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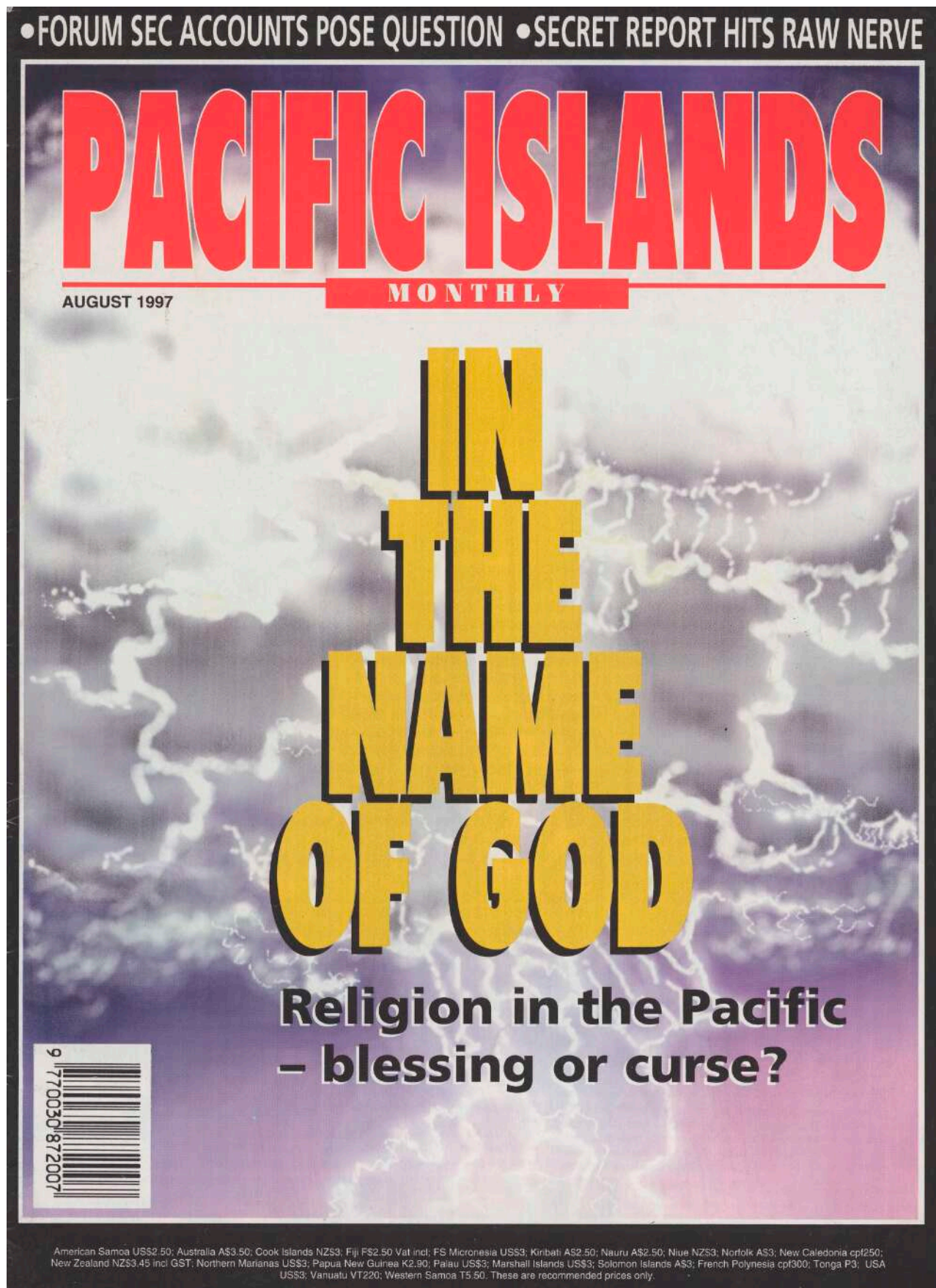
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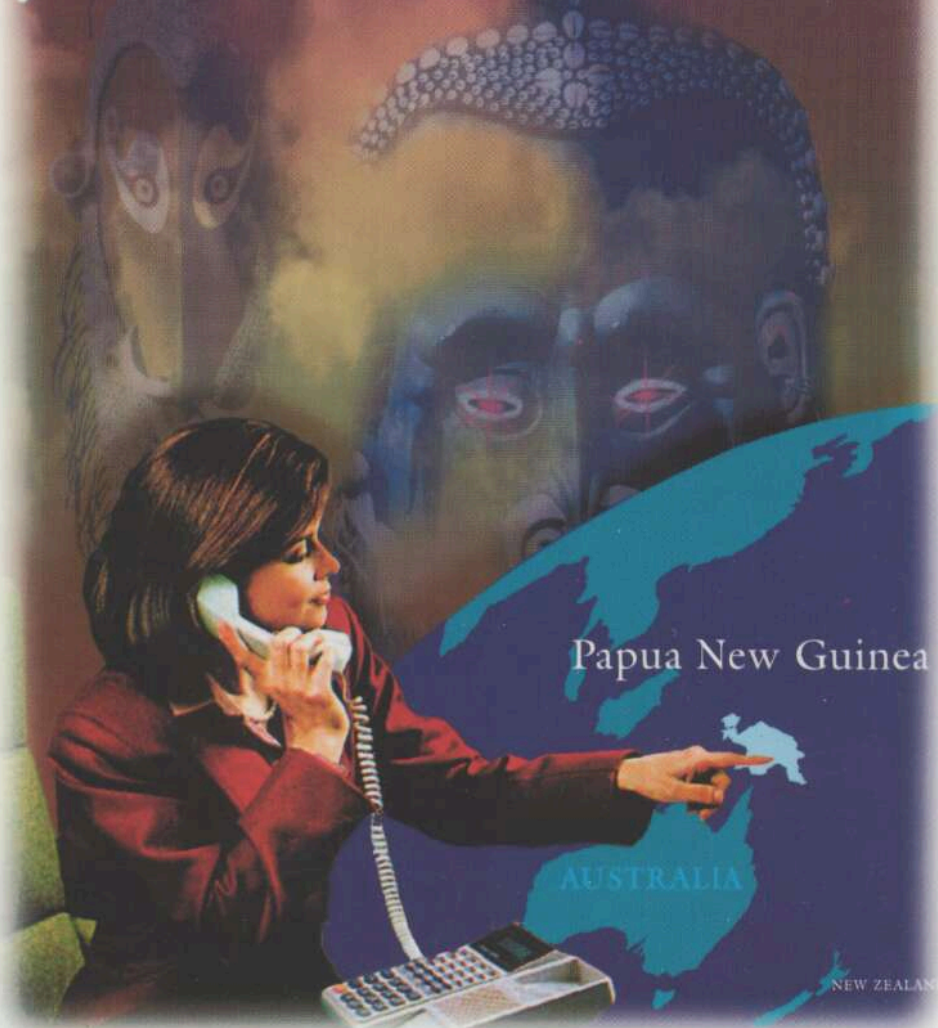
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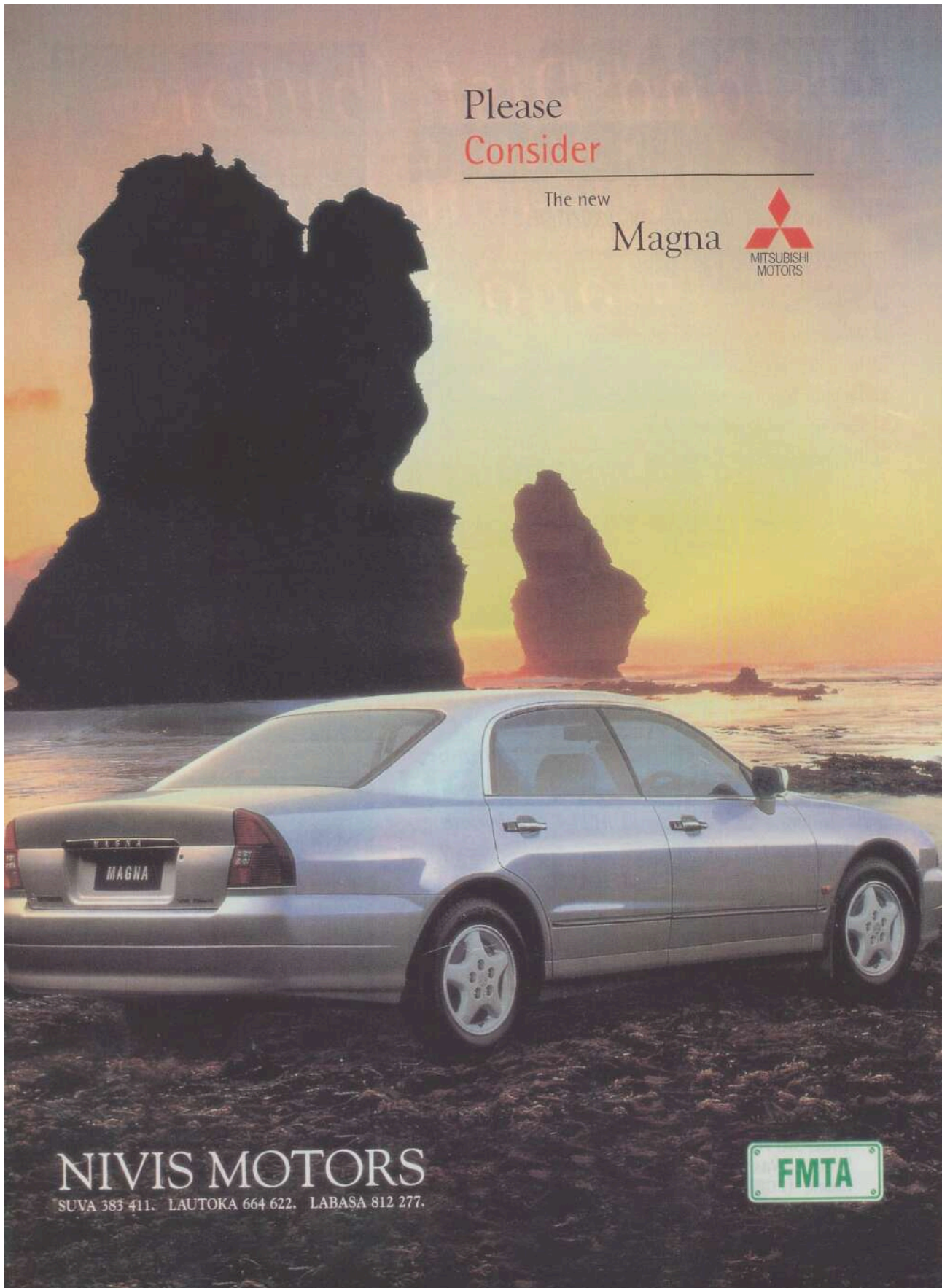
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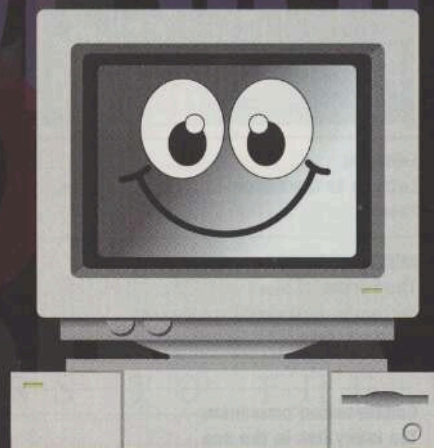
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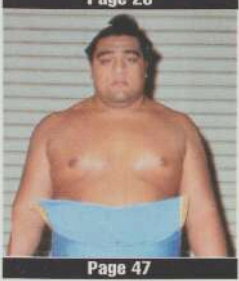
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AUGUST 1997	
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INSIDE	
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Cover stories: The Pacific is perhaps the largest Christian region outside Europe. But two hundred years after the arrival of the first Christians, newer denominations continue to make appearances, meeting with much resistance – and sometimes violence. Just what is the role of religion in Pacific Island states? In the name of God 18 Church appeal questioned From the pulpit 19 State versus religion Religion or scam? 20 Mormons in Samoa Prophets, predictions and the pope 22 Up in arms over God 24 Channeling in to God 26	
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EDITORIAL

In the name of God

At best, it is naive to argue a country will become a better place simply by virtue of it being declared a Christian state. At worst, it is religious bullying.

The past month saw the passage through parliament of Fiji's Constitution Amendment Bill. But, controversially, it stopped short of declaring Fiji a Christian state – and rightly so. To reason that Christianity – in name – will improve the state of a nation lacks any foresight, vision or logic.

Religion is too personal to legislate because it is based on interpretation rather than fact, faith rather than logic. Just what exactly becoming a Christian state would entail is impossible to establish and one even its proponents seem unable to explain without contradiction.

The Methodist Reverend Tomasi Kanailagi, a strong advocate of bringing religion into politics, says a Christian state would run along general Christian principles and not those of any one denomination. And, he is quick to assure non-Christians, his is a religion of tolerance and acceptance with no threat to religious freedom.

"We, as Christians," he says, "have to give people the freedom to worship as

they want and whenever they want."

But it is on justification of religion that a Mormon was nearly burnt at the stake in Western Samoa; that members of the Every Home sect have been discriminated against in several Fijian villages; and that places of worship are so frequently desecrated in Fiji.

Whether, as the Rev Kanailagi claims, Christianity does indeed value tolerance over conversion is arguable, but the reverend is entitled to his interpretation of his religion. What is questionable and does little to credit the man or his convictions is his self-contradiction.

The reverend describes as a problem the number of religious sects entering the Pacific. The reverend who – in the same interview – appears to be championing freedom of religion, it seems, has given new meaning to the miracle of speaking in tongues.

A similar view is shared by the president of the Methodist Church in Fiji, the

Rev Dr Ilaitia Tuwere, who, ironically, has been an advocate of keeping state and religion separate.

From such parochial thinking comes intolerance, and from intolerance persecution.

While criticising acts of temple desecration, the Rev Kanailagi also attempts to explain them away as the venting of frustration. To even imply that declaring Fiji a Christian state would be the cure for such acts of religious terrorism could be construed as nothing less than blackmail.

If history has one lesson to teach about religion it is this: that, contrary to what the Rev Kanailagi says, Christianity – or any other religion for that matter – does not necessarily provide the "humanitarian grounds which can bring people together". The Middle East, Northern Ireland and India are proof of this.

Religion cannot even provide consensus between observers of the sabbath on whether it should be a Saturday or a Sunday.

No one religion can be imposed as the absolute truth and be made to represent societies as a whole. Religion is not infallible; it is too personal, too full of interpretation and too contradictory. ■

• Cover Stories on page 18

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Independence and the accord

Dear Sir,

I wish to contribute to Kalinga Seneviratne's country report on New Caledonia (*PIM* May, 1997). Specific references will be made on the implications of the Matignon Accord on the fight for independence in New Caledonia. I gather from the report that the main pillar of the accord is to 'rebalance the economic scales' in the country over a decade. It is hoped, therefore, that in late 1998, a vote of independence will be the end result.

However, events within that 10-year period dictate that the actual intention of the accord is not too obviously evident as such but carefully hidden within the signed agreement itself. Only thorough analysis and careful reading in between the lines of

the document will detect the impurities of the agreement. This suggests that the excuse for the accord to promote equitable economic balance between all races in New Caledonia is only a camouflage.

I wish to substantiate this claim.

Firstly, I am of the opinion that the establishment of FLNKS provinces in the Loyalty Islands and north of the main island were ploys to neutralise the FLNKS voice for independence. This was especially obvious in the French government's resistance to provide a mining permit to Societe Miniere du Sud Pacifique (SMSP) – an FLNKS-aligned mining company.

It is also encouraging, especially for independence-minded citizens, to note that a portion of SMSP's retained profit is redirected to SOFINOR – which is by virtue a parent company of SMSP. In this connec-

tion, I uphold the decision by SOFINOR to form Compagnie D'Investissements Touristiques (CIT) for tourism development.

However, despite these positive initiatives, it is heartening to note that the purchase of three big hotels in Noumea by CIT was not welcomed by Jacques Lafluer. This was made worse by the fact that one of the hotels, Le Surf, housed the only casino in Noumea.

Secondly, I would suggest that Lafluer's jealousy and selfish attitude evident in his denial of equal business opportunities in the Rassemblement Pour Caledonie dans la Republique (RPCP)-controlled South Province for CIT is a good enough reason against the stated and so-called aims of the Matignon Accord for balanced economic development.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

This is to say that Lafluer's actions were indicative of the fact that RPCR is against the rebalance of economic development in the country.

In this regard, one can deduce that Lafluer's particular reference to the issuance of restrictions on the opening hours of the casino is counter-supportive of the Matignon Accord principle.

Is this act not contradictory to the so-called aim of 'economic rebalance' for all races?

Lastly, I am also sceptical of the genuine spirit for the Cadres 400 programme. The involvement of the government of France to educate New Caledonians on all subjects relating to French philosophies, principles, histories and theories in all France mainland universities and colleges can be seen as a means to brainwash the few educated indigenous citizens of the country.

To remain faithful to motherland is perhaps the bottom line. To this end, I have no option but to equate Cadres 400 to the development of right-wing support for France.

RPCR, in other words, is the direct beneficiary of the scheme.

On the worse side of the system is FLNKS's inverse relationship to Cadres 400. On another level, I will proclaim from an observer's point of view that the actual intentions of the Matignon Accord are to politically suppress the FLNKS's cry for independence.

The tactics applied were heavy migration of anti-independence supporters from mainland France to New Caledonia over a decade and a political fallacy of giving more autonomy to FLNKS in the provinces north of the mainland and the Loyalty Islands. As a matter of fact, France and PRCR are being successful in making fools of FLNKS.

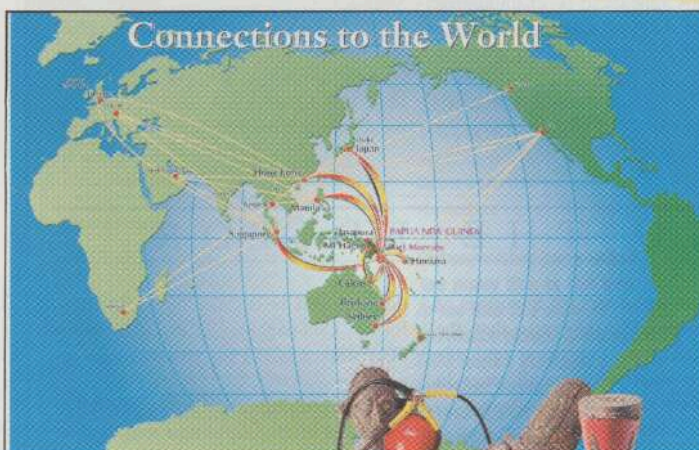
As a way out of this Matignon-tied web, FLNKS leadership is starting to talk of a South African-style option. The chances of power sharing, however, are doubtful at this stage.

*Rence Sore,
Honiara,
Solomon Islands.*



Race debate or gutter fight?

Dear Sir,
I read the letter by John Kayes (*PIM*, May 1997) first with amusement, then with annoyance - the reverse of the sequence he described for his reactions to your article on Hanson and the Australian race



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"debate" as it is constantly and erroneously called. In fact, there has been little debate.

What is happening is a gutter fight because that is where it started and where it has, unfortunately, been left – even exacerbated – by the Australian government.

Kayes presented many of the slogans of the Hanson camp as facts.

Slogans depend on having the superficial appearance of fact and common sense, while actually avoiding any critical analysis.

It should never be forgotten that Pauline Hanson's entry into political life in 1996 and her being dropped from Liberal Party endorsement was not to do with multiculturalism. Standing in a seat with a large and visible Aboriginal population, which attracts the amount of racist attention that is (sadly) normal in Australia, she mounted a vicious, totally ill-informed and unwarranted attack on them, claiming they were being feather-bedded by the system and should have to "do it tough" like other Australians.

Had she ever taken the trouble to read a little of the freely available information on this most consistently discriminated-against and disadvantaged sector of Australia's society, even she should have found the ludicrousness of her position untenable.

But that would suggest a respect for logic and a concern for truth, and those were not relevant – she saw a chance for a lot of votes from people just like her, and went for them. Got them, too.

The spin-offs of that attack continue, for it took the scab off a carbuncle on the backside of Australian society, a small but aggressive sector of the Australian community that ever since has been pouring out racial intolerance, neo-colonialism and good old-fashioned bullying.

This resonates through the current Wik issue and the Liberal/National coalition's attempts to find ways to convert Wik into wicked, to use it as a pretext to construct 'legal' devices to reverse the direction established by the Mabo decision and to dispossess the original, and already terribly wronged, indigenous people of this land.

The prime minister's Ten Point Plan is a real politician's solution – he is trying to present it to each faction as something that delivers what they want. That is clearly impossible, and what the majority (not the

self-serving minority) of Australians have a right to expect from the leader of the country is that he not look for the politically smartest and trickiest solution, but the solution that is moral and decent, that will allow Australians to walk tall in the international community instead of being pariahs. The Aboriginal community is quite right to reject his plan, as a massive three-shell trick.

It was recently pointed out by one observer that there has been an extraordinary conjuring trick performed, whereby the Aboriginal land claimants are being represented as the opportunistic outsiders attempting to rob the wealthy pastoralists of their birthright and confident feelings of security.

Aren't the 50,000-year owners of the land entitled to even share those feelings of security? Apparently not. And let us be clear that the pastoralists we are speaking of are not battling farmers trying to grub out a living for the little wife and six kids on 20 barren acres.

The inclusion of immigrants in Hanson's target range came after she was elected – I suspect to her own surprise and certainly to the surprise, and horror, of the many Australians who despise and totally reject her attack on Aboriginal people.

Buoyed and encouraged by this evidence that there must be a lot more out there who were as keen to find hapless targets on whom to blame the ills of late 20th century economic woes, she homed in on the next most vulnerable group – again already victims of racism mistrust and intolerance – migrants. Her maiden speech in parliament identified migrants as the next group of "others" who should be brought into line.

It is to the government's lasting shame that they did nothing to counter her attacks on Aborigines, nor initially her attacks on migrants (which must have sounded very familiar to John Howard, who had been mumbling about immigration for years, trying to find a way to curtail it without committing political suicide).

It is interesting that the mood Hanson created has encouraged him to move to reduce immigration, despite his extraordinary efforts to insist that the "credit" go to him.

But it took the government a full year to make the first utterances assuring the world it did not support the racism of Hanson, and that was only when they realised our

Asian neighbours were not taking kindly to people of their ethnicity being victimised and vilified in Australia, and were likely to direct their dollars (and ringgit and yen) away from Australia in response.

In other words, the government acted not morally as they should have the day after Hanson's maiden speech in parliament but pragmatically – and the lack of passion in their statements has not gone unnoticed among the people whom they were supposed to appease, as the Asian press shows.

They are very used to politicians' double speak in their own countries; of course they recognise it even if it does have an Aussie accent. It is naive to imagine anyone will believe that such attacks on "other" groups are justified by some current crisis emerging in Australia.

They are as ancient as the human race, and are called tribalism. This is when groups isolate themselves, and those of a different colour or creed or geographical location are perceived as "the other" and are then blamed for everything because of their difference.

