

# PACIFIC ISLANDS MONTHLY

FEBRUARY, 1982

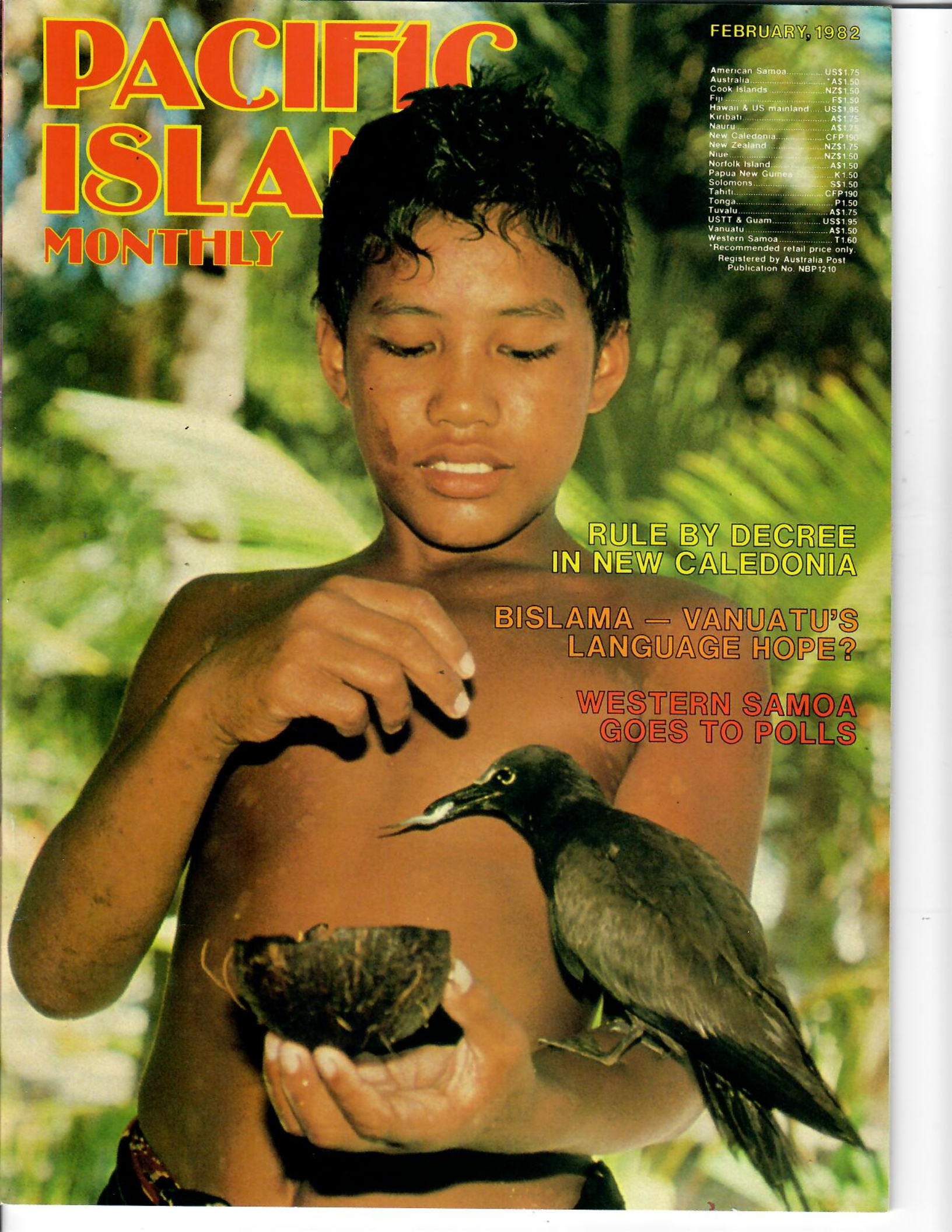
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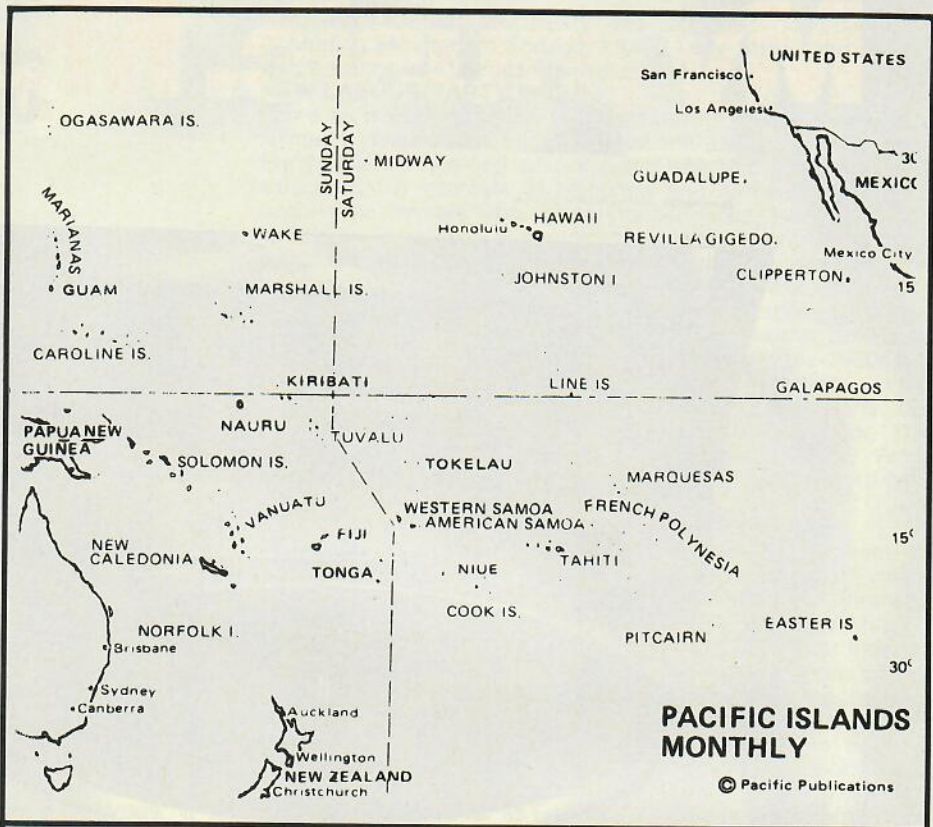
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## PACIFIC ISLANDS MONTHLY

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Cover picture: Having tamed it, this Tokelau youth evidently feels he has a responsibility to feed his pet bird. — George H. Balazs picture. Correction: Due to an error in transcription, our December, 1981, cover picture was described as having been taken at 'Vanikoro, Milne Bay province, Papua New Guinea'. In fact it was taken at Vanikoro in the Santa Cruz group, Solomon Islands. Our apologies.

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## **PNG, INDONESIA, IN DIPLOMATIC SPAT**

Relations between Papua New Guinea and its giant neighbour Indonesia were strained in January when the PNG Government failed to renew the visas of two non-diplomat members of the Indonesian embassy staff in Port Moresby. The two were Is Daryono and Koko Kamaludin. Mr Daryono had served only 18 months of his three-year assignment, while Mr Kamaludin had been in PNG for more than five years, far exceeding the normal two or three-year posting. Official explanation for the effective expulsion of the two staff members was that PNG's protocol department is so over-stretched it cannot cope with the 36-strong Indonesian mission. But, quoting 'very reliable sources in the Port Moresby intelligence community', the weekly *The Times of Papua New Guinea* wrote on January 15: 'Sources allege that the two officers have been engaged not only in information-gathering but in attempting to manipulate the West Irian community in PNG. They are convinced that a few immigrants from Irian Jaya are Indonesian "plants" who were the contacts used by the two.' Jakarta retaliated with the immediate closure of the embassy visa section, and Papua New Guinea applicants for visas to visit Indonesia are now being directed to that country's missions in Sydney and Singapore. Most are cancelling Indonesian visits because of the cost involved in securing entry visas. It is understood that Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan was not informed in advance of the decision not to renew the visas, although Foreign Affairs Minister Noel Levi was, and approved the action.

## **VITAL VOTES ON NEW CALEDONIA'S FUTURE**

New Caledonia's Territorial Assembly in January voted in support of the introduction of income tax (PIM Dec '81 p22). The vote on the vexed issue split the assembly's majority, with the 'Giscardian' Fédération pour une Nouvelle Société Calédonienne (FNSC) breaking away from its more conservative allies to vote with the Independence Front in support of the measure. A split also developed between two Melanesian members of the Council of Government (a type of Cabinet). Those at odds were Dick Ukeiwe, vice-president of the Council of Government, and Frank Wuhuzue, the youthful politician in charge of the Melanesian Promotion campaign. Also in January the territory saw the foundation of a new organisation in favour of independence for New Caledonia. Drawing its principal support from New Caledonians of French origin, the new body is led by Georges Chatenay, a lawyer. The dividing line between the new organisation and the Independence Front is that the former supports what it calls 'multi-racial independence', while the latter espouses 'Kanak socialist independence'. In Paris on January 15 the National Assembly voted 327-148 in favour of a bill authorising the French Government to rule by decree in New Caledonia for the next 12 months (see p29). New Caledonia's pro-independence deputy, Roch Pidjot, said in the course of debate: 'Because I see the bill as a sign of the government's readiness to conduct a policy of decolonisation aimed at giving Melanesians the right to assert themselves in the economic and cultural fields, I will vote for it.' — *Daniel Tardieu in Noumea.*

## **1982 ELECTION RASH**

Papua New Guinea is one of four important Pacific Island states to have general elections scheduled for 1982: its citizens start voting on June 5. Western Samoa goes to the polls on February 27, and Kiribati on April 1, while Fiji citizens begin casting their ballots on July 10.

