one of the South Pacific Conference's great contributors, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara: "It is fitting that we should return for the 50th birthday to Australia, the biggest Pacific Island of us all."

The Canberra Declaration on Social and Economic Development notes the challenges facing the region and the SPC over the next 50 years in the areas of population growth and urbanisation; the increasing need to use resources sustainably, particularly in areas of fisheries and forests; meeting basic needs of Pacific people, including feeding populations; improving the health of people and meeting new challenges posed in areas such as HIV/AIDS; education, training and creation of job opportunities for young people; improving the way in which Pacific economies are managed; improving economic cooperation and trade in response to challenge and changes while accounting for the special circumstances of small island countries; and preserving fragile and unique environments and traditions of Pacific cultures.

Those present in Canberra reaffirmed their commitment to the SPC saying both the organisation and the region had changed dramatically since 1947 and this was reflected in its membership, its work, its programme and its positive responses to concerns. The declaration states that the SPC is no longer what it calls a "colonial body" but has instead evolved as an organisation that has become an important instrument for cooperation and development. In this light, the decision by the Britain to rejoin the Commission in 1998 - nearly two years after its withdrawal, also reflects renewed donor confidence and the work of its executive team in strengthening the management of the SPC and giving it new vision. British representative, Andrew Pocock told the conference that although his country welcomed what he termed "political developments" and the strength they gave the SPC as a body, by the early 1990s, Britain became increasingly concerned by the way in which the organisation was being managed. "We perceived a lack of direction, vision and clear objectives and in our view an alarming proportion of members' contributions being spent on

management. By 1994, we could see little prospect of change in the SPC and we felt that we could no longer justify to parliament our continued membership," he said.

"There was a great deal of regret expressed to us over our withdrawal ... (but) we noted with great satisfaction the review done by (Savenaca) Siwatibau and his team and the way in which SPC has been transformed in the past two years. We pay tribute to the political will demonstrated by member governments to make the SPC into a vibrant and relevant deliverer of island services which you island societies want." In his address to the South Pacific conference Ratu Mara said the declared arm of the SPC (in its early days was to promote economic and social stability in the small islands of the Pacific. However, he said island leaders began to feel that "an increasing sense of responsibility among major nations towards less developed countries" (had) evolved after the second world war and the founding of the United Nations.

"Benevolent paternalism," Ratu Mara termed it. "But paternalism just the same. The discussions of politics was very firmly banned. The winds of change had not yet begun to blow in the Pacific." "Gradually, with political advancement in the island territories, we began to feel that the SPC and its procedures were too rigid. So what was formally accepted as paternalism now began to be interpreted as arrogant and even autocratic. The particular bone of contention was the ban on any form of political discussion," Ratu Mara said. This forced island leaders to meet to discuss these issues outside the conference. These discussions would culminate in the establishment of the South Pacific Forum - another offspring of the SPC, albeit an unintended one. But finally in 1983, the Commission adopted a resolution that the conference of 27 states and administrations should have full and equal membership. Another move, said Ratu Mara, that changed the character of the Commission was the appointment of islanders to the post of secretary general.

"Like all organisations, the SPC had its ups and downs ... (but) it has a feature which is not shared by the Forum. That is its universality. There is a place for every country, large or small and at whatever stage of political development," he said.

Forum Secretariat secretary general Jeremia Tabai highlighted the challenges facing Pacific Island countries, pointing to population growth rates outpacing economic development; unexpected declines in aid and the small prospect of the private sector being able to meet the needs of small economies and thus continuing to make these the primary responsibility of government and the community. "On the other hand," said Tabai, "our exposure to external events and dependence on outside assistance raises other types of challenges - challenges to independence and sovereignty. Clearly, there is no better way to respond than to increase one's ability to meet one's own needs. "Information technology is considered to provide an opportunity for small isolated countries to leap frog the industrial revolution into the information and service age. There is much interest about how we should be able to overcome the disadvantage and isolation from the markets and high shipping costs by greater reliance on information service exports. To do this requires our people to be well-educated and willing to participate in a global society based on free flowing information.