While tribes are prepared under certain circumstances to initiate others into their tribe, this involves a total recanting of all previous tribal allegiances. That is what has caused the conflicts in the long list of places Kayes mentions. It is hatred that causes wars, and it is hatred that Hanson has been peddling. Sadly, it finds as ready a street market as drugs do, and is far more dangerous.

People not speaking English don't cause bloodshed – only people's hostility toward them because they don't speak English does. The tragedy in Yugoslavia was not because of a lack of integration. What caused that awful bloodbath was the very insistence that people must be the same in every respect.

If Australians are unable to rise above that sort of animal instinct for savaging any animal that is different, Kayes would be right, and the future would probably involve bloodshed.

I don't agree the only way to avoid this is to insist everyone become the same – that's just reiterating the base cause of the problem.

I believe most Australians are now better than that – indeed, for 20 years we have been showing the world that we were right up until March 1996.

The whole point of multiculturalism is

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

that societies can be textured of different components, each of which is sufficiently civilised to accord others the respect and dignity their heritage deserves, and be enriched themselves by doing so.

Integration was the policy of the Australian authorities responsible for the Lost Generations of Aboriginal children taken to be "integrated" into a "better way of life". Kaye's demand, that anyone who wants to share in what Australia has to offer has to give up their birthright and become pseudo-Anglo/Celtic, comes from the same blinkered thinking, the same "tribal initiation" instincts mentioned above.

As long as the tribe can control everyone within its own sanctions, it will never have to expand its own traditions, question its own assumptions or values. Far easier all round, really – you can see why it appeals if you are not too strong in the data-processing department or if you just

enjoy beating up on others who don't, or can't, comply.

I note Kayes's reference to "my country" and "our" this and that. He, of course, has the right to do so, as a settled immigrant (or descendent of immigrants) in another people's country, just as I am.

Perhaps he is, as I am, descended from immigrants who came here a lot longer ago than this present bunch from whom he reckons all the problems are coming. Ah, yes, if only they could be 'good' immigrants like our lot. The very earliest of "us", and therefore best by such reasoning, were of course certainly all selected by the government of their day, and by pretty tough criteria, even though a lot of them couldn't read or write, and though the skills for which they were selected seem to have been theft and murder.

Perhaps, after all, they "should never have been selected for migration" – I'm sure the Aborigines would have felt that.

Since they were the very first immigrants, surely they should have had the last say.

Finally, if all these "others" (which would certainly include me as I don't want to be identified with Hanson or her ilk) were able to be brought into line, initiated into the tribe, Australia would be like one great big community of male and female Pauline Hansons.

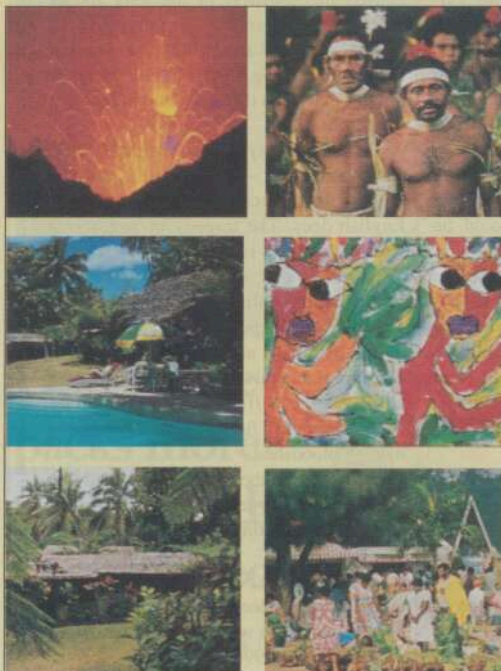
Now there's something to frighten the kiddies with when they won't eat their broccoli. Or spaghetti. Or curry. Or satay. Or taro. Or

Rod Ewins
Tasmania,
Australia

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BRIEFS

Ombudswoman files legal claim

Vanuatu's ombudswoman, Marie-Noelle Ferrieux-Patterson, in early July, decided to sue leaders in the supreme court to give effect to one of her latest recommendations on leaders' "misconduct". In a report published in June here, Ferrieux-Patterson alleged 23 former MPs who lost their seats in 1988 because they didn't attend parliament three consecutive times were later paid each V1.5 million (\$US13,200). She alleges that ministers in a former government, including current Prime Minister Serge Vohor, former PM Maxime Carlot, former Finance Minister Willie Jimmy and then acting Finance Minister Paul Telukluk "illegally awarded themselves ex-gratia compensation" with public funds.

The report recommends Jimmy and Carlot should not be reappointed "to any ministerial post or any position involving public money", that Jimmy resign or be dismissed, and that all monies received by the 23 be reimbursed within three months.

Vohor's office later said the report was



Ferrieux-Patterson

"just a piece of paper" and had no value until it had been proven correct by a court.

"My powers are limited - I'm an ombudsman, I make my recommendations. Until a leadership code which creates special tribunals for leaders is passed, not much more can be done. It's up to the people to decide at the next elections," the ombudswoman said.

Over the past 12 months, a leadership code bill prepared by the ombudswoman's office was on the agenda of three parliamentary sessions. Each time, it was withdrawn.

Anti-mercenary moves

Foreign Minister Alexander Downer has announced that Australia will join an inter-

national convention aimed at banning mercenaries, Pacnews reported last month.

The convention was opened for signature in 1990 but only 12 countries have so far signed it. It needs the signatures of 22 countries before it comes into force.

Western Samoa takes new name

The Western Samoan legislative assembly last month passed a constitutional amendment to remove Western from the country's name. Only one Independent MP voted against the amendment which was approved by 41 MPs in the 49-seat parliament, Pacnews reported.

Thyroid tumours in Marshalls

According to a preliminary study on the incidence of thyroid cancer in the Marshall Islands, there is a high number of thyroid tumours in the populations of Ebeye and Majuro, The South Sea Digest reported last month. "No conclusions are yet available



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BRIEFS

PIM staff win awards

Pacific Islands Monthly staff won five awards at the Fiji Islands Media Association awards night on July 12. *PIM* senior writer and former *Fiji Times* reporter Bernadette Hussein received the Pacific Affairs and Newspaper Journalist of the Year awards. *Fiji Times* features editor and former writer for *PIM* and *The Review* magazines Sophie Foster won the Magazine Journalist of the Year and the Business and Finance awards. Josefa Bola, graphic artist and cartoonist with *PIM* and *The Fiji Times* won the Cartoonist of the Year award.



The winners ... Bernadette Hussein (left), Sophie Foster and Josefa Bola (insert)

concerning the relationship between possible exposure to radiation and the diseases we observed," the study said.

More than 6000 Marshallese who were alive during the nuclear tests of the 50s were checked from 1993-94 by doctors from the Tohoku School of Medicine in Sendai, Japan, which coordinated the survey with the Marshall Islands Nationwide Radiological Study.

The study found the prevalence of thyroid nodules was 28.9 per cent in participants who were alive at the time of the

1954 Bravo nuclear test.

Celebrations cancelled

The Solomon Islands government cancelled official independence day celebrations because of cash-flow problems, according to a Pacnews report.

Secretary to the PM Fred Ganate said funds allocated for the celebrations would be used in sending the Solomon Islands contingent to the Mini South Pacific Games in Pago Pago, American Samoa, this month.

The Solomon Islands became indepen-

dent on July 6, 1978.

Enter the dragon

The small, but affluent Chinese community in Vanuatu celebrated Hong Kong's



return to China on June 30 with much rejoicing, traditional drums and a lion dance along Port Vila's main street.

"We, the Chinese from all around the world, we're happy. You can't take away our feeling about our motherland, no matter where we are. And we hope one day, China will become a democratic country. We believe China will have the common sense not to destroy the world's third-largest stock exchange. I don't think China can afford that," said Rene Ah Pow, a prominent businessman who was born here, but whose parents fled China earlier this century.

The Chinese ambassador Liao Jincheng took the opportunity to see in this occasion "a good example for the smooth return of Macau to China as well as the resolution of the Taiwan issue".

Vanuatu reforms

A stringent plan of economic, social and political reforms was endorsed late June by Vanuatu's leaders and community representatives in a two-day 'national summit'. In February, Vohor signed an agreement with the Manila-based Asian Development Bank (which coordinates the programme) pledging to carry out the reform programme. Australia, France and New Zealand have sent experts to assist in the reform drafting.

The reform programme aims to boost Vanuatu's finance, economy and administration performances and reduce costs crippling its development.

The programme advocates private-sector participation through privatisation of those government services seen as not profitable.

TURNING THE PAGE ISN'T SO EASY FOR HIM.



If this boy had been hit by a car there would be an investigation to find the driver responsible.

Unfortunately there will be no investigation.

No one will be brought to justice. Because this boy was hit by a landmine.

Just another victim of a weapon that claims seventy new victims every day.

A weapon that cannot identify its target (the vast majority of its victims are innocent civilians).

A weapon that, once detonated, will drive dirt and fragments deep

into the wound so that further amputations are often needed.

A weapon that is particularly cruel on children whose bodies, being smaller and closer to the blast, are more likely to sustain serious injury.

But the suffering doesn't stop there. The repercussions of a landmine explosion can spread far beyond the victim.

The severe disabilities and psychological trauma that follow the blast mean these children will have to be looked after for many years.

And the economic cost can be extremely high.

A child injured at the age of ten will need about 25 artificial limbs during their lifetime. The cost is \$3,000, a huge sum to pay in countries where people earn as little as \$10 a month.

That is why the task facing the International Committee of the Red Cross is such a huge one.

Between 1979 and 1996 we fitted over 70,000 amputees with artificial limbs, and we have established training programmes in 22 countries so that local technicians can take over the work of the rehabilitation centres.

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The landmine isn't being ignored. Neither must its victims.



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC)
LANDMINES MUST BE STOPPED

The Forum

While credited with improving relations between the Pacific and the world, the secretariat is also bedevilled with allegations of inconsistent and poor administrative practices

By the time the 28th summit of the South Pacific Forum is over in September, a new secretary-general for the regional organisation will have been announced. The appointee will replace the incumbent Ieremia T Tabai, whose term as head of the Forum will be up by the end of the year.

And as the Forum focuses on the affairs of the region, the region, similarly, focuses on the affairs of the Forum and its secretariat in Suva, Fiji – the achievements and the failures. While the South Pacific Forum can claim several feathers to its cap on behalf of the region, administrative practices at the secretariat have come under criticism from the Fiji auditor-general's office.

In a letter to the secretary-general dated May 29, 1996, (in reference to the 1995/96 accounts of the secretariat) the auditor-general highlighted numerous inconsistent and unfair practices, among which was the handling of the close to \$100,000 owed by a Karai Vunibau.

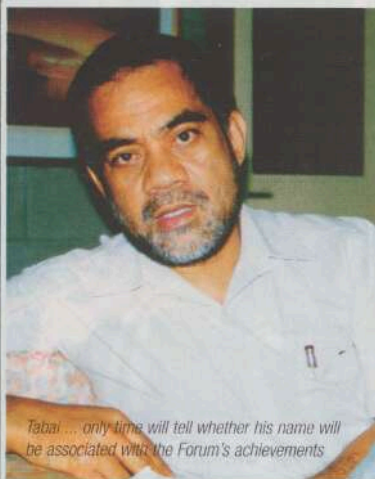
"Perusal of correspondence kept in the file for the above case revealed that a writ of summons was being served on K Vuibau demanding payment of \$96,498.64 to the European Union or alternatively provide evidence of how the funds advanced to him were utilised," the letter stated. Referring to a letter to the secretariat from the secretary of the European Union holding the secretariat responsible for the pending advance, the auditor-general stated: "The balance of \$96,498.64 outstanding appears to be a contingent liability to the secretariat."

The auditor-general also found that the unused portion of a receipt book was not cancelled, adding "for obvious reasons, immediate action should be taken to cancel

these receipts".

And, the auditor-general found that "payment vouchers and supporting documents were not always stamped 'Paid'".

"In several instances vouchers were not



countersigned by the officer signing cheques," the letter said.

The auditor-general expressed concern over the change to format of payment vouchers which was introduced in November, 1995, saying: "The [new] format does not have provisions for checking and passing for payment. Instead, these duties are performed by two senior accounts staff who are responsible for signing the cheques and certifying the vouchers."

Concern was expressed over expenditure incurred in the upgrading of House No 9 within the secretariat compound. Although the secretariat put aside only \$F35,000 (\$US24,350) for this work, it ended up paying more than double the amount – \$F74,774.81 (\$US51,595) –

incurring a \$F39,774.81 (\$US27,445) expenditure.

Appointment of casual staff came under scrutiny, particularly during the upgrading and relocation of the secretariat's library.

The auditor-general's office found: "There was no standard criteria for the appointment of casuals. Employees recruited in most cases appeared to be relatives of established staff."

The audit revealed the hiring of two consultants during the library's upgrading project. According to the auditor-general's letter, the two (believed to be locals from the University of the South Pacific library) were hired at \$F9 (\$US6.21) an hour, eight hours a week. They were to perform the task over 15 Saturdays. At this rate, each employee was to receive a taxable income of \$F1080 (\$US745.20) for working 120 hours, the letter said.

"Actual payment made to the first consultant totalled \$F7983 (\$US5540) for working 887 hours while the second one was paid \$F1552.50 (\$US1080) for working 172.5 hours. The payment made to the casual staff appears to be excessive and unjustified," the auditor-general's letter said. No formal contracts or letters of engagement were sighted by auditors and it was found neither consultant paid any tax to the Fiji government on the amounts they had received.

Not much later, the first consultant was recruited by the secretariat library as a library services officer and the officer is repaying the debt to the Fiji government through salary deductions. However, the auditor-general has questioned the appointment, saying the officer did not meet the qualifications specified in the advertisement for the job.

"The library services officer has paraprofessional qualification in the Diploma in Library/Information Studies," a letter to Tabai dated April 30, 1996 and signed by the secretariat's local staff, states. "The advertisement for the post she now occupies required a university degree which [the officer] does not possess."

The secretariat's librarian, now promoted to manager, Information Services, previously held the librarian position at the USP and was responsible for the hiring of the two consultants.

The letter from the auditor-general's office further pointed out that the "reasons for engaging casuals after normal working hours could not be established" in several instances.

"The hours worked by them [casual staff] without any breaks appear to be excessive, unusual and unrealistic."

The auditor-general expressed concern that despite an earlier letter (dated June 7, 1995) suggesting stock cards for each item in stock to monitor stock levels and periodic checks, this had not been done. And, the letter pointed out, "entries in request forms were made in pencil instead of ink".

In response to the allegations, Tabai wrote to the auditor-general's office explaining steps being taken to address the issues.

Under payment vouchers, Tabai wrote: "It is a requirement of our system of internal control that vouchers are to be stamped 'Paid' to reduce the likelihood of double payment. Staff have been reminded of the need to comply with these formal procedures."

On upgrading House No 9, Tabai said the initial budget figure was based on the removal of the hill at the back of the house. After this was done, he said, the architect recommended that the roof be lifted and a master bedroom be added upstairs to make the house habitable. The secretariat's Reserve Fund would be used to pay for this overexpenditure and rent collected from the property would be used to repay the Reserve Fund.

On the question of the appointment of the library services officer, Tabai said he "reserves the right to make appointments based on his total understanding of the qualification and experience of a particular applicant".

In response to the appointment of casual staff, Tabai said no procedures had existed in the secretariat at the time. "Procedures are now being developed," he said. "The decision on appointment of casual professional staff was made by senior staff who had no relationship to those persons," Tabai said in his letter dated June 28.

The non-payment of provisional tax, Tabai said, had been omitted in error. "However, the omission has been rectified and we are in the process of recovering the taxes from the two persons concerned."

The only former head of state to occupy the prestigious post, the Kiribati accountant-turned-politician will have completed six years at the helm of the Suva-based regional organisation this year.

Appointed by the South Pacific Forum in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, in 1991, Tabai couldn't have

wished for the appointment at a better time.

Globally, states began realigning in the face of the inevitable collapse of communism in the former Soviet Union. With the realignment in motion, the veneer of the so-called Cold War began to peel off layer by layer, resulting in a new world order.

To Tabai's credit, he has helped put the region on the international landscape. For instance, it was during his administration that the Forum obtained observer status at the United Nations General Assembly and APEC.

It was also during his time that the tedious, often time-consuming procedures involved in securing European Union funding were somewhat streamlined, resulting in a speedier release of funds for regional projects in the South Pacific.

There was a vast improvement in media relations with the Forum. Until his time, the South Pacific Forum was a closed-doors affair as far as media access to South Pacific leaders was concerned.

In the past six years, inaccessibility to leaders has become a thing of the past. Only time will tell whether or not Tabai's name will be associated with these achievements.

Asked by *Pacific Islands Monthly* whether he would be seeking another term as secretary-general, Tabai replied that the appointment of secretary-general was made by the Forum in closed session.

Fiji was badly embarrassed in 1994 when Tabai decided at the last minute that he wanted to stay on for a second term. Fiji had been lobbying strongly for the top regional spot for its foreign minister, Filipe Bole, prior to and during the South Pacific Forum in Brisbane, Australia.

Tabai's reappointment, spearheaded by Australia, drew the ire of Fijian Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka who reportedly said the South Pacific Forum should consider moving its secretariat away from Suva, and perhaps to outer space.

Bole is once again vying for the position which carries a basic, tax-free salary of well over \$F110,000 (\$US75,900), free housing, car, \$F6000 (\$US4170)-a-year representational allowance as well as first-class air travel.

The position also carries an education allowance of \$F6000 (\$US4170) a year per child for up to three children and a maid, whose salary is included in the secretariat's annual regular budget.

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■ SPECIAL REPORT

Open secrets

Australian report on Pacific may be too close to the bone

A secret document reportedly prepared by Australia's foreign affairs and treasury staff to brief finance minister Peter Costello on the South Pacific may have left Australia with a lot more than it bargained for. Australia's international reputation has already been damaged by its recent stance on reducing Greenhouse gas emissions (see Page 58) and Pauline Hanson's racist remarks (*PIM* Feb, 1997). The 93-page document – labelled AUSTEO (Australian Eyes Only) – risks

further alienating Australia, with its frank commentaries on the economic status of island countries, personal habits of leaders and by accusing Malaysian logging companies of corruption and New Zealand of undercutting Australia in the region. The report, left unattended on a table at the June Pacific economic ministers' meeting in Cairns, was picked up by a Reuters journalist.

The paper divides island states into six groups – with headlines such as "Melanesian mayhem", "Imprudent Micronesians" and "Bottom of the heap".

"Mismanagement is hurting, with the Solomon Islands, Nauru and the Cook Islands on the brink of insolvency," the report says. "Pacific leaders will continue

to flirt with easy solutions...especially quick-fix, easy-money schemes and over-exploitation of natural resources," the report says. "[Sir Geoffrey] Henry has taken the Cook Islands to the brink of economic catastrophe but his position as prime minister is secure for the time being.

"Henry is articulate and hard working, but he is boastful and vain – heaving spent heavily on grandiose monuments."

It alleges corrupt dealings between Malaysian logging companies and certain members of the Solomon Islands parliament. One politician, it says, is known in the business community as "Mister Ten Percent". The government, it claims, is

preoccupied with averting a financial collapse rather than embarking on a

reform programme, laying the blame on prime minister Solomon Mamaloni, who is seen as an obstacle to change.

PNG is criticised for government corruption and dragging its feet on abuses in the forest industry because of politicians' personal interests.

Interestingly, the yardstick most commonly used in analyses is island leaders' attitudes towards Australia and colonialism. For example, the paper says former finance minister Chris Haiveta is "combative towards Australia and may prove difficult to deal with at the FEMM [Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting]".

"He has gone along with [Sir Julius] Chan's efforts to cultivate the Malaysians in trying to reduce PNG's dependence on Australia."

Haiveta is "combative towards Australia and may prove difficult...at the FEMM"

Vanuatu's commerce minister Barak Sope is assessed on the basis of his "unhappy school days in Australia and university Marxism in Suva [which] drew Sope to the anti-colonial cause". Part of the financial "mess" the country is in is attributed to Sope, who is remembered for his role in the 1996 \$US100-million letters of guarantee scam which nearly brought down the government (see *PIM* September, 1996). And the report is cynical of Vanuatu's commitment to the Asian Development Bank-crafted reform programme because of "ingrained bad habits". Sope is married to "a poet with anti-colonialist views", the paper continues, observing that "despite his resentments, he visits Sydney often for business

Pacific Islands Association of Non Government Organisations (PIANGO)

Program Coordinator

PIANGO is a regional network of NGOs covering all Pacific islands states and territories, Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand. PIANGO aims to enable Pacific NGOs to more effectively promote and advance the interests and well being of their people.

PIANGO is currently establishing a Fiji-based regional secretariat and seeks to appoint a Coordinator to support the development and implementation of PIANGO's programs; act as a focal point for communication and liaison between member NGOs and other key agencies in the region; and to manage the day to day functions of the secretariat.

The successful applicant will share PIANGO's commitment to the role of the community sector in Pacific Island development. They are expected to have high level managerial and people skills, with a minimum of 5 years experience in senior positions in the NGO sector. Ability to communicate in both English and French, or a proven aptitude to learn these skills quickly, is essential. Remuneration will be negotiated commensurate with the experience and qualifications of the successful applicant. Accommodation will not be provided as part of the package.

Applicants should contact PIANGO at the number below for a detailed job description and selection criteria. Applications, including CV and three referees, should be sent to the address below by 31 August, 1997.

PIANGO Secretariat Establishment Project
PO Box 1045 Port Vila Vanuatu
Ph/fax 678 22 283

Doubletake Second report found

As *Pacific Islands Monthly* went to press, the Australian federal government found itself in the embarrassing position of having to deal with emergence of a second classified document. The report – also marked AUSTEO (Australian Eyes Only) – was similarly discovered on a table by a journalist (this time from AAP).

The document was prepared for bilateral meetings held by Treasurer Peter Costello the day after the FEMM and set out a strategy to coerce New Zealand into increasing defence spending at the expense of social programmes.

While there have been attempts to dismiss comments in the earlier report as not those of the government, the second report proves to be a lot trickier. According to the 39-page document, cabinet had agreed in February that all Australian ministers were to pursue a whole-of-government approach in their relations with NZ counterparts. Costello was to use the bilateral talks with Winston Peters to encourage NZ to maintain its defence spending. "Your meeting with Peters could be influential in swaying him (and the NZ Treasury) in favour of Australia's concerns," the paper said. The paper was also critical of island nations selling special investor passports. ■

reasons". Fiji's finance minister Berenado Vunibobo is similarly accused of not wholeheartedly embracing Australian presence in the region. "In spite of his good understanding of Australia (he was educated in Queensland), Vunibobo can react sharply if he senses he is being patronised.

"Temperamentally volatile, he is still given to Third World posturing against Western colonialism," the paper observes. "He has supported Fiji's moves for closer ties with Malaysia as a counter to Australia."

One of the personalities to emerge relatively unscathed is Aokuso Pavihi, Niue's minister for national planning and econom-

ic development. He is seen as hard-working, competent with a reputation for honesty. The report notes that Pavihi "will probably follow Australia's lead and the majority view" at the economic ministers' meeting, perhaps one of his more endearing qualities.

