

# Pacific Islands Monthly

THE CRUEL SEA, p. 4

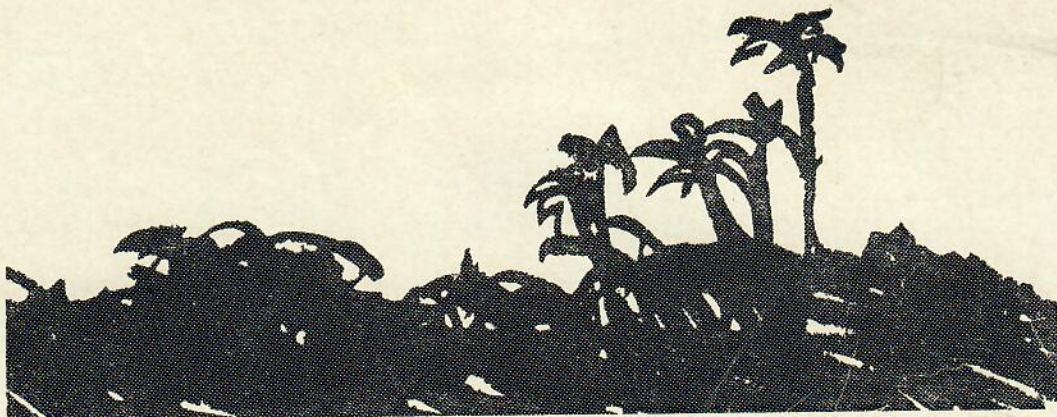
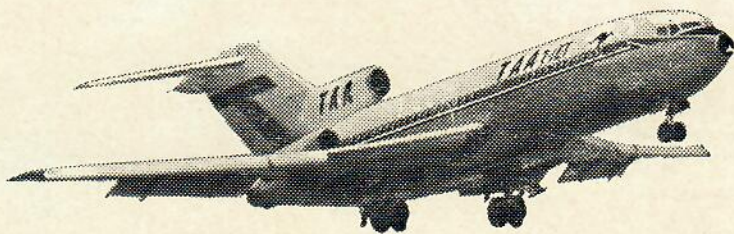


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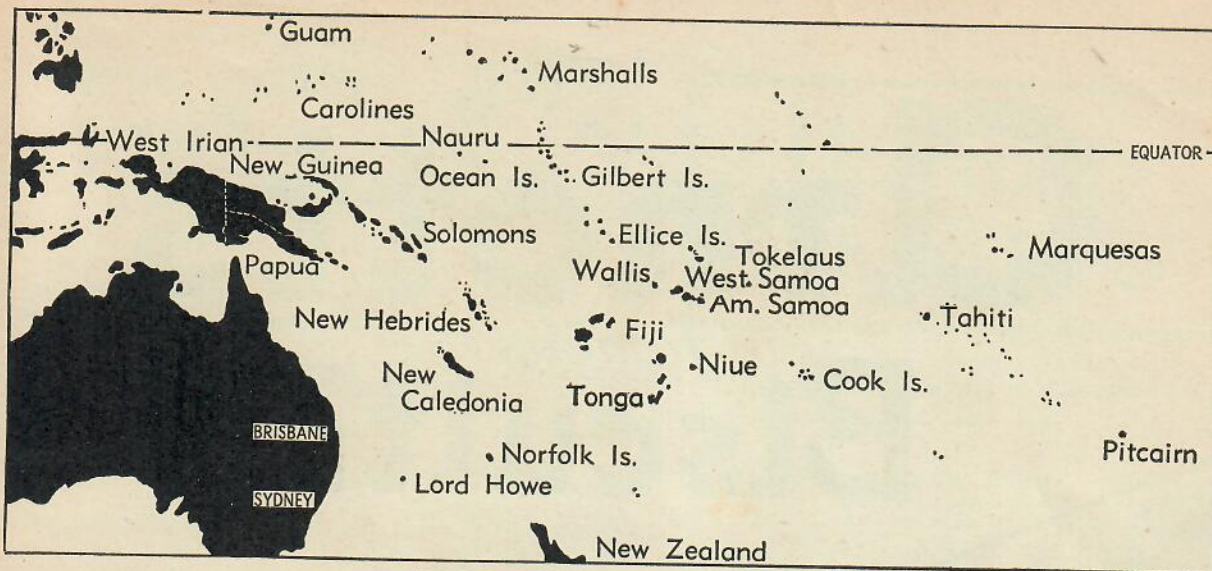
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Vol. 40. No. 1, January, 1969

## In This Issue

# Pacific Islands Monthly

### GENERAL

The "Waka Toru" tragedy	28
Islands rosy future: Skinner	33
New Bishop of Polynesia	71
Boost for Islands trade assn.	119
BP's shipping losses may drop	112
New Pacific airline	155

### AMERICAN SAMOA

A controversial year	34
Litterbugs	113

### COOK ISLANDS

Pastors remembered	36
Farewell to Ronald Powell	38
"Energy's" bad luck	103
Avarua's new wharf	103
Chief Judge Morgan retires	114
Copra records	120, 123

### FIJI

Politics for 1969	4
Details of Cpt. R. Kane wanted	17
Findings on the "Tui Lau"	30
TV prospects	31
The political scene	32
Travel film hurts feelings	35
Theological College's chapel	37
Tourist developments	45
Fiji Airways' schedules	51
Divorce figures drop	55
Swinging to a new tempo	59
They're living longer	61
Pacific Fishing Co's operation	99
Charter vessel launched	105

New fishing boats for Rabi	107
Miss Fiji, 1968	115
Happy with sugar agreement	122

### FRENCH POLYNESIA

Pouvanaa a Oopa returns	24
Pouvanaa a Oopa's political struggle	62
NZ's increased trade	122

### GILBERT and ELLICE ISLANDS COLONY

How to avoid seasickness	38
Honouring Japanese dead	71
Problems with "Nei Auti's" service	113
Sir John Field visits Tarawa	114

### LORD HOWE ISLAND

The "Waka Toru" tragedy	28
Plane forced to land	87
"Pacific Chieftain" lost	107

### NAURU

The President	4
New Commonwealth status	27

### NEW CALEDONIA

General survey	73
NZ's increased trade	122
French rein on nickel industry	124

### NEW HEBRIDES

Cyclone Becky strikes	33
Passports for Melanesians	36
Vila in pictures	40
Death of "Tulagi" officer	105
Mineral search	122
The budget	134

### NIUE

Life on the island	83
Nolarae's "poor taste"	113

### NORFOLK ISLAND

Mysteries, solved and unsolved	88
Historic anchor?	89
Skeleton and anchor puzzle	89
Prouds to open branch	123

### PAPUA-NEW GUINEA

South Pacific Games	4
Niuginians and happiness	19
Lieut. Pilsbury goes home	20
House of Assembly meeting	23
First Assembly of new church	33
Tuff—for tourists	43
Solair for Bougainville?	51
Aircraft restoration	56
NGVR names	57
"Bev" inquiry	107
Kieta wharf contract	109

### SOLOMON ISLANDS

Challenging budget	26
Cyclone Becky strikes	33
New plans for Solair	51
Exporting rice	123
Sir Robert Foster leaves	155

### TONGA

Title fight	25
Korean ship on reef	133

### US TRUST TERRITORY

Political future	32
Mr. Skinner's views	33
Continental airlines	155

### WESTERN SAMOA

Optimistic budget	25
Peace Corps	113
Hydro-power appointment	114

**DEPARTMENTS:** Up Front with the Editor, 3; Letters, 17; Tropicalities, 35; Travel, 39; To the Point with Percy Chatterton, 52; Magazine Section, 83; Yesterday, 91; Book Reviews, 93; Shipping, 99; Cruising Yachts, 110; Islands Press, 113; People, 114; Commerce, 125; Produce Prices, 125; Shipping, Airways Schedules, 127; Deaths of Islands People, 132; Practical Planter, 137; Index to Advertisers, 156.

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# Up Front with the Editor

I've got a hopeful feeling that 1969 will be a much more rewarding year for Fiji politically than 1968 was.

Fiji doesn't want another year like 1968, when the Government and Opposition weren't playing speaks, when Ratu Mara and A. D. Patel were involved in a personal hate session, when naked racism whipped up during bitter elections brought the 300 islands in the sun almost to the brink of anarchy.

