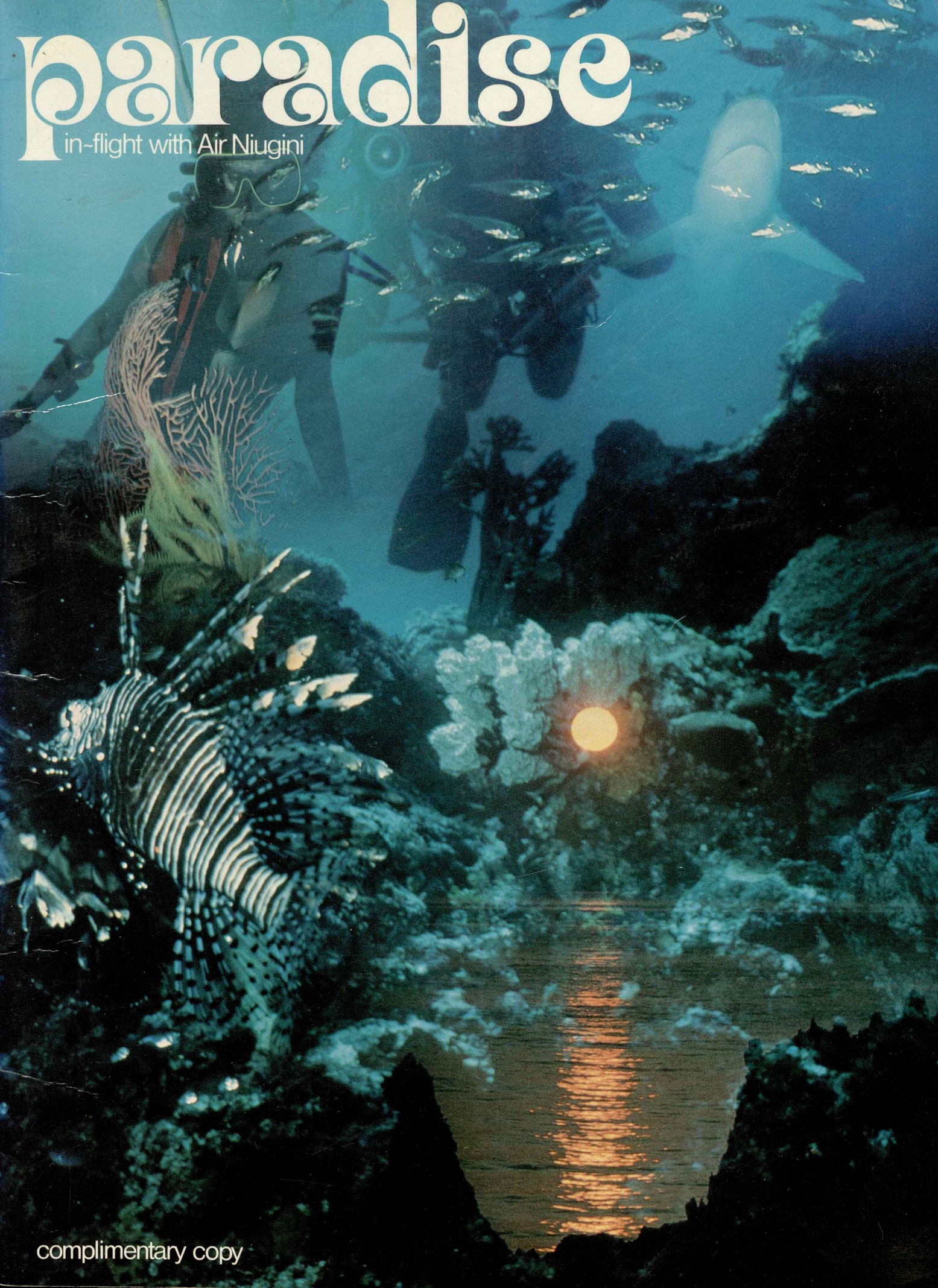


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The story of the Ok Tedi "Pot of Gold" is a special feature article in this issue of Paradise.

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**No. 37 Sept - Nov 1982**

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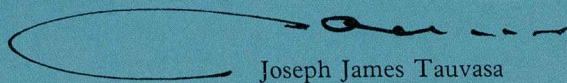
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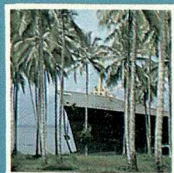
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Joseph James Tauvasa  
General Manager



## 5 BANKING ON SUCCESS

A Pacific cruise with a difference on board the Bankline Freighter *Corabank*



## 11 ELECTION FEVER

A look at Papua New Guinea's second General Election.



## 15 CORALS

Islands of life in an empty ocean



## 19 POT OF GOLD

After 13 years Papua New Guinea prepares to dip into its Pot of Gold — Ok Tedi



## 27 AIRLIFT

A helicopter airlift is the key to a new mountain airstrip



## 31 STAR GAZING

Film star Michael York satisfies a stab of boyhood curiosity



## 36 PESTS IN PARADISE

Even in Paradise not everything in the garden is rosy



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*A chance visit to Papua New Guinea by a north-bound freighter shortly after the turn of the century began an export trade which is now the cornerstone of the country's economy. Records show that in 1908 a freighter of the British Bank Line group left Australia bound for North America with vacant space in its hold. It called in to Papua New Guinea to pick up bagged copra to utilise the unused space. Over the years the exports increased. In the early fifties the cocoa, coffee and tea plantations in the Highlands began to bear fruit and these commodities began to appear regularly on the manifests of northbound Bank Line vessels. For eight decades the Bank Line has served the export industries of Papua New Guinea and other countries in the South Pacific basin. To get an understanding of this trade John Devereux joined the m.v. Corabank for a trip around the Papua New Guinea coast.*