The paper is perhaps less contentious for the bleak economic picture it paints of the region and the self-serving interests at the heart of Australia's concerns in the Pacific as it is for the untempered remarks on politicians' personal lives. It describes, quite unabashedly, their drinking habits

(whether they become belligerent or mellow when drunk), personal traits, family crises and even religious habits. As far as Australia's 'self-serving' policies go, it would be unrealistic to expect Australia to work from purely altruistic motives.

And, in much of its assessment of the region's economic state, the report, it must be admitted, only reiterates what is already known. Vanuatu's ombudswoman has repeatedly spoken of corruption and mismanagement in the island nation. It is no surprise to read that Vunibobo "is struggling to bail out the stricken National Bank of Fiji", the country's biggest financial scandal.

"Nauru has never denied that it is going through a period of economic difficulty like any number of other countries," a press statement issued by the Nauru consulate-general in Melbourne, Australia, said.

Some of the allegations might be true, was the response from a spokesman for Mamaloni. The Solomons' grievance is that Australia didn't address the criticisms through diplomatic channels, an AAP report said.

While the document is able to sum up most island countries on their economic status, New Zealand proves to be more complex with its "mix of cooperation and competition with Australia". The paper speaks of NZ being increasingly dependent on Australia in both economic relations and defence, adding that NZ politicians were content to let Australia take the lead in Pacific affairs rather than risk their own popularity in the region.

"On occasion they have even undercut Australia, especially in the Solomons where they have been reluctant to take on Mamaloni over forestry," the report says.

"Old habits die hard and many politicians and officials...like to believe that New Zealand, because of its smaller size, links to Polynesia and Maori and islander population, is part of the Pacific in a way that Australia is not."

But, according to the report, the financial crisis in the Cook Islands has seen NZ "moderating its tendency to indulge islanders".

The other stumbling block is Deputy PM Winston Peters, whom it describes as an "opportunistic" and "loose canon" yet to shake off his reputation for laziness, inattention to detail and erratic behaviour. The paper claims that, while Methodist by upbringing, Peters "enjoys late hours in nightclubs". Perhaps his saving grace is that he "has lived in and is well disposed to Australia" and that he "welcomes Australian investment, especially to balance Asian capital".

There has been speculation that the paper will be the talk of the South Pacific Forum meeting in the Cook Islands and that Australian PM John Howard will have quite a bit of explaining to do – that is, of course, if he attends. (Word had it, until now at least, that Deputy PM Tim Fischer would be attending the September meeting.)

While most island leaders have been openly critical of the report, both NZ PM Jim Bolger and Peters, who bore the brunt of the report's criticism of NZ, have tended to downplay the matter. Peters dismissed the comments as merely the opinion of an "ignorant bureaucrat".

"They reflect a personal judgment that sometimes demonstrates complete ignorance of political facts and contain extraordinary assertions which would be of embarrassment to a host nation."

Strong criticism has come from Australia's opposition party and the same can probably be expected from Malaysia, which Australia views as a direct threat to its interests in the Pacific.

According to acting opposition leader Gareth Evans, there were suggestions that, contrary to earlier reports, the document was not the work of a junior official in foreign affairs but that of some fairly senior officials in the prime minister's department.

"And I can assure you that this will take a very long time to be forgiven, if at all, right round the region," he said. ■

COVER STORIES

In the name of God

Questions arise over Australian church appeal for Fiji's cyclone victims



million," he said. The Reverend Tomasi Kanailagi, general secretary of the Methodist Church, was reluctant to comment on the matter, saying he could not talk about the role of the mission. He did, however, add that he had no idea the figure of \$100 million had been used.

The Methodist Church had, to date, received \$25,000 from the mission, the church said. This amount corresponded with what the mission said it had sent.

Cyclone Gavin was one of the worst to hit Fiji in a long time with severe losses to property and belongings. Eight were reported dead.

A fishing boat lost at sea during the cyclone has not been found – nor has its crew of 10.

By **BERNADETTE HUSSEIN**

In March, Fiji was struck by Cyclone Gavin. In April, *Partners* – a magazine published in Sydney, Australia, by Uniting Church World Mission – ran an appeal for Fiji's cyclone victims.

Fiji's National Disaster Management Centre (DISMAC) estimated cyclone damage to crop and property to be in the vicinity of \$F33.4 million (\$US23 million).

The Uniting Church appeal was seeking \$100 million – the ad did not specify the unit of currency.

When *Pacific Islands Monthly* questioned Uniting Church World Mission about this figure, the Reverend Laurie Fitzgerald said the inflated figure was an estimate on the part of the mission. The amount quoted by the Methodist Church of Fiji, the reverend said, was, in fact, \$33.4

million – for property damage alone.

"After discussions within our office, we felt that, given the information we had, it was not unreasonable to use the words 'with damage to property, crops and fruit trees estimated to be as high as \$100 million'," said the Reverend Fitzgerald, whose signature appeared in the *Partners* magazine appeal.

The appeal card said: "The request we received indicated that eight people were killed and at least 18 are still missing with damage to property, crops and fruit trees estimated to be as high as \$100 million..."

The secretary of the Methodist Church's Department of Christian Citizenship and Social Services, Paula Sotutu, said that when the request was lodged with the mission, the department quoted the official DISMAC figure. But, Sotutu qualified, the department had mentioned that there could be some hidden costs.

"There was never a mention of \$100

FIJI CYCLONE

From Laurie Fitzgerald, Mission Support Officer...

"We have received an urgent request from the Methodist Church in Fiji, one of our overseas partner churches, for help following the devastation caused by Cyclone Gavin which struck the island last month.

"The request we received indicated that eight people were killed and at least eighteen are still missing with damage to property, crops and fruit trees estimated to be as high as \$100 million. The rains which accompanied the 240 kilometre an hour winds caused mass flooding in a number of areas. Families were forced to evacuate their homes, while farmers lost their crops as flood waters, in some instances, covered whole settlements.

The appeal in *Partners* magazine

COVER STORIES

From the pulpit

As Fiji prepared for its new constitution, the politics-versus-religion debate gathered a lot of momentum with the hint of a split within the Methodist Church. General secretary of the church the Reverend Kanailagi expresses his personal views to **Bernadette Hussein** on the subject

Religion plays a major role in Pacific Island nations and Fiji is no exception. But with a population more multireligious than its island neighbours', the issue of religion versus politics becomes a more contentious affair. And as the country braced itself for the passage of a new constitution, the issue generated even more debate. The new Constitution Amendment Bill was passed last month by Fiji's parliament. But the state-versus-religion debate continues.

In Fiji, the majority are Christians, with Methodism being the largest denomination. Hindus and Muslims form a substantial part of the remaining population. According to the 1986 census, 52.9 per cent of the population is Christian, 38.1 per cent Hindu and 7.8 per cent Muslim.

Prior to the tabling of the Constitution Amendment Bill in Fiji's House of Representatives, the bill received the approval of the country's Great Council of Chiefs – but with two requests. Ignoring many of the more politically controversial provisions, the council asked that its appointees in the senate consider the council's views when voting on issues concerning entrenched indigenous Fijian legisla-



The Rev Kanailagi: "I don't think it is an individual choice to separate [church and politics]"

tion. The other request was that the government continue negotiations with other political parties to declare Fiji a Christian state. During the review of Fiji's constitution, when the public was called on to make submissions to the review commission, the president of the Methodist Church in Fiji, the Reverend Dr Ilaitia Tuwere, presented a paper titled *The Christian – Community within the Human Community*.

The Rev Dr Tuwere, who is seen as more tolerant in his views than his predecessor, stated in his paper that declaring Fiji a Christian state would go against the principles of religious freedom, qualifying his comment by adding it was more important for people to live by the principles of the Christian faith than to declare Fiji a Christian State. People wanted to make Fiji a better place to live in, he said in the paper, but he did not believe the declaration of Fiji as a Christian state in the constitution would achieve this.

As the media took hold of this line of the argument prior to the voting on the bill in parliament, the general secretary of the church, the Rev Tomasi Kanailagi, dissociated the Methodist Church from the comment, saying that the paper was still being discussed by the church's standing committee. The church's stand on the issue would be announced by the committee, he added. The Rev Dr Tuwere was away at the time of writing and was unable to elaborate on his views.

Personally, the Rev Kanailagi told *Pacific Islands Monthly*, he supported the idea of making Fiji a Christian state.

Stressing that the following views are his own and not necessarily those of the church, the Rev Kanailagi said a Christian state would be one always emphasising Christian principles. "One of the things it emphasises is the inclusiveness of other races and religions. No one is excluded."

While agreeing that the present constitution allowed for such principles without declaring Fiji a Christian state, the Rev Kanailagi felt that "being a Christian state would mean that these things will be taken seriously and will also make the country a better place to live in".

"I can see no other humanitarian grounds which can bring people together."

As for the Rev Dr Tuwere's paper, the Rev Kanailagi said it had not been accepted at the last meeting of the standing committee. "I think the general feeling among the indigenous Fijians is that yes, Fiji should be declared a Christian state. When the Rev Dr Tuwere's comment appeared in the media, I received a lot of calls from people who strongly objected to it and wanted to know if that was the official stand of the church. I told them, 'No, it was the Rev Dr Tuwere's personal paper to the CRC.'"

Quick to allay the fears of Fiji's other religious groups and their concerns over freedom of worship, the Rev Kanailagi assured: "No, they will not lose it. This is a free country and there is freedom of expression and religion here. Why should people have to give that up? People should not feel that this freedom is under threat because we, as Christians, have to give

COVER STORIES

people the freedom to worship as they want and whenever they want. Even after the country is declared a Christian state, I am sure there will be no pressure on them."

Last year saw the lifting of the Sunday ban in Fiji which had been imposed – with varying degrees of force – since the 1987 military coups. The ban was put in place after a call from the Methodist Church in Fiji, which had at its helm at the time the more right-wing Rev Manasa Lasaro. The ban was opposed by many church members at the time but the motion was passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate.

According to the Rev Kanailagi, the Sunday ban issue no longer figures in the equation. "You see, there are some Christians who want to impose this ban but there are many who are against it. We have a body called the Fiji Council of Churches which is made up of Christians of all denominations. It is the stand of this council that there not be a Sunday ban. People should realise that things like the Sunday ban will not happen just because one group feels it should. If the majority think that it is not such a good idea, then that's how it should be. Once Fiji is declared a Christian state, it will run according to general Christian principles and not principles of one denomination. It will be based on inter-denominational or general Christian beliefs. The Methodist Church is the largest Christian denomination in the country but we still have great respect for other denominations and religions. We have to work hand in hand with them to make the country a better place."

But he expressed his concern over the number of religious sects he said were coming into the Pacific.

"The problem is that governments are allowing these sects to come in. They tell people that their church will send people overseas for training or studies or will help them out financially. Human nature is such that when they are shown things like this, they turn towards it. Everybody wants the best in life and when they see and hear of such opportunities they turn in that direction. I think this is the trend in most Pacific Islands. These things are caused by Western influences.

"You see, our people, the Pacific people, do not have enough resources and any opportunity they see of getting [more], they go for it." But he dismissed suggestions that there could be more breakaway groups in the future.

"No, I don't think so. You see the mainstream churches are getting stronger. They are providing better education and training facilities to help their members."

But religious tolerance is not necessarily one of Fiji's stronger suits.

Desecration of holy sites is being reported with alarming regularity, with Hindu temples being the prime target for vandals and arsonists.

One incident last year, saw a man destroy a Hindu temple and then commence to sit on the spot and recite verses from the *Bible*. When arrested, he explained he was following instructions from God. But the Rev Kanailagi sees the declaration of Fiji as a Christian state as the cure for such goings-on. "People who are doing this are frustrated and do this as a way to show their feelings... I'm not saying it's OK. What they are doing is wrong and anyone who does things like this deserves to be severely punished."

But the crux of the controversy is whether religion and politics should mix. The Rev Kanailagi thinks they should.

"As a citizen of a country, you should be involved in politics because politics affects every citizen. I don't believe that religion and politics have their own places. If the two are separated, the country will not function well. They are closely linked.

"Religion is the conscience of the state. The two have their role to play – in some cases separate. But if the state is wrong, then the church has every right to come in and speak directly to the state.

"Politics is very important to every person, and so is religion. These two interests are in one person. Why should they be separated? They play different roles in the same human being. I have my political and religious roles. They are both important and I think I should play both these roles faithfully and diligently. If I fail in one of these areas, then I am not a good human being."

Does this mean taking politics into church? "Yes," he replies. "I can stand at the pulpit and talk politics," he said, dismissing concerns that the church may not be the right forum to talk politics. "Why isn't [the church not the right forum to talk politics]? That is what many people say but that is not what the *Bible* says. The *Bible* says God's word is for every man in every situation, and that includes politics.

"I don't think it is an individual choice to separate the two. It is a responsibility to keep the two together." ■

Religion or scam?

Resentments aside, the Mormons are here to stay

Story and pictures by CHRIS PETERU

Despite having one of their members almost burnt at the stake recently, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints – whose members are more widely known as Mormons – has acquired influence and numbers in God-fearing Samoa at a rate of knots.

In March, that rapid progress almost came to a fiery end for church member Lupe Lio, a 33-year-old father of four from Samalaeulu village in Savaii. On orders from the village council, Lio was accosted by men from the village then tied to a stake to be burnt alive. His offence was failing to adhere to the council's decision concerning building a Mormon chapel in the village. The council was holding onto a tradition that only Congregational and Catholic churches could have parishes in Samalaeulu, said the Reverend Palemia Reupena, the Congregational priest who pleaded for hours to eventually save Lio's life.

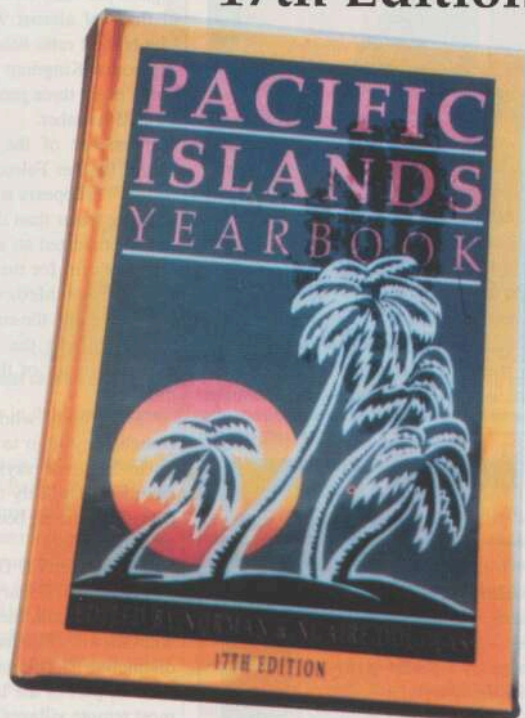
"They were very, very angry. I preached to them about Jesus teaching of forgiveness. There was still mercy in their hearts and they accepted our plea."

Controversy is nothing new to the Mormons, since they were founded in 1830 by New York farm labourer Joseph Smith, known as the prophet; its founding doctrine an assumption that Christianity needed to be restored from its waywardness care of new revelations. According to Smith, those revelations first came to him from the angel Moroni in 1820. He was 14. Although illiterate, divine inspiration allowed Smith to translate "by the gift and the power of God" golden plates buried in a hillside that were published into the *Book of Mormon*, one of four

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COVER STORIES



The Prophet Moroni above the Temple Pesega

scriptures used by the church. In 1844 Smith and his brother, Hyrum, acquired martyrdom when they were assassinated while in an Illinois jail on charges of treason and conspiracy.

Today rich, savvy and global, Mormonism shows no signs of slowing the conveyor belt of Samoan converts coming into the fold. Based in Salt Lake City, Utah, in northern United States, Mormons

are, according to their own figures, the fastest-growing religion in Samoa, the Pacific and the planet.

The 1995-96 *Deseret News Church Almanac* surveys (1993) show one out of every four Samoan from an estimated 202,000 citizens is an LDS member. Outside of the US, that marks the second-highest per-ratio membership from a global flock of almost 9,924,436 adherents. The highest ratio belongs to the staunchly Methodist Kingdom of Tonga where one out of every three people is purported to be an LDS member.

President of the Samoan Methodist church the Rev Faletoe Auvaa is not surprised. "It appears to me that the LDS is growing faster than the Methodists." The census indicated an annual growth rate of nine per cent for the LDS versus six per cent for the Methodists. Whatever the numbers game, the end result for Mormons is going to be the same, says Viliamu Mafue director of the Youth for Christ ministry.

"Everybody who joins the Mormon church, they'll go to hell, they will never go to heaven," says the one-time gang member. "The only thing I have for them is love and caring because they are under a great deception."

Since Joseph H Dean, the first official Mormon missionary, rowed onto the shores of Tutuila (now American Samoa) with his wife, Florence, in June, 1888, the distinctive LDS churches have now become part of the landscape in even the most remote villages.

Much of that success can be attributed to vigorous missionary work that has proven the cornerstone of skyrocketing membership, with a pool of close to 45,000 missionaries constantly on the road globally. Currently in both Samoas, 134 missionaries are serving a full-time two-year stint. Locally, it may create some bad vibes from mainstream churches who are seeing more empty pews each Sunday.

In terms of assets, the religion once chided by Samoans as the "poor Mormons" could now be said to be rolling in it. Church assets in Samoa are now worth in excess of \$US50 million, raised in part by a single 10 per cent salary contribution from members, called a tithe. Backing that up is virtually unlimited cash flow brought in by the church in Utah, where some astute business operations (including shares in soda giant Coca-Cola) helped pave the way for funding new

Prophets, predictions and the pope

By PATRICK DECLOITRE

Vanuatu's newly appointed bishop, Michel Visi, in early July warned Vanuatu's Christians against "false prophets", denouncing the recent visit here of a Sister Ruth who had already caused confusion in Western Samoa.

Sister Ruth, who claims to belong to a One in Christ order in Ireland, came here last month with a one-metre-tall statue of Fatima announcing a nuclear war in 1999, Jesus' return in 2000 and an anti-Christ infiltrating the Vatican to poison the pope.

"She does not represent the Catholic church and what she says is totally contrary to Catholic faith and teaching. I disapprove of it. What she says, the Catholic church will never accept," Visi told Radio Vanuatu, adding the nun never came to see him, as per normal procedure.

"I, as bishop, am responsible for teaching and spreading the Christian news. She went directly to the media without my prior authorisation."

The predictions, which she labelled "Fatima's third secret", were carried in Vanuatu's national weekly's last issue.

Earlier last month, after her visit to Western Samoa, about 100 women and children who had come to see her statue claimed they had seen a miraculous apparition of the Virgin.

Western Samoa's Cardinal Pio Taofinu'u had to reassure the population, saying the Irish order the nun claimed to belong to did not exist in the Vatican's very serious *Annuario Pontificio*.

In Vanuatu and Western Samoa, as in many Pacific countries, Christian fervour is strong. Vanuatu's motto is "In God we stand", and Western Samoa's is "Founded on God". ■



COVER STORIES



Atoa: "The Congregational church or the Methodist or the Catholic – those are the three that always band together and try and push us out"

churches and facilities in developing countries.

Official spokesperson for the church is National Director of Public Affairs Sam Atoa, 70, and a lifetime church member. He says the tithe system has proven beneficial in attracting new membership.

"It's quite straight forward. The only thing they are required to pay is 10 per cent of their earnings, which is your tithing, as it says in Revelations, and your fast offering every first Sunday of the month to help the poor and the needy.

"There is no money going out from here to Salt Lake. In fact, there is money coming in from Salt Lake to fund buildings and so forth. You don't go every Sunday and ask people to donate like in other churches where you have the *alofa* [the clergy's

stipend] besides that *faamati* [a fundraising collection]."

In comparison, Congregationalists, who make up the majority of worshippers, are asked to give on a larger, more frequent scale. Small wonder the economic sense of the tithe appeals to many Samoans forced to stretch their dollar through the high cost of living. Youth for Christ has also adopted the tithe system as the best way for members to contribute financially.

The Rev Auvaa says Methodists have been almost completely self-funded since 1963. "I have to admit we cannot match the [Mormon] economics provided from overseas. We receive some [financial] support from here and there but not on the same scale as the Mormons. Ninety-five per cent of our finances are provided from Samoa."

The two other main churches, Catholic and Congregational, have similar arrangements.

On the other hand, if Samoa had a Fortune 500-type rich list, Mormons would feature prominently. The multi-million-dollar Riverside complex at Tauese (nicknamed the Taj Mahal by locals), arguably the finest home in the country, is owned by a Mormon family. So is the MacDonalds franchise, the national lottery, the country's top nightclub and dozens of businesses. The resplendent home of Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson and later the head of state at Vailima was refurbished by former Mormon missionaries turned businessmen at a cost of millions of dollars, and is now a huge tourist attraction.

"The church teaches people to be self



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sustaining; it stresses to young people to get an education, so you can take care of yourself and your family. That's why the church does not want to see its members ... [relying] on someone else, or relying on the government."

"With the emphasis on education and clean living, top sports facilities which the public use at no charge plus a progressive system of spiritual, social, and community programmes which caters for every age

group underlines the benefits LDS members enjoy," says Atoa.

"I think it's because of the programmes. In other churches, I don't think they have programmes like that. They all go together on Sunday, everybody has the same programme, the preacher will preach and then they all go home. The only time you see little children participate is on White Sunday, and that's once a year."

Yet all this has failed to impress visiting

Belgian theologian Dr Karl Heinz Kuhlmann and others who remain adamant Mormons represent an unwelcome religious element in the Pacific.

"The Mormons are not a Christian church. In spite of a shining facade and a strict discipline, they are a sect with a doctrine that has nothing to do with the Bible. Although their members may sometimes live a dedicated life, it is their aggressive proselytising among Christians which

Up in arms over God

By CHRIS PETERU



Given the cost of living today there would be no shortage of Samoans willing to share that prayer with him. Choking back what looked to be tears of ecstasy he called out to the creator,

"Please God, take me, take me there."

Sadly, it turned out that God declined the prime minister's application to the pearly gates for undisclosed reasons.

However, the leadership of the Congregational church want to take Alesana, an elder deacon of the church, to another set of gates – marked exit only. The one-time church president is being shoved off the pews for lifting his hands in prayer at that same assembly. His praise the lord gesture, say the conservative

Congregationalists, was not becoming of a deacon of their flock. So much for Christian love and understanding.

"Now the elders have been persuaded by the deacons to disqualify me. If I am disqualified because of spreading the word of God and my testimony of Jesus, let it be. Your only concern is your relationship with God," he told national television recently. He said he had been accused of worshipping Satan, plus rumours that he had once stolen a government refrigerator and had used \$250,000 of appropriated funds to build a hotel for his children in Samoa.

"I was chosen by God." While Alesana may see his Christian life as an extension of his political career, there are fellow citizens who liken him to something out of X-Files, rather than being at the front of the queue when the Messiah handed out the top-drawer job roster. "I do not pray to Satan... and am worried about the bad name that Samoa gets overseas when people hear about things like this. I love my country. God bless our country and the devil be defeated."