That may now seem like an exaggerated review of the situation, but I can assure you that at the time a lot of people in high places were biting their nails with apprehension.

And yet the year had started well enough.

True, Mr. Patel's Opposition was boycotting the Legislative Council, demanding a new constitution and one-man-one-vote. But about March it looked as if things would settle; that the way would be paved for the Opposition's return to the Legislative Council without either side losing face.

## Fijian anger

But the paving didn't get done and there were recriminations on both sides about the circumstances, resulting in the rancour between the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. This, in turn, led to a lot of the bitterness of the elections.

There were two main results from the Federation's electoral win: (a) Ratu Mara and the Alliance were staggered at the support for the Opposition, Ratu Mara's pride being deeply hurt; (b) the Fijian anger which suddenly erupted at the Federation's electoral abuse of Fijian leaders and Fijian institutions and at the party's claim that its landslide support from Indian voters gave it a mandate to seek independence, staggered the Federation leaders. They saw with a shock that if you play with fire you may get burnt.

But for 1969, as I said, I have a hopeful feeling. Obviously the Alliance and the Opposition have to

get together if there is to be sane political development, and if you read between the lines our report on p. 32 you will see the first steps were taken behind scenes at the December budget session of Legco. Both sides suddenly are older and wiser.

I think that the Government and Opposition will manage to work out, jointly, Fiji's submissions to be put to a new constitutional conference, to be held probably towards the end of this year.

I do believe that Mr. Patel is not now so insistent on pushing the common roll camel through the needle's eye, realising there are other methods of working towards his aim. An extensive use of the cross-voting system for instance.

And Ratu Mara, I believe, may have got to the point in his own progress where he suspects that too many European cooks in the Alliance can be more handicap than help.

Thus 1969 may be the year that a successful Fiji-Indian partnership develops.

## Official visit?

This is the year, too, when Ratu Mara may make his first official visit to Australia. There appears to be something on the slate already.

Australia has wanted to get the Chief Minister here for some time, and there is an interesting background to his previous reluctance to say when. Some years ago, before he became Chief Minister, he landed at Sydney by air, en route to London, and asked to have his bags transferred to the London plane unopened, as a transit passenger. But an officious Customs officer not only inspected them but literally turned them inside out.

Fiji's present Chief Minister has never forgotten the rude way he was treated. Wars have started over less.

(Over)

**P**RESIDENT Hammer DeRoburt, of Nauru, is no stranger to Melbourne. He lived not far away, at Geelong, for two years before World War II, and he spent more time in Melbourne than on Nauru in 1966-67, when he was fighting for a better phosphate deal and for independence.

He has in recent months spent most of his time in Melbourne on business, or using it as a staging camp between trips to Noumea and Scotland (calling on Djakarta and President Soeharto en route).

In Melbourne President DeRoburt lives quietly. He occupies, with his wife, one of two flats in suburban Middle Park, which the Nauru Local Government Council bought before independence to save the continual expense of hotels. The two flats, in one block, are normally occupied by visiting, or convalescing Nauruans.

DeRoburt gets to Nauru's Melbourne office in the city usually by about 9.30 a.m., mostly prefers a sandwich lunch, and gets home about 5.30. Sometimes he will stay in the flat all day, working at his portable typewriter.

He doesn't keep a personal car in Melbourne, and usually uses taxis. At night he likes to relax with other Nauruans in the flat (getting together is an old Nauruan custom) and perhaps have a look at the telly. He may watch a show until the finish of transmission, for like many Nauruans he doesn't think about bed until after midnight.

Saturday and Sunday are rest days. On Saturday he may sleep in until 10 a.m. or 11 a.m. and then work about the flat. On Sundays he goes to church—usually the Middle Park Methodist, but perhaps the Collins Street Independent.

## OUR COVER

The cruel sea makes another claim. In an expanse of loneliness, where vast ocean meets vast sky, the broken and lifeless trimaran "Waka Toru" drifts hulls up, as the "Moanaraoi's" crash boat moves towards it shortly after sighting her. The trimaran, with eight aboard, had been missing for three months when she was discovered by the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony vessel north of Lord Howe Island. This photograph was taken from the bridge by "Moanaraoi's" master, Captain Peter King, whose comments on the finding are to be found in our report on p. 28. Trimarans are popular sailing craft in the Islands, but a criticism of them is that they can overturn—and stay that way.

In Melbourne, or when travelling, the President has no entourage—merely his ADC—Inspector John Olsson, of the Nauruan Police Force. He doesn't become involved in the Melbourne diplomatic round, and is left to get on with Nauru's affairs the way he wants.

As of old, he works hard—and makes it even harder by insisting on informing himself on everything and in making many of the decisions himself. Twelve months after independence there is a growing body of opinion on Nauru which thinks that President DeRoburt ought to delegate more authority. On his absences from Nauru too many decisions get held over until he can be consulted, and there is growing exasperation.

This is a vital year for Nauru. Important phosphate market decisions have to be made soon. Already the delay in establishing the Nauru Phosphate Commission has lost Nauru much of the goodwill of the present BPC staff.

This should be a year of decision, legislation and planning, and no one man can do it all. The President ought to sit down and take stock.

**N**OW that the Duke and Duchess of Kent have been named as the VIP's who will officially open the Third South Pacific Games in Port Moresby in August, I hope that the territory organisers will have been given incentive enough to do some stocktaking of their own.

There was a busy burst of organising and fund-raising activity at the beginning of 1968, but a number of people I have been talking to lately fear that the territory is running out of steam. There is still a large sum of money to be raised and many loose ends to be tied up.

Early last year the Games organisers conceived the excellent plan of publishing a regular newsletter in English and French, for overseas distribution from Port Moresby, as a way of getting publicity and of informing other Islands territories of progress. The first one was first-rate, but only two more have followed, erratically—the last one filled with advertisements. All have been poorly distributed. For heavens sake, someone, start off 1969 by getting this newsletter to do the job planned for it.

On the VIP side, the Duke and Duchess are a happy choice. They are young and attractive and not in any way stuffy. She (who was once a schoolteacher, by the way) is a charmer who took all hearts during their visit to Tonga, the



Cooks, Samoa and Fiji in 1967. They represented the Queen at King Taufa'ahau's coronation. At a reception on that occasion which I attended, the Duke and Duchess made their way around a large circle of guests from opposite directions, chatting as they went. So engrossed were they in their various conversations that they were genuinely surprised when they finally found themselves confronting each other.

Said the Duke: "We've met before?" And they went off laughing, arm-in-arm.

**A**LTHOUGH South Pacific communications have speeded up considerably in recent years, odd items still come our way months after the events. As for instance the story that Alan Williams, of Lord Howe Island, tells about some of the 11 Chinese castaways who survived 700 mile drifts lasting up to three months when their vessel, the *Hsienchin*, foundered near Fiji last June. We reported the drifts in September.

In August, Alan happened to be in the Santa Cruz group aboard his vessel the *Alena*, when three of the Chinese were washed ashore on a raft of drums after 45 days at sea. One man had died, the survivors were in a pitiful state.

Continues Alan, who immediately afterwards went on a world tour: "The Chinese could not keep the native food down and couldn't get anything else. They had US dollars with them, but the native storekeeper had not seen US money before, so no business was done.

"One of our crew changed some of the US money for Australian dollars, and the Chinese were then able to buy rice and tinned fish. We gave them some canned food."

Moral: Next time you are adrift in Melanesia, see you have the local currency.

—Stuart Inder

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# What are the lessons from the "Waka Toru's" grim fate?

By KEN MCGREGOR

"Comfort! *Waka Toru* has all the comforts of home. It has a full-size gas stove, gas refrigerator and hot water for the shower . . ."

So said a Sydney newspaper in July last year, a couple of weeks before the \$12,000 home-made, 46 ft trimaran sailed out of Sydney on an indefinite leisurely cruise to most of the choice yachting stopovers throughout the world. Aboard were an excited English family of five and three attractive young Sydney girls.

*Waka Toru* left on a burst of publicity in Australian and New Zealand newspapers because its owner and builder, Mr. William Shute, 48, an economist, had advertised widely beforehand for "four non-smoking girls" to accompany himself, his wife, Mary, 45, and his children, Joanne, 16, Rosamund, 12, and Richard, seven, on the cruise.