# BANKING ON SUCCESS

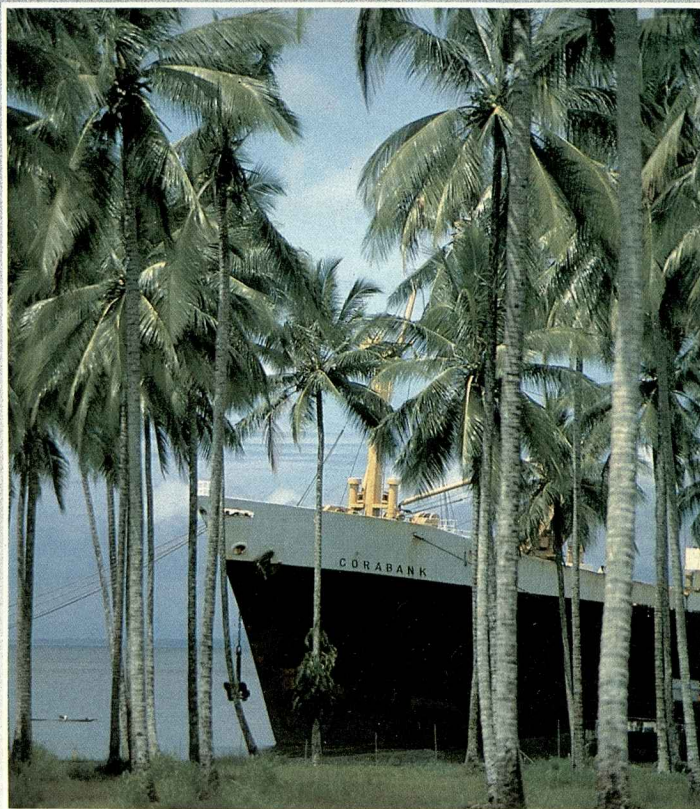
**T**HE idea of a south Pacific cruise aboard a cargo vessel may not be everyone's cup of tea. The motor vessel Corabank was specially built for the South Pacific trade, and is not the sort of vessel one would normally choose for an islands cruise. She has a cargo capacity of 16,000 tons, with six holds and specially designed tanks for liquid cargo. The import trade to Papua New Guinea is largely container loads of manufactured goods, and the export trade consists mainly of bulk commodities — palm oil, kernels, cocoa, copra. Special refrigerated containers are used for the export of frozen fish and shellfish. I was welcomed aboard the ship and immediately shown to my quarters . . . the ship's hospital situated aft.

Any apprehension I had about the coming voyage was dispelled as the food arrived at the Captain's table for lunch.

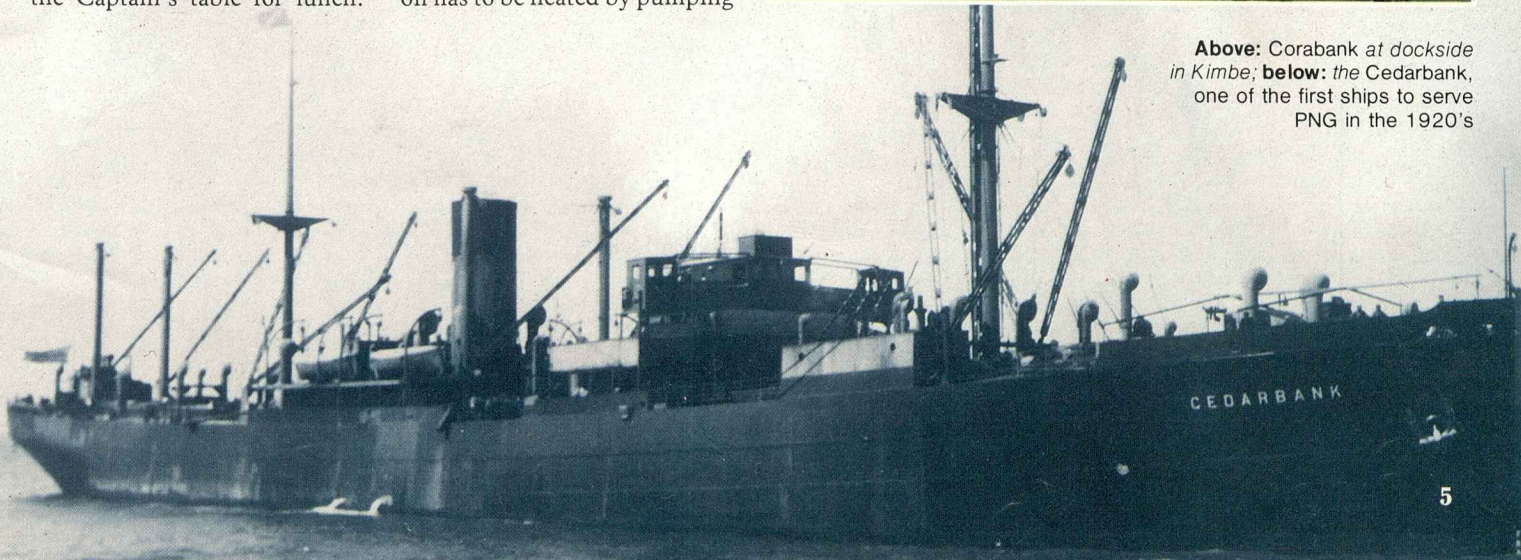
The officers aboard the ship dine in stately elegance. The tables are set immaculately with cutlery and crockery embossed with the Bank Line emblem. A large portrait of the Queen smiles down from an adjacent wall. Menus change daily. There was an obvious eastern influence which probably derived from the Bangladeshi chef.

The Bank Line prides itself on the care it takes of its cargoes. As the loading operation continues at the dockside at Kimbe in West New Britain Province the ship's mate closely supervises the stevedores to ensure the cargo stays dry. It is this sort of attention to detail that has earned the Line a fine reputation with all South Pacific traders.

The Chief engineer explains that it takes several hours of preparation to get the main engine ready to set sail. The fuel oil has to be heated by pumping



**Above:** Corabank at dockside in Kimbe; **below:** the Cedarbank, one of the first ships to serve PNG in the 1920's



hot oil through it. During the final five minutes before start up the injectors are heated and primed.

As the last batch of palm kernels disappears into the forward hold, the engine room is a hive of activity as the officers and crew wait for an order from the bridge to start engines. "Dead Slow Astern".

As the huge mooring lines are taken on board, the ship shudders slightly and begins moving backwards away from the wharf. Ninety minutes later after a series of precision manoeuvres which took the ship in and out of the reefs which fringe the port, Kimbe was on the horizon.

The ship has a precise schedule. The Captain knows exactly



*Left: oil palm trees and fruit prior to processing; below: view from the bridge of the m.v. Corabank as she sails into Rabaul at dawn*

when the Corabank will arrive at each port and what cargo will be loaded. On arrival at Kieta, on the island of Bougainville in the North Solomons Province, the main cargo was copra. Loading began immediately.