Ageing Samoan Prime Minister Tofilau Eti Alesana is known for his strong Christian beliefs. In parliament he likes to justify what the curiously named Human rights Protection Party does by intimating he is following the will of the Lord, while in the same breath managing to chastise another creation of god, Opposition leader Tuatara Toupua Tamasese for the most basic heresy – not attending morning prayer meetings.

That spiritual belief surged to potentially prophetic status when he told the opening of the seventh Evangelical Fellowship of the South Pacific Prayer Assembly that in a hospital bed and close to death in 1981 he had a vision: "I saw something that was heaven.

"I see (sic) mountains, green mountains. And a blue sea. And the children singing 'Hallelujah to the Almighty God'.

"I didn't pray for life; I asked God to terminate my life."

COVER STORIES

should be despised. With lots of foreign money, they harvest where they have not sowed."

More recently, Mormon missionaries were banned from proselytising in several large villages by the councils, for reasons that were not fully explained. The action left the Mormons crying foul.

"Here our motto is 'Samoa is founded on God' and, in the constitution, you have freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of worship. You know some of our *matai* and village councils still do not understand that... The Congregational church or the Methodist or the Catholic – those are the three that always band together and try and push us out. That's not right, that's not in the constitution," says Atoa.

"I blame too some of the clergy... They will start something, maybe say to the council of chiefs, 'Hey, our church is going down because the Mormons are preaching, and so forth.' We don't force anyone [to join]. We just preach what we have and if they decide, well that's it."

Responds YFCs Mafue: "This is a Christian nation already declared by the constitution. We shouldn't have allowed them to come in but, unfortunately, they are in." The Mormons are no different from Jehovah's Witnesses or the Baha'i in their inconsistent beliefs. The job of the Christian churches is to preach the differences and to let the people know.

"I don't hate the [Mormon] people. I love the Mormon people. They are our aunts, uncles and cousins. Unfortunately, some of them join without any knowledge."

"We believe in God, the holy ghost, why are we not considered Christians?" asks Atoa.

"They don't want to see our missionaries going around knocking on doors, preaching the gospel and so forth. What's to stop them from setting up their own missionaries – they can go and knock on Mormon doors if they want to."

On studying some Mormon doctrine, it becomes clear that some of their beliefs vary greatly from orthodox Christianity. These include that:

- God emerged in a physical form and had sexual relations with the Virgin Mary who then conceived Jesus Christ;
- God the father and Jesus Christ are both physical beings;
- Jesus is the spirit brother of Lucifer;
- Jesus had three wives in his lifetime on earth; and
- all humans can evolve to have the same powers as God.

Mafue says the doctrine equates to heresy.

"There are some doctrines in the church that they never teach Samoan people about because if they do so they will leave the Mormon church."

The growth of the LDS, says Mafue, is more social than spiritual.

"There is a lack of knowledge there. They don't really understand. They just join because of all the sport, because they are loving and they are caring. They never understand. You know, some go by influence not by knowledge. Our people are all in the ears. They love to hear the pastor preaching, but they never read the Bible."

"The reason they have to be stopped is their Jesus is not the same as our Jesus. Their gospel is not the same as our gospel. I believe the mainline churches should stop them coming because they are not bringing the same gospel, they are not bringing the same faith. They have the wrong faith, they have the wrong gospel, they have the wrong Jesus. They have done good on the social side, but where we have to draw the line is the gospel they

are preaching."

For all the Mormon get-ahead, neither the Youth for Christ nor the Methodists see the growth of the LDS as a threat to mainstream churches.

"Never. I believe Christianity and the Christian church will still rule. There is no threat. There is a deceiving spirit behind that church. And we cannot accept that on our front door. We need to find the truth about it," says Mafue.

"Is it affecting the growth of the Methodists?" questions the Rev Auvaa. "Maybe so, but this should not be regarded as a threat to an established church. It's exciting because it raises questions. Are our programmes working? Are they helping to meet the needs of our members?"

"We must acknowledge the growth of these other new religious groups, and be thankful the gospel has become part of that witnessing. Why is this particular denomination growing faster than our own? I think it all depends on how people look at it. But the important thing is to stay positive about it."

Tonga's King Taufaahau Tupou IV has for the past few years refused to renew any LDS land leases. But like the stake-burning incident at Samalaeulu village, Mormons have long held that persecution and misunderstanding is part of the restoration of Christian truth and authority by "the only true and living church upon the earth." Their own.

God-fearing religion or elaborate religious scam, the only sure factor for the moment is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is here for the long haul. ■



SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM SECRETARIAT SUA, FIJI

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Information Package on the position is available from the Secretariat and applicants are urged to obtain one. Inquiries should be addressed to Mr Aklesh Nand, on (679) 312600 Extn 207 or fax (679) 301366. Applications close on 29 August 1997 and should contain full information on education and career background, addresses and telephone numbers of three employment referees.

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COVER STORIES

Channeling in to God

The launch of televangelism in Samoa

Story and pictures by **CHRIS PETERU**



TV Graceland studios ... linking up with God

The mood of optimism is almost tangible at the Rhema Christian Centre near Apia, as staff at Television Graceland's broadcasting studios bring televangelism into thousands of Samoan homes.

Heading the hi-tech crusade is the Reverend Ricky Meredith, and his wife, Marge, who manage the country's Christian television network which went on air this month.

The Merediths have been instrumental in bringing Christian broadcasting into the country. In 1994, out of their own pockets, they established Radio Graceland FM106, the island's first gospel station. Amidst some scepticism about how a non-profit station could survive, Radio Graceland held its own against two other stations on the island run by the government and private interests. With a bilingual format of Christian music, teaching and preaching, the station gathered support from a wide section of the community. The Reverend Meredith believes that the success formula can be repeated with TV Graceland.

"The vision, I guess, is to bring the truth, preach the truth and let people make their decisions. Give people the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's my aim in terms of the radio and television stations."

It's been a lengthy haul from the drawing board to the end result. The concept for bringing televangelism into the country

started three years ago following an approach from the United States-based Trinity Broadcasting Network. TBN came here because they heard we had a radio station and said they were interested in starting a Christian TV station. I said: "OK, I'm your man."

"We approached the prime minister and he was very supportive of it and, since then, they just went on and started doing it."

But the station came near to being shelved on several occasions. "We just prayed that it would go through, it was all God's doing," says the pastor.

Since going to air in the early 1980s, TBN's growth globally has been phenomenal, with over 600 stations around the world plus cable networks. While the majority of the stations are in the US, they have also located to Europe, the Middle East and South America.

A multi-million-dollar turnover allows TBN to provide most of the financing, technical support plus 80 per cent of the programming; the remainder being produced locally with a nearly ready-to-roll mobile unit and a production studio at the Rhema centre.

"We'll have programmes of my church and also other churches. We have been going around filming Christian events to pile them up as part of the Samoan input." Unlike the Christian station in neighbouring Tonga which has some secular content

to help offset running costs, TBN emphasises 100 per cent Christian programmes which Television Graceland wants to maintain.

At the moment, only one of three intended transmitters has been installed on Mt Fiamoe to cover the capital, Apia, and parts of Savaii, the other main island. When all the transmitters eventually come on line – in September – programmes will be available across the country and into American Samoa.

"This is just a beginning. There are so many islands in the Pacific that do not have this facility yet. So, I want to look at doing this throughout the Pacific – Christian radio and television."

Most of the reaction to Television Graceland has been positive, though there were rumblings from some quarters about whether the content was culturally correct.

"I know I've had adverse reactions from the mainline churches because they think I am bringing in a different culture. I believe it is too early to make such a statement until they have seen the programming first. We are not bringing in anything that is radically different from what is in the Bible. What we are bringing into the country is exactly what is in the word of God, not something that we just pull out of the blue. The programmes are all biblically based. TBN is also biblically based. Otherwise they would not have been blessed by God."

In reality, many mainline churches in Samoa have been caught up in blinkered power struggles which have provided an open door for alternative styles of worship that thousand of Samoans have been turning to.

Founded in the 1970s, the Peace Chapel is a church seen as a likely model for Samoan congregations of the future, with a strong diverse membership and a reputation as forward thinking. Its pastor, the Reverend Milo Siilata, sees televangelism as having the potential to contribute positively to Samoans' spiritual lives by showing alternative ways to express praise and worship.

"Wherever you go and preach the gospel, it's going to be wrapped up in the culture of the people taking the message, which is what happened when the missionaries came here. As long as those running the station have the wisdom and sensitivity to acknowledge that, it will happen. Praise the Lord."

"But the downside is we will get the bombardment of American culture as well."

COVER STORIES

The prosperity theology that many American Christian programmes espouse [they say that every Christian must be a millionaire and if you are not there's something wrong with your life] has to be put into context.

"If these people look well off on TV, it's another cultural thing again because, in America, for you to be on TV again, you have to look like a million dollars, but it can really project a false image to think that we all have to wear three-piece suits and we all have to drive around in Mercedes.

"That could confuse a lot of people and bring about a lot of self-condemnation because if I'm a Christian [in Samoa], how come God gives another Christian a four-wheel and here I am catching the bus? So, you end up with all this confusion.

"But I think our people are ready – no doubt about it. And I thank the Lord for what's happening in Samoa. I think it's an issue the mainline churches will have to deal with because it is here to stay.

"Of course, there has been a lot of abuse in televangelism. But you can't criticise the whole body of Christ because of the actions of a few," says the Rev Siilata.

The movement lost credibility when several leading lights faltered – prominent televangelists such as the Rev Jimmy Swaggart was photographed cavorting with prostitutes, and Jim and Tammy Baker were accused of million-dollar tax evasion which landed Jim Baker a jail sentence.

Born-again Christian Greg Vaafusuaga says the prosperity message pushed by American televangelism could backfire in a developing nation. "If it's led by the Holy Spirit, it will be instructive, if not it will be destructive. It's like watching rugby – there are some games you want to watch and some games you want to tape over."

In an industry where the advertising dollar is king, the new station will not be focusing on ratings or advertising strategies but rely on goodwill and providence from above to pay the overheads.

Televise Samoa will continue to screen nightly 20-minute prayer services in Samoan during peak-time viewing and several hours of live church broadcasts every Sunday evening.

"We are completely different from what Televise Samoa is putting over and what cable is putting over. As I said, those are

secular programmes and we are doing Christian programming which is an alternative for people to make a choice on what they want to view. There is a freedom of choice there because right now people only have TVS and the video shops."

With so many non-mainstream beliefs who collectively are making major inroads into numbers attending the traditional churches in Samoa, TV Graceland will not be used as platform for cult bashing, says the Rev Meredith. TVS has frequently broadcast local and overseas programmes featuring the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints services and events and the Bahai Faith.

"I'm not concerned about cults coming here, I'm concerned about Christians not getting off their backsides and doing what God told them to do. That's my concern – to motivate Christians, the ones called in God's name to get out and preach the Gospel because the Gospel brings truth and life. It's not going against the cults that bring truth and life, it's preaching and distributing the truth – there's a big difference. All I can say is this is just the beginning of what God is going to do in this country." ■

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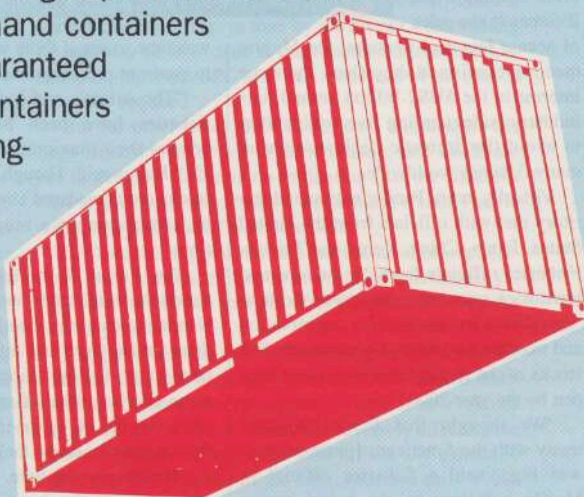
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■ FISHERIES

Conservation consensus

Fisheries conference surprises with agreement from all parties

Reports and photography by
GIFF JOHNSON

It started off with everyone agreeing and, remarkably, finished with agreement from all participants in the second high-level Conference on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Pacific. There were a few bumps during the week-long meeting in Majuro, Marshall Islands, in mid-June.

But no serious disagreements blocked the major distant water fishing nations and Pacific Island countries from approving an unprecedented three-year timetable for action to draft a conservation regime for the region.

Although fishing nations and Pacific Island countries are often at odds when it comes to the price of access fees and licenses, the Majuro meeting confirmed they share the same interest in the \$US2-billion annual tuna industry: safeguarding its sustainability to avoid the dramatic declines seen in many fisheries worldwide.

Virtually every Pacific nation and territory met with officials from the United States, Japan, China, Korea and Taiwan. Fisheries officials from 24 nations and territories unanimously agreed both to "establish a mechanism for conservation and management of highly migratory fish stocks of the region" and to make it happen by the year 2000.

"We thought that the multilateral treaty with the Americans [purse seiners] was big," said a fisheries official in Majuro referring to the broad access accord that brought peace in the mid-

1980s to fisheries relations with the US tuna fleet after years of confrontation over illegal fishing. "But what we've done here is of much greater significance."

Marshall Islands President Imata Kabua expressed the sentiments of many in the region in opening the conference when he said the adversarial approach between fishing nations and island countries may have worked in the past, but it

adviser to Japan's minister of agriculture and head of the Japanese delegation.

But, he added, given the excellent chair [Nandan] and their talks with island delegations, their view had changed. Nandan was a central participant in early Law of the Sea negotiations, drafting the brief that led to the Suva Declaration in 1976 under which Pacific Islands agreed not only on the 200-mile exclusive economic zone concept, but to take a coordinated regional approach to fisheries access negotiations with DWFN.

"We'll be satisfied if we can identify areas of agreement and have a frank discussion and exchange on the issues where we disagree," said one FFA official at the outset of the meeting.

By week's end, both FFA and DWFN officials were basking in the euphoria of the plan to hammer out details of surveillance,

catch reporting, stock assessment, financial assistance and related fishing management details.

Conference chairman Nandan said he doubted such a far-reaching accord could have been reached earlier. Although the FFA, when



In 1996, 1700 tons of tuna were exported from the Marshall Islands by Ting Hong, which operates a fishing base in Majuro

was time to see if there was a better way to confront pressing conservation issues.

"The Atlantic and Indian Ocean tuna fisheries have been harvested at or beyond their maximum sustainable levels," Kabua said. Though the Pacific tuna stocks are considered strong, "we cannot be complacent; we must take precautions".

The Forum Fisheries Agency convened the conference and selected Satya Nandan to chair the meeting, a move that drew praise from and reassured the distant water fishing nations (DWFN) – some of whom (the Asians, in particular) often feel the FFA is trying to ram island fishing policies down their throats.

"Before coming here, we were somewhat pessimistic about what could be accomplished," said Taisuo Saito, special

formed 20 years ago, called for cooperation for management of tuna, it could not happen then "because some of the important distant water fishing nations were not ready to recognise the sovereign rights of coastal states over highly migratory species in their exclusive economic zones", he said.

The long delay in negotiating a cooperative arrangement, however, "may have worked to the advantage of both sides", Nandan said.

"Both sides know each other well and this creates a very good atmosphere [for the discussions]."

The agreement is all the more startling for the fact that the islands themselves have disparate interests – ranging from the lucrative fishing grounds of the Federated States of Micronesia and Papua

FISHERIES

New Guinea to the somewhat less valued areas of the Marshall Islands or Tonga.

"This shows that not only fishing nations but also Pacific Island countries are serious about conserving tuna," said Marshall's Foreign Secretary Robert Muller.

"We thought initially that we'd get a watered-down document [at the end of the week's meetings]. Instead, we have agreement on an aggressive three-year timetable for action."

The plan of action commits the countries to cooperate in collecting and sharing accurate fisheries data, and provides that fishing nations are committed to providing "financial, scientific and technical assistance to Pacific Island developing states and territories to enhance their ability to conserve, manage and sustainably use the highly migratory fish stocks of the region".

A number of island participants had said at the outset of the conference that they expected more disagreement from Asian fishing nations, principally Japan. But the Japanese delegation joined in approving the plan. "If there is a clear

agreement on a legal framework that binds everyone, we are more than willing to participate because it's essential [for management of the resources]," Saito explained.

Muller added: "It was a much greater accomplishment than we expected. There was a real spirit of cooperation and compromise at the conference."

A three-year limit for negotiating an agreement was set by the conference, with follow-up conference sessions planned for 1998 and 1999, and technical meetings to take place in between.

While conference participants were generally ecstatic over the result of the week, all acknowledge the difficult negotiations that lie ahead.

"This doesn't mean it will be easy to get agreement [on a specific management regime]," said Brian Hallman, deputy director of the state department's office of marine conservation and head of the US delegation in Majuro.

But he expressed optimism the commitments made in Majuro would lead to future agreement. "We're anxious to get [management] arrangements in place for the

Pacific," said Hallman. "The time to do it is now because the tuna stocks are not over-fished. It's much harder to get together and make rules when the area is over-fished."

Similarly, FFA deputy director Ian Cartwright observed there "may be storms down the road" as they try to get the disparate fishing nations of Asia and the US to agree with the equally independent-minded island countries. But no one was allowing this speculation to hinder the celebration over the Majuro accords.

"This is an historic turn of events," Hallman said. "This is the one region in the world that doesn't have an international mechanism for conserving fisheries and yet it's the world's richest fishing ground."

He credited island nations for the conservation initiative. "They've seen the necessity and importance of making a multilateral agreement," Hallman said. "They've made a commitment to it."

Cartwright said the agreement on a plan of action for fisheries management by 24 participating nations and territories was a "first for the world". ■

Too many fish in the sea ... despite increase in tuna fishing

Tuna catches have more than doubled in the Pacific since the early 1980s but, with one exception, the fish are in no danger of being fished out of existence, the South Pacific Commission reported in Majuro in mid-June.

The increase from 540,000 tons of tuna caught in 1980 to more than 1.4 million tons yearly in the early 1990s is the result of an explosion in the purse seine fishing fleets of five distant water fishing nations, John Hampton, the SPC's principal fisheries scientist, told more than 100 fisheries officials meeting in Majuro to develop a conservation and management system for the Pacific.

The fleet of purse seiners of the United States, Japan,

Taiwan, Korea and the Philippines grew from 14 vessels in 1980 to almost 200 in 1992, Hampton said.

Yellowfin and skipjack tuna account for the vast majority of tuna caught in the western and central Pacific. Albacore and bigeye are the two others, but are a minor part of the total catch. Studies suggest, however, that the current catches of bigeye tuna by the distant water fishing nations may be at or close to maximum sustainable yields, Hampton reported. SPC said that reanalysis of the data is "urgently required".

But for other tuna, SPC is confident that despite the huge expansion in the use of purse seining, tuna stocks are not in danger. "There is no indication that the fisheries have significantly impacted the western and central Pacific ocean skipjack stock," Hampton said.

SPC studies suggest that the current level of exploitation – even averaging close to one million tons annually – "is low to moderate, in spite of large increases over the past 15 years".

Hampton said that studies show the same holds true for albacore, and that even the use of the now-banned drift-nets didn't jeopardise the supply. "There is no evidence that the current levels of fishing are adversely affecting the [albacore] stock," he reported. "Nor is there any indication that the driftnet catches of the late 1980s and early 1990s have had a significant impact on the stock." ■

■ PROFILE

Arms and the man

Dogged by Bougainville and with a penchant for military-style solutions, it may seem Sir Julius Chan's political life is over. But there's a feeling, almost, that this is not the end...

By **RUSSELL HUNTER**

When the voters of Tanga Island in Papua New Guinea's New Ireland electorate of Namatanai rejected Sir Julius Chan in the June election, they brought to a close his 29 years in public life.

"That's probably the end for me," he was quoted as saying. "I'll re-enter private life."

Don't bank on it. While, at the age of 58 on August 29, he'll probably consider himself too old for politics when the next election comes around in 2002, the public hasn't heard the last of Sir Julius Chan. After 29 years in the public eye, there's a feeling, almost, that the process of government cannot continue without him.

And in those 29 years, controversy and Sir Julius have rarely been far apart.

Born on Tanga Island in 1939, the son of Chinese trader Chin Pak Chan and village girl Miriam Tinkonis, the young Julius was educated in Brisbane though his early life was dominated by village culture and by his father's Chinese identity. True to the latter, he has helped to develop the family business from its island trading base through shipping, hotels and now an airline. Business has never been far from his mind.

But it is politics that has made the Chan name. He entered the second pre-independence House of Assembly in 1968, formed the People's Progress Party two years later and has led it ever since. The party is named after the group led, for so long, by his political hero, Lee Kwan Yew. As leader of the PPP, Sir Julius was elected as the member for Namatanai in the first independent parliament in 1976. He was to hold the seat until this year.

His name gained regional prominence in 1980 when the then deputy prime minister led a no-confidence vote against the government led by his former ally, Sir Michael Somare. Sir Julius, with the late Sir Iambakey Okuk as his deputy, successfully put the motion that ended the first Somare government. The parliamentary coup propelled Sir Julius into the PM's office (even though the fiercely ambitious Sir Iambakey would be a thorn in his side for the next two years) and he soon gained world fame as he enthusiastically hailed the success of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force's first armed action – in the newly independent nation of Vanuatu.

While France and Britain, the former joint rulers of the colony of The New Hebrides, dithered, the fledgling Lini government turned to PNG for help and the Kumul Force (led by the then Brigadier-General Ted Diro) crushed the Jimmy Stevens rebellion on Espiritu Santo.

Basking in the reflected glory of the military, Sir Julius milked the success for all it was worth. Yet it can be argued that this was the beginning of his love for military solutions – he consistently pushed for a standing Pacific Forum "peace force" – that would lead to the Sandline affair and his political undoing.

And if the 1997 prime minister embarked on an election campaign bathed in controversy, the 1982 prime minister was no different.

The '82 campaign was punctuated by street demonstrations calling for Sir Julius' political head. The controversy this time surrounded the Sir Julius-Sir Iambakey cabinet's purchase of a \$US6-million Grumman Gulfstream executive jet. The plane – bought despite howls of protest from the opposition, the media and just about everybody else who was unlikely ever to sit in it – was burnt in effigy by Port Moresby students during a street demonstration. Yet despite the din, Sir Julius displayed his customary disdain for criticism, insisting that the aircraft would save the country money.

It had no impact on the vote in Namatanai but Sir Julius's PPP was unable to gather sufficient seats to be a major force in parliament and he and all other contenders were outmanoeuvred by Sir Michael Somare in the post-election horse trading that is the hallmark of PNG government-making. It would be 13 years before he returned to the prime minister's suite.

Sir Michael, at the head of Pangu Pati, swept back to power, relegating Sir Julius to the opposition benches. But not for long. By the time the 1987 election came along, he was back in the deputy prime minister's office after Sir Michael disappeared in yet another no-confidence motion, this time planned by his former ally Paias Wingti.

And once again, Sir Julius went out on the campaign trail with the howls of protesters ringing in his ears. This time it was money.

In 1996, the Canadian mining giant Placer Dome decided to float part of its Pacific assets in the biggest float the Australian sharemarket had then seen.