Eager novices and experienced sailors from Australia and even NZ applied, and Mr. Shute had the happy job of picking his crew-women from over 40 girls. The "lucky ones" were Misses Valerie Quirk, 32, Diane McNeill, 22, and Mrs. Sally Scales, 28. All were non-smokers, non-drinkers and knew nothing about sailing. All entered contracts to pay him \$1,000 for their passage to the West Indies.

## What went wrong?

*Waka Toru* left Sydney on August 18. First call on the world tour was to be Lord Howe Island, and then Noumea, Fiji and New Zealand.

*Waka Toru* didn't even make its first landfall. No one will probably ever know exactly what went wrong, but it seems likely that somewhere off Lord Howe in late August *Waka Toru* was caught in a bad storm.

A fruitless air and sea search was made in September. General alerts were given to regional shipping and port authorities on the Australian

east coast and island ports in the South-West Pacific.

Relatives and friends for the next three months had no definite evidence whether the trimaran had foundered, drifted or, hopefully, been washed on some lonely shore. A big trimaran and eight people, including an entire family, had disappeared.

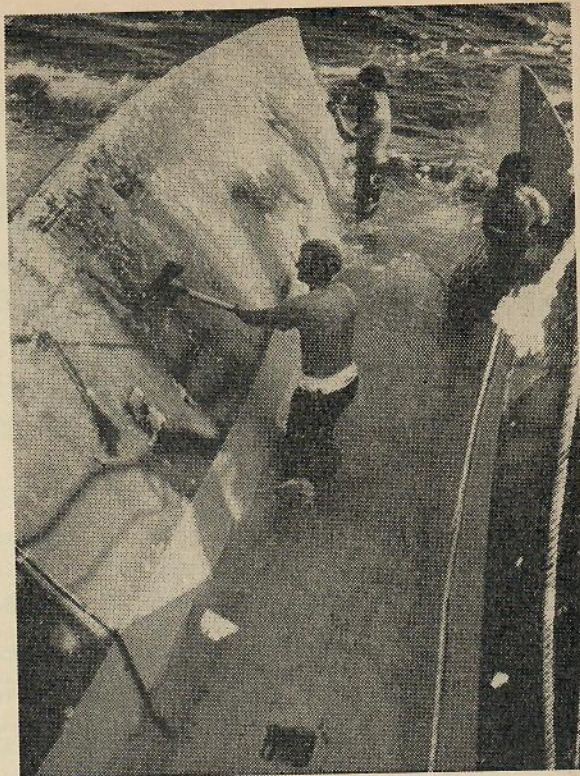
Until late November, when the GEIC's 800-ton trader *Moanaraoi* located the *Waka Toru* 320 miles north-north-east of Lord Howe (PIM, Dec., p. 30).

*Moanaraoi's* master, Captain Peter King, tells of the discovery:

"Second officer Paueli Sione sighted the capsized wreck at 2.48 p.m. on November 19 one mile away on the port beam," Captain King said. "*Moanaraoi* was brought around and manoeuvred into a position upwind of the wreck, and the crash boat was sent away under Mr. Joe Kum Kee, third officer, to pass a warping line across the wreck.

"The wreck answered the description of the missing trimaran *Waka Toru* and once she had been warped alongside, her stern was lifted clear of the water and the name read on her stern.

"A rope was found wrapped around her propeller, possibly washed there, and her starboard bow was broken off as far back as the leading



● Officers and crew of the GEIC Wholesale Society's "*Moanaraoi*" use axes to break into the upturned hulls of the trimaran, in a search for bodies. The trimaran has been warped alongside the vessel. This photograph and the one on p. 29 were taken by "*Moanaraoi's*" master, Captain Peter King. They are the first pictures published of the wreck.

edge of the sponson. This was the only apparent underwater damage.

"Sails and masts could be seen drifting about under the wreck. It was not possible to carry out an underwater search on account of sharks cruising around close by.

## No life

"Attempts were made to right the craft, but these were all frustrated by the rope slings cutting through the hulls like a knife through cheese.

"It was therefore decided to cut open the bottom of the hulls, and a party under the chief officer, Edward Lysons, boarded the upturned sponson, and set about opening the bottoms with axes, saws and crow-bars.

"No trace of life was found, but items of equipment passed on board

## Tried to sink her

included an inflatable liferaft, which showed signs of having been opened inside the yacht, and an emergency radio transceiver with no battery fitted.

"There were some children's toys which had a profoundly saddening effect.

"I made a final personal inspection of the yacht, and then gave orders for its destruction, that it might not constitute a danger to navigation.

"Attempts to fire it proved unsuccessful, and I therefore smashed the hulls by ramming. The trimaran was left in a shattered condition, and a search of the area was conducted until darkness.

"Marine growth on the submerged hull topsides and leading edge of the sponson indicated that the trimaran had been capsized for a considerable period."

## Think twice

"I might add a cautionary note to those reckless people in the yachting fraternity who set off on ocean voyages without the necessary experience and skill. They might think twice if they had witnessed my crew operating under conditions that were at times extremely dangerous, working furiously in a vain cause, not knowing what the next axe cut might reveal."

Captain King said that before *Moanaraoi* left Sydney on her trip to Tarawa, he was visited in Sydney by a sister of one of the crew members of the *Waka Toru* (Aileen Quirk). "This young lady has never given up hope for the crew of the trimaran, and has visited the masters of many of the ships passing through the area", he said.

"Her perseverance impressed me, and I issued orders for an especially good lookout to be maintained while *Moanaraoi* passed through the search area. Whether this had any bearing on the eventual sighting is a matter of conjecture."

Shortly after the *Moanaraoi* left the crippled trimaran a US-bound freighter sighted the wreck, still drifting about 300 miles north of Lord Howe. The freighter reported the wreck to Sydney and continued her voyage.

The *Waka Toru* tragedy started controversies in Australian and NZ yachting circles and newspapers. It was pointed out that at least 20 lives had been lost with trimarans in the South Pacific in recent years.

The two big questions: Are trimarans safe for ocean cruising? Should any Tom, Dick, or Harry, who has built his own craft and who has no sailing experience, be allowed to put to sea, particularly with passengers?

Biggest argument against the trimarans was that if the craft capsized in heavy seas, it was impossible to right them again. Single-hulled yachts with keels can be righted, but the prospect of turning over three hulls in heavy seas by several hapless sailors is not good. Nor is there anything to hold on to on an upturned hull.

Trimaran sailors and enthusiasts hastened to defend their craft, pointing out that a badly-sailed ketch or sloop can just as easily be lost as a better-balanced tri'. Others called for a full-scale look into the adventures or misadventures of the tri's.

The fiercest controversy was on the second question. Many people these days are building yachts, on all coasts of the Pacific, and heading out to sea with little or no ocean experience behind them.

If they go alone, with their own money and boat, maybe it's their own business. However, when other people go along, the owner or skipper of the yacht is involving other lives.

*Waka Toru* was a tragic example.

The girl crew were all paying passage money to Mr. Shute.

There are no plans for a marine inquiry into the loss of the *Waka Toru*. No court is likely to get involved in the tragedy until relatives seek leave to declare any or all of those on board legally dead. They are merely listed as missing.

There is nothing at the moment to stop other craft going the same way as the *Waka Toru*, as there are no regulations to stop craft leaving Australia.

Anyone, with any sort of boat under 100 ft, can sail off from Melbourne, Sydney or Brisbane, with as many people as he likes. No forms, no qualifications, no rules.