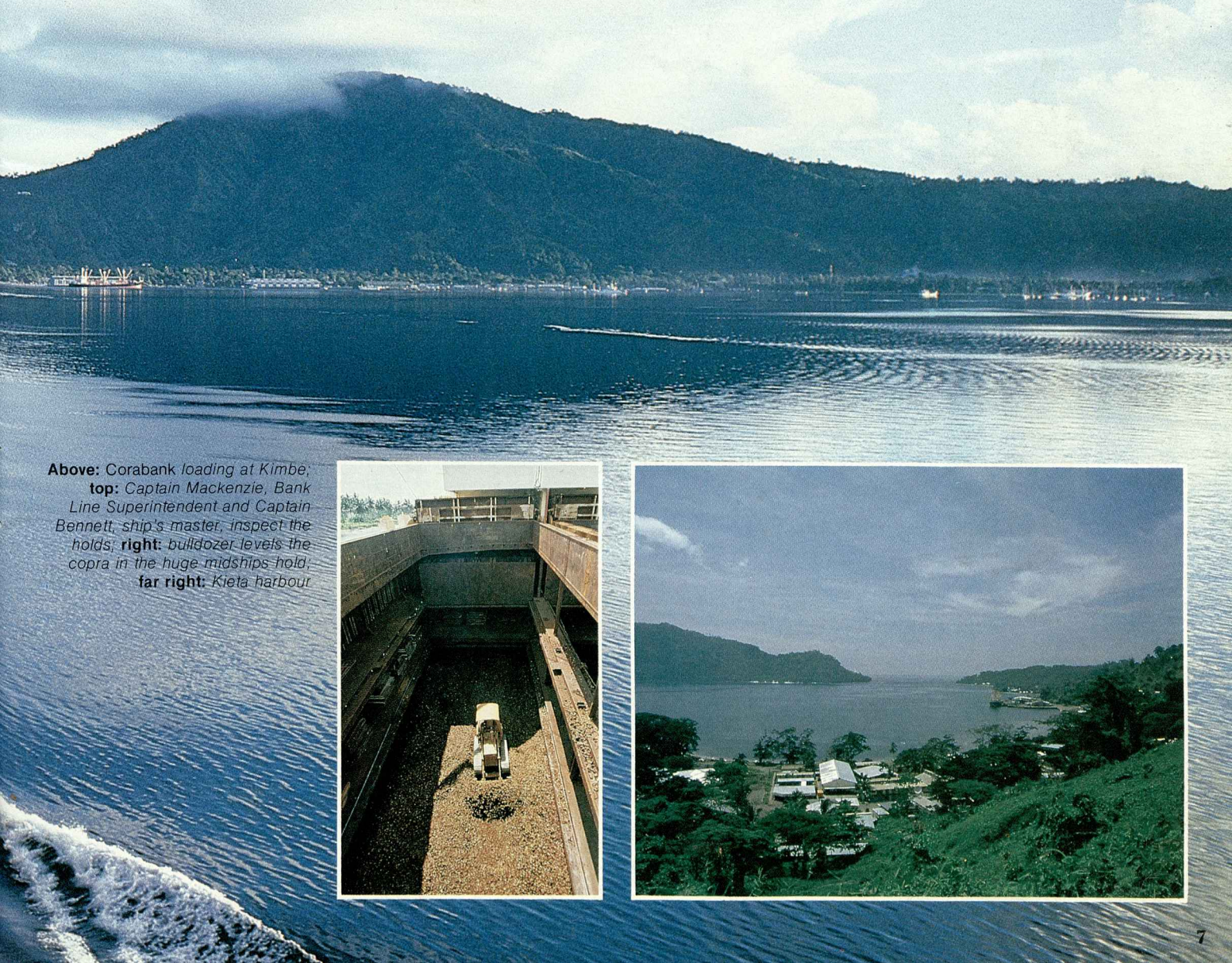
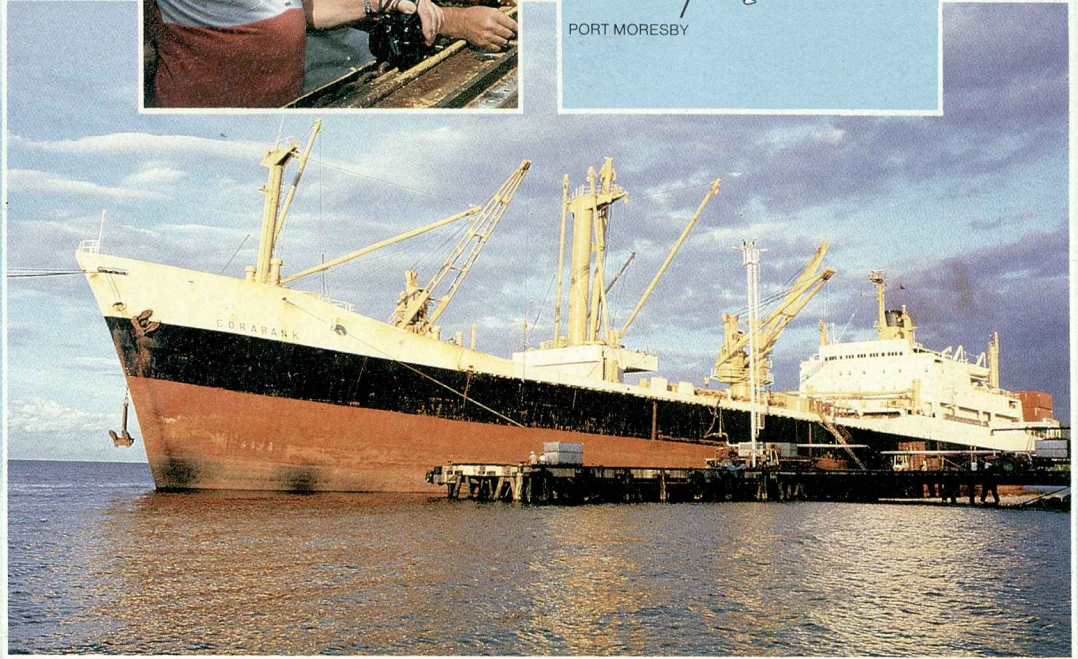
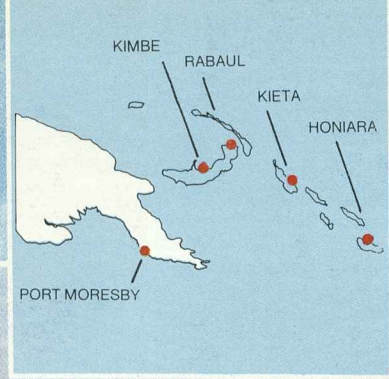
On the island of Bougainville a superb winding road takes you from the port up into the mountains to the huge Bougainville Copper mine. The mine produces a large percentage of the world's copper supply. Work on the mine goes on non-stop. So does the loading operation at the wharf. Throughout the afternoon and night and into the next day the dockworkers shovel thousands of tons of cocoa and copra into the holds . . . cocoa into the forward hold, copra aft. By evening the loading