It was decided that 11 per cent of the float would be set aside for PNG investors with strict limits applied to the number of shares available to each individual. Soon, however, it became apparent that the limits would apply on a selective basis. The mum and dad investors – the small people – were able to secure a handful of shares while the big people somehow managed to corner much of the market. As *Pacific Islands Monthly* pointed out at the time, a glance through the Placer Pacific share register read like a *Who's Who* of public life in PNG.

In any case, the float went ahead and the stags – Sir Julius among them – made a killing as the shares doubled in value on the first day of trading. The minister protested strongly that the profit was made by his party, not himself. With an election pending, the



Sir Julius Chan ... no stranger to controversy 29 years later

PPP was in sore need of funds and the Placer Pacific play was a good way to raise quick cash. But the controversy refused to die.

Finding his PPP once again with a few – but strategic – number of seats, Sir Julius had to back a winner if he was to return to the government benches. He did just that, becoming a popular and, in many ways, innovative trade minister in Pias Wingti's new government.

These were perhaps his finest years in politics. As Wingti enjoyed his popular image (he drove his own small car and shunned, at least at first, the trappings of power), he left Sir Julius pretty much in charge of trade and commerce. The business community had always regarded Sir Julius as a pragmatist, a minister who would lay down the rules and not change them every time the political whim took him. By now, however, with his plan for a stock exchange among other innovative policies, business had come to love him as one of their own. He enjoyed more support

from the business community than any minister before or since.

It wasn't to last. As the Bougainville crisis deepened and PNG Budget haemorrhaged millions of kina, the Wingti cabinet succumbed to the inevitable no-confidence motion, this time instigated by Pangu's new leader Rabbie Namaliu.

By the time of the 1992 election, Sir J, as he is known in the PPP, was deputy opposition leader.

He campaigned strongly and was again rewarded for supporting Wingti with the

position of finance minister and deputy prime minister.

Two years ago, Sir Julius made his move, returning to the prime minister's office the same way he arrived – through a vote of no confidence.

Vowing to solve the Bougainville crisis once and for all, the new prime minister offered peace talks but gradually, frustrated by the rebels' intransigence, he moved towards a military solution and the secret Sandline deal. The rest, as they say, is history. ■



SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM SECRETARIAT SUVA, FIJI VACANCY

SENIOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANT TO THE FORUM SECRETARIAT

The Secretary General of the South Pacific Forum Secretariat, as Regional Authorising Officer (RAO) for the European Development Fund (EDF), invites applications from suitably qualified nationals of the European Union (EU) and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) member countries for the post of Senior Technical Assistant (STA).

The STA will support the Forum Secretariat in its continuing role in the implementation of Lomé IV regional programmes and in carrying out its mandate as Central RAO. As STA the appointee should have a proven experience in the identification, appraisal and implementation of EDF funded programmes/projects, in project cycle management and more specifically in Logical Framework methodology. Previous experience in the South Pacific region or preferably with a regional organisation is desirable.

The duties of the STA will include the following:

- support the Forum Secretariat as RAO by strengthening its capacity to meet its obligations under the Lomé IV convention;
- assist in the implementation of regional programmes funded under the 7th and 8th EDF;
- assist in the preparation and commissioning of rapid pre-feasibility studies for newly identified regional projects/programmes, and in the preparation, commissioning and follow-up of such studies;
- assist in the preparation of project dossiers in accordance with EDF requirements;
- assist implementing agencies, where required, in the implementation of approved projects and programmes, in the preparation of terms of reference, tender dossiers and invitation to tender, evaluation of tenders and award of contracts;
- assist in project/programme reviews where necessary;
- assist with on the job training of local counterpart(s) in the administration of EU Programmes in the Forum Secretariat;
- assist in the preparation of papers and documentation for annual Pacific ACP Group meetings, reporting on these and monitoring the implementation of decision taken during these meetings;
- prepare annual work plans and cost estimates for the above purposes.

The STA will report directly to the Director of the Development and Economic Policy Division. The STA will maintain close and frequent contacts with the Delegation of the European Commission and will always conduct himself/herself with the objective of facilitating relations between the Forum Secretariat and the European Commission.

Applicants should have a Master's degree in Development Economics or in a related field with at least five years of working experience. Previous experience in the preparation of EC projects and a thorough knowledge of the Project Dossier Manual and the administrative aspects of the Lomé Convention are highly desirable.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The successful candidate will be expected to take up duties in October/early November 1997 for an initial period of two years with the possibility of extension up to a maximum of five years. More details can be obtained from the Forum Secretariat on request (fax: (679) 312-696, telephone: 312-600).

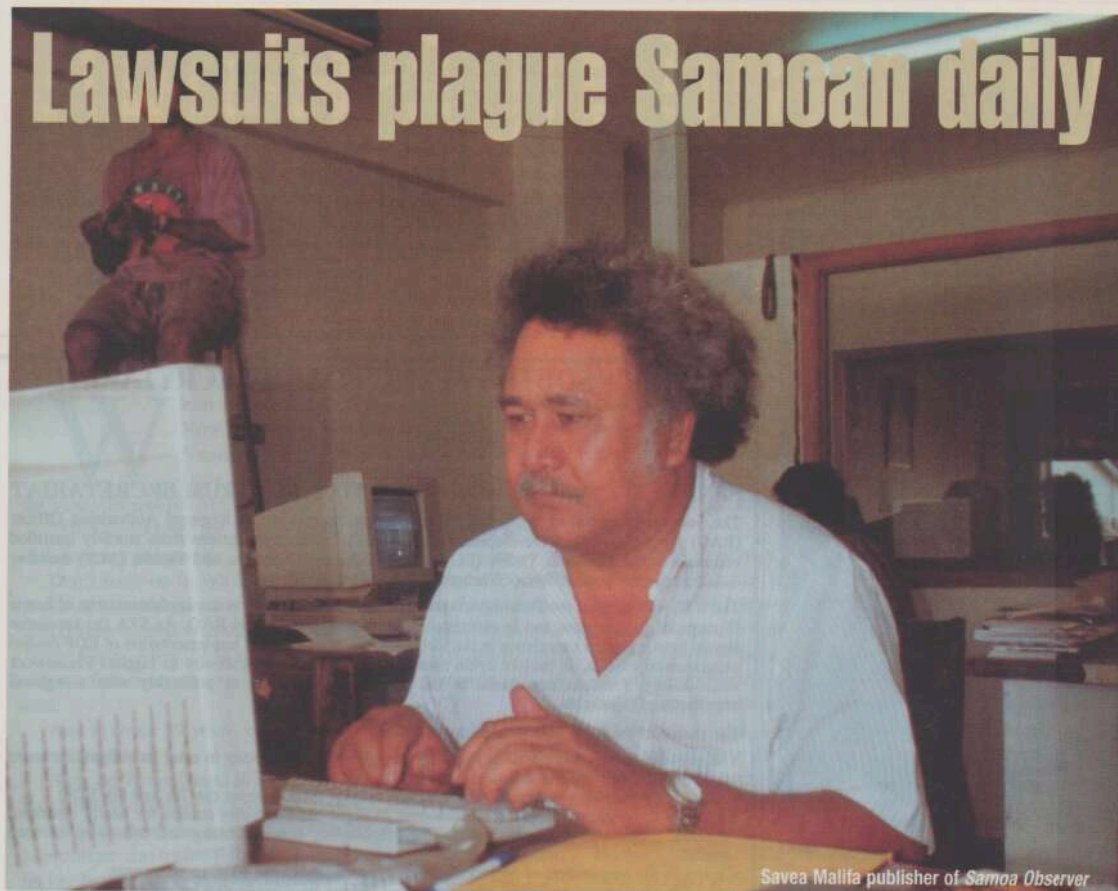
This appointment is funded by the European Development fund and may only be taken up after the financing decision on the project has been taken.

Applications will close on 5 September 1997 and should contain information on education and career background as well as names and full contact addresses of two referees with whom the applicant has been associated with professionally. All applications must be addressed to: The Secretary General, EDF, Regional Authorising Officer, Forum Secretariat, Private Mail Bag, Suva, Fiji.

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■ MEDIA

Lawsuits plague Samoan daily



Savea Malifa publisher of *Samoa Observer*

By **CHRIS PETERU**

Concern is mounting over threats by the Samoan government to stop the country's only daily newspaper from publishing. In a specific reference to the *Samoa Observer* in parliament, Human Rights Protection Party Prime Minister Tofilau Eti Alesana said he wanted to amend the law in order to withhold or refuse licenses to newspapers "that stir up trouble".

"I think the prime minister's unhappy about what's being said in the paper," says publisher Savea Malifa sardonically. The antagonism between the two parties goes back to the 1980s, he said.

Viewed as mainly anti-government, the controversial paper is facing a \$1.6-million stack of lawsuits. These include charges of defamation and criminal libel laid by the PM against Malifa and a Samoan editor, plus contempt of court and

defamation by chief executive officer Richard Gates and Polynesian Airlines.

As a result, Alesana's political and personal reputation had been seriously injured and he had been exposed to ridicule and contempt, defence lawyer Katalaina Sapolu told the supreme court. Similarly, Polynesian's Gates is claiming defamation for an editorial in January following a fatal crash in which three people died when a Twin Otter aircraft careered into a hillside.

For Malifa, the Apia court rooms have become a familiar sight, as have the names of the plaintiffs.

In past years, both the PM and deputy Tuilaepa Malielegaoi have filed huge legal actions against the paper for hundreds of thousands of dollars that were eventually dropped. The paper has responded by calling the lawsuits a despicable campaign of intimidation. Malifa believes the suits are a ploy to squeeze him financially.

"These cases are going to cost a hell of

a lot to defend."

More fiscal pressure was applied last year when the government announced a policy of only advertising in state-owned media.

Inside the house, Malielegaoi described the *Observer* as being run "by a bunch of fools" and referring to the publisher "as an opposition candidate who is still angry at losing in last year's general elections".

"That is very irresponsible – without any basis. It's all political manipulation. I lost because there was a lot of money [illegally] being spent in my constituency on election day," says Malifa.

First published in 1979, support on the street for the *Observer* has tended to run between very strong and slightly bemused. Widely held as the only public forum with a shot at keeping the colourful Tofilau government accountable, it has also shown an ability to offend sections of its readership with some outrageous copy.

FSM media struggle

By
SUSAN PROKOP



O'Sullivan

The saga of Sherry O'Sullivan, former editor of *FSM News*, continues (see "Pressing for freedom" *PIM* June, 1997).

O'Sullivan was on Guam in early June making plans to establish a new publication, *The Micronesia News Magazine*, when she received a letter from FSM immigration invalidating her re-entry permit and stating she would not be allowed back into the country.

Copies of the letter were distributed to all airlines and shipping companies that enter the Federated States of Micronesia. Nevertheless, the embattled journalist vowed to return and file an appeal with the president, Jacob Nena.

The government, however, seems equally resolved to keep her out. The attorney-general's office recently issued an eight-page memorandum justifying the denial of O'Sullivan's entry permit, citing various inconsistencies in representations she made to the immigration service when she first arrived in the islands.

The notice came in response to a letter to Nena from the Committee to Protect Journalists, which has taken up O'Sullivan's cause. The CPJ wrote to the president on her behalf, saying that the effort to expel O'Sullivan was "a blatant violation of the right to 'seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers' guaranteed by Article 19 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights". ■

One infamous editorial last November stated "that women who have been violently abused usually deserve it".

Penned by Malifa, it asked: "Do women enjoy being abused? Many believe that deep down some of them do. It's the primordial instinct at play causing confusion amongst today's advanced thinkers."

Stunned news agencies overseas called local correspondents asking if it was some kind of prank. It wasn't.

Other editorials could best be described as something akin to character assassination rather than thought-provoking treatises on issues or people. Alternatively, a government which refuses to

admit even the smallest indiscretion, promotes supporters with criminal records has earned its reputation as marginalising public interest for its own gain.

Pacific Island News Association president Monica Miller has come out in support of the *Observer* with a public appeal to the government to respect the rights of freedom of speech and information. Nevertheless Malielegaoi called PINA's allegations "absolute rubbish".

"What is being written in the *Observer* in Samoan would be unprintable in English" he told Radio New Zealand.

"The truth hurts you know, the government realises there are people actually reading what is going on, especially the Samoans out in the villages. It frightens them," counters the publisher.

Media sanctions have not been restricted to one publication or person. For years now, the opposition leader Tuiatua Tamasese has been banned from both national radio and television, a move the government frivolously explains is payback for similar treatment when they were in opposition years ago.

"There was one single instance where *Televise Samoa* came to my house and interviewed me. I was told by the television station later that the interview was not aired on specific instructions from the prime minister.

"He is the chief promoter of a ban that has existed for 10 years which makes government media inaccessible to the opposition."

Alesana is "one of the most brutal, tough and cunning political operators in the Pacific", he said.

Neither situation augurs well when it comes to providing the public with informed decisions. Not that the public is in any great hurry to see what goes on after the first-ever broadcasts of parliament went to air on state television recently. This Mecca of visionary decision-making, where journalists are allowed to watch, but not take notes, was for those two sessions punctuated by a mixture of barnyard noises and bar room language, starring the country's two elder statesmen.

Within 10 minutes of the opening prayer, the PM, supposedly a born-again Christian, might have been speaking in tongues when calling Tamasese (a direct royal descendent) a pig, a horse, an adulterer, who was high minded and, when last prime minister, had been a supreme skirt chaser of women in his department. All in one sentence.

Happy to repay the compliment, Tamasese told the nation Alesana was a liar on a global scale and a thief; in fact, "the only PM in the whole world confirmed [in court] as a thief". Little wonder the parliamentary debates have never been screened before.

Significantly government supporters who believe the HRPP chant that Malifa's paper is a payed-up opposition supporter may have short memories. The *Observer* is credited with, in 1981, playing a role in the ousting of Tamasese's government following a 13-week strike by civil servants. Now in opposition and with only nine members of parliament left, they have not been near the Treasury benches since.

"Despite copping all that back then Tuiatua [Tamasese] did not retaliate against the *Observer*. He did not say a thing," recalls Malifa.

"Personally, you get stressed out by all this but if we can no longer scrutinise publicly what the government does, we should bloody well close shop. If we bend to this organised campaign by the government, then there is no point.

"But we will keep on, whatever it takes." ■

■ DECOLONISATION

Flagging powers

By Ian Williams

There's a lot about the United Nations that drives the US Congress to baying distraction – its very existence for one thing. But surprisingly enough for an ex-British colony, one thing that excites them even more is the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation.

Of course, one part of that dislike could be that the committee regularly hears petitioners and reports from American Samoa, the US Virgin Islands, Guam and Puerto Rico.

In particular, the idea of having regional seminars that pay expenses for representatives from the non-self-governing territories reduces some American representatives to paroxysms of rage. With the usual deference of UN bureaucrats to Washington, the UN commissioned a special investigation into the costs of last year's seminar, held in the Caribbean. This year, the committee's response was to decide to hold a seminar on decolonisation in the Pacific next year.

The committee has played a big role in decolonisation in the Pacific but its members all too often give ammunition to their opponents by having dual standards. For example, it is big on self-determination but only when it produces politically acceptable results. So, the Falkland Islanders' own views are of no account in comparison with the 160-year-old legal claim of Argentina.

On the other hand, the view of the 60 or so people on Pitcairn, who have not expressed the slightest interest in changing their present position, are of paramount importance. Of course, it is easier to beat up on a 'traditional' colonial country like

Britain, even though London would dearly like to shuffle off its final responsibilities in most parts of the world if only it could thrust independence on its remaining territories.

Apart from a general disregard of the possibility that southern countries could also be colonialist, there is a reluctance to tweak the beard of powerful neighbours. Last year, for example, PNG Ambassador Utula Utuoc Samona, who is also chairman of the committee, caused a stir by declaring that "the presence of the armed forces of Indonesia is a very positive factor for efforts to raise the well-being of the Timorese people", while on a visit to East Timor. Since many petitioners and governments consider that one of the Indonesian army's achievements was to lower the number of living Timorese by one-third, this understandably raised some controversy.

The ambassador invoked the theological subtleties of diplomacy to explain this away, claiming that he was speaking on behalf of Port Moresby rather than in his chairman's capacity. This year, petitioners agreed that, in fact, he was very fair and supportive to pro-East-Timorese petitioners in the face of a barrage of Indonesian protests. One of the petitioners, Professor Roger Clark of International Law at Rutgers commented, however, that two-thirds of committee members themselves were absent during the East Timorese issue, in contrast, for example, with the relatively full turnout for the Falkland

Islands. He also supported the continuation of the committee in the face of perennial pressure to disband it, usually from the colonial powers put in the dock there. "The demise of the committee would quell the East Timor issue at the UN," he said, adding that he wished the Pacific had been more forthright in getting, for example, the other French Pacific territories enlisted. Ironically, PNG was a major mover in getting New Caledonia inscribed on the list of colonised territories. There is little doubt that the continued

international exposure of the Kanak case in the committee has helped move Paris to a more reasonable position. Discussion on New Caledonia has been held over until next year when the Matignon accords click in – or not.

However, it is instructive to compare the progress made by the Kanaks with the relative silence surrounding the French Polynesian territories which a combination of Pacific inaction and French adroitness have kept off the agenda. No one wanted to upset Paris on this issue. On the other hand, the committee now attracts members such as Iran and Cuba who have no compunction in tweaking the American Eagle's feathers. The issue of Guam has had a steadily higher profile in the UN and the US Congress, as the Chamorros have been comparing their position with other US Pacific territories.

Apart from self-determination, a major issue is the preservation of traditional property rights of Chamorros, especially over the vast areas currently in use by the US military. Laura Torres-Souder, representing the governor of Guam, lamented the time taken by successive US administrations to move on the territory's proposals for regularising its status as a Commonwealth. In particular, she pointed out that US immigration laws in force had allowed an influx of 10,000 immigrants with permanent status. She did not say it but, clearly, the example of New Caledonia shows the dangers of a colonial power allowing the indigenous inhabitants to be swamped by newcomers. Her compatriot, Mark Forbes, the majority leader of the Guam legislature was even more forthright. The legislature and the governor were elected by the people of Guam, but their decision could be overridden by the US government, and while they could send a "congressman" to Washington, he had no voting rights there. When the Pacific seminar does take place next year, there is little doubt there will be a vociferous Chamorro presence, regardless of Washington's displeasure.

It will be interesting to see whether representatives from the uninscribed French territories are allowed a voice. ■



France: It is instructive to compare the progress made by the Kanaks with the relative silence surrounding French Polynesian territories, which a combination of Pacific inaction and French adroitness have kept off the agenda



UK: It is easier to beat up on a 'traditional' colonial country like Britain, even though London would dearly like to shuffle off its final responsibilities in most parts of the world



US: Apart from self-determination, a major issue is the preservation of traditional property rights of Chamorros, especially over the vast areas in use by the US military

■ LAND

Estate of W A R

Villagers and government
battle over plot of land

By **CHRIS PETERU**

A 120-ha block at the heart of a simmering land row in Samoa is essential for the economic survival of a group of villagers. But for the government-owned Samoa Land Corporation, it is the ideal spot for a sports centre.

Unfortunately for the villagers, the law is on the government's side.

"Traditionally, the land belongs to us but legally, it is the government's," concedes High Chief Mailo Sio. "But we will be the poorest village in Samoa if this land is taken off us. There is no fish out on the reef because it has been dredged so sand could be sold; economically it will finish many of us.

"The government has to get its priorities right. They gave themselves big pay rises two months ago, we get booted off the land for growing bananas. We do not want to become criminals, but this is not fair."

While 19 people growing crops illegally on the land were arrested then given bail after eight days in jail, their release has done little to cool police anger at being shot at during the midday raid to evict them. A police bus and jeep were raked with semi-automatic gunfire that whistled down the interior of the bus, narrowly missing the driver and some of those arrested. Although the usual procedure is for the village council to hand over those involved to the police as a gesture of goodwill, the gunmen remain at large.

"These people have done wrong and will face the full weight of the judicial process," said an angry deputy prime minister, Tuilaepa Sailele, who is also chairman of the Samoa Land Corporation. Those arrested claim poor treatment by police while in custody with some being forced to defecate in their cells. High Chief Lava Peti accused Sailele of using "dirty ways" in



Landmark battle ... the Vaiusu dispute - Picture by Chris Peteru

dealing with the village. "Maybe the prime minister has a mind to give us this land, but it is the minister of finance - he does bad things for our village he is the one urging this." Tensions over the land have been building for some time.

Last October, attempts by the government to fence off the land ended after villagers tore the fencing down, then fired warning shots on White Sunday, the country's main religious festival. Despite the show of firepower, some Vaiusu villagers feared the possibility of murderous reprisals by relatives or friends of the police in retaliation. Firearms training for police by the New Zealand army and orders for more modern weapons are being interpreted as an ominous sign that stronger state tactics are in the pipeline. While shooting at police officers was not condoned by the Vaiusu Village Council, High Chief Mailo Sio believes the options to remain on the land are fast running out.

"We are trying to avoid violence, nobody wants to kill anybody."

Despite the arrests, 20 families still live on the disputed area, angering government officials but holding to the village's declaration that it will not vacate the land regardless of government pressure. But not everyone supports them. Several *matai* and their extended families have come out in support of the government position, splintering the village unity traditionally held as crucial to the success of any venture.

"It's an opportunity for the government because the people are not united, but this is way beyond politics," says villager Henry Taliva'a. With no legal recourse such as the Waitangi tribunal, the odds of Vaiusu winning in court are small.

Ancestral ownership of the Tuinaimato

land ended when Germany arrived at the turn of the century buying off huge tracts. New Zealand then took over Samoa during the world war and the purchased lands became the New Zealand Reparation Estates. Before independence, the NZRP became Western Samoa Trust Estates Corporation. Massive corruption and mismanagement kneecapped WSTEC financially who, last year, transferred most of its land assets to the newly formed Samoa Land Corporation. With local archives mostly in disarray, proof of land alienation by Vaiusu in order to take the moral high ground would be a difficult task.

"We are not going to step backwards because we have planted and harvested crops here and it has been good to us. Whatever the situation between the village and the government, we will not retreat or show weakness," says Chief Maalona Maalo. "The government position remains unchanged, that land belongs to the government and these people are trespassing," emphasised Sailele. He added there were reasonable legal procedures in place for Vaiusu to seek compensation.

For its part, the government's refusal to back down is understandable given the uncomfortable choice it will eventually have to make. By refusing to negotiate with Vaiusu, it will inevitably face more armed stand-offs with many other villages unlawfully farming on Samoa Land Corporation property. Giving in to villagers' demands would set a precedent for dozens of claims for land acquired questionably by the government.

The refusal of either party to sit down and talk suggests the sound of more gunfire will be heard long before any kind of settlement is reached.

■ ADVERTISING FEATURE

■ MOTORING

Car wars

Dealers are facing tough times ... but all they're fighting for, they say, is efficient regulation

Having to contend with high tariffs, declines in the economy and a competitive market, it is no smooth jaunt for Fiji's motoring industry, at least not as far as car dealers are concerned. But while competition is always tough for dealers, the consumer is blessed with the luxury of choice.