"(But) anything is possible with foresight and political will. Our future is what we make it and the politics we pursue and how we respond to these challenges and global changes will help us determine that future," Tabai said. ■

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NORTHBOUND SHUTTLE SERVICE

WEEK 44/97										
VESSEL	VOYAGE	MELBOURNE	SYDNEY	AUCKLAND	SUVA	LOS ANGELES	VANCOUVER	SEATTLE	OAKLAND	NEWYORK
COLUMBUS CAL.	052N	02-04/11	05-07/11	11-12/11	15-16/11	28-11-01/12	04-04/12	03-09/12	01-01/12	05-05/12
COLUMBIA STAR	041N	23-24/11	26-28/11	02-03/12	06-07/12	20-22/12	25-25/12	24-24/12	22-22/12	27-27/12
BRISBANE STAR	030N	07-08/12	10-12/12	16-17/12	20-21/12	03-05/01	08-08/01	07-07/01	05-05/01	10-10/01
COLUMBUS CAL.	053N	21-22/12	24-26/12	30-31/12	03-04/01	17-19/01	22-22/01	21-21/01	19-19/01	24-24/1
ARGENTINA STAR	002N	11-12/01	14-16/01	20-21/01	24-25/01	07-09/02	12-12/02	11-11/02	09-09/02	14-14/2
BRISBANE STAR	031N	25-26/01	28-30/01	03-04/02	07-08/02	21-23/02	26-26/02	25-25/02	23-23/02	28-28/2
COLUMBUS CAL.	054N	08-09/02	11-13/02	17-18/02	22-22/02	07-09/03	12-12/03	11-11/03	09-09/03	14-14/3
ARGENTINA STAR	003N	01-02/03	04-06/03	10-11/03	14-15/03	28-30/03	02-02/04	01-01/04	30-30/03	04-04/04
BRISBANE STAR	032N	15-16/03	18-20/03	24-25/03	28-29/03	11-13/04	16-16/04	15-15/04	13-13/04	18-18/04
COLUMBUS CAL.	055N	29-30/03	31-03/04	07-08/04	11-12/04	25-27/04	30-30/04	29-29/04	27-27/04	02-02/05
ARGENTINA STAR	004N	19-20/04	22-24/04	28-29/04	02-03/05	16-18/05	22-22/05	20-20/05	18-18/05	23-23/05

WEST COAST NORTH AMERICA-FIJI-NEW ZEALAND-AUSTRALIA SERVICE
SOUTH BOUND SHUTTLE SERVICE

WEST COAST NORTH AMERICA										
SCHEDULE	VOYAGE	SEATTLE	VANCOUVER	OAKLAND	LOS ANGELES	FUJI	NEW ZEALND	AUSTRALIA		
BRISBANE STAR	030S	12-12/11	13-13/11	14-14/11	15-17/11	29-30/11	03-03/12	07-08/12	10-12/12	
ARGENTINA STAR	002S	17-17/12	18-18/12	19-19/12	20-22/12	03-04/01	07-07/01	11-12/01	14-16/01	
BRISBANE STAR	031S	31-31/12	01-01/01	02-02/01	03-05/01	17-18/01	21-21/01	25-26/01	28-30/01	
ARGENTINA STAR	003S	04-04/02	05-05/02	06-06/02	07-09/02	21-22/02	25-25/02	01-02/03	04-06/03	
BRISBANE STAR	032S	18-18/02	19-19/02	20-20/02	21-23/02	07-08/03	11-11/03	15-16/03	18-20/03	
ARGENTINA STAR	004S	25-25/03	26-26/03	27-27/03	28-30/03	11-12/04	15-15/04	19-20/04	22-24/04	