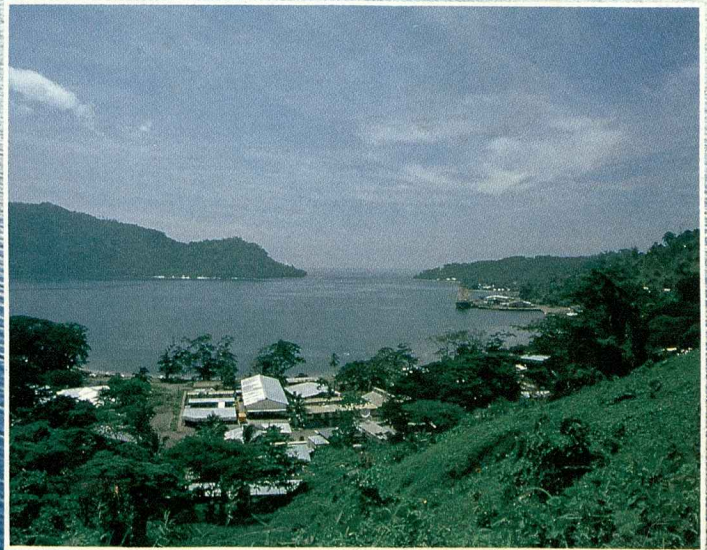
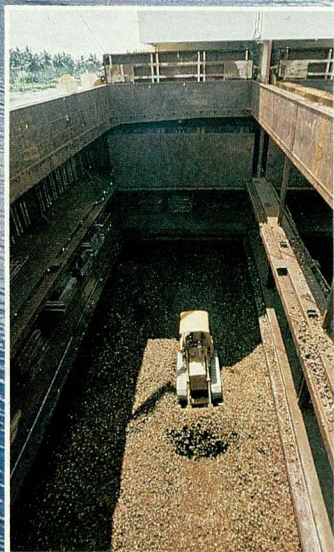
operation is completed and a bulldozer is hoisted aboard to push the copra into the furthest extremities of the hold.

At 2030 hours, my watch tells me it's 8.30 p.m., the Captain gives the order to cast off. A day and a night later the Corabank edges its way into Honiara, capital of the Solomon Islands. During this stop we will take on bulk palm oil from the huge tanks at the wharfside. This cargo will ultimately find its way into millions of bars of soap in England and Europe.

The Solomon Islands saw heavy fighting during the Second World War and today evidence of the fighting still exists at Honiara. The crystal clear, warm water just off the coast is home to a myriad of



**Above:** Corabank loading at Kimbe;  
**top:** Captain Mackenzie, Bank Line Superintendent and Captain Bennett, ship's master, inspect the holds; **right:** bulldozer levels the copra in the huge midships hold; **far right:** Kieta harbour



**Right:** loading cocoa at Rabaul; **below:** stowing cocoa sacks into the aft hold; **left:** Fred Kano displays his wartime relics

wrecks and relics which can be explored by snorkellers and divers.

For the less adventurous, me among them, an enterprising local character, Fred Kano, has established an open air museum



in Honiara. Fred kept us enthralled for almost an hour with his anecdotes of the wartime years. Fred Kano's stories of those wartime seat-of-the-pants fliers contrasts strongly against a scientific demonstration given by the First Mate on the bridge of the Corabank. He shows us the sophisticated NAVSAT satellite navigation system which calculates the ship's exact position, bearing, speed, heading and estimated time of arrival at the next port, all with extreme accuracy.

NAVSAT tells us that we are due into Rabaul at 5.44 a.m. on Sunday morning. The Rab-



aul Harbour Pilot meets us and guides us through the volcano-ringed harbour to dock just one hour later. Almost instantly work begins unloading contain-

ers and loading more cocoa into the holds.

Rabaul also was the scene of heavy fighting during the war. At the height of the conflict

**Below:** The m.v. Corabank featured on a Solomon Islands stamp issued in 1980; **bottom:** m.v. Corabank in Honiara



hundreds of thousands of Japanese soldiers were dug-in around Rabaul. Reminders of the conflict still exist today at the bottom of the harbour and in the hills around it. Intrepid explorers are still finding tunnels dug in and around the area by the Japanese soldiers. Even today a search is still going on for a huge underground Japanese hospital which has remained undiscovered under Rabaul since the end of the war.

As the hatch covers are screwed down aboard the Corabank the Captain prepares to set sail for the Papua New Guinea city of Lae and then to Port Moresby, Darwin, Singapore, Suez, Rotterdam and Hull.

On the Air Niugini flight from Rabaul to Port Moresby I reflect on the activities of the Bank Line in Papua New Guinea. There's no doubt that it has played an important role in the development of the country but from my personal viewpoint it was an interesting way to see a little of the country. — *John Devereux is a graphic artist on the Paradise team in Port Moresby*





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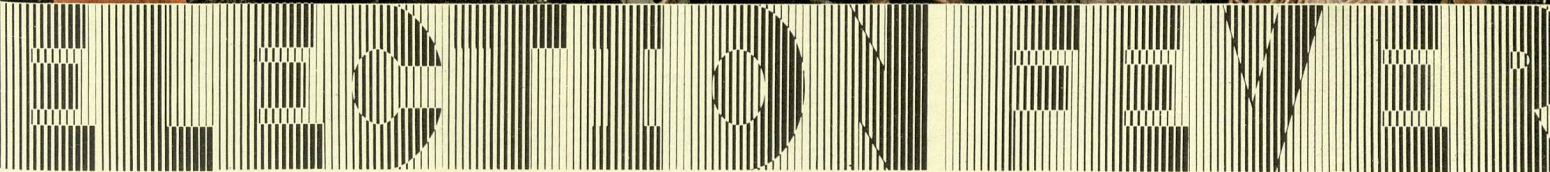


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By Susuve Laumaea

**T**HE Papua New Guinea election campaign just concluded revealed that one of the world's youngest democracies has imposed its own cultures and traditions on the Westminster system.

For those new to Papua New Guinea, all political events appear to take on a mixture of theatre and the serious matters of state.

The enthusiasm with which Papua New Guineans throw themselves into politics at election time belies the fact that such events are comparatively new. The foundations of the present political system were laid as recently as 1961, with the setting up of the Legislative Council.

*Politics in PNG is sometimes serious (above) and sometimes light-hearted (right)*





This was a wholly colonial entity charged with the task of administering the country.

As a result of a decision by the Legislative Council the first House of Assembly came into being in 1964, following Papua New Guinea's first major election. Papua New Guinea attained self government in 1973 and Independence in 1975.

A reasonable understanding of the intricacies of Papua New Guinea politics and elections requires knowledge of the political history of the country. The country's legislators, who represent its three million people are elected by popular vote. There are several registered political parties, the major ones being Pangu Pati, People's Progress Party, National Party, Melanesian Alliance, United Party and Papua Besena. Parliament's 109 members from 19 provinces mainly belong to one of the major parties. However there are a handful who remain independent. Most political

parties relate directly to particular geographic regions and no party has won a clear majority before or since independence.