The split in the market lies mainly between new car dealers and second-hand dealers. While the one can offer the latest technology – at a price; the latter is able to offer tested and tried models – usually at a lower price.

Most second-hand cars imported from Japan are tested for road worthiness before they are certified. But a recent scandal in New Zealand to do with the winding back of odometers in imported

used cars has cast a dark cloud of suspicion over the local market, with speculation that



Dutta: Not all imported spare parts are the genuine items they are often sold as

such practices may also exist in Fiji.

The Fiji Motor Traders Association (FMTA) has been lobbying government for stricter regulations on the import of sec-

ond-hand cars.

Daljeet Singh, general manager of Nivis Motors, dealers of the Mitsubishi range of vehicles, feels the pinch of duties charged on new cars.

"The high duty rates are a problem which causes the cost of vehicles to go up," Singh said.

It cannot be said that the government has not attempted to alleviate this problem for importers of new cars. Tariffs, Singh explained, depended on the vehicle's engine capacity. Last year's budget dropped duty on cars under two litres from 60 to 50 per cent and duty on cars over two litres from 80 to 60 per cent.

"But these duties are still very high," Singh maintains.

"We have been lobbying for a reduction and government was good to us last year in that they reduced duty by 10 per cent," FMTA secretary Jean Ragg said. "We would like to see the tariffs go down further but we have to be realistic about it because government needs to make revenue some how."

The other problem affecting the market is crooked car dealers.

Roger Powell, national operations manager of Carpenters Motors, expressed concern over customers buying cars believing them to be

newer than they actually are.

"Government has to go back to a domestic three-year age to stop all sorts of rubbish coming in," Powell said. Crooked



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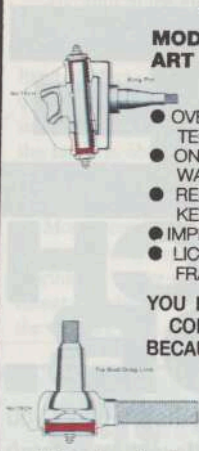
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dealers are also having an impact on the spare-parts market. According to Unique Motor Spares company director Victor Dutta, not all imported spare parts were the genuine items they were often sold as, and proved to be more trouble than they were worth. "Yes, they are cheap all right and more people can afford them." But in the long run, they work out to be more expensive because they have a shorter life than genuine parts do and, in many cases, last only a few months, he says.

"The importation of these parts hasn't really killed business but has slowed it down a great deal. Usually what happens is that people buy these parts the first few times but when they realise it is costing them more, they come to us."

He said he did not see the need for a complete ban on such parts but called on government to have in place some sort of rules and regulations which would control the type and life of parts brought in.

"What happens is that when a consumer with a second-hand car has problems with his car, he realises he needs parts which are sometimes not available from where he bought his car. So what he does is go to genuine dealers expecting them to have the necessary parts, and what happens in some cases is that the dealers don't have the parts these people are looking for because they don't bring in the particular model of car," Ragg said.

"So here the consumer gets annoyed; one - because his dealer doesn't have the part, and two - because his vehicle can't be used until the parts are changed."

Ragg is a strong advocate of the use of number plates to differentiate between new and used cars.

"What is happening right now is that whatever vehicles are brought into the country are being given brand new number plates - these include second-hand and reconditioned cars.

"When this happens, there is no way the customer can identify which car is new and which is not.

"It's a matter of letting the public know that they have to be aware of what they are purchasing with respect to second-hand vehicles.

"We want separate number plates for second-hand cars. There was a time when these cars were given number plates beginning with 'D' and 'E'."

However, this saw much protest from second-hand dealers, who believed the move was discriminatory. The matter land-

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ed in court and was ruled in favour of second-hand dealers.

"In the new legislation, the traffic bill, which is still to be passed, there are recommendations which state that to be a bona fide operator dealers must have a showroom, suitable workshop, proper panel shop, proper block and tackle (for lifting engines out of the car) and [adhere to safety regulations]," Ragg said.

"There will also be a grading system - A, B, C."

To qualify as an A, the dealer would need to have the whole setup, B would mean the dealer has the showroom plus workshop and C would mean the dealer has just a showroom, Ragg said. "And, of course, they must have spare parts."

Ragg said the FMTA was waiting for the bill to be legislated and said it had been 18 months since being presented to government.

"The point to keep in mind is that we are not against second-hand cars." The FMTA's opposition, she said, had to do



Singh: "The high duty rates are a problem"

with the difficulty of maintaining such cars.

The association has recommended that government not allow the import of vehicles more than three years old. "That would mean a reasonably new vehicle is coming into the country."

As for allegations of odometers being turned back, "I don't know how this problem could ever be solved but what I feel is that these meters should be sealed - which means when a mechanic checks the engine he would be able tell whether someone has tampered with it or not," Ragg suggests.

Powell agrees that the high numbers of cars being brought into the country increased competition and allowed more people to own cars. But the point, he said, was that there should be better screening of the types of vehicles brought in. Singh agrees. Only with proper rules and regulations would there be proper control, he said.

Ragg sums it up by saying: "We know we can't stop the consumer from buying what he wants. But what we can do is make him aware of what is available in the market and why they should be more careful when buying such cars." ■

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Leading the unleaded

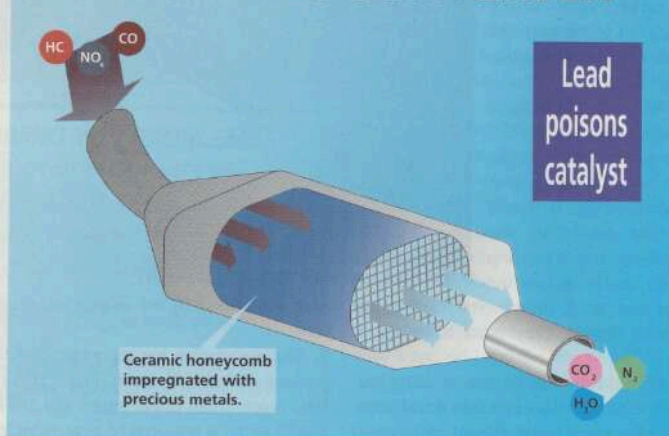
In keeping with the environmentally friendly practices, the world is coming under increasing pressures to implement and, in an effort to control air pollution in the island country, Fiji has marked the end of the century as the end for leaded fuel.

All cars on Fiji roads are expected to run on unleaded petrol by 1999.

And Shell Fiji Limited has already taken steps towards preparing the market in this important transition. Early last month, the multinational company launched Shell Formula unleaded fuel.

Sefa Nawadra, the company's health, safety and environment manager, said the introduction of unleaded fuel into the Fijian market showed the country was moving along with current world trends.

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What is it?

Shell Formula is simply a grade of petrol produced with no lead-based additives as compared to super or leaded petrol.

The technology behind the production of unleaded fuel does not require lead for refining purposes.

Lead is a neurotoxin capable of poisoning brain cells, with children and babies at most risk, affecting IQ development in children – dangerously.

Nawadra said that by the end of 1999

all fuel brought into the country would have to be unleaded and all cars brought in have to have catalytic converters in order for them to be able to run on this fuel.

"But this shouldn't worry drivers as the vast majority of cars that are running on Fiji roads were designed to run on lead-free petrol," he said.

"The cars which come here are Japanese and Japan has been using unleaded fuel since 1972.

But because they have to send cars to Fiji, they have to change parts inside the

converters to make them suitable to the Fiji market."

Lead-free petrol was quite simply better for cars, people and the environment, he said.

The catalytic converter

The catalytic converter "looks like a small muffler which helps to change the harmful gases which can be emitted by a vehicle to become less harmful gases", Nawadra explained.

"The inside of a catalytic converter is made of a honeycomb structure inside which are raw metals. These are randomly arranged.

"The fuel has oxides of nitrogen, carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons.

"When these gases go through the converter [they are hot gases], they react with the rare metals and come out as carbon dioxide, water and nitrogen.

"These are all naturally occurring elements."

And the reason leaded fuel could not be used in this process was because lead reacted with raw metals and did not come out as gas – which would cause the vehicles to have problems.

There are many other advantages to using lead-free fuel, Nawadra adds.

The advantages

One is that fuel consumption will improve if unleaded fuel is used.

"Fuel consumption is likely to improve even more in models with fuel injectors."

While many countries around the world have been using lead-free fuel for over 15 years, Fiji is the first independent island nation to use it.

And, with its introduction to Fiji, the fuel will soon be available in Tonga and Niue where Fiji supplies fuel.

But, Nawadra cautioned, cars which take diesel cannot use unleaded fuel. Unleaded fuel is already being sold at Shell outlets throughout Fiji.

The other advantages of moving towards unleaded fuel, Nawadra says, are:

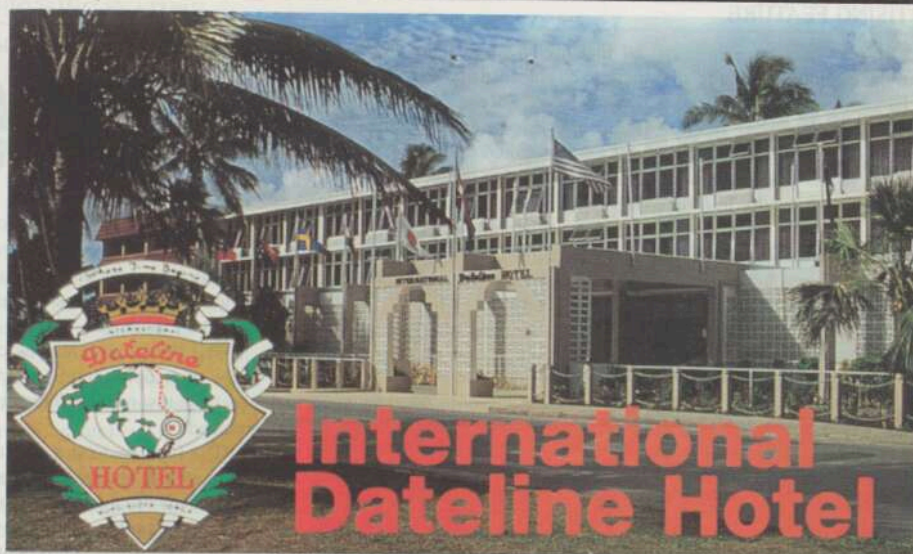
- it improves car performance;
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■ TONGA

Steel magnolias

Named after the Tongan flower, Miss Heilala is hardy as well as beautiful

For any Tongan, the month of July is most significant. It is a time for celebration as it marks the birthday of the Tongan King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV. The event is celebrated with much pomp and ceremony and is one time of the year when work is forgotten, and dancing, singing and merrymaking are the order of the day.

To mark this important event on the Tongan calendar, the festival of Heilala is held in June/July to coincide with the king's birthday.

Brass bands, military parades and floats, traditional dancing, choral festivals, sporting events and a fishing tournament



1997 Miss Heilala hopefuls - Pictures Shabana Naaz

are just part of the fun and frenzy in the otherwise laid-back island kingdom.

Perhaps the highlight of the festival is the Heilala beauty pageant. The Miss

Heilala Pageant has become the major focus of the festival.

Each year, eligible young women of Tonga are joined by aspiring contestants from Tongan communities in Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America in the glamorous battle for the Miss Heilala title. This year saw 14 young women contesting the coveted title; including one from Australia and five from New Zealand. The aspiring beauties were sponsored by various sectors of the business communities of Tonga, Australia and New Zealand. The festival was first held in 1979 with Crown Prince Tupouto'a's search for the ultimate celebration of the king's birthday.

The festival has since grown to become the event of the year.

The five categories paving the path up to the prestigious Miss Heilala Crown are designed to identify the single most suit-

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able woman of the year to be relegated the responsibility as Tonga's roving ambassador of relaying to the world what Tonga is. Miss Heilala is Tonga personified. Miss Heilala is the representative of the world's smallest island kingdom's tourism industry, expected to join delegations to world trade shows and promotions and participating in promotional activities organised by the festival's major sponsors. And just what are the makings of Tonga's woman of the year?

Events leading up to the crowning glory – private luncheon interviews, the Miss Heilala Ball and talent quests – are each one of them a test for the next Miss Heilala.

Certainly, a certain amount of glamour and sophistication is

sought. But the search is not for beauty without brain.

The young women are judged on their communication skills, knowledge of both the English and Tongan languages, Tongan culture, general knowledge ... and charisma and personality.

While each aspect is given equal importance and perhaps part of the universal judging criteria for such contests, what is unique to the Tongan festival occurs on the Miss Tau'olunga evening.

The Tau'olunga is the classical solo dance of Tongan culture, traditionally performed by the daughters of the royal family and nobility. Each facet of the performance – costume, movement, grace and charm of both dance and dancer – is studied.

The Tau'olunga is more than a dance, it is an expression of what is the essence of Tongan culture – a skilful blend of beauty, skill and modesty. All is not glamour and gloss. But despite what, as in most pageants, can sometimes become a hard and harrowing experience, becoming the woman of the nation is no small gain.

The winners of the title this year were:

Miss Heilala – Anita Siosi'ana Lavulo Robert, Miss Good Samaritan Inn;

First runner-up – Cathrine McAuley Fifita, Miss Pacific Royal Hotel;

Second runner-up – Eileen Fuifuimanu 'o Vaolahi 'Ofamo'oni, Miss Kafaola Cultural Group;

Third runner-up – Aspasia Cathrine Vaka, Miss International Dateline Hotel;

Miss Tau'olunga – Sinitalela Lufe, Miss Lady Maria's Boutique; Runner-up – Tania Margaret Sharkey, Miss S Mata'afa and Sons Ltd;

Best costume – 'Ana Fakalelu Ngata, Miss Tali'eva Nite Club;

Miss Ball Gown – Cathrine McAuley Fifita.

Winners of the Miss Heilala Talent Quest

1st – 'Ana Fakalelu Ngata, Miss Tali'eva Nite Club;

2nd – Anita Siosi'ana Lavulo Robert, Miss Good Samaritan Inn;

3rd – Aspasia Cathrine Vaka, Miss International Dateline Hotel. ■



Heilala

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The era of King Tupou IV

Reign and shine

When His Majesty King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV ascended the Tongan throne on July 4, 1967, Tongan leaders hailed the event as the dawn of a new era. And, 30 years later, his reign is judged on the innovative projects implemented to encourage tourism and foreign investment, the establishment of a small industries centre, explorations for oil and underwater minerals, the free movement of regional and international telecommunications and the acquisition of more land in the region for Tongan farmers.

King Tupou IV, 79, is a direct descendent of the late King George Tupou I, who was styled by historians as the founder of modern Tonga.

Born on July 4, 1918, King Tupou IV was the eldest son of Queen Salote Tupou and Prince Viliami Tunigi Mailefihi.

He was educated at a special primary school established by the Free Wesleyan Church in Nuku'alofa. In 1927, he entered Tupou College at Nafualu, the first secondary school to be established in the South Pacific – in 1866. The college was also run by the Free Wesleyan Church. During his years at Tupou College, the current head of the world's smallest island kingdom, was an outstanding student and sportsman.

After completing his early education, he went to Australia to Newington College in Sydney. The next step was the University of Sydney where he became the first Tongan to receive a university degree – a Bachelor of Arts and LLB.

Being the keen mathematician that he is, the king is a member of the International Mathematics Association. But his interests also lie in music and, while he was the minister for education in the mid-40s, he wrote a booklet on reading the English musical notation and its translation into the Tongan notation system.

On his 78th birthday last year, the king was presented the World Peace Award, recognising him as a human cultural asset and member of peace.

Tonga's three ancient lines of kings, the Tu'i Tonga, Tu'i Ha'atakalaua and the Tu'i Kanokupolu have been united in Taufa'ahau Tupou IV, making him the country's paramount traditional leader. Tracing back through the royal genealogy shows his grandfather, Tupou II, married Lavenia of the Tu'i Tonga line, with their daughter, Salote, who became Tupou III, uniting the Tu'i Tonga and Tu'i Kanokupolu lines.

Queen Salote Tupou III married the highest chief of the Ha'atakaloua so that her children brought together all three lineages.

The royal couple have four children; the eldest, the Crown Prince Tupouto'a, followed by their only daughter and two other sons.



The king sets the pace for health & fitness in Tonga - Pictures: Courtesy of TCSP

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Boosting trade

September 16 will see the beginning of a new trade era with the opening of the Tonga/Fiji Trade and Tourism Fair in Suva, Fiji.

The trade fair is the result of two years of negotiation between the two countries, leading to the Tonga/Fiji bilateral trade agreement.

Trade between the two island nations is

not new: "Tonga supplied mercenary warriors to warring Fijian chiefs and even through ancient rituals, such as reserving the daughter of the Tui Tonga for marriage to the Tui Lakeba as she was considered too sacred for marriage to any Tomgan. In return, Tonga obtained sandalwood for scent and great double canoes as the wood was not available in Tonga" (Siers 1990).

The trade fair is being organised by TongaTrade with assistance from the Fiji Trade and Investment Board and the Forum Secretariat.

TongaTrade was officially inaugurated on January 16 as a division of the Ministry of Labour, Commerce and Industries.

TongaTrade was established to promote and facilitate the export of Tongan products. The organisation is funded by the government of Tonga and the Asian Development Bank and has a staff of five, including two overseas advisers, Garth Atkinson and Nicholas Freeland.

Recent experience with exports of bananas, vegetables and squash led to the realisation that Tonga was in a very vulnerable position as an exporter of agricultural products and subject to a boom-and-bust approach.

The principal goal of TongaTrade is to identify markets which are appropriate to Tonga's productive capacity and to develop an environment which encourages private-sector investment in export industries.

Its establishment is an important and critical step along the pathway towards trade independence and the ability of Tonga to shape its own economic destiny.

In the past, geographic isolation and weak market signals have been cited as the major reasons for Tonga's inability to establish itself in markets and maintain market positions.

By providing up-to-date information which can be readily disseminated, TongaTrade hopes to provide the private sector with a competitive advantage.

Tonga has an advantage over larger, more industrialised countries in that it is very easy and cost effective to spread information in Tonga.

Its size also means it is able to react more quickly to market changes than larger.

The establishment of TongaTrade is an important and critical step along the pathway towards trade independence and the ability of Tonga to shape its own economic destiny. ■



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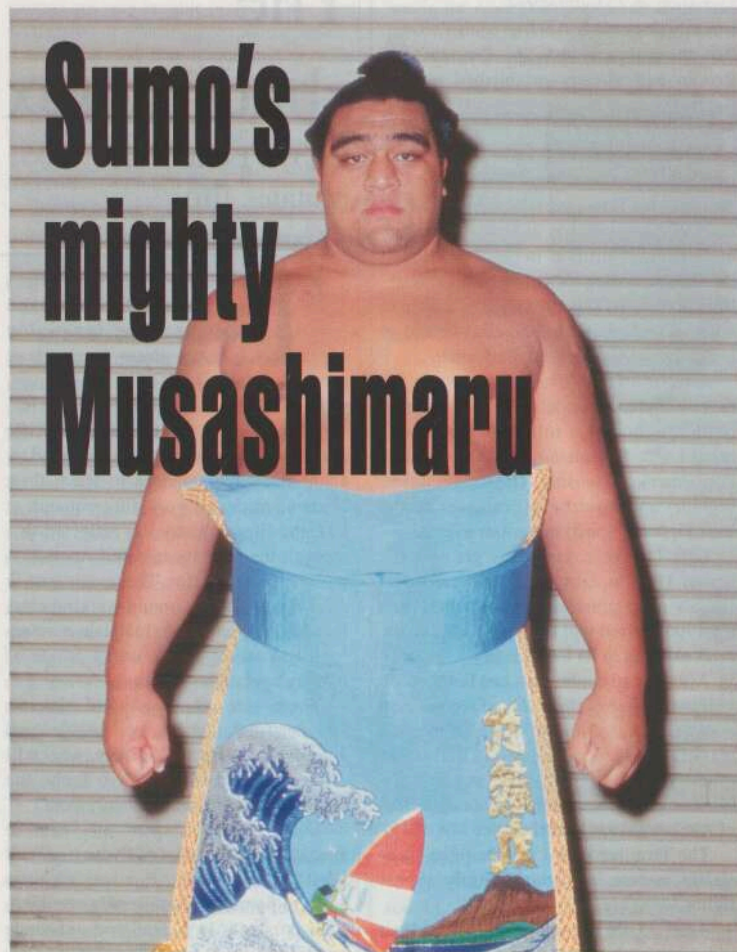
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■ SPORTS



By ATAMA RAGANIVATU

It is surely a great paradox that Tonga, named the Friendly Islands by Captain Cook and whose people are renowned for their congeniality, should produce so many exponents of gladiatorial sports in which hostility is regarded as a virtue.

Tonga, despite a population of just over 100,000, has long been able to boast champions at boxing, professional wrestling, rugby union, rugby league and American football. To that impressive list can now be added Japan's national sport, sumo. That a Tongan could even participate in sumo, one of Japan's most quintessential traditions, would have been unthinkable only a few years ago. Historians can trace sumo back to 23 BC, but an ancient myth

insists that the Japanese gained possession of their homeland with a Shinto god defeating an aborigine in the very first sumo bout many centuries earlier.

In 858 AD, succession to the Japanese throne is believed to have been determined by a sumo contest between two aristocrats. Earliest fights were to the death.

Sumo has changed very little in the interim, apart from fatalities being far fewer. Contestants observe an ancient and solemn ritual before each match commences. They enter the 12-foot-diameter circular ring (known as *dohyo*) wearing colourful aprons, which are lifted to exorcise evil spirits, raise their arms to prove they are not carrying weapons, and accept a ladle of water from the winner of the previous bout to share his luck and to purify

their mouths. The wrestlers (*rikishi*) are clad only in silken girdles after discarding their aprons, and prepare for the fight by crouching, clapping (to rouse the gods), turning their palms up and thereby confirming they are unarmed, stamping their feet to scare demons, scattering salt (for further purification) and staring fiercely at each other.

These preambles last longer than the actual contest, which formally commences when the antagonists simultaneously touch the floor and launch themselves towards each other. They then attempt to win by either toppling their opponent (only the soles of the feet are allowed to have contact with the ground) or forcing him from the ring. Forty-eight official techniques are permitted to accomplish this.

The winner, before leaving the ring and collecting his monetary reward, thanks earth, man and heaven with his hand in a chopping motion – to the left, right and centre. Further reminders of sumo's place in Japanese culture and history come in the form of the *rikishi*'s topknot hairstyle, a legacy from the time the sport was practised only by *samurai*, and the Shinto priest garb worn by the referees (*gyoi*).

Sumo evolved from the ruling elite's favourite martial art to entertainment for the masses in the 16th century, when aristocrats commenced sponsoring stables of wrestlers – a whole 200 years before British lords began supporting prizefighters in a similar manner. By 1700, competitive sumo was established throughout Japan.

It remained a strictly exclusive Japanese discipline until the 70s, when Hawaiian Jesse Kuhaulua appeared in leading tournaments. Kuhaulua himself made few waves. However, he recruited Salevaa Atisanoe for sumo and, in doing so, changed the sport's face, probably forever.