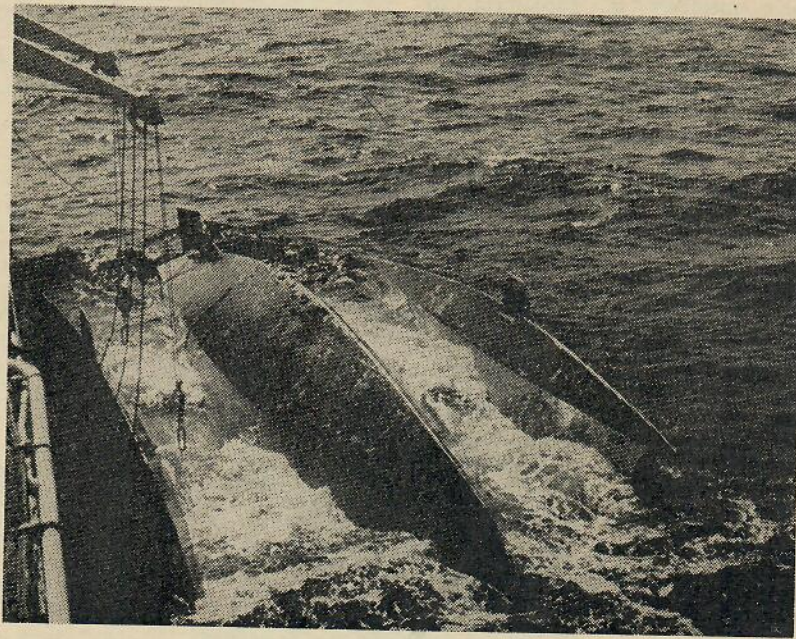
## Little co-operation

One of the most caustic critics of the system, or non-system, has been Mrs. Mary Quirk, of Caringbah, Sydney, mother of one of the missing crew of the *Waka Toru*.

Mrs. Quirk said she received little co-operation from regional shipping authorities and police in NSW in efforts to have searches for the *Waka Toru* extended or continued.

"I continually hit a red tape or 'nothing can be done' attitude from the shipping or police people who were supposed to be looking for the trimaran," she told *PIM*.

"We had asked earlier for the air



The upturned hulls of the trimaran "Waka Toru" alongside the "Moanaraoi" in late November about 320 miles north of Lord Howe Island. Efforts to get the wreck righted failed when ropes cut through the hulls. Note bow broken off (right).



## Move to introduce safety regulations

search to be more to the north of Lord Howe, and this is where the trimaran was found. If planes had found it earlier perhaps some traces of the people might have been there or we might have been able to see what really happened. Even now, I don't know exactly what was in the overturned trimaran when found, but I suspect that clothes and another inflatable raft were missing. Perhaps they all got off, and drifted somewhere, but if the officials have any facts which might solve this matter they haven't told me.

"Shortly before Captain King found the trimaran a New Hebrides boat reported a yacht sailing strongly northwards towards the New Hebrides.

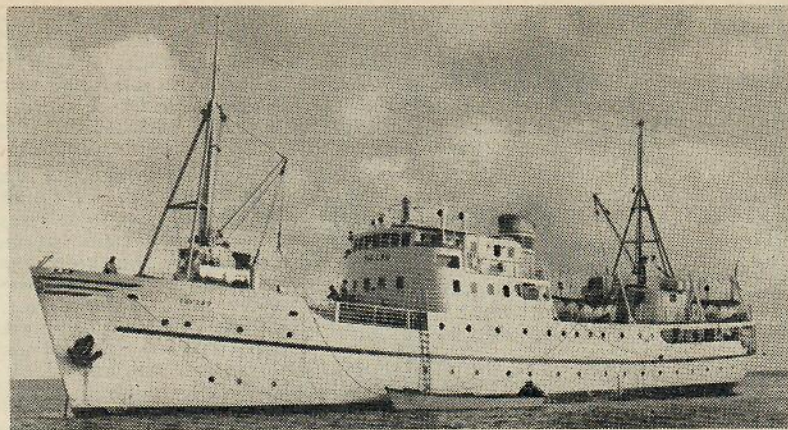
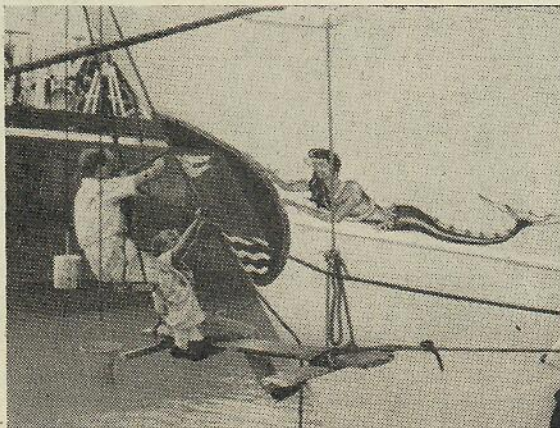
### Still hoping

"It's still a mystery to me and I still keep the hope that they did survive and were washed up on some lonely coast."

Mrs. Quirk is one of a number of Sydney people who are asking their members of parliament to support a bill to introduce regulations that would-be cruising yachties must comply with before they put to sea from Australia, and regulations affecting the seaworthiness of their craft for ocean voyaging.

They hope the bill will be passed this year and in a large way prevent other *Waka Torus*. Something, obviously, needs to be done.

Shortly before the "Moanaraoi" left Sydney in November and discovered the "Waka Toru", "Moanaraoi's" master, Captain Peter King (foreground), and a fellow officer put finishing touches to the GEIC coat-of-arms which graces the bow of the ship. The mermaid at right is another example of Captain King's brushwork.



The "Tui Lau" in happier days.

## Findings on the "Tui Lau"

The court of investigation into the stranding of the *Tui Lau* on October 25 has cancelled the Certificate of Competency of the Master, Captain Donald Wendt.

Giving the court's decision on December 20, the Senior Magistrate, Mr. Clifford H. Grant, said the court found that the stranding and loss of the ship was caused by the incompetency of Captain Wendt "failing to comply with elementary procedures of navigation and in plotting a course from Kabara dangerously close to the reef of Totoya Island; to the wrongful default of Captain Wendt in leaving an unsupervised, uncertified person as officer of the watch in Fiji coastal waters at night, and the wrongful default of Captain Wendt in not posting a lookout in Fiji coastal waters at night".

Mr. Grant said: "The court was informed that it was the custom *not* to post a lookout in Fiji coastal waters at night. If such a manifestly dangerous custom exists it is to be deplored".

"The court rejects the submission that a lower standard of seamanship should be accepted for Fiji than that which applies to more sophisticated territories. The value of human life is no less in Fiji than anywhere else. Had it not been for the timely intervention of HMS *Fife* the consequence of this stranding could have been very much more serious, and the ready and able assistance which was offered by *Fife* was commendable and praiseworthy."

### "Erased marks"

The "uncertified, unsupervised person" referred to by the court was 18-year-old Cadet Officer Frederick Smith who alleged during the hearing that Captain Wendt had set a course of 260 degrees to Totoya from Kabara, not 265 degrees as Wendt had said. Smith alleged that Wendt had erased marks on the chart just before the ship had struck.

In its findings, the court said it was satisfied that Wendt had laid a compass course of 260 degrees and written it in pencil on the chart, and that Smith had followed this calculation.

"That this calculation was not a figment of the imagination of Frederick George Smith is borne out

(Continued on p. 133)

● The busy main street in Pago Pago, capital of American Samoa.



## 1968 A CONTROVERSIAL YEAR IN AMERICAN SAMOA

The year of 1968 was one when the political pot in the increasingly industrialised territory of American Samoa reached boiling point. The fire was lit in June when the American Samoan Democratic Party affiliated with the US mainland party, and it continued to burn as the year drew to an end with the general elections in November. Glen Wright, in a dispatch from Pago Pago, reports:

The village chiefs are alarmed at the deterioration of their traditional powers and privileges; charges and counter charges fly back and forth between conservatives and liberals; the Legislature is at odds with the US Administration; and the people, 85 per cent. of whom voted in favor of US citizenship 10 years ago, are wondering when the enabling act will be passed.

And all this amid a hustle and bustle of auto traffic and commercial activity in a debris-littered, architecturally ugly landscape that would have broken the hearts of Somerset Maugham and his contemporaries who once upon a time knew this isle as one of the loveliest in the Pacific.

"Don't force citizenship upon us", plead the Chiefs, and Governor Owen Aspinall replies (blithely ignoring the 1959 plebiscite): "Of course, not—an organic act would be passed by the US Congress only if the majority of the people wanted it". Big problem of an organic act, he says, is land.

If Samoa becomes part of the US, Americans would be free to buy island real estate, which is now exclusive to native Samoans except in rare instances. And, he points out, if the Samoan were to become an American citizen, he surely would be unfairly exploited, because he has no knowledge of land values.