## **AUSTRALIA, FRANCE IN SEA BORDER ACCORD**

Australia and France in January signed an agreement on maritime boundaries in the Southwest Pacific and the Southern Ocean. In the Southwest Pacific, a plotted boundary has been drawn between the Australian Islands in the Coral Sea and others such as Lord Howe and Norfolk Islands, and New Caledonia, the Chesterfield Islands, and other outlying French-controlled islands. In the Southern Ocean, there is now a boundary between the Australian Heard and McDonald Islands and the French

Kerguelen Islands. The treaty was signed in Melbourne by Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Tony Street and French Ambassador to Australia Pierre Carraud.

## **NEW LABOUR PARTY IN FIJI**

Three ex-members of the Fiji National Federation Party have formed a new political party, the National Labour and Farmers' Party. The party's first official statement said its aim was to safeguard the interests of labourers and farmers, particularly sugar-cane farmers who, since independence, have not been sufficiently protected economically by the government or the National Federation Party, according to the new political grouping. President Gurubux Singh is an assistant storeman and purchasing supervisor with the Fiji Electricity Authority. He says he hopes to get support from Labour Parties in other countries. Last attempt to form a Labour Party was made in the 1960s but it was abortive. Fiji now has five political parties — the government Alliance Party, the National Federation Party, the Fijian Nationalist Party, and the Western United Front. The National Federation Party and the Western United Front announced in January that they had reached agreement to fight the July general election as a coalition.

## **NZ SCIENTIST REBUTS FRENCH N-TEST CLAIM**

Dr David Kear, director of New Zealand's Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, has denied official French claims that statements by New Zealand scientists had 'stressed the harmlessness' of French nuclear testing at Moruroa Atoll. Dr Kear told a press conference in Auckland in December that the claim, made in an official French reply to representations on the tests made by the New Zealand Government, distorted the New Zealand scientists' position. He said that while the general conclusion reached by them was that the tests would not be likely to harm New Zealand or its neighbours, no conclusions were reached on the safety of French Polynesia. 'No one suggested things were safe as far as French Polynesia was concerned,' he said. 'It is not possible to say how safe Tahiti and other inhabited islands are because the French will not let foreign scientists visit Moruroa.'

## **NOT-SO-PLACID FUTUNA**

A special squad of 40 police was sent in January to the French-ruled island of Futuna to quell continuing civil disturbance. Long-standing political differences between King Nasalio Keletelona, 50, and his Prime Minister Soane Failo, 50, crystallised in a charge by the latter that the king had acted extravagantly in the lavish welcome he offered to French Secretary of State for Overseas Departments and Territories Henri Emmanuelli when he visited the island on August 13, 1981. A long-running dispute on the issue between the two men and their supporters flared into violence in the Nuku church on New Year's Eve. The fight between the two sides reduced the church to a shambles. The priest, Father Patrice, and a few helpers, managed with great difficulty to eject the combatants and shut the door. The two constables on the island were unable to cope with the situation.

## **PNG POLICE CHIEF RESIGNS**

The Papua New Guinea Police Commissioner, Phillip Bouraga, announced his resignation in mid-January following a protracted confrontation with Minister for Police Warren Dutton. Late last year Mr Bouraga was suspended from duty and in January he appeared before a Public Service Commission tribunal to answer four charges brought against him by Mr Dutton. The decision of the tribunal was still being awaited when Mr Bouraga announced his intention to resign, effective from February 17. In resigning as commissioner Mr Bouraga also resigned his position as Secretary for Police, the public service departmental position responsible for police matters to the minister and cabinet. The decision of the tribunal which heard charges against him is not expected to be given until late in February. The charges were that he had disobeyed lawful directions by refusing to brief Mr Dutton on four matters — the tribal fighting situation, the murder of a policeman in Port Moresby, the state of police discipline and allegations that insufficient funds were available for operational duties. Mr Bouraga is one of PNG's most senior and experienced public administrators and held a number of top government posts before his appointment as police commissioner.

## **TONGAN COPS CLEARED OF MURDER CHARGE**

Following an eight-day jury trial in Nukualofa in December, two Tongan policemen were acquitted of the murder, and five of abetting the murder, of an arrested suspect on the night of September 2. The man, according to the post-mortem evidence, died of massive multiple injuries and extensive internal haemor-



rhages, consistent with his having been punched, kicked and stamped upon while his back was pressed against an unyielding surface. The prosecution proved that the injuries occurred while the deceased was lying double-handcuffed in the back of a Police Mobile Unit van, and while in the custody of the seven accused. (A more detailed report will appear in PIM, March) — *Penny Hodgkinson in Nukualofa.*

#### **N-TESTS, DUMPING: BOYCOTT PLANNED**

The Pacific Trade Union Forum, formed at a meeting in Port-Vila in June of trade unionists from 13 South Pacific countries, plans a campaign against nuclear testing and dumping of nuclear waste. The Fiji Trades Union Congress, a founder member of the forum, has meanwhile announced it is joining the New Zealand Federation of Labour and other South Pacific unions in a selective boycott of French and Japanese goods as a protest against testing and dumping.

#### **HIJACK DRAMA 1**

The saga of the hijacked 1000-tonne Australian freighter *Glenelg* drew to a close in mid-January when it ran aground and was badly holed on Pott Island in New Caledonia's Belep group, northwest of the main island. *Glenelg* was first hijacked from Cairns, north Queensland, in 1979, when the man to whom she had been leased sailed out of harbour owing charter fees. She was confiscated on the owner's behalf at Santo, Vanuatu, in early 1980, and then brought down to Port-Vila for safe-keeping. It was held there until December, 1981, when two men — an Australian and a New Zealander — used force against guards to hijack the \$250 000 vessel once again. Vanuatu Mobile Force personnel in the vessel *Mala* gave chase, firing machine-gun and teargas rounds across the *Glenelg's* bridge to prevent her escape. But their efforts failed. After running aground on Pott Island, the hijackers spent three weeks trying to repair and refloat the ship, but eventually sent a radio call for help which was picked up at an emergency listening post at Townsville, Queensland. A French naval vessel went to the island, and a helicopter took the two to hospital in Noumea. When they are well enough to travel, the Vanuatu Government has requested their extradition to Port-Vila to face hijacking charges.

#### **HIJACK DRAMA 2**

A 46-year-old Frenchman from New Caledonia, said to have a history of mental illness, attempted to hijack the Pacific cruise vessel *Minghua* on December 15 and force it to change course to Noumea. The ship at the time was heading for Suva. After being overpowered and thrown into the brig, the man unsuccessfully tried to set fire to the ship, but managed to wreck his cell. He was arrested when the ship arrived in Suva, and deported to Noumea. The incident had a sequel in Australia when it was revealed that the two men who over-powered the would-be hijacker — when he was on the bridge threatening ship's officers with a knife — were off-duty policemen from the Australian State of New South Wales. A spokesman for the NSW police said the officers were 'on a trip given in return for services rendered'. A company spokesman said a number of shipping companies were in the habit of using off-duty policemen as security guards. He would not give details of the concessional fares offered to police.

#### **A FIRST FOR MOPIO, MP: THE SACK**

James Mopio, member of Papua New Guinea's national parliament for Central Province, has been dismissed from office for misconduct in office. The dismissal followed a leadership tribunal hearing in which Mr Mopio was convicted of 15 charges and acquitted of one. The offences included refusal to pay legitimate debts, acceptance of gifts of money from private companies, tax evasion, and involvement in a black market beer operation in his home province. Judge Greville Smith, who headed the inquiry, said in his finding: 'Mopio is in our view a person who is unfit to hold office. We find that public policy and public good require his dismissal.' Mr Mopio is the first PNG MP to suffer this fate.

#### **AIRLINES TO FLY IN TRIANGLES**

Australia's national flag-carrier Qantas joined in January with the Pago-based South Pacific Island Airways (SPIA) to offer a new Pacific Triangle fare. At the same time, Continental Airlines and Thai International set up a new Pacific Circle to compete with circle fares already offered by combinations of four other airlines. The new Pacific Triangle will enable passengers to fly to both Hawaii and Tahiti from Sydney for less than if they detoured through Los Angeles, Nadi or Auckland to visit both. Final details of fares were unavailable at press time, pending filing with the

Australian Department of Transport. SPIA will operate the connection between Honolulu and Papeete with the Boeing 707 it has on lease from American Airlines. The new Pacific Circle drawn by Thai and Continental traces the widest arc of all, from Bangkok to New York. It is also the most expensive, with a ticket quoted on January 20 at \$US1950.

#### **PORT-VILA LOSES ITS VOICE**

*Voice of Vanuatu*, an English-language weekly published in Port-Vila since November, 1979, ceased publication 'for an indefinite period' with its Christmas '81-New Year '82 number. The paper was virtually a one-woman operation conducted by Australian expatriate Christine Coombe. Ms Coombe explained that the closure was voluntary, and for personal reasons. The government weekly, *Tam-Tam*, accompanied its account of the closure with a warm tribute to Ms Coombe's work, describing her as 'editor, publisher, reporter, typist'.

#### **PNG PROVINCIAL HEADS RAP STAR KIST**

Five premiers of the Papua New Guinea provinces of Manus, East New Britain, North Solomons, West New Britain and New Ireland have given the American fishing company Star Kist three months to withdraw all its operations from the region. Their decision was made at a meeting held to review progress of the K20 million fish cannery at Kavieng, New Ireland. PNG has protested on several occasions at the slow rate of progress of the cannery plans. The latest upset was a complaint from a government consultant team that the site at Bagal plantation for the cannery was unsuitable. The premiers opposed the granting of a three-month extension of negotiations between the government and Star Kist.