Samoan Atisanoe weighed 270 kgs – 70 kgs heavier than the biggest Japanese *rikishi* – and gained the nickname "dump truck". For several years, he dominated sumo but, because of several confrontations with officials, failed to gain the sport's greatest accolade – *yokozuna*.

Yokozuna is an honour acquired both through achievements in the *dohyo* and demeanour outside it. Atisanoe, known in Japan as Konishiki, did not shy from making contentious statements (particularly about the racism he perceived in Japan).

SPORTS

He often failed to attend functions he was required to, saw no reason to present a positive image to the media and rarely complied with the wishes of administrators.

On several occasions, Atisanoe came close to forcing the sports administrative body, the Nihon Sumo Kyokai, to confer the *yokozuna* title upon him by performances alone before the Samoan's size began to sap his strength. By 1993 he was a spent force.

In January of that year, Hawaiian Chad Rowan became the first foreign *yokozuna*. Rowan, whose professional name is Akebono, possessed all the social skills the sumo establishment believed to be lacking in Atisanoe and few quibbled over his promotion.

Tonga's Fiemalu Penitani is the third Pacific Islander to distinguish himself in sumo. Often overshadowed by Atisanoe and Rowan in the past, his victory late last year in the President's Cup – one of the six major 15-day tournaments staged annually – suggests he is now ready to come to the force.

Although born in Hawaii, Penitani regards the Tongan village of Houma his home and, like many Tongan Hawaiians, his first sporting love was American football. In 1989, he had to choose between a contract to play football with a Pasadena-based college or an opening in sumo. He plumped for the latter and has yet to have cause to regret it.

Penitani originally travelled to Japan to offer moral support for Nathan Strange, a Hawaiian wrestler hailed as a great prospect in sumo. However, Strange could not adjust to the lifestyle and soon returned home. Penitani stayed – despite experiencing many tribulations whilst learning the Japanese language – and eventually prospered.

Given the 'fighting name' of Musashimaru and dubbed "the Terminator" by sumo fans, he made his professional debut in September, 1989.

Because of continuing problems with the Japanese tongue, Penitani experienced difficulty understanding sumo's more complex techniques and even some of its easier ones.

He once lost his balance when in the crouching position *rikishi* adopt towards the end of the compulsory preliminaries and commenced a contest prematurely. He was disqualified and fined \$US900.

That was a rare setback though and, in 1994, he gained promotion to the second-

highest ranking in sumo, *ozeki*, after appearing in 27 tournaments.

Only one man had achieved this sooner; Rowan required just 26. Penitani and Rowan had already established a great rivalry.

A year earlier, the Tongan ruined Akebono's hopes of a rare 100 per cent record in a tournament at Fukuoka. He also defeated his Hawaiian adversary to win an unofficial competition in Honolulu, which offered \$US1 million in prize money. At the season-closing Emperor's Cup, though, Rowan took the title, leaving Musashimaru with second place and the consolation of being named Outstanding Performer.

July, 1994 saw Musashimaru win his first official tournament in Nagoya. A string of minor honours followed as he was named *Shukunsho* (Outstanding Performer), *Ginosho* (Best Technical Fighter) and *Kantoshō* (Possessor of the Best Fighting Spirit) in various events.

Late last year, came his greatest triumph. The Emperor's Cup is regarded as sumo's most prestigious tournament and the 1996 version will be remembered as the most exciting in its long history.

After the 16 contestants had fought each other once, five of them shared top position with 11 wins and four losses. This meant a play-off was required, in which Musashimaru won all his three bouts – including a particularly satisfactory defeat of Akebono – to claim the title.

The Terminator now has the prize every *rikishi* covets, *yokozuna*, firmly in his sights.

Aged 25, he can expect to have at least two more peak years and, unlike Atisanoe, his 202 kgs within a 191cm-tall frame should not betray him as he approaches the veteran stage.

Musashimaru's major strengths are his agility, a powerful pushing attack, an uncompromising attitude, a whirlwind style and the ability to immediately seize the initiative.

However, he laughingly claims, his most important weapon to be the intimidating stare inflicted upon opponents prior to battle. "I practise it before every fight," he insists.

Musashimaru's humour reflects the amiability that many believe to be a natural characteristic of the Tongan people.

As sumo's greatest reward requires both athletic ability and charm, perhaps Tonga should henceforth be known as "the Yokozuna Islands". ■

ENTERTAINMENT

The shadowbox

Robyn Loau's art imitates life

By ATAMA RAGANIVATU

The few feature films depicting Pacific Island people have invariably shown them living free of all stress in idyllic surroundings, with an abundance of nature's gifts.

Of course, life for many Pacific Islanders, particularly those compelled by economic circumstances to leave their home countries, is very different and, at last, the film industry has reflected this through the recently released Australian presentation *Idiot Box*. The female lead in *Idiot Box* is Lani, a young working-class Samoan girl battling to maintain a meaningful existence in the urban jungle of Sydney's western suburbs.

There are thousands of Pacific Islanders in Auckland, Los Angeles and Honolulu, as well as Sydney, who will relate easily to Lani. Robyn Loau, the actress portraying her, certainly does.

Loau, who has spent 19 years in Blacktown in the heart of Sydney's 'Wild West', admits: "*Idiot Box* was a bit too close to home for me, literally speaking. Lani is caught in a dead-end existence and I could easily have slipped into a similar lifestyle – which a lot of my friends have."

As well as having witnessed at close quarters the social problems depicted in *Idiot Box*, Loau encountered the same racial taunts Lani faces in the movie. She was forced into leaving one school because of the intolerance of some class 'mates'.

"I suffered a lot from racism in the 1980s," she says. "I copped a fair amount of it. It's a lot better now, but it was amazing to discover just how narrow minded people could be."

However, Loau believes that her Blacktown upbringing had a positive factor in moulding her character. "It made me harden up and go out and get the things I want," she now reflects.

"Coming from a working-class back-

ENTERTAINMENT

ground made me hungry for success. My parents are very humble people. They have no degrees or education or qualifications. I don't come from a well-educated or financially stable family and I've had to fight for what I want. Nothing was given to me. Being from that environment made me a lot tougher and streetwise. Not much fazes me."

Blacktown may have helped her foster a fighting spirit, but the single-mindedness she often displays first came to the fore when Loau was five years old and still residing in her birthplace, Wanganui, New Zealand. "I caught the entertainment bug by watching an old black-and-white Shirley Temple film," she remembers with a laugh. "I told my mum, 'That's what I want to do' and from then I threw my heart and soul into it. I started off by singing, dancing and performing in countless talent shows."

The Loau family moved to Sydney a year later and, despite their lack of money, Robyn's always supportive parents sent her to a private school specialising in the performing arts. When in her early teens, she bet her brother \$100 that she would be famous before 21.

The wager was won with two years to spare.

Loau's earliest work as a professional entertainer was at a theme park and, while there, an agent seeking recruits for a five-girl singing and dancing group 'spotted' her.

The group was named Girlfriend and, despite ridicule from professional critics for their sweet and wholesome image, they achieved immense popularity in Australia.

Girlfriend's debut single reached number one in the Australian pop music charts and they won national awards for Best New Act, Most Popular Act and Best Dance



Loau: "Idiot Box was a bit too close to home for me"

Album.

After achieving the initial success she sought, Loau outgrew Girlfriend and looked towards further challenges. Playing Lani was the first of these and she landed the role after outshining 50 other hopefuls during a series of auditions.

Loau has an anecdote about the premiere of *Idiot Box* which illustrates a dif-

ference in values becoming apparent between the new generation of urban-raised Pacific Islanders and traditionally minded parents. During the showing of a bedroom scene in which she has a prominent part, Loau noticed her father standing aghast in a corner "as if he was in a trance".

"Mum realised such things are all part of acting," she added, "but Dad was deeply embarrassed."

Despite Dad's concern at her willingness to embrace western ideals, Loau cherishes her family and her Samoan background, readily acknowledging the parts they played in making her the acclaimed entertainer she is today. Loau fondly recalls her parents singing while accompanying themselves on guitars at clubs and pubs in Blacktown, her sister playing the piano at home and her brother's "ability on virtually every instrument". She initially learnt to harmonise while driving to church with the clan and fully appreciates the extent of the financial sacrifices her mother and father made, "in true Samoan tradition", in order for her to cultivate the talents she showed when an infant.

Having put the Girlfriend career phase behind her, Loau's debut solo album, *Malaria*, signals a return to her roots.

According to the publicity material circulated prior to the album's release, it is "an eclectic mix of music from the South Pacific - a tribute to her heritage and a tribute to her father who has just been made a chief of his village in Samoa".

The desire to explore her musical birthright also led to Loau's appointment as vocal coordinator of Siva Pacifica, a World Music project combining traditional Melanesian and Polynesian chants, customary songs and vocalised myths. So extensive was the work on this, the Siva Pacifica team travelled to villages which had received no European visitor since the early 1950s.

Loau provided a further indication of where her heart lies when she stated recently that part of the proceeds from the sales of *Malaria* would finance the purchase of a four-wheel-drive vehicle for her father's home village. If Loau is typical of the new breed of modern, urbanised and exiled Samoans, then her country's culture is in good hands. ■

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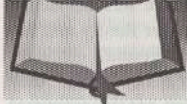
The Nature Conservancy is seeking a Manager for its Solomon Islands conservation program, based in Honiara. The incumbent will be responsible for implementation of the existing community based projects, building local capacity for conservation and managing the field office and staff. Interested persons should contact Peter Thomas, South Pacific Program Director, for a job description.

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■ LITERATURE

Politics of art

BOOK REVIEW



By **NICOLAS
ROTHWELL**

Contemporary Art in Papua New Guinea begins with a resonant quote from politician Bernard Narokobi, one of the most impassioned architects of the nation.

"Our contemporary artists will pass into history as our artists, our visionaries, our prophets in our time. Our art should be seen and enjoyed and our artists appreciated for what they are and not for whom or what they resemble."

Susan Cochrane, one of the leading scholars of contemporary Pacific art, follows this advice carefully in her definitive overview of the many forms of artistic expression in PNG today; painting, *bilum*-making, self-decoration, sculpture and architecture all receive her attention.

She provides a capsule account of the colonial era, showing how vital were the village roots of modern PNG art, before addressing the transformations in national life following independence in 1975.

For the first generation of western-educated and trained artists and intellectuals, art and literature inevitably reflected the political temper of the times; but this pattern of engaged art was overlaid on another tradition: "The integration of all art forms is inherent in PNG cultures," writes Dr Cochrane.

"In western culture, separate education and cultural institutions exist for the display and performance of visual and performance arts and individuals are highly specialised in a particular art form, although they may appreciate others.

"In many PNG and other indigenous cultures, specialisation reflects an intensive knowledge of a particular aspect of a complex, holistic, cultural environment."



Many strands of creative activity in PNG, Dr Cochrane argues, are interlinked in the endeavour of making and describing the transformation of the people and their nation into its modern cultural identity.

The key artistic heroes of this process – figures such as Akis from Madang Province, Highlander Mathias Kauage, Joe Nalo from Manus and Trobriand Islander Martin Morububuna – are discussed at length and their works, often startling combinations of traditional and modern motifs, are illustrated.

During this quick tour of Dr Cochrane's eclectic "artists' gallery", some of the splendours of PNG painting are on view, and many of its anomalies: why, for instance, do Highland artists specialise in humour and savage wit; and why are so many modern PNG artists originally from a small area of the Central Highlands, a part of the nation considered the least sophisticated in its visual arts?

Sculpture presents Dr Cochrane with more problems – partly because PNG

sculpture is still in its infancy and partly because the glory of traditional PNG sculpted objects – funerary masks, Haus Tambaran facades, elaborately carved lintels and posts – lingers in the memory. Inevitably, modern PNG sculpture, even in the most exotic of materials, both departs from this tradition and stands in its shadow.

One particularly poignant illustration shows the spectacular Malanggan canoe carved in New Ireland by Hosea Linge between 1994 and 1995; a work viewed by some critics when it was exhibited in Australia as the most important reinterpretation of the Malanggan tradition for several generations.

"Until very recently," comments Dr Cochrane, "the overriding interest and perception in the western art world of what constitutes New Guinean sculpture was confined to a narrow band of objects made famous by modernist art movements and the passions of collectors in Europe and the USA in the first half of this century."

■ LITERATURE

Today, however, she reports, "western scholarship and art appreciation" is open to a broader interpretation of what constitutes sculpture in PNG: the fluid spirit-birds made from welded steel by Gickmai Kundun, for example, or Tom Deko's *Dynamite Rocker* of steel and scrap metal.

Ceremonial dance and *bilum*-weaving receive proper attention as female art forms and carriers of a new idea of national identity: a "neo-traditional symbol" of PNG unity. Perhaps the most spectacular exploration of this theme to date, though, is the Parliament House in Port Moresby, a collective artistic and architectural enterprise that exemplifies "the philosophy of merging heritage with modernisation" – a physical representation of cultural policy.

In a striking pendant to Dr Cochrane's survey from the outside, a closing chapter written by Michael Mel, a teacher of expressive arts born in the western Highlands, narrates from the inside the experience of the art of *bilas* – self-decoration.

The meaning of *bilas* in the contemporary world may have changed, but the art survives, and "to impose and maintain the claim that one meaning is richer, more original than the bastardised version is a dangerous enterprise".

In his detailed account, Mel describes the change within as he puts on his finery for a ceremonial performance: "I felt flighty, free and loose. I felt as if I had given way to a new skin in place of an old one... I sensed a lightness and at the same time an elaborateness."

Mel's story forms a striking and elegant ending for an important survey of a new stage in the drama of PNG art.

Yet, Dr Cochrane's overview, for all her intimacy with the subject and the country, at times assumes the reader's agreement with its judgments, where it might be better to persuade. Many of the artists whose works she discusses are modernist in temper, and political in approach.

They deliberately dispense with the age-old beauty and splendour of traditional PNG art.

This is a striking and impressive stance, but it is also one that needs advocacy.

• *Contemporary Art in Papua New Guinea* by Susan Cochrane, published by Craftsman House, Sydney, \$A80.00.



South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

VACANCY: Project Manager, Capacity Building for Environmental Management

Applications are invited for the position of **Project Manager, Capacity Building for Environmental Management** with the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in Apia, Western Samoa.

Post Description

The Project Manager will be responsible for regional coordination, management, and monitoring of the project to achieve the project goal and objectives as set out in the project logframe. The Project Manager will initially be responsible for managing and coordinating regional inputs into the preparatory phase of the project and, on completion of this phase, will also manage and coordinate the project implementation phase, subject to approval and agreement of the Project Document between SPREP and the UNDP and also subject to satisfactory performance by the Project Manager during the preparatory phase. The Project Manager will be responsible to the Director of SPREP, through the Head, Environmental Education, Information and Capacity-building Division. He/she will work in close consultation with the governments of participating countries and with the Resident Representatives of the UNDP Regional Offices in Apia and Suva.

In relation to the planning, management and budgeting activities, the Project Manager will be expected to perform the following duties during the preparatory assistance phase:

1. Coordinate project activities at the regional level as set out in the project logframe. During the preparatory assistance phase these will include organising input into a regional meeting to consult with participating countries, facilitating the formation of national coordinating bodies in participating countries, and organising a regional workshop for national project coordinators.
2. Provide advice and peer support to national coordinators and national coordinating bodies in participating countries as required.
3. Assist national coordinators and national coordinating bodies in preparing in-country monitoring strategies.
4. Coordinate project activities at the regional level with programmes and projects of regional organisations and donor agencies.
5. Prepare (with assistance if required) a project design document that includes the contributions from all participating countries.
6. Monitor, analyse and report to UNDP on progress towards achieving the goal and objectives of the project as set out in the logframe, identifying risks and constraints, and recommending solutions to improve the effectiveness, coordination and sustainability of the project.
7. Other related activities as directed, from time to time, by the Head, Environmental Education, Information and Capacity-building Division and the SPREP Director.

Desired Qualifications and Experience

Candidates must have appropriate tertiary qualifications preferably with post-graduate qualifications related to environmental management and policy from a recognised institution and experience within the Pacific island region, in environment and development issues. Other essential requirements are: proven management experience; good communication skills in managing international projects and staff; the ability to manage the work of consultants; the ability to work with inter-disciplinary and multi-cultural teams; ability to prepare report proposals to deadlines often under difficult circumstances; fluency in spoken and written English; knowledge of other Pacific Island language(s) would be advantageous. The role suits a team player who is able to motivate and lead staff. Applicants must be nationals of a SPREP member country.

Conditions

Appointment will be at either Project Officer or Advisor level of SPREP's authorised salary scales for contract staff, depending on the successful applicants' qualifications and experience. The package will include annual return airfares for appointee and dependents, a housing subsidy and other benefits. SPREP remuneration may be tax-free depending upon circumstances. The appointment will be for six months initially, with renewal for a further 2 and a half years subject to approval and agreement of the Project Document and depending upon the officer's performance during the first term.

Applications

Applications should be accompanied by curriculum vitae containing full personal and professional details, information on qualifications and experience for the position, previous appointments, current position and salary, names, addresses and telephone and/or fax contact numbers of three persons associated with the applicant professionally and who would be prepared to provide testimonials. An indication of how soon the applicants would be available should be indicated.

Closing Date: 07 September 1997.

Applications should be addressed to:

The Director
South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP)
PO Box 240
APIA
Western Samoa

Telephone: (685) 21929
Fax: (685) 20231
E-mail: SPREP@talofa.net//

Further information, including a full post description and details of remuneration and terms and conditions of appointment is available from the SPREP Administration Officer, Telephone (685) 21929.

■ YACHTING

The President's race

A milestone for Fiji yachting

Story by **MANOJ KUMAR**

The inaugural President's Cup Yachting series at Denarau, Fiji, was everything pundits expected it to be. Crystal-clear waters, warm weather and local hospitality made it the ideal location for a truly international event, which attracted 40 yachts.

Entrants included part of the world fleet rally which left Portugal on January 4, 1997 and concludes at Lisbon in May, 1998 to coincide with the grand opening of Expo '98.

Top yachties from all over the world arrived for the racing series off Port Denarau from June 30 to July 1.

"*Cagi donu mada ga na soko*" (fair wind and pleasant sailing), was part of the president of Fiji, Ratu Mara's opening address which set alight the first international keelboat regatta held entirely in Fiji, the series was a milestone for Fiji yachting.

It followed the world 18-foot skiff championship held in Suva in 1954, and the 1986 Hobie 16 world championship and the 1994 Windsurfer One Design Worlds held at Pacific Harbour.

The series was the result of the organising committee chairman, Dick Smith forming a committee of Fiji's leading yachting reps with the backing of the Fiji Visitors Bureau.

"Once we had a few things organised, we went to the president of the Republic of Fiji, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, and asked him to lend his name to the event. With his approval, we were on our way," Smith said.

"As far as we know, the President's Cup is the first-ever international yachting event in the Southern Hemisphere to have a head of state as its patron."

Some 150 crew members worked the 40 participating yachts.

The week of 'real sailing' and the fun and feasting that followed will long linger in their memories.

Variable predominating east-to-south-east tradewinds often played against the yachties, who had to constantly change sails and manoeuvre to maximise wind variations.

Only a week earlier, what used to be the annual Auckland-to-Suva Yacht Race changed course for the first time in its 36-



President of Fiji Ratu Mara (right), who lent his title to the race

Pictures by Jai Prasad

year history to finish at Denarau.

"Although the hospitality and history of the Suva arrival will be missed, we hope that the attractiveness of Denarau, the scope for friends and family to holiday in the resort area will add a new dimension to the classic," said Nick Davenport, a representative of race organisers the Royal Akarana Yacht Club.

But that was only the beginning. Tuesday, July 1 and international yacht racing finally became a reality in Fiji with the opening round of races off Port Denarau.

At stake – the President's Cup, a trophy handcrafted by Alby Stuetzle, a master of fine art pewterfoundry and engravings, and designed by Dick Smith and Robi Wilcock.

The piece of art, which took Stuetzle 800 hours to complete, represents a Fijian *drua*, or traditional sailing boat, made of brass with copper wire rods and plated with 24-karat gold.

After a slight delay on each of the three race days, caused by erratic wind conditions, the winners were finally decided.

Kiwi Ron Brittain, of the Royal Akarana Yacht Club, overcame a first-round defeat at the hands of Onerahi Yacht Club's *Ondine VII* to win top honours in Grade A.

"I am absolutely elated. It's been a great series, great destination and a great lot of people that we raced against," offered Brittain on the presentation night.

Fellow Kiwi yacht, *Caveat*, a Chico 40, skippered by Phil Smith of the Westpark Cruising Club, won Grade B.

Fijian yachts, *Dove*, skippered by John Ross, and Jan Partridge's *Outrageous* had their fair share of luck against the seasoned campaigners.

But the best of the locals was Tony Philp Senior, who skippered *Hydroflow* to a clean sweep in all five Grade C races to share the prestigious Cup with Smith and Brittain.

"It's really pleasing. I think the local boats that started the President's Cup for the first time put up a really good show," said Philp.

"It was an unusual event for me because I've been a long-standing member of the Royal Suva Yacht Club – for about 30 years – and done lots of sailing events in Fiji. But this one has been a really high-profile event and we're really excited about it."

Hidden Paradise was crewed by David Murphy and Geoff Taylor.

On shore, a real sense of camaraderie prevailed with a heap of fun activities on non-racing days.

Skippers and crews of the participating yachts spent a fun day cruising to Beachcomber Island, tried a hand at golf and tennis and retreated to cocktail parties at night.

■ YACHTING



Fiji's tourism industry also benefited from the series.

"This event is being supported by prestigious yacht clubs from overseas as an indication of how important they see this event," said Fiji Tourism and Civil Aviation Minister David Pickering.

"In Fiji we now have several marinas and an increasing number of yachts visiting our country, with over 600 yachts visiting last year.

"This race will significantly encourage more visitors to our country."

Next year's President's Cup will be timed to coincide with the movements of yachts from Australia and New Zealand to Hawaii for the Kenwood Cup, and the Tradewinds Round the World rally due to visit the Pacific around June 1998.

"With the America's Cup coming up in New Zealand in 1999, more yachting will be focused on this part of the world," said Smith.

"We have received tremendous support from our overseas friends and I would not be surprised to see an even bigger race next year."

Royal Akarana Yacht Club's Monty Singleton, who will be part of the America's Cup organising committee, brought with him a wealth of experience as the principal race officer of the President's Cup. ■

Mayday, mayday

Story and photography **SALLY ANDREW**

Sailing out a tricky pass in response to a mayday call and rescuing two fishermen; flying over the lagoon in an ultralight (ULM) aircraft; kayaking to an island full of birds; racing aboard a traditional sailing canoe; swimming in a circular volcanic lake teeming with blind eels ...

Our passage to France's smallest Pacific territory was perfect, with light winds and flat seas. *FellowShip* arrived off the pass at first light and negotiated the deep-water pass into the lagoon at a slack low water.

We headed for the day at Gahi, a calm, protected anchorage, though some mornings it is quite noisy with children yelling and roosters crowing long before sunrise. And when the tide is up, the swell reflects off the seawall, making the water in the anchorage lively. Several small runabouts moor here.