The political hassle started in June when the Democratic Party of American Samoa affiliated with the US mainland party. In August it hosted a ball featuring Democratic congressman from Hawaii, Spark Matsunaga.

### Guiding lights

Eight hundred people were invited—at \$10 per head. Two hundred attended. Trumpeted Pago Pago Democratic leader Ivi Pele to the banqueters: "Government should be guided by public opinion and public opinion should be guided by political parties".

A couple of weeks later the party conducted a debate over elective

governorship and US citizenship. Majority of the members favoured both.

While this was going on, Governor Aspinall vetoed bills providing for a constitutional amendment which would give the American Samoa Legislature power over money appropriations and job appointments.

Incensed, the Legislature protested to US Secretary of Interior Stewart Udall, pointing out that the territory of Hawaii had been permitted to do this in 1910.

Under-Secretary of Interior David Black replied that the Governor had the right to veto the bill because that body should not have made its proposal in the form of a bill but rather as a "concurrent resolution for a Constitutional Amendment", about which the Governor has no say.

### Surplus plus

However, he said, this was unnecessary since the Legislature already has power to appropriate local revenues. But it must keep its hands off US taxpayer grants. (Aspinall argues that the money in question—there was a surplus of some \$1.1 million in the 1968 budget—is made up of US grants).

Disregarding the Legislature, the Governor went right ahead and spent \$624,000 of that \$1.1 million surplus and announced plans for disposing of the rest of it—and more.

Budget for 1970 was adopted in late September: \$14.1 millions, which is \$3.8 millions more than 1969.

Partisan politics were burgeoning apace throughout 1968. In August,

(Continued on p. 153)

## They were scared out of their lethargy

(Continued from p. 34)

tribal chiefs and orators, concerned that the activities of the Democratic Party would result in loss of American voice in Washington, formed the American Samoa Party (ASP).

The party's objectives: "To protect the interests and the property of our people from encroachment and exploitation by outsiders and modern civilisation".

One hundred members pledged to promote and protect the chief and communal land ownership systems from "foreign invasion".

The chiefs, scared out of their lethargy at the prospect of oblivion, are reacting violently at every little thing.

### Furious

One of them, President of the Senate, got irked because Governor Aspinall referred to the election of a high chief to the Senate as an "appointment". They were furious when Speaker of the Assembly urged US citizenship for American Samoans in mid-August.

The Speaker said that the US Congress should pass an organic act in three years, and that the question of statehood could come up later. Why hadn't the Legislature acted on the popular mandate of 1959? he wanted to know.

"The Constitution must be revised to permit this once and for all," he declared. "Each time it has been revised in the past, 'faults' have been discovered". In such a manner, he accused, the chiefs of the Legislature had contravened the wishes of their people for 10 years.

Governor Aspinall poured some oil on the troubled waters by saying that he was prepared to give more authority to the village councils, and that he intended to incorporate chiefs and orators into the government structure. The chiefs countered by advocating that American Samoa become a US protectorate such as Puerto Rico.

As of September, two political parties were going strong. The inevitable then happened. A third group, the Republicans, was organised and became affiliated with its mainland counterpart. Prime mover was Pete Sunia.

It declared itself against both enforced US citizenship and the chief system: the people should decide

## CUMULATIVE INDEX to the PACIFIC ISLANDS MONTHLY (Volumes 1-15)

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The index contains 228 closely-printed, but easy-to-read pages measuring 11 by 8½ inches. It is cloth-bound and printed on tough, long-lasting paper.

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(ignoring, like the Governor, that the people had already decided). The party also came out against educational television, urging that more classroom teachers be hired.

## Changing mood

When the people went to the polls in early November to vote for 20 members of the House of Representatives, only five previous members of the legislature were returned. The other 15 were new—and this, surely, is an indication of the mood of change in the territory.

Last reports from American Samoa showed that the House would contain nine Democrats, five Republicans, four independents and two ASP men. However, various parties were claiming more supporters. The ASP, for instance, claimed that it could count on 13 supporters in the House.

## NG WOMEN'S CLUB FOR 1969

The first meeting in 1969 of the New Guinea Women's Club will be held on Wednesday, February 5, at 10.30 a.m. at the Lyceum Club, 6th Floor, 77 King Street, Sydney.

The second meeting will take place at the new address on Wednesday, February 19, after which the club will meet on the FIRST and THIRD Wednesday of each month. The Feminist Club rooms are not available to the NG Women's Club in 1969.

## Continental gets Pacific service

The American airline, Continental, which last year beat a Pan American bid to operate the US Trust Territory air service, has now scored another victory over another favoured US rival, Eastern, to operate from the US to Australasia, via the Pacific Islands.

In late December, President Johnson overruled an earlier US Civil Aeronautics Board examiner's recommendation that Eastern be the second US carrier to fly the South Pacific (*PIM*, May, 1968, p. 41). At present PanAm is the only American airline to fly the South Pacific.

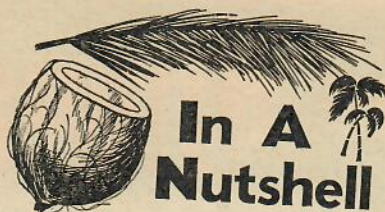
President Johnson authorised Continental to fly from the US west coast to Hawaii, American Samoa, the US Trust Territory, NZ and Australia. Fiji was not mentioned.

Continental hopes to begin the service before 1970. The airline is expected to build several hotels and a site had already been selected near Pago Pago.

One of Continental's Pacific executives is Mr. Carlton Skinner, who is on the board of the US Trust Territory's airline, Air Micronesia (in which Continental has a 31 per cent. stake) and who is US Commissioner on the South Pacific Commission.

Continental's latest victory—the South Pacific—is a far bigger one than its Micronesia service, and when its jets start running from its probable takeoff point—Los Angeles—it is bound to give headaches to its competitors, particularly PanAm and Qantas.

Trans-Pacific jets are not even filling half their seats now so extra planes are going to make the struggle a lot harder.



● The first Shortland Islander to become a priest in the Roman Catholic Church was ordained at a ceremony held at Nila on December 17. He was the Reverend Laurence Isa, of Aleang, Shortlands, a son of a church catechist. Isa will work under Bishop E. J. Crawford, of the Diocese of Gizo.

● An emergency call was made by the 6,400 ton phosphate ship, *Tri-Ellis*, at Honiara on December 16, to transfer a crewmember to Central Hospital. The ship was sailing from Geelong, Victoria, to Nauru and Ocean Island. The crewmember was later operated on for ruptured appendix.

● The new Honiara cathedral of the Diocese of Melanesia was used for the first time on December 15, when about 1,500 people attended the blessing by the Bishop of Melanesia. Consecration of the cathedral will be in June, on the Sunday closest to St. Barnabas' Day—for whom the new cathedral will be named.

● Sir Robert Foster, High Commissioner of the Western Pacific

High Commission, and Lady Foster left the Solomons on December 20, after a busy round of farewell ceremonies and visits. They flew to Fiji where Sir Robert takes up his position as the new Governor replacing Sir Derek Jakeway.

● Basic salaries, local allowances and conditions of services will be among the subjects contained in a report which will be presented in 1969 by the BSIP Public Service Commissioner, Mr. J. R. C. Pincombe. As well as a British Solomons report, he will also cover the New Hebrides and the GEIC in two further reports.

● Election of officers at the annual general meeting of the BSIP branch of the British Red Cross Society included Mr. Solomon Dakei as president—the first Solomon Islander to be elected. Mr. Dakei has been a member of the Red Cross since its inauguration in 1952. Another Solomon Islander, Mr. Stephen Pita, has joined the branch to train as Field Officer.

● Right Rev. Monsignor Raymond Etteldorf has been appointed Apostolic Delegate to New Zealand and the Pacific and has been made titular Archbishop of Tandari. His seat is in Wellington.

The Sydney office, which has controlled these areas since 1914, will still control NG and BSIP affairs. The Wellington office will control Catholic operations in the Cooks, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Fiji and Tonga.

● Tonga announced in December that the Bank of Hawaii and the Tongan Government were near agreement on the establishment of a Bank of Nukualofa. The bank would not be a branch of the Bank of Hawaii but a Tongan bank with participation capital and the management by the Bank of Hawaii.