SOUTHERN CROSS SHIPPING
AUSTRALIA- FIJI-PACIFIC ISLANDS

VESSEL	VOYAGE	GLADSTONE	SYDNEY	BRISBANE	SANTO VILA	SUVA	FUNAFUTI	WALLIS	APIA	PAGO	VA'U	NUKU'ALOFA	GLADSTONE
PRINCESS CATHRYN	10	03/12	04/12	04/12	09/12	11/12	14/12	17/12	19/12	20/12	22/12	24/12	23/12
PRINCESS CATHRYN	11	01/01	02/01	02/01	07/01	09/01	12/01	15/01	17/01	18/01	20/01	22/01	24/01

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SOUTHEAST ASIA-FIJI DIRECT SERVICES							
VESSEL	NZOL	NZOL	NZOL	NZOL	NZOL	NZOL	NZOL
VOYAGE NO.	COMMANDER	CHALLENGER	CRUS ADER	CAMPAIGNER	COMMANDER	CHALLENGER	
	V21S/97	V22S/97	V23S/97	V24S/97	V1S/98	V02S/98	
SOUTHBOUND							
SURABAYA	-	-	14/11	29/11	14/12	29/12	
JAKARTA	-	-	16/11	01/12	16/12	01/01	
PORT KELANG	-	-	19/11	04/12	19/12	04/01	
BANKOK	-	09/11	25/11	10/12	25/12	10/01	
SINGAPORE	-	15/11	30/11	15/12	30/12	15/01	
NOUMEA	12/11	27/11	12/12	27/12	12/1/98	27/1	
SUVA	14/11	29/11	14/12	29/12	14/01	29/1	
NORTHBOUND							
SURABAYA	14/12	29/12	14/01	29/01	14/02	28/02	
JAKARTA	16/12	01/01/98	16/01	01/02	16/02	01/03	
PORT KELANG	19/12	04/01	19/01	04/02	19/02	04/03	
SINGAPORE	21/12	06/01	21/01	06/02	21/02	06/03	
BANKOK	25/12	10/01	25/01	10/02	25/02	10/03	

MANILA/TAIWAN/HONG KONG/ KOREA SERVICE

PORTS	BAI HE KOU	XIAO SHI KOU	BAI HE KOU	XIAO SHI KOU
	V167/268	V244/245	V269/270	V246/247
MANILA	-	09/11	30/11	21/12
KEELUNG	-	10/11	01/12	17/12
KAOHSIUNG	-	07/11	28/11	15/12
HONG KONG	-	16/11	07/12	26/12
BUSAN	-	09/11	27/11	27/12
SUVA	18/11	10/12	31/12	21/01
AUCKLAND	21/11	13/12	03/01/98	24/01
LYTTELTON	26/11	16/12	05/01	26/01

FEEDER SERVICE LAUTOKA VIA RELAY

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CHINA/JAPAN DIRECT SERVICE				
PORTS	BAI HE KOU V267/268	XIAO SHI KOU V244/245	BAI HE KOU V269/270	XIAO SHI KOU V26/247
DALIAN	-	14/11	05/12	21/2
HUANGPU	-	14/11	05/12	23/2
NANJING	-	15/11	06/12	23/2
QINGDAD	-	10/11	01/12	21/2
SHANGHAI	-	12/11	03/12	24/2
XINGANG	-	13/11	04/12	21/2
KOBE	02-03/11	25/11	13/12	001
NAGOYA	-	-	-	-
YOKOHAMA	04-05/11	26/11	15/12	001
SUVA	18/11	10/12	31/12	201
AUCKLAND	22-23/11	13/12	03/01/98	201
LYTTELTON	25-26/11	16/12	05/01	201
KOBE	13-14/12	05-01/98	26/01	202
NAGOYA	-	-	-	-
YOKOHAMA	15-16/12	07/01/98	28/01	202

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LYTTELTON	14/11	22/11	28/11	12/12	13/12	2/18
AUCKLAND	15-16/11	25-26/11	29-30/11	13-14/12	16-17/12	3-
SUVA	19/11	2-3/12	3/12	17/12	23-24/12	7/1
LAUTOKA	20/11	4/12	4/12	18/12	25-24/12	8/1