#### **A MONTH'S UNCOMFORTABLE WAIT — THEN GAOL**

Shipwrecked Canadian sailor John Harrison waited nearly a month in December-January to be rescued from Palmyra Island in mid-Pacific. But as soon as he returned to Honolulu — and civilisation — he was sent to gaol. Harrison was arrested at Honolulu airport on January 6 after he and his two daughters, Micki, 20, and Kristen, 13, had flown the 1770 kilometres from Palmyra. He was charged with taking property that belonged to a crew member when he sailed for Australia on his 12.5-metre trimaran, *Sisyphus*. Harrison and his daughters apparently left Maui in a hurry on November 10 as he was being confronted by collection agents for the Bank of British Columbia, which holds the mortgage on the craft, Hawaii officials said. The *Sisyphus* came apart in a storm on December 10, stranding the Harrisons on Palmyra.

#### **MAKING FRIENDS AT AMAZON BAY . . .**

Talair, the big third-level airline in Papua New Guinea, suspended flights into Amazon Bay southeast of Port Moresby for several days in mid-January after a man there attacked one of the company's pilots. Pilot Peter Wilkinson was supervising the loading of an Islander aircraft at Amazon Bay when he became involved in an argument with four men over fare payments for the flight to Port Moresby. One of the men swung a punch at him and the group chased him to a nearby building where stones and pieces of wood were used to smash windows and a door. Police ended the disturbance and took one of the men into custody.

#### **POPULATION FALL IN COOKS**

The Cook Islands population has fallen by 2.4 percent since 1976, according to provisional 1981 census figures. The 1981 figures show a population of 17 695. The 1976 census recorded a population of 18 128. Northern group islands such as Penrhyn, Manihiki, Pukapuka and Nassau, however, showed a population increase since 1976.

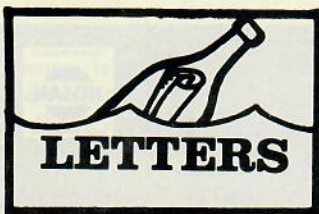
#### **HAIL TO THE VETERAN DIXIE**

The USS *Dixie*, oldest ship on continuous active duty in the US navy, is on a visit to the South Pacific. The 16 000-ton destroyer tender, commissioned in 1940, repaired and tendered ships taking part in the battles of the Coral Sea and Midway, following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Leaving Pearl Harbor in November 1942, she based her operations in Noumea, and later in Santo, Vanuatu. Commanded by Captain R. L. Coffey, USN, and carrying 870 enlisted crew and 32 officers, *Dixie* visited Sydney on January 14-18. Her first visit to Australia's biggest port city was in September, 1943, and her second in May 1980, to mark her 40th birthday.

#### **GUAM IN ESCAP**

Guam is reported to have been admitted to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the first US Pacific territory to be admitted to a major functional body of the United Nations. As an associate member of ESCAP, Guam could receive UN technical assistance.





## Sir Julius sets a record straight

I was surprised to read Second Officer Kevin B. Judkin's criticism of my defence of the Pacific Forum Line (PIM Dec '81 p9), and his assertion that my statement that the Papua New Guinea Government 'saw the project as one supporting the islands that did not get shipping services to their part of the world' was a political *faux pas*.

I question his competence to speak authoritatively on this subject.

It is a matter of personal pride to me that before entering politics I managed a modest coastal shipping business for



**Sir Julius: Ship operator, prime minister — and letter-writer.**

several years, and achieved some small success.

I was interested, therefore, in pursuing the matter, and took the time and trouble to locate a copy of the September issue of PIM from which Second Officer Judkins had quoted. I was left with the impression that his remarks were intended as no more than a red herring. Certainly, his comments had little relation to what I was quoted as saying in the September PIM (p74).

The PIM article stated right at the beginning that as finance

minister I had been opposed to the establishment of the Pacific Forum Line. I have, in addition, expressed on many occasions very strong reservations about government-owned corporations, which are rarely successful because bureaucrats are not businessmen.

In the same issue of PIM I was also quoted as saying: '... relationships are not built on talks and politics alone. They need to have some visible sign of achievement, of togetherness, and this (the Pacific Forum Line) is one of them.'

That was the essence of my remarks, and that was the message that seems to have escaped Second Officer Judkins.

(Sir) JULIUS CHAN  
Prime Minister of  
Papua New Guinea

Port Moresby  
Papua New Guinea

## The handicrafts of Tonga

I have just received a copy of *Tongan Handicrafts*, published in 1980 for the Australian Development Assistance Bu-

reau by the Australian Government Publishing Service.

I have long been waiting for such a catalogue. When I finally had it in my hands, I was both excited and disappointed. Excited, because I recognised some of the most beautifully made handicrafts of the Pacific — mats, tapa, baskets. Disappointed, because of the growing number of standardised curios or trash pretending to be traditional, and placed indiscriminately side by side with objects of exquisite craftsmanship. If those who have a copy of the book would just compare the finely woven mat (44), basket (31), or piece of tapa (60), with the lifeless mask (73), which has no relation whatsoever to Tongan tradition, I think they will see my point.

My criticism, however, is not directed in the first place at the producers. I fully realise that for them handicrafts mean income, important cash for school fees, and goods like tinned meat and clothing, and I am far from blaming the makers for their efforts to earn money for their families' needs. Moreover, such

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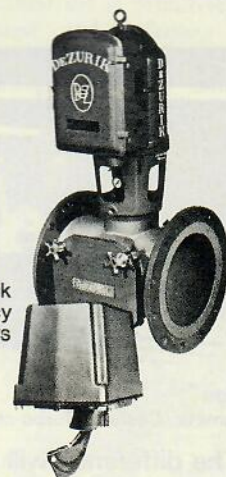
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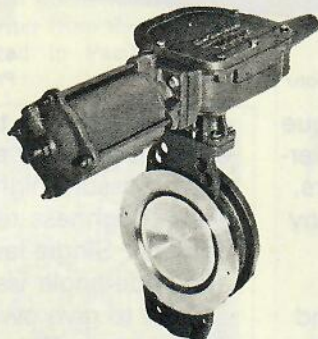
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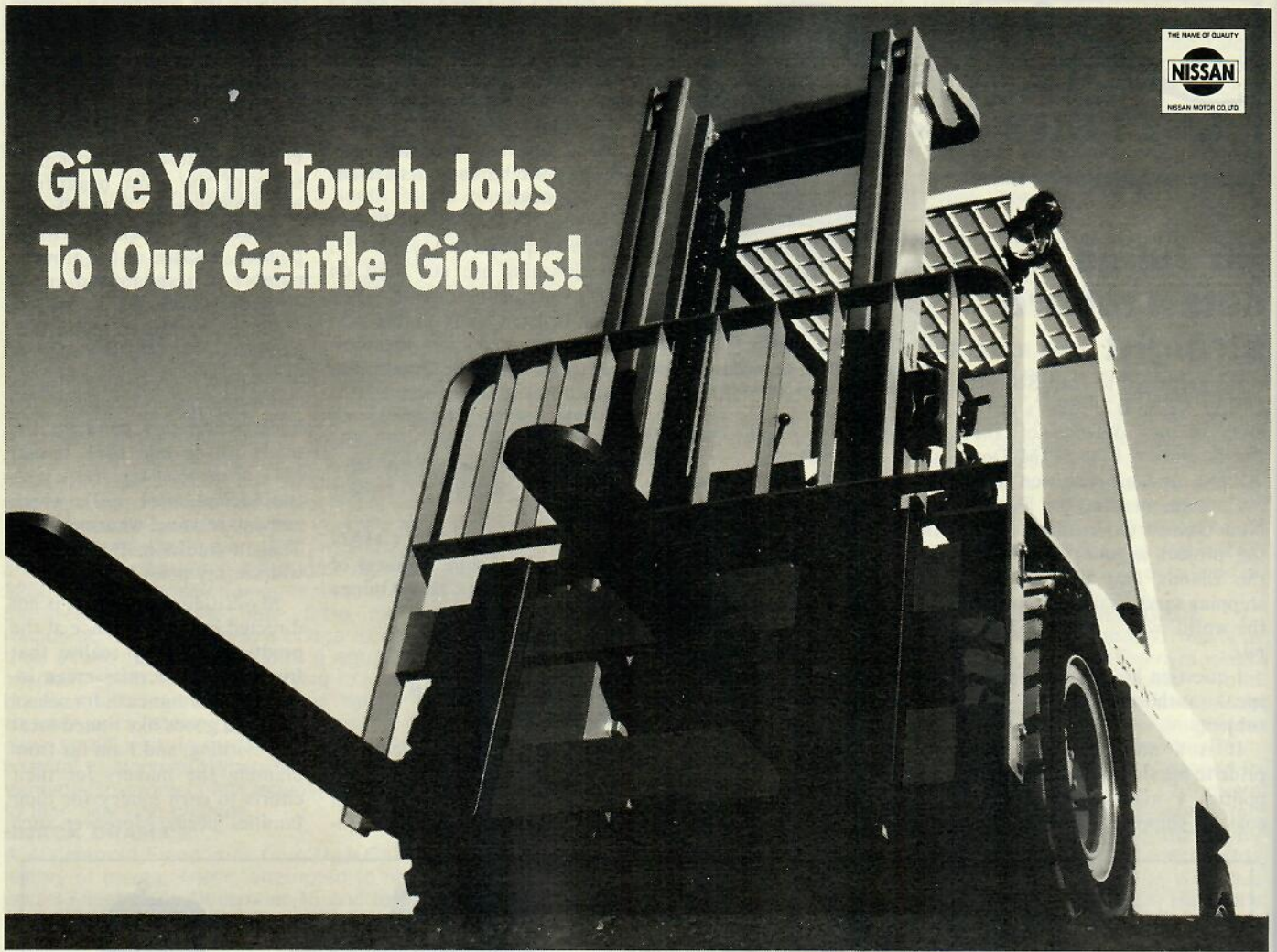
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income is mainly provided by women, and adds to their status in the households.

Being more and more connected with the international economy, Tongans are now naturally interested in producing handicrafts for general sale, particularly since such work can be done at home or in the village community, making use of home-grown materials.