● BOAC Associated Companies Limited is to make an investment in New Hebrides Airways. A 25.01 per cent. shareholding is being acquired from Qantas and represents half of the Australian airline's recently acquired interest.

● King Taufa'ahau and Queen Mata'aho, of Tonga, arrived in London from the US in December on the second leg of their world tour. It was expected that while in London the King would have talks with the British Government which would lead to full independence for Tonga. The party will return via the East, stopping over for five days in Rome.



**Under this banyan tree on Tanna, New Hebrides, hundreds of pigs were slaughtered for the last "toka" celebrations. "Toka"—a time of feasting, singing and dancing and a time when traditional Tannese roles are reversed (the women order and the men obey)—is a Tannese version of oneupmanship in which one important chief tries to outdo all other local chiefs in the lavishness of his entertainment. Tanna's "toka" is a tourist attraction, with Air Melanesia running charter flights. But Tanna is only part of the New Hebrides; a different aspect is shown on the next two pages.**

Photo: Coral Tours

# Prosperous New Caledonia is happy to be French (but it has some gripes)

From KATHLEEN HANCOCK, in Noumea

Rumours kept cropping up all during 1968 about unrest in New Caledonia. The landing of 300 paratroopers in Noumea was publicised in Australia as a move to quell incipient "rebellion". Visits of French warships have been termed a "show of force". A demonstration in a West Coast hamlet against government tardiness in installing a water system was blown up into a call for "independence".

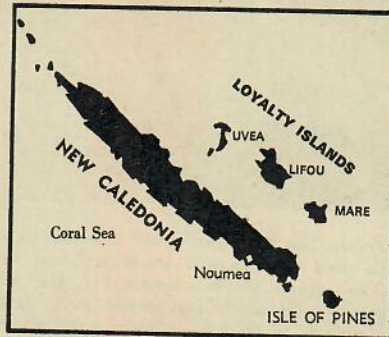
It's all a little silly. France has been a naval power in the Pacific these hundred years and more. What is so surprising in a visit to Noumea of French warships on their way to Tahiti's big naval base? As for paratroopers—or any other troops that might be landed in New Caledonia—there aren't many other French colonies these days where young Frenchmen can put in their 18 months of compulsory military service. Tahiti, Martinique, New Caledonia—you've just about named the lot.

## "Take it as it comes"

On New Caledonia's West Coast the Poya district had been petitioning for a water supply for 20 years. But in this mineral-rich country, anything not directly to do with mining tends to be overlooked—*indefinitely*.

However, the necessary funds were requisitioned by government two years ago. Time passed, still the good citizens of Poya had no water supply. So the local gentry staged a demonstration. It was hardly the harbinger of bloody revolution!

The man in the street in Noumea—European, Melanesian, Tahitian, Martiniquais, Vietnamese, Soamli, Arab—responds to rumours of this sort with little more than a shrug of the shoulders. He certainly has



his gripes about local affairs. But from the political left to the political right—and the distance in New Caledonia isn't very great—all parties want to remain within the French Union.

Among the discontent to be found in New Caledonia is dissatisfaction with the French Government's failure to encourage exploitation of low grade nickel deposits. But the permission recently granted foreign concerns to enter this field has done a lot to allay this. Up-country farmers and planters erupt periodically over government's failure to improve roads and install essential services (such as that water incident), and they have a genuine grievance in this wealthy country.

There is grumbling about the

neglect of agriculture. But both the country's great mineral resources and the Melanesian system of communal land tenure work against any encouragement the government might give to agricultural development.

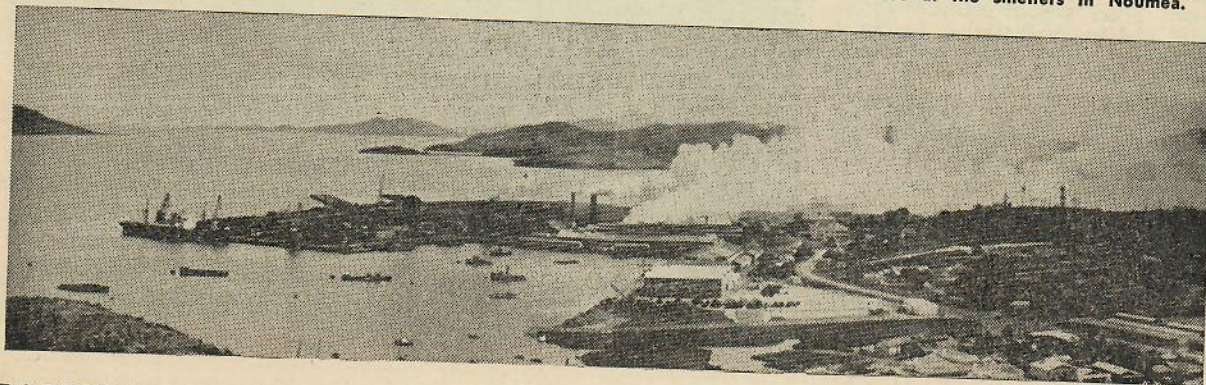
You have to look very hard indeed in New Caledonia to find a farmer who relies solely on farming for a living or does anything to improve his property or his stock. His attention is always diverted from farming to mining, where the return averages about 30 per cent. on the investment. And all you need is a bulldozer and a few trucks.

## "Sensible fellows"

It's not hard to see how the hard graft of agriculture might come off second best in a situation like this, which is compounded by the difficulty of getting casual labour away from mining or the sweet life of communal living.

Time was when the gendarmerie, those hard-eyed cops-cum-soldiers who are sent from France to keep

● Among the discontent to be found in New Caledonia is dissatisfaction with the government's failure to encourage exploitation of low grade nickel deposits. Nickel is New Caledonia's life blood, and the heart is here at the smelters in Noumea.





New Caledonians don't want closer ties with France, but they don't want independence either. They are happy enough to be French—and they gave a warm welcome to General de Gaulle when in September, 1966, he became the first French President to visit the South Pacific while in office—but they would like more control over local affairs, and their own budget. Here, the President is in Noumea talking to some of the local veterans. Below is one of the fine beaches of Noumea which help keep tourism booming. New Caledonians, with high wages, no income tax, increasing numbers of tourists and better nickel prices, are "having it good".

order in the New Caledonian countryside, were detested by all right-thinking "colons". But your New Caledonian is a sensible fellow, really. It didn't take him long to realise that in a country where everyone is somebody's cousin, or uncle, or brother-in-law, a non-involved peace-keeping body is an essential part of law and order. And even the working-class Union Caledonienne party has a kind word to say for the gendarmerie these days.

### Social security

There's no income tax on this carefree island—the fruits of your labour are for the most part all yours. There are, of course, indirect taxes and heavy duties on imported goods, but social security is largely provided for by a pay-roll tax paid by employers. So it's not surprising that the lone socialist Assemblyman, Mr. Alain Bernut, finds that his call for this hardly revolutionary form of taxation falls on deaf ears.

Even the rank and file of the European-Melanesian Union Caledonienne cannot get excited over this idea. They probably have a weather eye on some day not too far in the future when they, too, might have to fork out income tax themselves.

New Caledonians have quite a comprehensive system of social security and their family allowance is a fine, fat sum. Parents receive \$A5.25 per child—that is, all parents who are neither employers nor self-employed. Neither of the two latter classes is eligible for any other kind of social security either, so it's easy to see why the New Caledonian wage-earner can't get particularly wrought up over Mr. Bernut's cry for social justice. He's got a goodly portion of it already. In fact, any



revolution likely to erupt in this comfortable country would seem to have more chance of originating within the capitalist classes than among the wage-earning section of the community.

All New Caledonians, of whatever race, in whatever income bracket, have got it good these days—with high wages, no income tax, social security, workers' housing schemes, and the magnificent sports facilities that the South Pacific Games brought to Noumea.

Tourism is booming—nickel prices are good. But in spite of all this material prosperity, these French colonials would like to get their hands on more of the rich profits being harvested from their mountains by the big nickel companies.

However, they're in a difficult spot. As French citizens, with universal franchise and the right to elect their own representative to the French parliament, they don't really have a leg to stand on. Through their elected representatives in Paris, they already have as much say in controlling their own affairs as any citizen of metropolitan France has in controlling his.