Visiting yachts can also anchor off the administrative centre at Mata Utu, on the

red earth and lush green gardens overgrown with taro, kumara and bananas. All gardens are neatly fenced round with colourful hibiscus or croton plants – though one had a unique border of old pipe valves, all set in a straight line.

After completing our normal "landfall routine" – checking-in with officials, re-provisioning with fresh food and collecting mail – we shifted to the peace and quiet of the anchorage of Faioa, enjoying halcynon days in the sun, lying under the shade of our awning, listening to music and shortwave radio, reading books.

After several lazy days at anchor, the tranquility was broken. A mayday call suddenly shattered the silence of the VHF radio. I waited. Nobody responded. The call came again. Nobody listening? I picked up the microphone and pushed the button. "This is yacht *FellowShip*. I copy you. Go ahead with your transmission."

A man and his 15-year-old son were in trouble. While fishing outside the lagoon, both motors had stopped – they were "not going around".

The skipper was excited and spoke very quickly. I couldn't understand him. "Parlez-vous Anglais?" He switched to English.

Thanks to GPS, a worldwide satellite Global Positioning System, he was able to relay their exact co-ordinates. Their position – 13 degrees 22.8 South, 176 degrees 17.2 West

– put him about 6.5 miles away and slowly drifting away from the island. We had to make a decision.

While I plotted the location of their 5.4-metre Bonito runabout on the chart to determine our compass course, Foster got

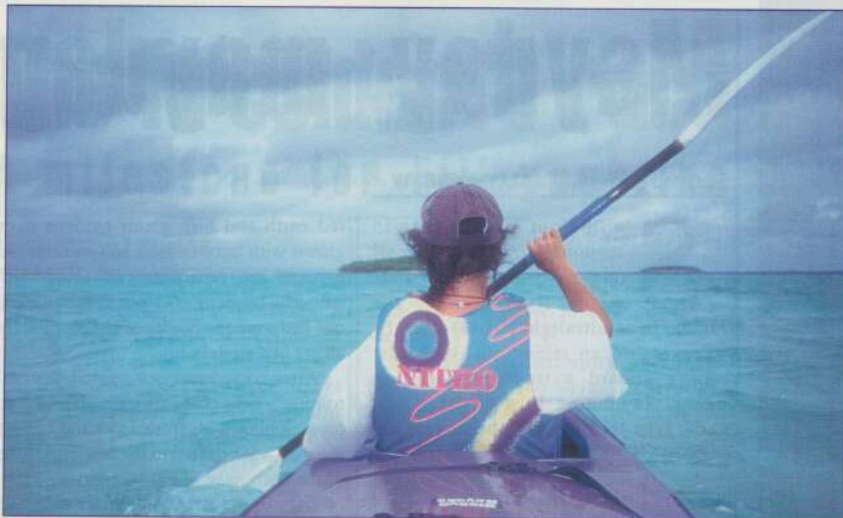


Bird's eye view of the lagoon at Wallis

west side off the wharf at Halalo or at Faioa, one of several tiny uninhabited atolls strung like baubles along the barrier reef.

In the center of the lagoon, the main volcanic island of Uvea is carpeted in rich

■ YACHTING



Kayaking at Wallis

FellowShip ready to go to their assistance. A yacht anchored off the administrative centre at Mata Utu, *Starlight* of Santa Barbara (California), raced ashore by dinghy to inform the gendarmerie.

We took down our sun awning, removed sail covers, hauled the anchor and

headed for the open ocean.

It was exactly slack water when we exited the often-tricky pass and the weather conditions were perfect, blue skies with 10.12 knots from the southeast.

We sailed at about five knots, our sails being more efficient than our tiny 13hp

Yanmar diesel.

We found the runabout, easily, and after passing a long tow line attached to a bridle, headed slowly back towards the pass, close hauled, motorsailing, beating into the wind.

As we approached the pass, a local fishing boat with lots of horsepower took the tow line from us. By radio, the much-relieved skipper invited us for dinner later in the week.

The following morning, friends picked us up in their noisy car and took us to the Kafika Grille for coffee and pastries.

Francoise Guillemoteau, the man we rescued, was there too. Much to his dismay, it was contaminated fuel that had clogged

both his engines.

At our "heroes' dinner" I found out that Françoise taught natural science at the high school. He was also an ultra-light machine (ULM) pilot.

When I murmured, in the best French I could muster, "To fly, it is my dream!" he

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■ YACHTING

said, "I can take you up!" So three days later at 8am I found myself soaring over the lagoon in a tiny aircraft with a man who's motors had broken down in a 'Mayday' situation five days earlier. Was I stupid or brave? Who cared? I was rapt! What a view! We flew slowly over the stunning luminescent blues of the lagoon, soaring above the necklace of tiny white-rimmed islets which dot the barrier reef, following the line of pounding surf right round the island in a yellow *Coyote II* ultra light.

The local gendarme and his wife, Catherine, had been invited to the "heroes' dinner" too, and we quickly discovered that they shared our love of kayaking.

So we made plans for a paddling expedition. Catherine picked us up and, after loading the kayaks onto a small trailer, we drove to the village of Vailala in the north. Here, we found two sailing canoes hauled up on the beach.

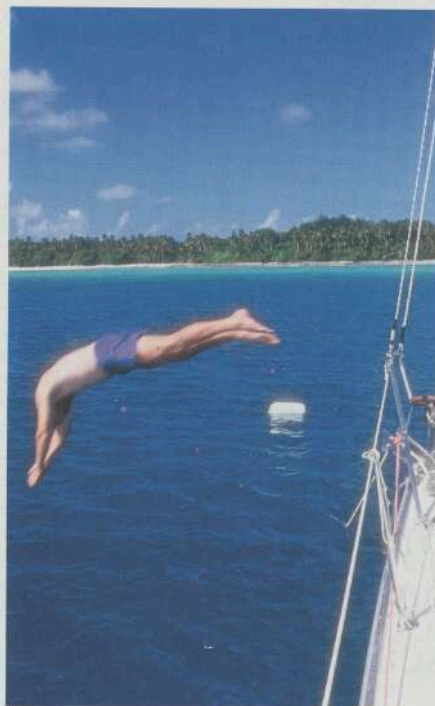
A third, named for the local Church of St. Jean-Baptiste (*Sangato Soane Patita*) and brightly painted in green, orange, red and white, lay under some trees.

We paddled across to Bird Island - Ile des Oiseaux or Nukufotu - then beached the kayaks at Nukulua, lunching on bread, pork

pate, cheese, chocolate and lemon drinks. There was no doubt that birds were nesting nearby - we could smell them! Fairy terns, sooty terns, frigates flew overhead. The wind picked up, as did the chop on the water, making the return rugged. Aware that even a day-trip in the lagoon can be dangerous, since squalls often give little warning, we were well-equipped with radio, flares, drogue, emergency light, food, water.

One never turns down an invitation for French cooking so when Catherine asked, we accepted. It had been a long and exciting day - flying at first light and kayaking all afternoon.

Catherine started sautéing garlic and mushrooms in the kitchen, her three-year old daughter alongside. Little Alizee, mixing up her butterflies and mushrooms, kept chanting "*papillons, papillons*" as she munched "*champignons, champignons*". Butterflies had never tasted so good. ■



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■ OPINION

Sad, but true

Island New Zealanders languish at bottom end of the economic and social scale



David Barber
WELLINGTON

It is a sad fact, long known, that Pacific people are at the bottom of the heap in most of New Zealand's key economic and social performance indicators.

National figures on unemployment, health, housing, income levels, life expectancy and children's education achievements are all bad news for the Pacific Island community.

To put it simply, the 170,000-odd Pacific people (about five per cent of the population now, but growing rapidly and expected to double in number in 35 years) is just not participating fully in New Zealand's economic and social life.

This is not only their misfortune, the country is poorer for it. Given their vitality, sense of community spirit and strong sense of values (often religion based) they should be one of New Zealand's major assets.

It is a tragedy that, in many *palagi* eyes,

they have instead come to be seen as something of a liability. This was one of the reasons the former Labour government appointed New Zealand's first minister of Pacific Island affairs 13 years ago. His tiny administration was set up under the umbrella of the Department of Internal Affairs but, in 1990, it was made a department of state in its own right.

Two years later, the Auckland-based operations division, Tagata Pasifika, was separated from the former Maori affairs ministry and combined with a policy unit in Wellington as a fully fledged ministry.

The ministry of Pacific Island affairs was charged with advising the government on policy and piloting new approaches to solving the education, employment, housing and health problems that plagued the Pacific community.

But, sadly, in seven years, it has done little, if anything, to improve the lot of the Pacific Island community in New Zealand.

The word around Wellington has it that when chief executive Apii Rongo-Raea resigned in March, it was on the verge of collapsing through internal conflict and lack of accountability.

Pacific Island Affairs Minister Don McKinnon admitted as much when he told parliament the ministry had been "rather difficult" to manage, particularly in absorbing the Tagata Pasifika division.

"I am not 100 per cent satisfied with the work that is being done," he said diplomatically. "That is part of the reason why we are doing a top-down, bottom-up review of the whole ministry right now."

A ministry of foreign affairs official, Kate Lackey, was appointed acting chief executive for about six months to keep the place ticking over while the review was conducted and a new head sought.

Lackey admits there was some concern in the Pacific community about the appointment of not only a *palagi* but a woman. But she had the advantage of going in as an outsider, untainted by some of the contentious issues of the past, and stresses she is only there temporarily.

A new chief executive, certain to be a member of the Pacific community, is expected to be named later in the year, hopefully taking over a ministry with a more clearly defined role and objectives.

Lackey will not criticise her predecessor, but says: "I'm aware there have been some shortcomings in our performance.

We have not done as much in working with, and communicating with, the Pacific communities as we should have – especially in getting feedback from them.

"It was clearly time to stand back and take a tough critical look at what we are doing."

The review of the ministry has not been without controversy, especially in relation to a proposal from its Pacific Island Employment and Social Development Advisory Board.

This called for the creation of a new Crown agency or 'super ministry' to provide a one-stop shop for Pacific people to access government services.

It would combine the work of the immigration and labour departments and income support service in their dealings with Pacific people.

The idea was bitterly attacked by ACT leader Richard Prebble, who was the first minister of Pacific Island affairs. "There's a name for that and it's called apartheid," he said.

As a result of the proposal, a steering group review of government services and resources directed at Pacific New Zealanders was set up.

Chaired by Lackey, it included representatives from the prime minister's department, treasury and state service commission with two eminent Pacific Island representatives.

The report went to McKinnon for a decision in June. He is thought unlikely to pursue the 'super ministry' option, which would contradict the thrust of the government's mainstreaming policy of consolidating service provision to all through centralised agencies.

Lackey says her personal preference is to see a revitalised, strong and united ministry able to pressure the big departments into maintaining a Pacific peoples' perspective in all their operations.

She says the ministry – which has a total budget of about \$NZ5 million (\$US3.2 million) – will always be a small policy advisory unit and needed input from the Pacific communities to support its case. "The big departments have the money and want to fix the problems we have," she says. "They welcome a robust contribution from the Pacific peoples."

Of the ministry's lack of success so far, Lackey says: "The past is behind us. We need to do better, and we can." ■

■ OPINION

High acclaim follows Majuro fish meeting



Debbie Singh
SPC, NOUMEA

The Second Multilateral High-Level Conference on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific (MHLC2) was held in Majuro, Marshall Islands, in June. The meeting comprised representatives of the Pacific's distant water fishing nations and French territories, including representatives from the Forum Fisheries Committee.

Participation at the meeting was generally at ministerial level and included 150 participants. Representatives of the South Pacific Commission attended the meeting in an observer capacity.

Of the SPC contribution to the meeting, Director-General Bob Dun said: "The SPC's Oceanic Fisheries Programme (OFP) contribution in data collection and research on the region's tuna stocks is unique and is essential as the scientific basis for any stock management scheme which may evolve. It is also a Pacific service in resource monitoring and research which will need to be maintained indefinitely.

"Given the urgent push towards a multilateral management system for our tuna fisheries, questions are being asked about the forms of new scientific and administrative relationships that will have to be developed. [The SPC] has a lot to offer in contributing to this endeavour but we need to make sure that our contribution is offered to the best advantage of SPC's

member states and territories, the fishing interests of the region operating under the Law of the Sea Convention and SPC's institutional future," he said.

The Majuro Declaration on the Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific adopted at the end of the meeting highlights issues needing to be addressed and provides a framework for working activities and negotiations aimed at having the conservation/management mechanism established in three years – by June 2000.

"The Majuro contribution has been such a stimulating one," said Dun.

"Basically, it's because the Pacific seems ready for change. There's a spirit of cooperation bringing disparate parties together towards shared goals. Delegations are aspiring towards the future and forgetting past wounds and legal precedents."

Dun had words of high praise for the meeting's chairperson – Indo-Fijian Satya Nandan, Director of the International Seabed Authority in Jamaica.

He said the multilateral meeting benefited much from the leadership of Nandan, whom he described as an international negotiator, wise in the ways of the United Nations and experienced in the special challenges of marine management.

"It was an education to see the combination of firm leadership, good-humoured camaraderie and personal effort which moulded the cooperative spirit of the meeting into measured success – achievement without pain.

"It's important to note that Nandan is committed to his own continued involvement with this negotiation process until a successful conclusion is reached.

"He's not short of calls on his time – and, having given this priority to the Pacific, he certainly won't be prepared to see the MHLC's achievement targets dissipate."

One of the most important contributions

from MHLC2 was to endorse the results of the scientific consultation held at the SPC in Noumea in 1996.

The recommendations give support to the continuing role of the Oceanic Fisheries Programme, call for further improvements in the coverage and availability of fisheries data, and identify needs related to research programming and scientific collaboration.

In addition, there was a growing consensus for the establishment of a scientific advisory-cum-collaborative body for western and central Pacific tuna research. It is felt this could likely develop around the OFP and its existing scientific groups – the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish (SCTB) and its associated research networks.

An important feature of both the ministerial and multilateral meetings was Dr John Hampton's presentation of OFP's research results on the status of Pacific tuna stocks.

Hampton said: "[The meeting] was generally seen to be a success, with more progress being made on issues than thought possible.

"This was [also] due to the skill of the chairman who took control of the meeting, agenda and output from the start.

"The opinion seems to be forming that the OFP is an appropriate vehicle to provide research coordination and scientific services to the future management arrangement.

"This view needs to be reinforced wherever possible, particularly within the SPC membership."

Dr Hampton's paper emphasised the value and unique place of OFP's tuna research; expressed confidence that the region's main tuna stocks were still in a healthy state, particularly skipjack, but also highlighted a worrying picture with the less productive, but valuable, bigeye tuna.

In summing up the meeting, Nandan described it as a "truly seminal event".

"History will judge it as one of the most important initiatives that has been taken in this region," he said.

MHLC3 will convene in a year's time and will receive reports from two intercessional technical consultations – one dealing with issues relating to fisheries management and the other with monitoring, control and surveillance. ■

■ OPINION

Global warning for Howard

Australia branded Greenhouse pariah at Earth Summit



Jemima Garrett

SYDNEY



During the Earth Summit II, in New York, at the end of June, Australia's vociferous stand against the imposition of mandatory targets for the reduction of Greenhouse gas emissions saw it branded a Greenhouse pariah – but this did not worry Prime Minister John Howard.

Instead of attending the Earth Summit as other world leaders did, he went to Washington where he emerged buoyed by his discussions with conservative congressmen and determined as ever to fight on until the all-important meeting in Kyoto, Japan, in December, when the western nations are supposed to sign on for specific reductions. The Pacific islands, vulnerable to the increased cyclonic activity, flooding and seawater inundation, a consequence of global warming, have been fighting for almost a decade for action on Greenhouse gas emissions. At Kyoto, the Europeans, with support from the developing world, will propose the industrialised nations commit themselves to cut emissions to 15 per cent below their 1990 levels by 2010. It's a stance which scientists and environmentalists say will only make a small start in halting global warming – but it's the best on offer.

Australia, once a leader on Greenhouse action, totally rejects the European proposal. Environment Minister Senator Robert Hill told the Earth Summit it would cost Australia 22 times as much as it would cost the Europeans to comply with those targets. The government's economic modelling suggests even reaching the weaker target of 1990 level emissions by 2010 would cost \$A9000 (\$US6400) for every Australian man woman and child. Within Australia, public opinion is divided. Howard's supporters have branded the European position "self-serving and hypocritical". They say the Europeans have already drastically reduced their Greenhouse emissions for reasons unrelated to Greenhouse – in the UK by switching to gas power, in France to nuclear energy and in Germany by closing old and inefficient power plants from the former East Germany – making compliance much easier. The Europeans, they argue, are now using their position as a means of gaining economic leverage over other countries, like Australia, which has a lot of energy-gobbling industrie.

The government says 35 new major energy-intensive projects would be threatened if Australia had to work to the European targets and points out that the all-important jobs they promise would only go off-shore to a developing nation where environmental standards would be less rigorous. As a result, Australia is pushing a plan for different targets for different countries depending on capacity to pay – and it would not surprise anyone that Australia

would have least to pay.

Unfortunately for Howard, even his supporters are questioning his actions in the area of energy efficiency, which is a crucial component of all strategies to reduce Greenhouse gas emissions. A *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial, while applauding Howard's international stand, complained he had nothing but thin excuses when the government abolished the Energy Research and Development Corporation and cut funding to the National Energy Efficiency Programme in the last budget. Others point out that as Australia has done less than other countries in using building codes, appliance efficiency standards and vehicle fuel economy measures to improve energy efficiency it will, in fact, be easier for Australia to bring down its emissions. Worse still, 131 Australian economists, including 16 professors, have rejected the economics behind Howard's special pleading on targets. They say policies are available to reduce Australia's Greenhouse gas emissions without harming the economy and that the findings the Megabare economic modelling system used by the government are simply "wrong". Megabare was developed by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) but was funded in part by the very coal and energy interests which have most to gain by Australia's refusal to agree to binding Greenhouse targets.

"Australia seems to be heading for diplomatic humiliation in Kyoto," said Dr Clive Hamilton from the Australia Institute on behalf of the 131 economists. Diplomatic humiliation is certainly what Senator Hill had to put up with at the Earth Summit. Members of the British and US delegations were so angered, they took the unusual step of naming a nation in their criticisms. British PM Tony Blair nominated climate change as the most important international issue. "No country can opt out of global warming or fence in its own private climate," he said. "We need common action to save our common environment." US President Bill Clinton was also forthright. He promised a "strong American commitment to realistic and binding limits that will significantly reduce our emission of Greenhouse gases". But, he added, "in the United States, in order to do our part, we must first convince the American people and the Congress that the climate change problem is real and imminent". It is this statement which gives Howard hope. Clinton needs a two-thirds majority to impose binding targets but conservative leaders, such as US House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich, told Howard their support was growing and there may now be a two-thirds majority in the senate against binding targets for industrialised nations unless developing nations are also bound. In Australia, the energy lobby is pulling out all stops to swing public opinion its way.

Despite the credibility gap, with his all-important economic statistics and the real chance that Australia will lose its reputation as a good global citizen and even face trade sanctions if it rejects binding targets in Kyoto, Howard is unmoved. Perhaps Razali Ismail, president of the UN General Assembly, was speaking about Australia when he told the Earth Summit: "Five years on from Rio, we face a major recession; not economic but a recession of the spirit, a recession of the very political will essential for catalysing real change."



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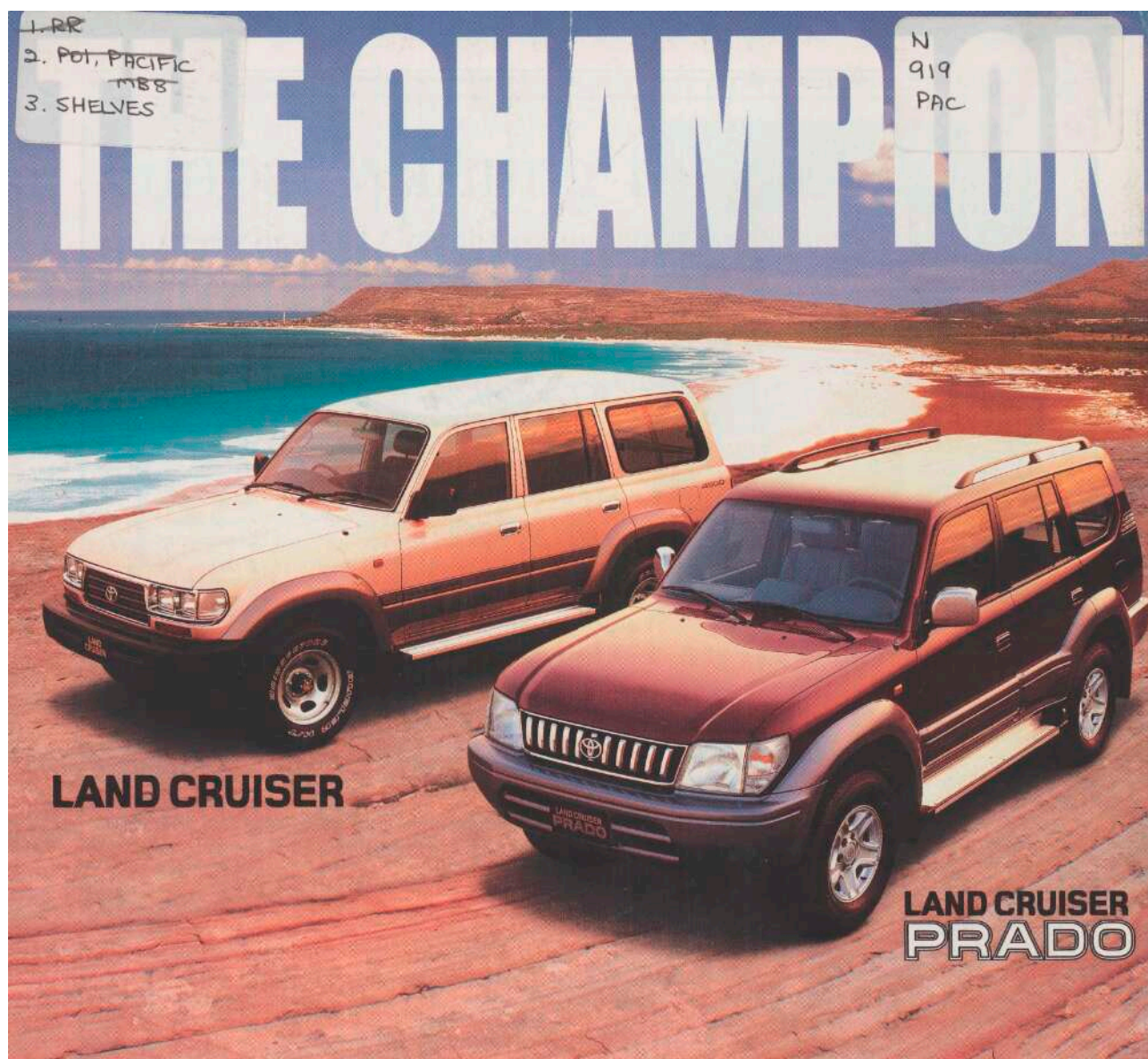
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