Today its uniqueness is certainly its greatest advantage on the world market: whether in Hawaii or New Zealand, you can usually still tell at once that this basket or that mat comes from the Tongan islands. In Fiji, Tongans are proud of this fact, as is confirmed in the book *Pacific Tourism — As Islanders See It* (p31). (See review this issue PIM, p39.)

On the other hand, I vividly remember the worries of women in Vavau about their market, largely dependent as it is on regular visits by cruise vessels to their islands. They were most anxious to find new avenues for the sale of their handicrafts, and for support of their self-organised Women's Handicraft Co-operative, *Langa Fonua*.

I understand the present catalogue to be a well-

**A comparison of Tongan artefacts referred to in the letter on this page. Below is the piece of tapa and at right the basket and woven mat described as 'exquisite'. At far right is an example of the 'hideous lifeless mask' which is claimed to be a direct result of growing pressures from the tourist and souvenir markets. — Pictures on this page by Anne Livingston from *Tongan Handicrafts*, a catalogue of current craftwork.**



intentioned response to such worries. Well-intentioned, no doubt, but in my opinion missing important aspects which have, for instance, been discussed in the book of Visonie Tausie, *Art in the New Pacific*. Such aspects include the problems of commercialisation and tourist art. Visonie Tausie writes: 'Since the market determines the kind and form of art produced, and the market is mainly Euro-American, it is obvious it is white values which really dictate the standards. Pacific art is now threatened by mass production, which creates a certain sameness in fashion, music, literature, or whatever.'

It is the imposition of Euro-American concepts that will eventually eliminate creative Tongan or Pacific art and handicrafts.

What I would like to discuss, as a writer from the Antipodes interested in Pacific culture,

**Tongan culture: Today's craftsman works, tomorrow's craftsman watches. But will pressures from the souvenir market distort the pattern of tomorrow?**

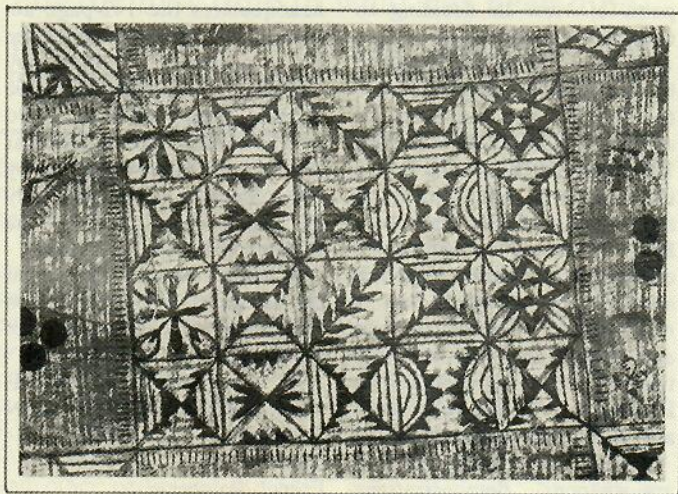
and as an anthropologist, is: Who should adapt to what taste? Is it really inevitable that the Tongans will have to adjust themselves to the uncultivated tastes of tourists if they want to find a market? Could not a catalogue published by an Australian development agency perhaps help to develop the tourist's sense of aesthetic appreciation? Is it true that tourists will necessarily prefer

exotic trash — such as hideous, lifeless masks — to artistically valuable handicraft products, and that they cannot see the difference between a collector's piece and mass-produced souvenirs, and be prepared to pay for it?

Let me make it quite clear: I am not simply pleading for the 'traditional' or 'authentic'. What I would like to see is a wider range of criteria or standards by which quality may be differentiated and judged.

Perhaps one could begin to distinguish between art, artistic handicrafts, good craftsmanship, objects designed for daily use (hats, toys, and so on), and various forms of souvenirs or mass-produced trash, and stop lumping them all together as 'tourist art' or just 'handicrafts'. Such all-embracing categories, incidentally, would never be applied to artefacts made in Western societies.

It must be irritating and discouraging for the Pacific artist and artisan to find himself confronted with so much ignorance. Visonie Tausie comments: 'If islanders are made to feel that their art is primitive, uncivilised and inferior, then sooner or later they will end up imitating what they think is superior. This goes not only for





art, but also for other aspects of Pacific cultures ... The islanders must clearly evolve a practical solution. Obviously, tourist income is needed. The question is how can this be obtained without losing self-respect? ... A set standard of quality is necessary.'

To me this 'standard of quality' also means a questioning of our 'Euro-American concepts'. It is a matter of dialogue.

One may hope that a growing awareness of such questions among Pacific artists will eventually help us to understand and recognise 'the development of the creative potential drawing on the past for inspiration', but at the same time producing material 'which is relevant and contemporary' (Visonie Tausie).

It is in this sense that new standards are needed. The *Tongan Handicrafts* catalogue, unfortunately, fails to reflect ideas of this nature.

RENATE von GIZYCKI  
Kassel  
Western Germany

### A trans-Tasman argument

I refer to a letter from N. J. Bullock of Auckland, New Zealand (PIM Dec '81 p9). The letter begins with a reasonable defence of the New Zealand police force, and ends with an unwarranted attack on an aspect of Australian life that, I am sure, we all regret.

The tone of Mr (or Ms) Bullock's letter is one of righteous anger from beginning to end. Yet the writer's ire appears to have been prompted less by any inaccurate statements made by Bruce Turner (PIM Sep '81 p10) than by the fact that an Australian had had the goddamned audacity to criticise something that happened in N. J. Bullock's own country.

This is shown clearly by the irrational remark with which Bullock rounds off the letter: 'I suggest that you clean up your own backyard before you cross the Tasman and attempt to clean up ours.'

It appears that Australian society must become perfect before any Australian can assume the right to express a

disapproving opinion on any aspect of life in our trans-Tasman neighbouring country.

I am not going to bother refuting the calumnious charges made by Bullock, except to say that they betray not even a hint of empathy with the Australian Aborigines. Bullock uses this sad issue in an attempt to justify a nationalistic dig at the Aussies.

Over the years I have read many letters like Bullock's, penned by New Zealanders along the same touchy, nationalistic lines. One wonders at their sharp, defensive tone!

If it is true that New Zealand society has no skeletons in its own closet, why is it necessary for people like Bullock to be constantly defending their country's record, and attacking ours?

A century and a half after it was signed, in good faith, by Maori chiefs, the treaty of Waitangi has still not been ratified by the New Zealand parliament. Could it be that some cherished Kiwi myths are fraudulent after all?

S. GREAVES  
Eastwood NSW  
Australia

### Social history of planters

Under the aegis of the Academy of Social Sciences, Australia and the South-western Pacific, I am writing a social history of Australian planters, plantation managers, and their families between 1900-1980.

The main thrust of the work will be the social experience of plantation life — living conditions, adaptation to life in the islands, aspirations, European 'sense of community', the role of women, success and failure in financial and social terms, and so on.

The source material is diverse, but memoirs, diaries, record books, photographs, and reminiscences from planters would form the basis of the account.

While the connections between Australia and the islands are most important, the general European experience of plantation life would be illuminating. This is particularly true of planters: 'Going South' on

leave, education of children, health, obtaining supplies, and marketing production in Australia — irrespective of any family ties with Australia.

People who feel they could contribute their experiences to the project should contact me in the: Department of Pacific History, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, 2600.

(Dr) I. BRUCE WATSON  
Canberra ACT  
Australia

### N-tests: French White Paper

It was interesting to know that Pacific radio-activity was the lowest since 1960 (PIM Dec '81 p5). As the French nuclear tests have been deep underground for years this is what one would expect: there is no way that the Moruroa weapon tests could add to the fallout already in the atmosphere, which is a good thing.

The highly emotional drives are perennial, they come and go, and I have no doubt that they will for many years. And you can't blame people for being concerned over weapons.

In the interests of good information I would like to mention the White Paper, in English, which has been produced by the French Government, covering in detail virtually every scientific angle on the environment surrounding Moruroa.

Weapons are one thing. Nobody wants a nuclear war whose effects would be almost inconceivable. But one can see the French Socialist government's point of view in deciding to continue the tests.

By June, 1979, according to the *Illustrated London News*, the USSR had deployed all along its boundary with Europe 150 of the SS-20 rockets. Today the number is about 250. Each rocket has three warheads. Each warhead is separately directed to a different city with an accuracy of about half a mile. Each warhead has an explosive force about 30 times that of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Yet this awful scenario is never mentioned.

I was in Paris during the 1981 anti-weapon demonstrations

that were so well-orchestrated all over Europe. The number of demonstrators was small compared with those in Germany and Britain, and the demonstration was peaceful. It was notable, however, that no mention was made of the SS-20 rockets deployed by the Russians. The Americans were the only ones who were condemned by these well-organised rallies. One wonders why?

J. C. GROVER  
Chatswood NSW  
Australia

### Pacific women: A reply

In a long letter (PIM Nov '81 p9), the South Pacific Commission's Director of Programmes W. T. Brown rightly praises the excellent work done by the 60-odd delegates who attended 'his' seminar on the role of Pacific women, held, at great expense, at Papeete in July, 1981. In doing so, he is merely echoing what we had said two months previously (PIM Sep '81 p20).

On the other hand, we feel obliged to express our complete disagreement with Mr Brown's attempt to persuade PIM readers that this SPC conference represented a great pioneering effort. That honour surely goes to the Pacific women who as early as 1975 organised a conference in Fiji along the same lines as last year's Papeete gathering. The Fiji conference was attended by no fewer than 90 delegates from 19 countries.

If Mr Brown cared to dig out from the library of his Noumea headquarters the 142-page account of the proceedings of the Fiji conference (edited by Vanessa Griffen under the title *Women Speak Out*) he could well be embarrassed to find that the 46 resolutions adopted by the conference were practically all put forward again at the Papeete seminar.

What is needed now — and all delegates were agreed on this point — is therefore not more talks, but some action.