New Caledonians of all parties turn their faces against closer tie with France—they don't want any more "departmentalisation". But they don't want independence either. They are happy for the most part with the judiciary, the gendarmerie and the strong defence force that protects their small but rich island.

But they'd like to have more control over local affairs and more say in matters like the nature and extent of secondary education in the territory. They want to be protected by the mother country but they want to do their own taxing and spending.

They want to have their cake and eat it. In a word—they're human.

# Cruising Yachts

● **WEST WIND V**, 47 ft auxiliary ketch, with New Zealanders Sandy and Muriel Lowe and their two sons, Jim, 12, and John, 10, Brisbane. The Lowes planned to Brisbane. The Lowe's planned to see the start of the Sydney to Hobart yacht race before sailing to Tasmania and then on to Perth.

The *West Wind V* left NZ in April and sailed to Brisbane via Norfolk Island. She then took a five-month cruise from Brisbane to Cairns and back visiting almost every resort and island on the way.

● **AIREYMOUSE**, 33 ft yawl, with Allan and Jean Batham, was expected to leave Suva in December for Auckland. The Bathams, who have a home in the West Indies, left Tahiti in July (where they had been since April awaiting delivery of a new engine) and made their way to Suva via the Windward Isles, Penrhyn, Suvarrow and Pago Pago. *Aireymouse* was last mentioned in *PIM* in June, 1968, p. 109.

● **THEKLA-CHRISTINE**, 60 ft all-steel ocean racing cutter, arrived at Rarotonga from Tahiti and Bora Bora in November. She was previously in Rarotonga in June and July. On board were owner-captain E. G. Eggers, Wolfgang Eggers, and two Americans. The yacht is equipped with a depth sounder, an automatic pilot, hydraulic steering gear, a deep freeze, a refrigerator, a showerbath and central gas heating. *Thekla-Christine*, which has taken part in three Sydney-Hobart ocean races, left Rarotonga in December for Sydney with calls scheduled for Tonga, Fiji, Samoa and the New Hebrides.

● **ROBYNE LEE**, Australian-owned sloop, reached Rarotonga in November with owner-captain Edward W. Smith and Terrence J. Corridan on board. She left for New Zealand in December.

● **HAVAIKI**, 20 ft fibreglass yawl, with owner-captain Dr. Rockne



"Sylvia", with Bob and Sylvia Welles of Los Angeles and their three sons, in Russell Harbour, NZ, recently.

Johnson, his Hawaiian wife, Ruby Kawena, their four children and Dr. Johnson's niece, left Rarotonga for NZ in October. Dr. Johnson, family and crew, who left Honolulu in July and had sailed to the Cooks via Maui Island, Fanning and Penrhyn, planned to spend three months in NZ. Dr. Johnson is on leave from his post as a geophysicist with the University of Hawaii.



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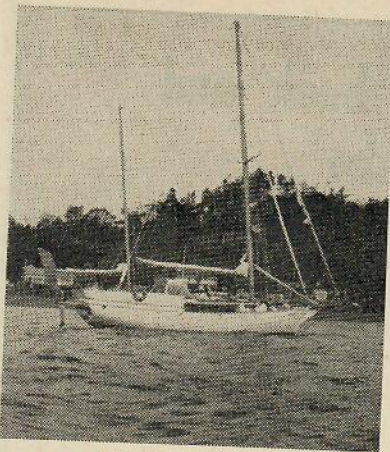
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"Nightingale", the Bennetts' 36 ft ketch, in Russell Harbour, NZ, recently.

● **MALAGUENA I**, 26 ft sloop with singlehander Dave Thomas of Wellington, NZ, left Rarotonga, Cook Islands, for NZ in October via Niue, Tonga and Samoa. Before arriving in Rarotonga, the sloop had called at Aitutaki.

● **HOANA**, Australian sloop, with Captain Joseph Adams and his wife, Anne, left Rarotonga for Sydney in October. The Adams had arrived in Rarotonga earlier in the month from Tahiti and Moorea.

● **KELASA**, with Harry Gilbert and his attractive fiancée Adrienne Matzenik, was in Rabaul, New Britain, in December en route for Singapore. The cutter had previously been in Suva and Honiara (BSIP). Adrienne tells us in a letter that the visibility between Honiara and Rabaul was shocking, "due to, of all things, smoke haze from Aussie bush fires!" Also in Rabaul in December were the 50 ft steel yawl, *Nomad*, with the Williams family, and the 25 ft sloop, *Kittiwake*, with singlehander Ed Boden.

#### OUTSIZE CATAMARAN ALMOST FINISHED

Mr. Roy Jackson's giant catamaran—he believes it may be the biggest in the Southern Hemisphere—is expected to be ready for its first long cruise by May, 1969.

The former cattle-man has been building the super-size craft—75 ft long and 28 ft wide—at Kadavu, Fiji, for the past nine months.

"My Fijian builders appear to be very much at home with double-hulled boats—and they have great expectations regarding its potential

speed," Mr. Jackson said during a recent visit to Suva.

"When she's finished, we'll make a few long cruises to see how she goes and then return to Fiji waters.

"I'm very pleased with the workmen on Kadavu—I hope my catamaran will be the forerunner of a village boat-building industry for them."

Mr. Jackson said building would be completed by May next year, providing his supplies of hardwood from Vanua Levu high country were maintained.

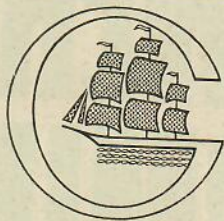
The catamaran will have a fibre-

glass finish, and Scottish terylene sails are being imported.

Accommodation will provide for a crew of four, with bunks for a total of 20 people—although Mr. Jackson said he didn't expect to be carrying large numbers of passengers.

Headroom would be 7 ft, he said, and the galley would be quite as large as the kitchen of any medium-sized house.

Mr. Jackson's catamaran may be the largest in the Southern Hemisphere but Mr. Ray Paton, of Rotorua, NZ, will launch in March or April a 75 ft steel-hulled trimaran, *Laron*, which, he says, is the world's largest.



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Miss Fiji 1968 steadies her new headpiece after the crowning ceremony performed by the Minister for Communications, Works and Tourism, Mr. Charles Stinson, at Nadi on December 7. The tall beauty is Miss Agnes Thomas, ledger machinist from Lautoka. She will represent Fiji at the Pacific Quest held in conjunction with Melbourne's Moomba Festival this March.

## Hopes for practical Islands fisheries

Over \$800,000 will be spent over the next three years to help Pacific Islanders fully exploit the fish life of their reefs and lagoons—if the United Nations agrees to contribute half the funds to finance the project.

The UN Development Programme Division is expected to allocate funds in January, and things could get moving by May or June.

The project was approved by the South Pacific Commission at its meeting in Noumea in September and member governments of the SPC are ready to put up \$409,300 in cash, technical assistance and equipment.

A body called the South Pacific Islands Fisheries Development Agency (SPIFDA) based in Noumea, would run the project and, in theory, conduct 10 schemes.

They would be:

- A survey of marine turtles, found in most low-lying atolls and islands;

- Scad mackerel fishing methods demonstrated to Islanders;

- Tahitian pearl-shell lure methods demonstrated to Islanders;

- Information to be made available on handling, marketing and distribution of fish;

- Encouragement of beche-de-mer fishing and processing;

- Edible oysters examined as potential industries in selected areas;

- Trials of improved methods of mother-of-pearl and pearl production;

- Intensified research into fish poisoning;

- Investigation of fish farms;

- Investigation of coastal and lagoon fisheries resources, including bait fishes.

Mr. Val Hinds, Fisheries Program Officer for the SPC, is hopeful that the project would have practical results and not be confined to academic findings.

"Pacific Islanders are sick to the teeth of experts doing surveys," he told *PIM*. "They've had surveys. They want practical help and someone who can come down and show them how to do things instead of putting their turtles or crabs under the microscope inside the concrete walls of an institute.

"SPIFDA won't be an institute or a convenient study centre for overseas personnel. Noumea will merely be a base from which practical experts can go to places like the Gilberts or the Carolines and actually help Islanders get fishing projects going," declared Mr. Hinds.