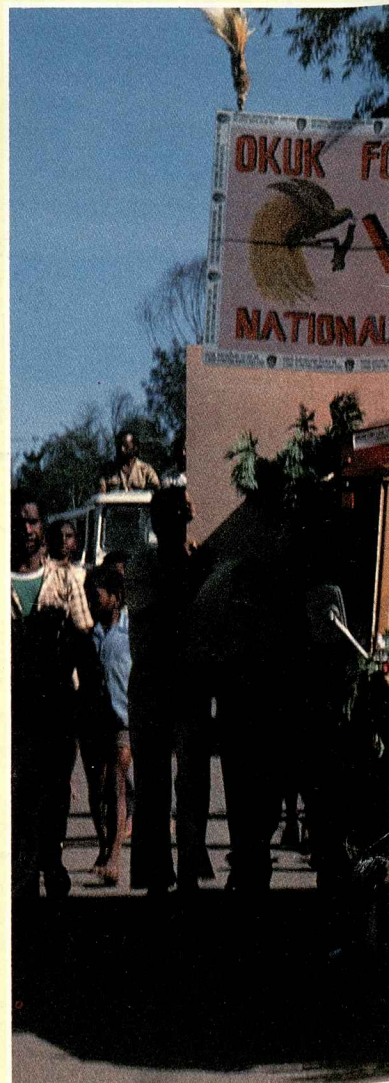
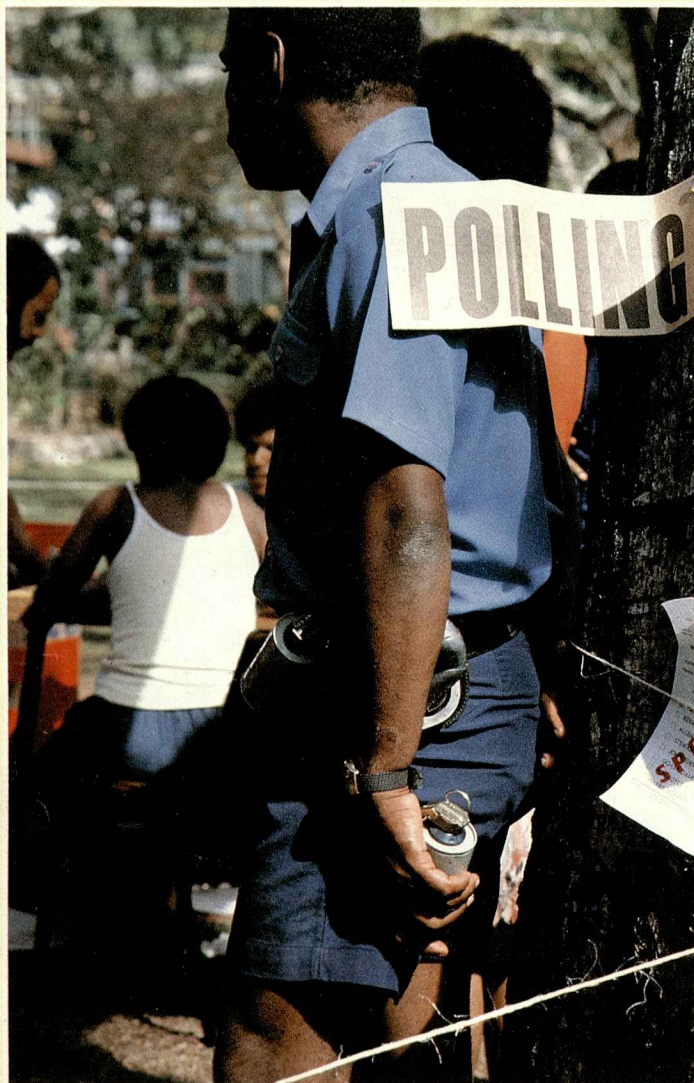
This year more than 1100 political hopefuls contested the election. Such is the enthusiasm for politics that dozens of seats are each contested by five or six candidates, who all claim to represent one party. In some cases the major parties endorse more than one candidate in a particular seat. Commenting on the hot competition in the election the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Iambakey Okuk, who ultimately lost his Highlands seat, says, "It'll be hard, but it's always hard in the Highlands. Everybody here competes for everything, against everybody, and that's the way it should be", he says.

The political hopefuls carry their campaigns right to the grass roots levels. An upturned fruit box in a village marketplace is as useful for addressing constituents as a microphone

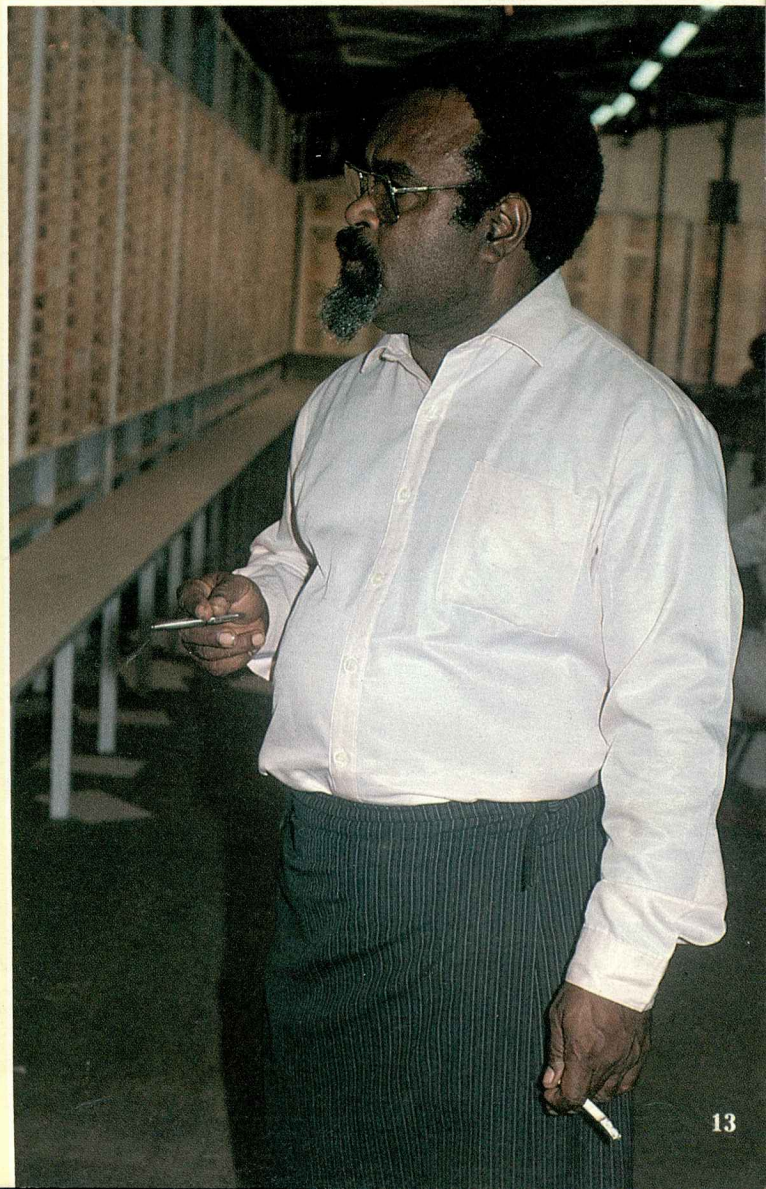
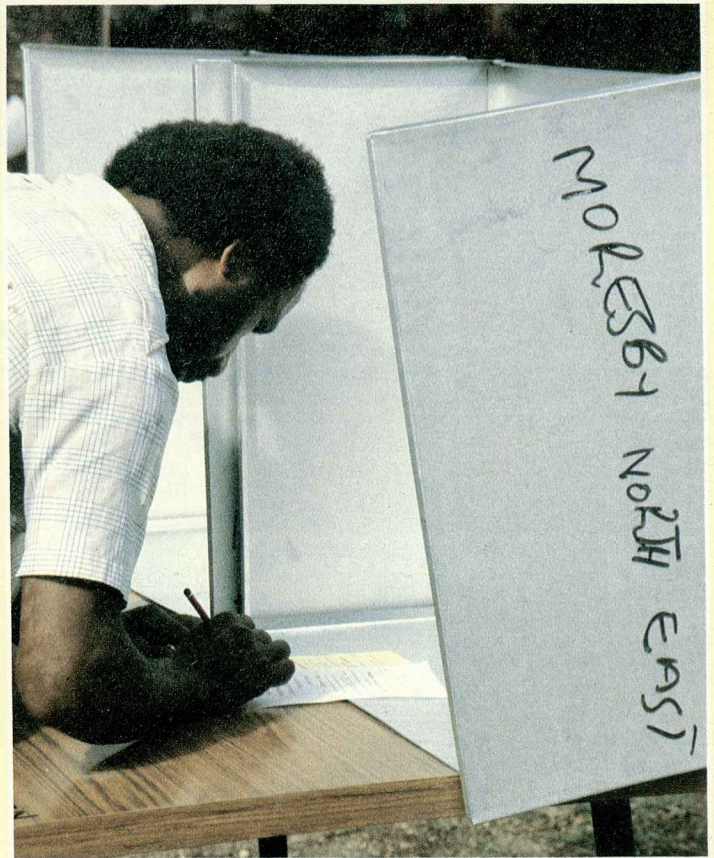
and podium in a modern hotel.