FIJI TO ISLAND PORTS AND AUSTRALIA						
VESSEL	SOUTH QUEEN V18E	MOANA III V02	ARIKI PACIFIC V18	SOUTH QUEEN V19E	TUI PACIFIC V03	SOUTH QUEEN V20E
SUVA	-	8-9/11	12/11	21/11	2/12	18/12
LAUTOKA	-	-	-	VIA SUVA	-	VIA SUVA
NUKUALOFA	-	-	-	23/11	-	20/12
APIA	-	-	-	24/11	-	21/12
PAGOPAGO	-	11/11	14/11	25/11	4/12	22/12
WALLIS	-	13/11	-	27/11	-	24/12
FUTUNA	-	12/11	-	28/11	-	25/12
SUVA	6/11	-	-	30/11	-	27/12
SYDNEY	13/11	-	-	7/12	-	4/1
MELBOURNE	18/11	-	-	10/12	-	7/1
BRISBANE	118/11	-	-	10/12	-	7/1

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NEPTUNE SHIPPING AGENCY SERVING FIJI DIRECT FROM NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA							
NEW ZEALAND- FIJI DIRECT SERVICE							
VESSEL	VOYAGE NO.	AUCKLAND	LYTTELTON	TAURANGA	AUCKLAND	LAUTOKA	SUVA
CAPITAINE WALLIS	5	404/11	7-7/1	10-10/11	11/12/11	18-18/11	19-11/1
CAPITAINE WALLIS	6	25-25/11	28-28/11	1-1/11	2-3/12	9-9/12	10-4/12
CAPITAINE WALLIS	7	14-14/12	17-17/12	20-20/12	21-21/12	26-27/12	29-7/12
CAPITAINE WALLIS	8	6-6/1	5-5/1	12-12/1	13-14/1	20-20/1	21-1/1
CAPITAINE WALLIS	9	26-26/1	30-30/1	2/2/2	4-4/2	10/10/2	11-7/2
AUSTRALIA FIJI-DIRECT SERVICE							
VESSEL	VOYAGE NO.	BRISBANE	SYDNEY	MELBOURNE	LAUTOKA	SUVA	
CAPITAINE TASMAN	4	2-3/11	6-7/11	10-11/11	19-19/11	20-20/1	
CAPITAINE TASMAN	5	22-28/11	30/11-1/12	4-5/12	13-13/12	15-16/1	
CAPITAINE TASMAN	5	22-22/12	24-24/12	27-27/12	-	-	
CAPITAINE TASMAN	6	5-5/1	8-9/1	12-13/1	-	21-21/1	
FIJI-APIA-PAGOPAGO-FUTUNA-WALLIS NOUMEA SERVICE							
VESSEL	VOYAGE NO.	SUVA	APIA	PAGOPAGO	FUTUNA	WALLIS	NOUMEA
MOANA III	3	8-9/11	-	11/11/11	-	14-16/11	17-17/11
MOANA III	4	25-26/11	-	-	27-27/11	28-30/11	1-1/12
MOANA III	5	3-4/12	6-6/12	-	-	9-9/12	10-10/12
MOANA III	6	18-18/12	-	-	22-22/12	23-23/12	24-24/12
MOANA III	7	29-29/12	31-31/12	-	-	03/1-4/1	5-5/1



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 COOK ISLANDS.....PACIFIC MOTORS LTD. PH 20796

KIRIBATI.....TARAWA MOTORS
 PAPUA NEW GUINEA.....ELA MOTORS
 TAHITI.....NIPPON AUTOMOTO
 WESTERN SAMOA.....ASCO MOTORS

PH 21090
 PH 4229400
 PH 429819
 PH 20800

FIJI.....ASCO MOTORS
 NEW CALEDONIA.....S.I.A.P.
 TONGA.....ASCO MOTORS
 AMERICAN SAMOA*.....ASCO MOTORS
 (*PRADO is not being handled.)

PH 384888
 PH 275562
 PH 33500
 PH 633-4281