MARIE-THERESE  
and BENGT DANIELSSON  
Papehue  
Tahiti  
French Polynesia



Leading Apia journalist FELISE VA'A previews the general elections to be held in Western Samoa on February 27. If there is to be a change of government, he says, the man most likely to be his country's next prime minister is Vaai Kolone, leader of the Human Rights Protection Party, now in opposition.

## Western Samoa to the polls: Has the time come for a change?

Western Samoa's general elections on Saturday, February 27, are almost certain to result in a 50 to 60 percent turn-over of sitting members — at least that has generally been the case with such elections in the past. Past experience also shows that nobody is safe from this tendency to violent shake-outs in the membership of the *Fono*, or Legislative Assembly, at election times: candidates of all political beliefs are liable to suffer nasty shocks.

However, there is a unique feature about the 1982 election that could possibly be significant enough to upset this long-standing tradition. This is the fact that for the first time in the history of this country a strong political party, the Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP), is taking the field against the government — and, indeed, all comers. The electors may just decide to sweep the HRPP to power, in reaction against the two-term government of Tupuola Efi. Certainly, all sitting HRPP members (they represent about half the 47-strong membership of the assembly), are confident they will be returned. Their optimism stems in part from their

features. The organisation is certainly there — a fact which becomes most obvious around campaign time, from November to election day.

The newly formed Labour Party (*Tautua mo Samoa* in Samoan) represents a third force in the field for the 1982 poll. According to its leader, the sitting MP Mapuilesua Pelenato, this party stands for free enterprise, and for the development of an industrial base to supplement agriculture.

Mapuilesua accuses both the government and the HRPP of hypocrisy. 'They say one thing in debate and then vote against it later,' he says, referring to the practice of certain members who vote against their individual beliefs in order to support a party position.

Apart from the fact that he is an able parliamentary orator, little is known about Mapuilesua's capabilities. He obviously aspires to be prime minister, but he labours under the handicap that he is not well known on a nation-wide scale.

These then are the three political parties — or, rather, two parties, and one 'party' — that will contest the elections. It is unlikely that any more will



frequently, it is financial need rather than ideological conviction that drives candidates to join a political organisation. At this stage of development, it may be seriously doubted whether many of the chiefs (*matai*) understand, or can distinguish between, political ideologies such as conservatism, liberalism, socialism, communism, and so on.

It may be safely assumed that the Labour Party will offer no serious threat to the two main parties. For one thing, Mapuilesua Pelenato is reported to have only a shaky hold on his own constituency. His chief rival for the seat will be veteran politician Tagaloa Leota Pita whom he unseated in 1979. Tagaloa must be counted as a strong candidate.

So the real fight will be between the government and the HRPP — and the power-

**Prime Minister Tupuola Efi, leader of a government which has had two terms in office. His greatest handicap in the February elections may well prove to be the bitterness which remains from last year's disruptive strike by public servants.**

brokers will be the independents.

Looking at the government's record since the last elections in February 1979, no one could accuse it of not trying. It has continued to do everything expected of it in maintaining and extending government operations, most notably in economic development. In foreign relations, Tupuola has followed an innovative course, and with overall success.

The recent budget figures provide some evidence of progress, and generally reflect good economic management. Any careful study of the economic record (including foreign aid,

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**For the first time in what has been a no-party system, a strong party is now challenging the established government.**

---

party's success against government candidates in 1981 and earlier by-elections.

Tupuola's supporters, inside and outside parliament, do not constitute a formal political party. In effect, however, they are a party, since they have political organisation, and the common goal of holding on to power. They also have a central fund for political campaigning, and other party-type expendi-

appear between time of writing and election day.

Of course, there will be independents. But most of these are already secretly committed to one or other of the three major groupings. The fact is that it is extremely difficult for candidates to remain unattached to a party: the need for campaign funds literally forces them into the arms of one or the other of them. So, not in-



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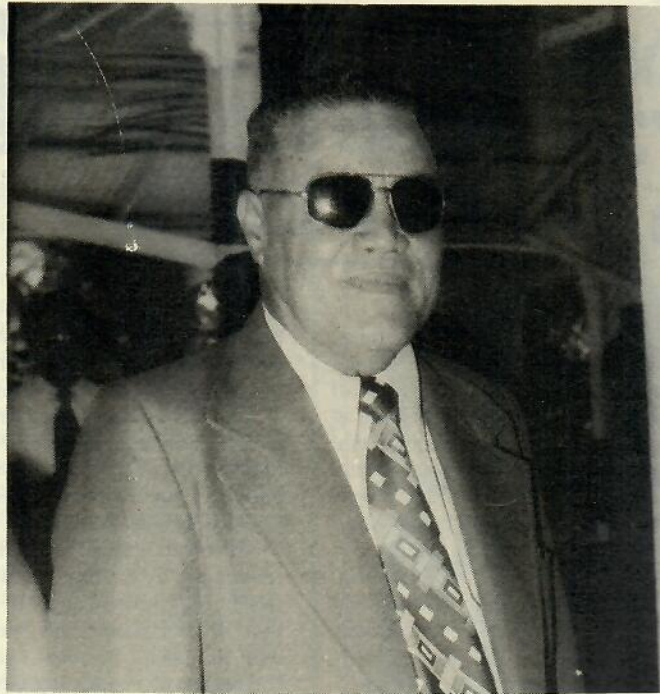
which jumped from \$WS6 200 000 in 1979 to \$12 050 000 in 1981, a 94 percent increase) shows a generally good performance.

The main dark spot appears in the export-import figures. Exports in 1979 reached an all-time high of \$15 340 000. This performance was maintained in 1980, with a figure of about \$15 250 000. But exports nosedived in the first nine months of 1981 to about \$7.7 million. Final figures for the year are unlikely to exceed \$10 million, a massive fall from the \$15 million of the preceding two years.

Government is blamed for this fall. One MP has claimed that the government's inability to settle the public servants' strike of April-July 1981 had meant that people were discouraged from producing key export products such as copra and cocoa. There is surely much substance to this claim.

The export figures must be seen against the background of the figures for imports. These were worth approximately \$61 million in 1979, \$57.5 million in 1980, and \$44.9 million for the first nine months of 1981. Indications are that the figure for the full year will again exceed \$60 million.

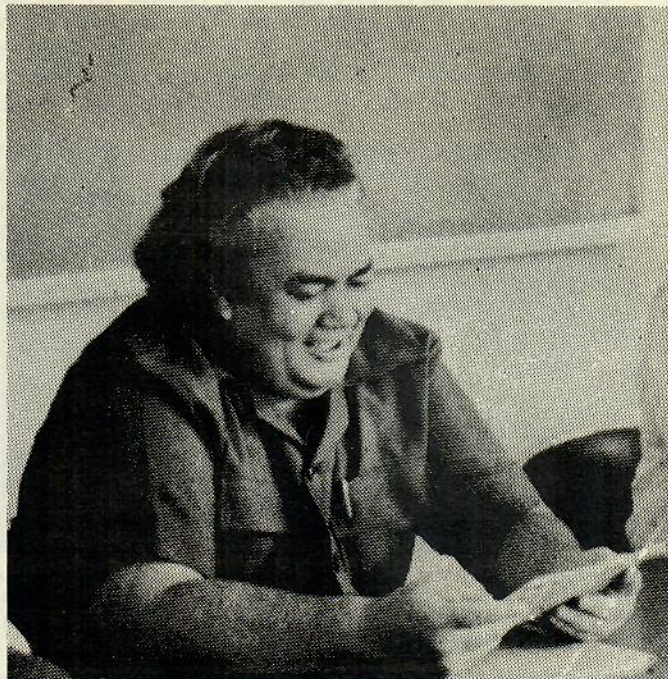
The cost of living remains high. While no Samoan is starving, the locals generally are finding the cost of many



**Vaai Kolone, parliamentary leader of the Human Rights Protection Party, who has the support of about half the number of members in the retiring parliament. If Prime Minister Tupuola Efi fails to return to office, Vaai Kolone is tipped as the most likely man to form the new government.**

items beyond their means. To buy them, they depend on remittances from overseas. There was a 24 percent increase in the Consumer Price Index in 1979, and a 29 percent increase in 1980. Figures for 1981 show a 21 percent rise over the first nine months, with clear indications of further increases in the final quarter.

**Asi Eikeni, a strong government supporter, denied doing anything wrong in last year's import duty scandal, but the impact hurt the government.**



International reserves fell from a high point of \$5 161 000 in December 1979 to \$3 088 000 in September 1981. 'This figure is dangerously low and makes us extremely vulnerable to any one of a number of contingencies,' Finance Minister Vaovasa Filipo observed in his budget speech. In this connection, government introduced a bill, later passed, enabling it to borrow for the purpose of meeting any balance of payments problems.

All things considered, Tupuola's government is unpopular.

The biggest single reason is the bitterness left over from the public servants' strike. The strike arose over a claim for a salary increase, and other grievances. But the government handled it badly from beginning to end.

The cost of the strike to the country was enormous. While estimates vary greatly, the minister of finance puts the figure at about \$3 million. But in fact it is much more, given the \$5 million decline in the value of exports — almost certainly a side-effect of the strike — and the many millions lost in remittances from Samoans abroad.

The other major reason for the government's unpopularity is the series of scandals in government, first in the Health Department — the uncovering

of a conspiracy to defraud government — and, more recently, the case involving former Minister of Justice Asi Eikeni.

The Chief Justice found that the former minister was not telling the truth in court, and that he had conspired to deceive Customs concerning goods he had brought into the country, and the duty to be paid on them. While the minister is unlikely to face perjury charges — a legalistic point — the scandal has seriously undermined his position as a politician and an individual. Asi, for his part, has denied that he did any wrong.

Perhaps a further reason for the unpopularity of the government is the simple fact that it has been in power for so long. Power breeds indifference and arrogance. It also breeds carelessness.