There's hardly a person not participating in the campaigns in some way. Bumper stickers, t-shirts, loud hailers, posters and the mass media form a constant montage of political messages. In most cases the man is the message with the issues largely disregarded.

Many candidates have spent tens of thousands of kinas in a bid to convince constituents that they are right for the job. Like politicians in every corner of the world they are making a blatant grab for office and the power and responsibility that goes with it. However, whatever perspective one gets of Papua New Guinea politics, its unique character, its vibrancy, its excitement and widespread participation confirms that democracy and the electoral process is very much alive and well in Papua New Guinea. — *Susuwe Laumaea is a senior journalist with the National Broadcasting Commission*

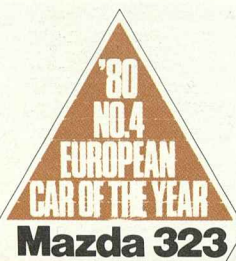


Anti-clockwise from top left:  
 electioneering PNG style at Kundiawa;  
 women play a big part in politics;  
 Media Minister, Mr Clement Poe, with Mrs Karina Okuk, the wife of former Deputy Prime Minister at a rally in Chimbu Province;  
 election pleas outside Port Moresby polling booth;  
 casting a vote; police stand by at polling booths to dampen boistrous enthusiasm;  
 National Party supporters campaign for Mr Okuk at Kundiawa;  
 Prime Minister Somare at the central tally room;  
 a vote for one of the 1100 candidates;  
 a dab of indellible paint says "I've voted"



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**C**ORAL reefs are an obligatory turquoise backdrop to everyone's tropical paradise. In the world's imagination they are a trap for sailors, a haunt of deadly giant clams (actually harmless and now threatened with extinction by over-fishing) and an essential setting for rum adverts. They are among the most complex of biological habitats yet their very existence seems contradictory at first sight.

The clear blue waters of tropical seas are clear because there is nothing in them — they support almost no life. While there are certainly a lot of fish in the sea, there's a lot of empty water around each one — ask any honest fisherman. Yet where light can reach the sea bottom there are wonderfully rich communities in that same clear and barren water.

These are the coral reefs, islands of life in an empty ocean. The basis for reefs' incredible productivity is the partnership of the corals with tiny algae which live within the tissues of the coral animals. These algae use sunlight to synthesise sugars, and the corals use some of the sugars. Corals only exist where light can reach because the algae need light and the corals need the algae. In the sea, as on land, animal life depends on plants.

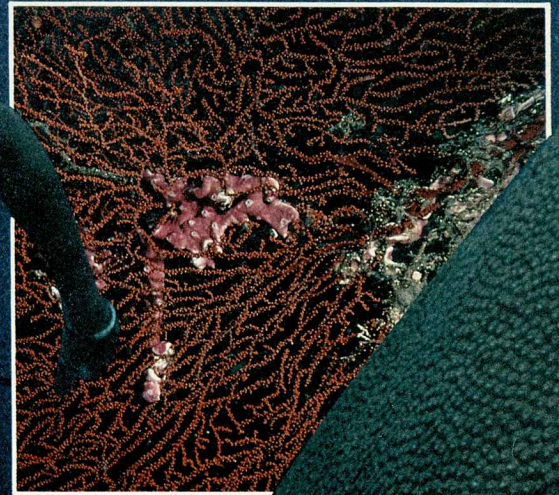
Corals are the body of a reef and its adornment too. They belong to the same group of animals as jellyfish but whereas jellyfish are almost as insubstantial as water itself, corals have the ability to extract lime from the water and use it to build rock-hard skeletons. Reefs are built from millions of tons of limestone, the accumulated remains of stony corals.

There are also soft corals. These do not have lime skeletons and do not build reefs. They are among the most beautiful and delicate living things on the reef. Some, the gorgonians, develop in quiet water into delicate and brilliant fans. Others, the alcyonarians look like

small material in a sticky web on the surface of the colony.

The brilliant colours of corals are elusive. The colours are usually in the animal, not in the skeleton which is as white as any other limestone. (The blue cor-

al and red pipe-organ coral are exceptions). In the ocean the colours are masked by the water, which absorbs the red and yellow light so that everything is reduced to a dull brown. Flash photography reveals the true



# Corals

Story and pictures: Chris Prior

fluorescent cacti or bunches of flowers.

Hard and soft corals can be distinguished by their tentacles. The hard corals have multiples of six and the soft ones have eight.