"Fish resources have been neglected

by Pacific Islands territories. There are only seven fisheries officers in the Islands and only New Guinea is doing something to train Islanders as officers. Islanders as assistants are no good," he said.

Mr. Hinds said the SPC, in September, had also approved a project for tuna fisheries. This plan differed from one that was rejected by the SPC in 1967, because it featured short-time offshore operations, similar to current day-long operations out of Papeete.

He said this project, like the reef and lagoon scheme, was dependent on the UN contributing funds on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

## Record copra exports for Penrhyn atoll

Penrhyn atoll, in the northern Cooks, exported a record 430 tons of copra from January to September. The islanders produced between 12 and 15 tons a week.

Manihiki produced 300 tons of copra during the same period when the high price of \$180 per ton encouraged copra producers to extra efforts.

Penrhyn's former *rahui*, a period when coconuts are not allowed to be taken from the motus, lasted six months, and this caused the loss of many nuts. The *rahui* has now been reduced to two months with greatly improved results.

Copra production in the southern group islands was poor last year due to damage to coconut palms caused by last December's hurricane and it may take another year before production is back to normal.

## BSIP is now exporting rice

Guadalcanal Plains Ltd., which harvested rice commercially for the first time in 1968 in the Solomons, has begun exporting rice and sorghum to two overseas markets and has received inquiries from nearly 10 other countries interested in buying Solomons rice.

The company has sent five tons of rice on the Solomons trader *Belama* to Tarawa, GEIC, for sale to the Wholesale Society and is now hopeful it can supply a big share of the 1,225 tons of rice the GEIC imports from Australia at a cost of \$176,000 a year.

In late October it shipped 300 tons of grain sorghum on the China Navigation vessel *Chengtu* for sale to Mitsui and Company, of Japan. Future exports of sorghum are likely to depend on prices offered and the

yield per acre sorghum can be grown.

Mr. Paul Brown, the company's general manager, told *PIM* that GPL was examining rice exports prospects in the New Hebrides and New Caledonia.

C. Sullivan (Export) Pty. Ltd., of Sydney, has been appointed overseas agents for GPL's rice, and the company has received inquiries for Solomons rice from Fiji, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Britain and Nationalist China.

"There is little doubt that if the Solomons can produce the rice, buyers will easily be found overseas," a company officer said.

GPL is growing rice at Tetera, east of Honiara, on Guadalcanal (*PIM*, June, p. 33). In August it installed a rice processing mill at Okea, 14 miles outside Honiara, which will be able to process two tons of polished rice an hour.

The mill came from the Japanese firm of Sataka.

In mid-January the first of three big rice drying machines for GPL is expected to arrive in Honiara. Ordered from Norlin Products Pty. Ltd., of Sydney, it is worth about \$7,000 and is the biggest ever exported from Australia.

The machine will dry 110 tons of rice a day in storing sheds which are 216 ft long by 30 ft wide (much larger than the storing sheds normally used).

## Prouds for Norfolk Is.

Sydney jewellers, Prouds Pty. Ltd., which already operate a branch of the business in Suva, in December were to open on Norfolk Island. Manager will be Mr. Ron Orphin, of Sydney.

## Undersea mineral search in Fiji

If there is any gold, copper, lead or zinc to be found at the bottom of the sea around Fiji's two main islands, a team of American scientists—from Crawford Marine Specialists Inc., of California—hopes to bring it to light.

Following similar programmes in many countries, Crawford Marine Specialists has obtained off-shore prospecting and mineral concessions all around Vanua Levu and in parts of Viti Levu.

The scientists began their undersea probe in mid-October in the belief that gold and other heavy minerals may have been washed out of the soil and deposited on the seabed centuries ago.

(Over)

A team of five, headed by geologist Dale Y. Anderson, spent the early part of October in the Tavua area, conducting a mapping survey to enable boundaries to be fixed for underwater exploration.

## Copra market should remain firm

Mr. Ian McDonald, chairman of the P-NG Copra Marketing Board, gave the following report on P-NG and world copra market trends on December 26:

Market prices of practically all edible oils and oilseeds advanced slightly during December. Philippine copra moved from \$US200 at the beginning of December to \$US208 by mid-December. At these levels, the average Philippine copra price, on which the board's contracts are based, will be around \$US177 for the three months period, October/December.

There are several factors currently bearing on the edible oil market. The possibility of a longshoremen's strike in US ports could affect exports of soyabean and soyabean oil.

Other factors which have contributed to uncertainty in the oilseed market include the very much reduced offerings of sunflower seeds, the uncertainty of effects of typhoon damage to the coconut growing areas in the Philippines, the unrest in world money markets and the continuing civil war in Nigeria, which has restricted exports of nutkernels and oil from that country.

Indications are that over the next few months a general firmness will continue in edible oils.

An interesting development in the Philippines is the installation of a coconut plant which will absorb about 7 per cent. of the total Philippines' copra production.

The plant will produce about 7,000 tons of plasticizer, some 400 tons of glycerine as well as coconut oil, fatty acids and fatty alcohols.

Later the plant is expected to produce detergents and margarine and the plant will probably have some effect on the European market as far as copra is concerned—though perhaps not a very serious effect.

The year 1968 has been a record production year for P-NG. Copra receipts for the 11 month period from January to November reached about 123,000 tons. December receipts were expected to be well up on the average of 8,500 tons. Therefore an overall receipt of 130,000 tons was assured—7 per cent. better than the previous record year in 1965.

# Tight French rein for New Caledonia's nickel industry

From a Noumea correspondent

A bill passed by the French National Assembly in December will eventually give the French Government complete control of the immensely rich nickel-mining industry of New Caledonia.

The bill was passed despite the unanimous opposition to it of New Caledonia's Territorial Assembly, and despite delaying tactics by the territory's deputy in the French Parliament, Mr. Rock Pidjot.

Mr. Pidjot also opposed two other bills introduced at the same time—one creating a new system of local government in New Caledonia, and the other concerning the economic development of the territory.

A Gaullist spokesman for a legal committee on the mining bill told the National Assembly that because of the increasing value of nickel, particularly from a strategic point of view, it was indispensable that the government should have control of all prospecting and mining.

Mr. Pidjot retorted that a decree of November 13, 1954, already assured the nickel industry of State guardianship, and that there was no risk of New Caledonian nickel being used for purposes contrary to the national interests.

## Less say for locals

Mr. Pidjot went on to say that the three bills would reduce the prerogatives of local authorities in mining, municipal and economic affairs, and added: "New Caledonia gives a lot more to France than it costs it".

The Secretary of State for Overseas Territories, Mr. Michel Inchauspe, replied that New Caledonia cost France about 1,200 million francs annually. The State also provided considerable assistance to the mining industry.

Motions by Mr. Pidjot to have the debate on the bill adjourned, and to have the bill referred back to an investigating committee were defeated by 284 votes to 184 and 285-183 respectively.

A series of amendments to the bill by Mr. Pidjot were also defeated.

Under the bill, the French Government will have the sole right to issue prospecting and mining licences in New Caledonia, although existing

licences and concessions will not be affected until they expire. Until now, the licences have been issued by New Caledonia's Governor.

In an editorial on the new law, Noumea's conservative *Bulletin du Commerce* wondered what criteria the French Government would use for issuing new prospecting and mining permits, and renewing old ones.

## Political opinions

"Will the small New Caledonian prospector," it asked, "have to go to Paris to show that he's a clean-skin and to discreetly reveal his political opinions?"

Communist deputies who supported Mr. Pidjot in his opposition to the mining bill also supported him when he opposed the bill on the creation of communes in New Caledonia.

The communes bill, which suspends and dissolves the existing municipal councils and revokes the appointments of their mayors and deputy mayors, is designed to establish new local government districts and a new system of local government.

According to the French Government, the new system will give the local authorities greater responsibilities and greater control over their finances.

The third bill pushed through the French Parliament in December concerns the attraction of new capital to New Caledonia, and gives the French Government the right to intervene where investments exceed 15 million francs.

● The GEIC's new Wholesale Society manager, Mr. William Hardie, has been quickly settling into his job and has proved very popular, locals told a *PIM* staff writer recently. Mr. Hardie is on a nine-months contract, but it would not be surprising of the colony tried to keep "Bill" longer.

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