It was arrogance that prevented the government from recognising that the public servants fully intended to go ahead with their strike. It was arrogance that led them to treat with disdain the public servants' petition for a salary increase. It was arrogance again that led them to refer to the public servants as 'good-for-nothings who in any case are not earning their pay, or are stealing government property'.

Then, the Public Accounts Committee and the Auditor began spilling the beans — and for much of 1981 the public in Western Samoa had a heavy diet of scandals reported in the press, all involving government figures.

After all this, the Samoans reason, perhaps it is time for a change.

Time will tell.

If there is to be a change of government — and a change is almost universally predicted by the usual crop of pre-election prophets in Apia — Vaai Kolone, leader of the HRPP, is the man most likely to be this country's next prime minister.



# 1981 revival of a 1973 drama

Marie-Thérèse & Bengt Danielsson

## POSTMARK PAPEETE



History seemed to be repeating itself just before Christmas, 1981, as the nuclear protest drama that had shaken French Polynesia nine years before was re-enacted in almost identical terms. There was the yacht *Greenpeace III* again, patrolling at Moruroa outside the 12-mile limit, escorted by a French naval vessel. Her captain was once again the courageous David McTaggart who, in 1973, had almost lost the sight of his right eye after being beaten up by the French marines who captured his yacht.

In Papeete itself, the elected members of the Territorial Assembly were protesting more vociferously than ever against the serious health hazards resulting from the steadily increasing number of nuclear explosions — 88 so far — at the badly battered atoll.

When the French defence minister, or the admirals responsible for the Moruroa testing programme, occasionally deigned to reply, they simply continued to swear, with fingers crossed on the bomb, that Moruroa was the cleanest and safest place on earth.

But the main difference between 1973 and 1981 was that the tests are no longer made in the atmosphere but underground — or, should we say, under-water. It was precisely this fact that made the new *Greenpeace III* protest voyage (begun from San Diego, California, at the end of October) much more difficult. Back in 1972 and '73, the presence of a yacht in Moruroa waters meant that no bombs could be exploded without exposing its crew to lethal irradiation. This explains why the French navy at the time resorted to piratical seizure of the vessel in international waters. This time, the CEP technicians felt they had no reason to stop exploding their depth charges. So the choice of protest tactics left to the *Greenpeace* people was rather narrow.

The most obvious course was to take on board a few radiobiologists equipped with the necessary instruments and put them ashore here and there in the islands to take samples of the flora and fauna, and examine the health of the population. But the big drawback to this scheme was that the French navy was perfectly willing and able to prevent any such landings.

David McTaggart sought to meet his problems by taking on board a person whose sensitivity to nuclear health hazards was of a quite special quality.

The person in question looked exactly like the other long-haired, bearded crew members — Chris Robinson from Australia, Lloyd Anderson from the USA, and Tony Marriner from the UK. But as it happened he was Brice Lalonde, the politically highly astute leader of the French ecological movement. A veteran of the 1973 sea battle off Moruroa (where he had arrived on the vessel *Fri*), he has continued ever since to wage a valiant fight against the proliferation of nuclear power plants in France. He has acted to such good effect that he became eventually, at the age of 35, the candidate of the entire French ecological movement in the May 1981 presidential poll. In the first round of the election he secured 3.9 percent of the total vote — 1 126 254 votes. Then, it was largely due to the support of Lalonde's voters in the second round that François Mitterrand became president. The ecologists still hold the

balance of power in a good number of French constituencies. So, Brice Lalonde was actually more important to the success of the new *Greenpeace* mission than a whole swarm of radio-biologists.

The goal he set himself from the beginning of the cruise was to elicit a firm commitment from President Mitterrand that all nuclear tests at Moruroa would be suspended until the whole disarmament problem came up for discussion at the special United Nations conference on the subject in May, 1982.

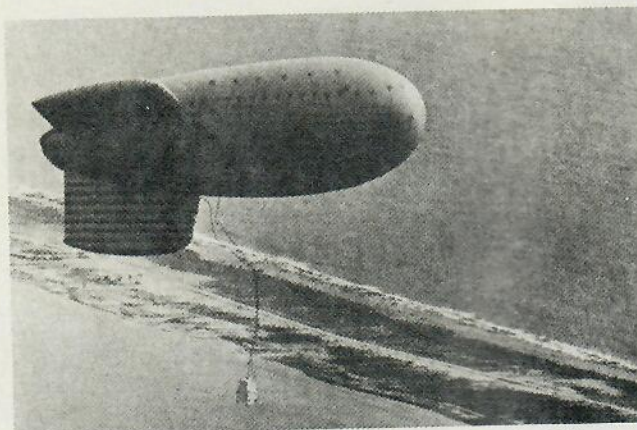
Mitterrand again demonstrated what a consummate politician he is by sending a most graciously worded message saying that he was most strongly in favour of general disarmament, and that Brice Lalonde was 'welcome back to Moruroa at a later date to make a personal examination of the flora and fauna in the region of the testing site'.

Brice Lalonde replied in similarly vague and ambiguous terms, saying that he considered the message 'an excellent starting point for further discussions', and that he was 'much interested in taking an active part in the study of the radio-active pollution in French Polynesia'.

Not a word was said on either side about the proposed moratorium — even though at the very moment of the exchange of these polite messages, the seismological stations in Wellington, New Zealand, and Hagfors, Sweden, announced that on December 5 and 8 two more bombs had been exploded at Moruroa. However, it could be argued that these were the last tests to take place before the UN disarmament conference . . .

The *Greenpeace III* had now been at sea for 40 days, and her provisions were almost exhausted. No invitation to land at Moruroa had been received. On the contrary, the sturdy French navy ship *Hippopotame* kept circling the yacht, and cutting across its bows to show how far it was to be allowed to go.

Wisely, David McTaggart and Brice Lalonde set sail for Tahiti, tailed closely by the *Hippopotame*. Although they didn't know it, their timing was perfect: the French press, including such respected and widely known newspapers and magazines as *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, and *Le Point* had been publishing a whole



A photograph from the 1972 atmospheric bomb tests at Moruroa. The bomb is in the container suspended from the blimp and was in sight of the *Greenpeace III* crew. Since 1975 the bomb tests have been underground.



series of Moruroa horror stories about the plutonium experiments, the huge pile of nuclear waste swept out to sea, the extensive underwater leakage and fracturing of the atoll, the sinking of the atoll, and the arrival of African monkeys for use in experiments with the neutron bomb.

It also happened that as the *Greenpeace III* was sailing into Papeete harbour on December 16, our own little local parliament, the Territorial Assembly, had just started meeting for its annual budgetary session. Having been lulled for years into believing that the nuclear tests were harmless, the members felt betrayed and outraged by the latest revelations of the many nuclear leaks and accidents at Moruroa.

Most vocal of all in protest was Deputy Gaston Flosse, leader of the local branch of the French Gaullist party. With a long record of blind trust in his French masters, Flosse made a spectacular reversal of his previous pro-nuclear stand: he quickly proposed a motion recommending a sensationally simple method of discovering the truth about the nuclear pollution of France's Polynesian territory. He proposed the immediate calling-in of an unspecified number of impartial civilian radio-biologists of both French and foreign nationalities, of whom some at least should come from Australia and New Zealand.

Their task would be to take samples everywhere in the islands of plants, animals and foods, and to make a detailed health survey of the whole population.

The December 21 debate — followed attentively by Brice Lalonde from the public gallery — resulted in early and overwhelming victory for the anti-nuclear forces.

Strongest support for Flosse's motion came, paradoxically, from his arch-enemy, the respected Autonomist leader Jean Teariki — although Mr Teariki was unable to prevent himself from wondering aloud whether Flosse's dramatic reversal of position might not have something of an opportunistic character, given that elections were only five months away.

Flosse and other members of his party replied, with what seemed unfeigned sincerity, that they had changed their minds after the recent revelations about the frightening extension of radioactive pollution of the atoll.

Flosse therefore voted — with what feelings one cannot tell — for a last-minute amendment emanating from Teariki's party which requested the French Government to suspend immediately all testing at Moruroa until the international team of radio-biologists had completed its survey.

A few assemblymen protested that such a suspension, which would probably last a long time, would suddenly throw thousands of men out of work. (Actually, only 750 Polynesians are employed by the CEP, a number representing less than two percent of the total workforce in the territory.) Flosse very pointedly declared that he considered health more important than money, and in the end the amendment was adopted by a two-thirds majority.

Since President Mitterrand is determined to maintain and develop France's nuclear strike force, it is most unlikely that he will take much notice of this last request. All he has to do is to repeat what all his predecessors have said in such situations in the past: that, under the present colonial system of government, the Polynesians have no say in matters of national defence.

But, luckily, French Polynesia's Territorial Assembly is fully in charge of local health services. It can thus without delay implement the bold decisions taken during its momentous Christmas session of 1981, even though such action will be frowned upon by the French authorities.

Anticipating that, in the event, the assemblymen will muster the necessary courage to act along these lines, David McTaggart and Brice Lalonde are already on the look-out for experienced radio-biologists willing to spend some time doing interesting fieldwork in our radio-active paradise. — *Marie-Thérèse and Bengt Danielsson.*



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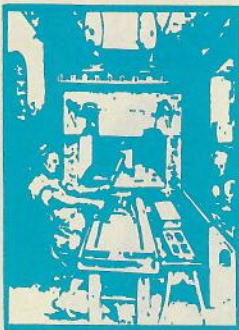
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## From the ISLANDS PRESS

### **Part of a letter signed Kingston Kamurar, University of Papua New Guinea, published in the Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, Port Moresby**

Our national government, with the backing of the news media organisations, is spending a fortune in trying to combat crime. Of all the anti-crime slogans advocated so far by our leaders through the media, not a single one has challenged our political weaknesses causing wide social and economic inequalities in our society. Should we not have a leader who is ready to challenge the causes of this social unrest rather than beating around the bush?