Corals obtain essential sugars from their companion algae but the animals are basically carnivorous and catch prey as large as small fish in their tentacles. Many feed at night, when the coral colonies 'flower' in a mass of coloured arms. They may trap food directly in the tentacles, or they can catch very

*Diver examines a huge brain coral at Rabaul; inset: gorgonian coral not a reef builder*

An alcyonarian soft coral growing on a steep coral wall.  
**inset clockwise from bottom right:** coral polyps with tentacles  
extended; triangular butterfly fish feeding on acropora coral;  
brilliant soft coral; carnation coral

colours. These are seldom what you see in tourist shops — those souvenirs are usually dyed.

Corals spread by releasing tiny swimming young into the oceans. These eventually settle to form new colonies on reefs, rocks or wrecks. Many of Papua New Guinea's war wrecks are now covered in small corals. Some corals are aggressive and can overgrow the ones next to them, so that reefs are constantly changing.

As well as being pushed out by their neighbours, corals are eaten by fish. Parrot fish with tough, rock-crushing jaws crunch up stony corals and leave teeth marks on the reefs. Butterfly fish are more conservation minded, they just pick out the

than marine scientists feared.

There are fossils known of many more species of reef-building corals than are alive today. Many died out at the same time as the dinosaurs. Today's reefs are only a remnant of the reefs of earlier ages when the world's climate was warmer and reefs were found in seas now too cold for them. Corals need a temperature higher than twenty degrees centigrade.

As the reefs grow, the ac-

cumulation of coral debris eventually brings them to the surface, where of course they stop. Thus, if everything else was constant you would expect that in time all reefs would have developed to the limits of shallow water — all atolls would be high and dry and all fringing reefs would be limited to sheer drops into deep water.

It would seem that because of the limitations of light and clear water, reefs should have filled all the space available to them by now. But all things are not constant, and over the years seas rise and fall and so do land masses, allowing reefs to accumulate and yet stay submerged.

At Eniwetok Atoll the coral layer is nearly one mile deep and yet all this coral has grown in an ever-renewing shallow zone on

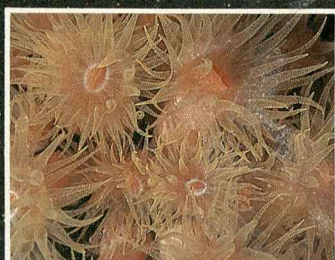
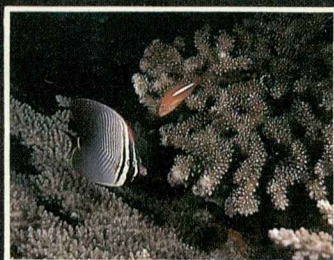
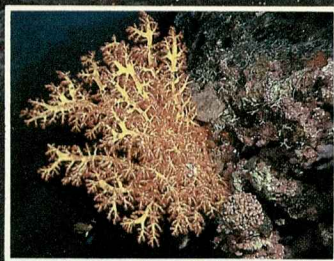
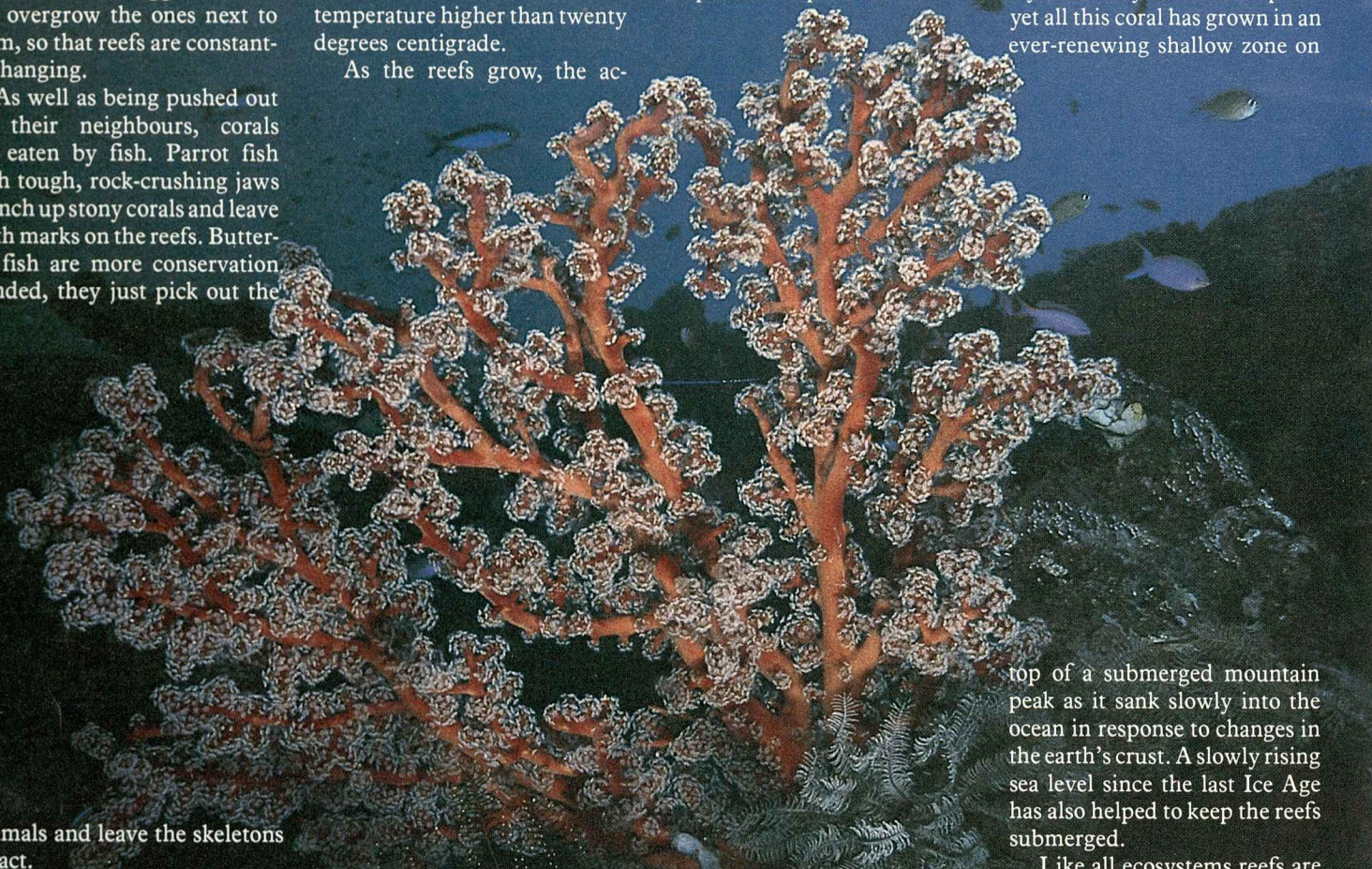
animals and leave the skeletons intact.