### **The Observer, Apia, Western Samoa, in an editorial comment on the failure of parliament to achieve a quorum on the first day of its December sitting**

The failure by more than half the members of parliament to turn up for the session on Tuesday strongly convinces us that most politicians do not really care if they contribute to the sound development of the country or not. When they should have been in parliament discussing ways and means of improving the general welfare of the country they stayed away — obviously with the idea that their terms of office were nearing the end and that they should now pursue their plans for re-election in February. It would be well for the voters when they are given the chance to have their say on February 27 to keep in mind the members who ignored parliament yet are seeking re-election. A look at the overall government spending on the services provided for running public affairs shows that the cost of having the services of parliament fails desperately to match the effectiveness which materialises from it.

### **From an editorial in The Times of Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby**

There has been a perceptible shift in the attitude of many overseas countries, including near neighbours, to Papua New Guinea. No longer are we seen as the proud new nation successfully avoiding the pitfalls that have claimed the hopes of so many developing countries. We are beginning to be seen as a country whose only growth industry is official corruption. A massive clean-up of our image is required.

### **A warning on the dangers of electricity, published in Tohi Tala Niue, Niue**

If you have an electric lead coming outside your house, the lamp may break, one of your family may touch the wires, the flex may be damaged, or rain water may have caused the lamp holder or the cable to become alive. The result is a shock which could be fatal. Sure, it costs more to have a light installed permanently — but death is more permanent.

### **The Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, Port Moresby**

Is the national airline's new Dash 7 aircraft to be used as a secret government weapon to placate the people of the highlands and thus curb tribal fighting there? At least one of our Port Moresby readers thinks so, and has drawn attention to an Air Niugini advertisement. The advertisement says the new plane can take five tonnes of fish to Chimbu in the highlands for breakfast, and fly 48 highlanders to Port Moresby for lunch.

### **Part of a letter in The Observer, Apia, Western Samoa, complaining about the influence of movies on local young people**

What a disgrace these movies have brought the Samoan youths. Gangs of youths, one group known as the Dirt Gang or something,

have been parading round town looking for a clash. They have imitated everything that was in the movies — carrying sticks, wearing slobby costumes, etc. Sooner or later if they're not stopped they'll probably start crashing windows, or will become pickpockets etc. Then there's going to be a lot of crime. Government should look thoroughly into these matters.

### **... and another letter on the same subject from the same paper**

Our young people have absorbed the junk in these films, and have formed gangs and have shown vandalism. They have intruded into private property by scribbling on the buildings all over the place, making the buildings in Apia look like an untidy scrapbook.

### **An apology for a typesetting error, from the Times of Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby**

A correspondent wrote to us that someone appeared to be making large sums of money in Australia by selling Papua New Guinea art. Somehow in our pages that 'someone' appeared as 'Somare'. Our apologies to Mr Somare, the Leader of the Opposition. He is definitely a 'someone' but definitely not THAT particular 'someone'.

### **The Cook Island News, Rarotonga**

A New Zealander ordered to leave the Cook Islands had a philosophical response when questioned about his future. When he was asked if he had any employment to go to when he reached New Zealand he replied that he had something sorted out. When asked to elaborate he replied 'watch and pray'.

### **From The Drum, a regular column in the Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, Port Moresby**

Even thieves are apparently concerned about the zero allocation of funds to the family planning programme. Apparently mindful of keeping population growth at 2.4 percent a year, thugs broke into the family planning office in Port Moresby last weekend. Guess what they got away with? Yes, boxes of condoms.

### **Part of a letter from a cruise ship visitor, Mrs S.M.**

### **Tapper, published in the Samoa Times, Apia, Western Samoa**

I came to Apia some weeks ago with some friends on a cruise. We hoped to enjoy our visit, but we did not. All we had on our minds was the shocking state of health of your dogs. Never had we seen such ill-cared-for animals — and in a country where the people kept telling us how religious and good they were . . . It was a shocking, unhappy visit, the memory of which will never go away. I cannot remember the scenery of Apia as anything else but STARVING DOGS.

### **From a letter defending the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, Solomon Mamaloni, published in the Solomon Islands News Drum, Honiara**

Don't you know that our present PM is one of the three top politicians in the Pacific Islands. He is not a confused man internationally, but a top politician. He knows his constitutions. He may be regarded as a confused man in his own private life, but that should not take his political brains off him.

### **... and from another letter in the same paper, in which Mr Mamaloni's supporters are roundly criticised**

Perhaps you believe things just because you have been told so by your friends, but you have only the brains of a dog — a dog which awaits his master's command. You bark aloud with empty words. I suggest you pull those logs from inside you own eyes before telling another to do the same.

### **A widely-published quotation in Papua New Guinea from the Leader of the Opposition, Michael Somare, in an address to the Port Moresby Chamber of Commerce**

Unemployment among young people is potentially the most explosive situation that this country will be facing during the coming decade.

### **A two-column-wide personal advertisement from The Observer, Apia, Western Samoa**

Ann: It was only a rash. Please come back. — Ian.



# New Caledonia facing an uncertain '82

The French Government has said it: 'We shall move rapidly ahead (in New Caledonia) in the direction of political, economic and social reforms.' It seemed at the time the announcement was made that the government intended to take the destinies of New Caledonia directly in hand, introducing its policies by way of ordinances without consulting either the French Parliament or the Territorial Assembly in New Caledonia.

The Secretary of State for Overseas Departments and Territories, Henri Emmanuelli, has indicated to the French Senate that the first thing the government planned to do was put the land reform — under way already for three years — into effect. Up to now, the Territorial Assembly in Noumea has had responsibility in this matter. Now it seems that a new office is to be created made up of equal numbers of representatives of the Melanesians, the French State, and the Territory.

In November, 1981, 16 European landowners were dispossessed of their lands in the context of the land reform. Their properties were concentrated mainly on the east coast. A similar operation undertaken in the south led to sharp conflict between various Melanesian tribes, who have conflicting claims to the land acquired. At present the dispute remains at the level of threats of this and that type of action, and palavering. Gendarmes recently intervened to cool a dispute between rival clans in the Yaté region.

**Taxation:** The French Government considers that the measures of direct tax-

ation proposed by the Territorial Assembly and the Council of Government for New Caledonia are 'far too timid'.

Here again, ordinances from Paris will have the force of law, and the inhabitants of New Caledonia will have to bow, without being consulted, to the point of view of Paris.

The taxation question has always been a bone of contention between Paris and Noumea, where it is estimated that the New Caledonian standard of living is 20 percent below that of the metropolitan French.

Tax increases might appear to achieve 'greater fiscal justice', but in fact they would only swell the administrative budgets.

**Powers of elected New Caledonian representatives:** The French Government's take-over of New Caledonia's affairs is clearly to be seen in the appointment as high commissioner of an eminent politician, Christian Nucci, 42 (PIM Jan p5). Until his appointment Mr Nucci was vice-president of the National Assembly. Born in Algeria, he studied in metropolitan France, and was later a teacher in Morocco and Algeria.

Solutions to New Caledonia's problems must first of all be political solutions — at least that is what Paris says, that is its belief. The majority of the New Caledonian population are opposed to this effective abrogation by Paris of the internal autonomy of New Caledonia, and the president of the Territorial Assembly has protested vigorously against this unilateral action. An indicator of the situation: governmental pro-

## Daniel Tardieu's NOUMEA NOTEBOOK



posals for changing the 'profile' of New Caledonian society were presented to the assembly 'for information'.

What course of action is open to those who have been democratically elected, both to the Council of Government and the Territorial Assembly? Speaking in the French Senate, Senator Calhabet declared that the government should seek the opinion of the New Caledonian population on their future by way of a referendum. In the course of debate, Mr Emmanuelli declared: 'The result of a referendum, if it were held today, would be against independence.' Revealing the thinking of the French Government on this score, Mr Emmanuelli said: 'The New Caledonian populations will be consulted on their future in three years, if they so desire.'

**No Kanak Socialist Independence:** The French Government has thus not accepted Kanak socialist independence as expounded by New Caledonian independentists. The fact is — and this must be strongly emphasised in view of the great confusion in the Pacific on this matter — there never has been a demand for the independence of New Caledonia. What there has been is a demand for Kanak socialist independence put forward by a minority who do not even represent the whole Melanesian population.

When the energetic and bold reforms of the French Government have been put into full effect, and have made themselves felt all round, after three years have

elapsed the French Government is prepared to consult the populations — all the populations — of New Caledonia about their future.

What is the Independence Front going to do in the face of this decisive and uncompromising (towards all parties involved) attitude adopted by Paris? In the months ahead, the various demands put forward by the political parties in the front will be satisfied.

Things will settle down — that is the hope of all inhabitants of the country. And as they do, it is to be hoped that there will also come the confidence that is indispensable if the New Caledonia economy, badly shaken by the worldwide crisis in the Western economies, is to be got going again.

**Sickly nickel:** The main plant of Société Le Nickel in Noumea is working at only 48 percent capacity, and to maintain even this level the Doniambo plant had to close down two furnaces at the beginning of December. Personnel who have either left Le Nickel voluntarily, or have been retired, have reduced the labour force to 3000.

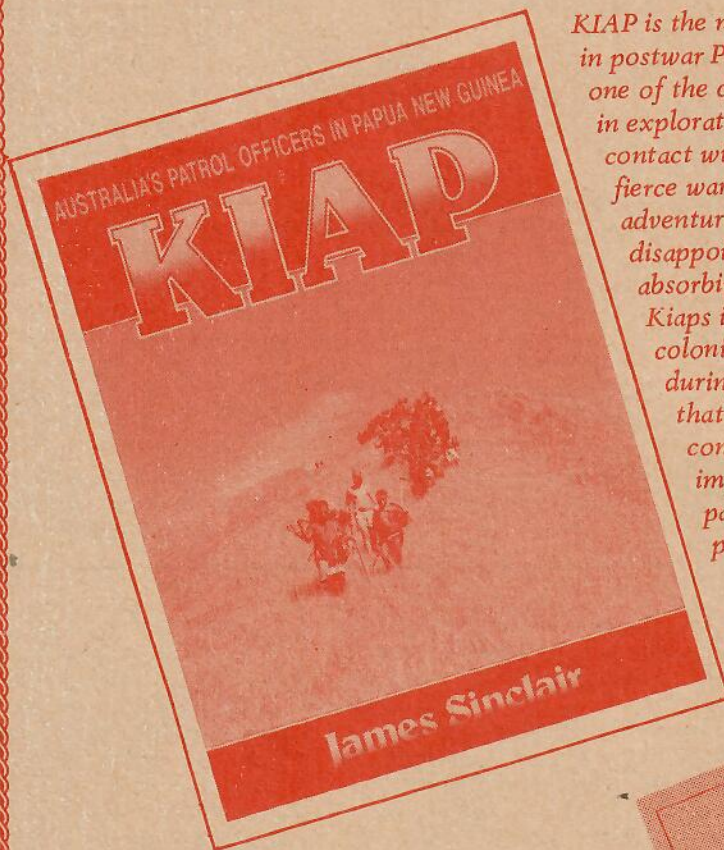
Nickel ore exports to Japan have fallen by 50 percent in four years. However, the high prices being paid for the ore, and for metal products generally, have kept financial damage to a minimum.

Hopes now centre on the opening up of the chromite mines in the north by the American company Inco. It is hoped that production will start by the end of 1982.



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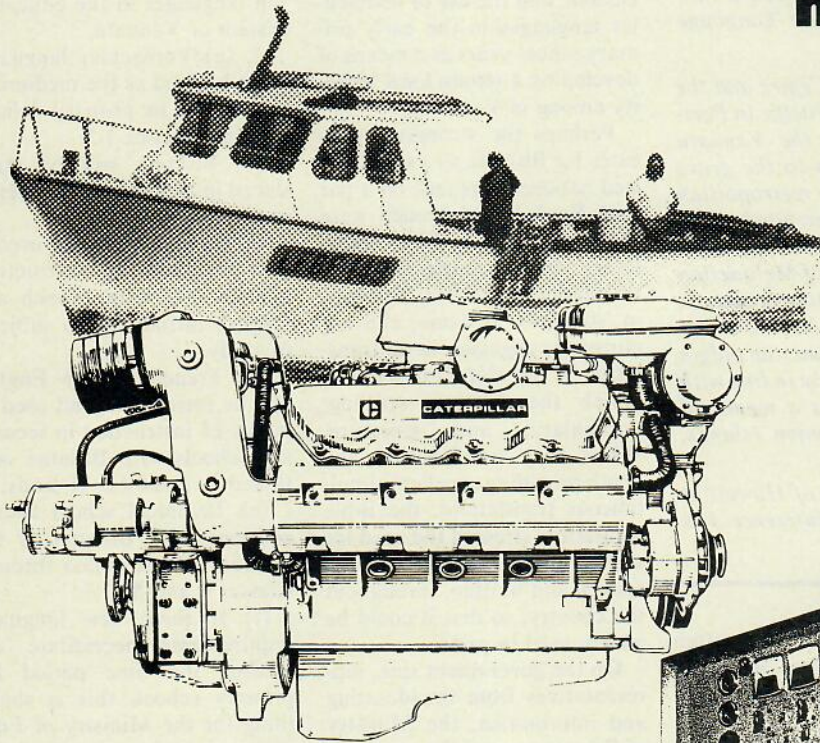
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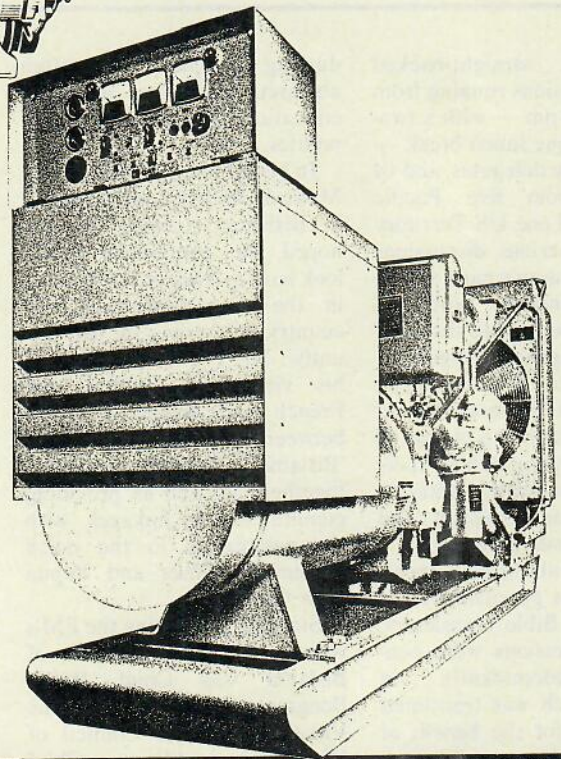
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for government support of linguistic studies of the vernacular languages, the establishment of a joint committee between PNG and Vanuatu to study the development of Melanesian pidgin as a regional language, to support a monolingual Bislama dictionary project, and to establish a National Language Commission which would report directly to the prime minister.

In spite of the obvious gravity

of the problems caused by the legacy of the two metropolitan languages, no solutions were proposed at the conference. Nowhere in the resolutions was the problem even mentioned. Like the grey clouds of Port-Vila, the big question was constantly hovering, and was apparently dealt with in the same way, with everybody wishing that the clouds, as well as the big question, would simply go away.

## The big question that just won't go away . . .

Like all the other new Pacific Island nations, Vanuatu is attempting to govern itself within the conceptual framework of a European language, as required by the constitution. Throughout the Pacific, the constitutions, legal systems, education, and, in many cases, the media are still dominated by the languages of the former colonial powers. What distinguishes Vanuatu from the other island groups, adding to their problems of self-governance, is the legacy of not one, but two, colonial languages. The difficulties created by this linguistic schism go back to the earliest days of the condominium government, and have not abated in the slightest.

The divisiveness of the English-French dichotomy runs deep throughout the country, especially in the two competing education systems, each of which enrolls approximately 50 percent of the school population. Although the French didn't get involved in education in Vanuatu on a significant scale until the 1960s, and therefore began as the minority system, they caught up quickly in terms of numbers of students whose parents were attracted to the French schools because they were new and, more importantly, free. (Anglophone schools have always charged fees in Vanuatu.)

The linguistic division of the schools can be seen in virtually all other aspects of the society: broadcasting, news-

papers, movies, churches, commerce, parliament, and the laws.

In addition to the English-French division, Vanuatu is further fragmented by 108 different indigenous languages for its 112 000 people (January 1979 census). This ratio of languages to speakers is higher than for any other nation in the world. Such linguistic diversity reflects a long tradition of separateness of the ni-Vanuatu.

Bridging all of these languages, European as well as indigenous, is Bislama, the Vanuatu dialect of Melanesian pidgin, which is spoken by most ni-Vanuatu of school age and above. Born out of the necessity to communicate across linguistic boundaries, Bislama is a dynamic language that is developing rapidly to meet the growing communication needs of Vanuatu, both within the country and externally with Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

Because of its dynamic role and widespread use, Bislama shows considerable dialect variation (especially in vocabulary) from one island to another, and especially between the urban (heavily anglicised) and rural areas. Those who are eager to make greater use of Bislama argue strongly for the standardisation of usage, and especially of spelling. They would also argue, perhaps naively, that the way to standardise is through an authoritative grammar and dictionary.

Although Bislama has served as the *lingua franca* of Vanuatu for several generations, it was never accepted as a viable language of communication by the governing powers. Its use, in fact, was discouraged, and in many cases — especially in schools — it was forbidden. The first meeting of the elected Representative Assembly in 1976 was dismissed abruptly by the Clerk (a Frenchman) because the members began to conduct discussions in Bislama.

The strong, and often emotional, opposition to Bislama is based on the grounds that Bislama is nothing more than simplified broken English with no grammatical rules and a severely limited vocabulary, and therefore unsuitable for anything more than simple, rudimentary communication. Nothing could be further from the truth. Like all other human languages, Bislama has a very fixed and complex set of grammatical and phonological rules (see the grammar of Bislama by Jean-Michel Charpentier). Furthermore, the vocabulary of Bislama is constantly being expanded, usually by borrowing English words, to meet the growing needs.

Proof of its adequacy as a medium of sophisticated communication is the translation of the *Bible*, and the week-long 1981 conference, where Bislama was the principal medium for papers and discussions that touched upon subjects covering politics, economics, law, education, and communication itself.

Most ni-Vanuatu, as well as

others, see Bislama as the unifying linguistic force. Yet, neither the constitution nor the independence agreements show that recognition. On the contrary, the constitution, in its present form, guarantees continued divisiveness by mandating that, although Bislama is the National Language (on a par, perhaps, with the National Flower), it is not the language used where it counts: in education and the law. According to the constitution, French and English are the official languages to be used in these two important areas. Furthermore, French financial aid is directly tied to the maintenance of the French education system in Vanuatu.

This is the real problem that Vanuatu and all other Pacific Island nations must face. As long as education and law are conducted in the alien languages, then the systems will remain alien ones. Language shapes thought. The language used in the education and legal systems plays the crucial role in determining views of the world. It would appear, judging from the current language policies, that most of the new Pacific Island nations want to continue to inculcate European values and world views through their schools and legal systems. This is, in fact, what is happening.

**Walter Lini, Vanuatu Prime Minister, addresses the language planning conference in Port-Vila. With him, at left, is Pastor Allen Nafuki who organised the conference. Bill Camden, from South Pacific Bible Translators, is in the translation booth in the background.**