A much more notorious predator is the crown-of-thorns starfish, which sucks out the coral animals from their skeletons. One crown-of-thorns starfish can destroy an area of reef as large as itself in a day. When the first outbreaks of this once-rare animal were recorded on the Barrier Reef in Australia there was quite a panic. The reason for the sudden increase is not known for certain, but it now seems that the older damaged areas are being recolonised, and that the damage is probably not permanent. Reefs, whose structure is continually changing, proving to be more adaptable

top of a submerged mountain peak as it sank slowly into the ocean in response to changes in the earth's crust. A slowly rising sea level since the last Ice Age has also helped to keep the reefs submerged.

Like all ecosystems reefs are vulnerable to pressures from outside. Pollution, over-fishing and mining for limestone are some of the human threats to reefs. Pressure from sports divers in some popular Caribbean resorts had led to the suggestion that the more fragile corals should be fenced to prevent damage from careless flippers!

Papua New Guinea's reefs are still relatively free of such pressures and, in one of the world's richest areas for marine life, they are a superb attraction to swimming and diving visitors. — *Chris prior is a research fellow at the University of Papua New Guinea*







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**J**UST 18 kilometres from the Indonesian Border in the remote Star Mountains of Papua New Guinea is a scarred and sparsely vegetated mountain — its name is Fubilan and beneath its rough exterior, lies such vast quantities of gold and copper it will take almost 30 years to mine.

Over 410 million tonnes of gold and copper bearing ores will be extracted in an operation now known simply as “OK TEDI”.

It is a project which many Papua New Guineans hope will catapult this young nation back to the boom days of Bougainville Copper, bumper coffee crops, and big profit copra markets. Ok Tedi, (named after the nearby river of the same name) is awe-inspiring in size, its logistics mind boggling and the terrain totally unforgiving. Over 10,000 mm of rain is dumped annually on the project

area, mud is sometimes a metre or more thick on the ‘roads’ and and there have been occasions when helicopters could not get off the ground for ten days because of low cloud that cuts vision down to less than a car’s length.

This then is Ok Tedi, a project which reads like a “B” grade movie plot and has an international cast which rivals Ben Hur.

The mine is 800 kilometres by air from the National Cap-

ital, Port Moresby, and from the summit of Mt Fubilan, Indonesia’s snow capped peaks are clearly visible across a border which is just eight minutes away by helicopter.

There is no way to Fubilan except by foot or helicopter, the latter running shuttle services for workers from the nearby construction camp at Tabubil. Built on a plateau which was once the traditional fighting ground for opposing village groups, Tabubil is now home to over 1000 workers and a handful of families. The camp was



*Mt Fubilan contains over 410 million tonnes of minable ores;  
inset: chemist checks water samples taken from the Fly River*

# POT OF GOLD

By Noel Browne

originally built by the Kennecott Copper Corporation, which discovered Ok Tedi's vast mineral wealth, back in 1969. When that company withdrew from the project in 1975 the Government took the matter into its own hands, formed the Ok Tedi Development company and sought overseas partners to fully investigate the feasibility of a mining operation at Ok Tedi.

It didn't have to look far. Australian mining giant, The Broken Hill Pty Co. Ltd (BHP) soon made its willingness to

participate known and became the managing partner in a consortium which includes American and West German interests.

The feasibility study took 31 months to complete and cost the consortium K11.1 million. In summary it found that, yes, there were substantial quantities of ore; yes, it was economically viable and, yes, there were companies willing to take on what has become one of the most challenging projects in the world today.

In February, 1981, Ok Tedi Mining Limited was formed — it was the company which would construct and mine Ok Tedi. The Papua New Guinea Government took a 20 per cent shareholding in Ok Tedi Mining Limited and together with its Australian, American and West German partners, quickly got down to the task ahead. Partners BHP, the American Amoco Minerals Papua New Guinea Company and a group of West German companies, and the State soon provide a hard core

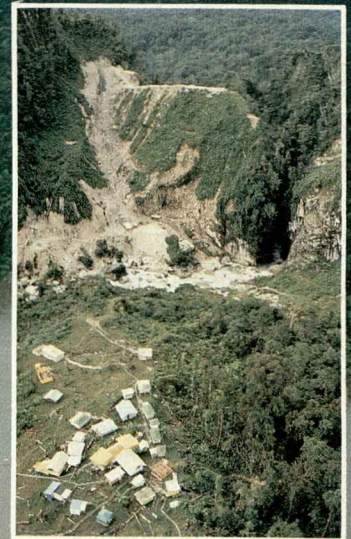


of expertise which now forms part of the management nucleus of OTML. Bechtel-MKI, was appointed prime contractor for the project's construction phase.

The San Francisco based Corporation and the Idaho, USA based Morrison Knudsen International pooled their resources for the "tough one". Both companies have separately and jointly participated in some of the world's most ambitious construction exercises.

Work began in October. Us-

ing the Fly River port of Kiunga as the spring board, supplies and workers soon began to stream in on the way to what is referred to as the "pot of gold". As no road existed between Kiunga and Tabubil all supplies were flown in. The feasibility study called for a road to be built, so that when copper production begins in 1986, the concentrate can be transported by road to the Fly River at Kiunga. The breakthrough on the road came on March 29, 1982 when the first convoy of trucks was



Fuel and plant equipment for the project is barged over 1200 km to Kiunga from Port Moresby; **inset anti-clockwise from above:** road construction from Tabubil to Mt Fubilan; road gangs sleep on the job in temporary camps; the road was cut through 135 km of virgin bush; traditionally the way to cross the raging streams in the mine area

Below: torrential rain turns Kiunga airport into a quagmire; below left: new recruits wait for allocation of "donga" or single-men's quarters; bottom: everpresent cloud provides the backdrop to construction at Tabubil



pushed, pulled and winched through kilometre-long stretches of metre deep mud to reach Tabubil.

The townships of Kiunga Tabubil have grown rapidly. Kiunga, once a sleepy government outstation, has grown to a township of over 3000 people, over half of whom work on the Ok Tedi Project. Tabubil is home to over 1000 people, mostly single men, who work ten hours a day, six days a week for 16 weeks before any break.

The first gold is scheduled to come from Fubilan on May 18, 1984 when the first construction stage ends.

Once copper mining begins in 1986 the ore will be mined at Mt Fubilan, trucked to the nearby crushing mills and then slurried by pipeline to Tabubil before being trucked some 135 kilometres to the Fly River port of Kiunga. From Kiunga it will be taken by barge 850 kilometres down the Fly River to the ocean port. From there it will be shipped on bulk concentrate carriers to markets around the world.

The Ok Tedi project has a three stage mining plan spanning 27 years based on current mineable ore reserves. All mining will be by the open-cut method, similar to that used at Bougainville Copper's Panguna mine. The first stage, starting in 1984 and lasting two years, is the mining and processing of



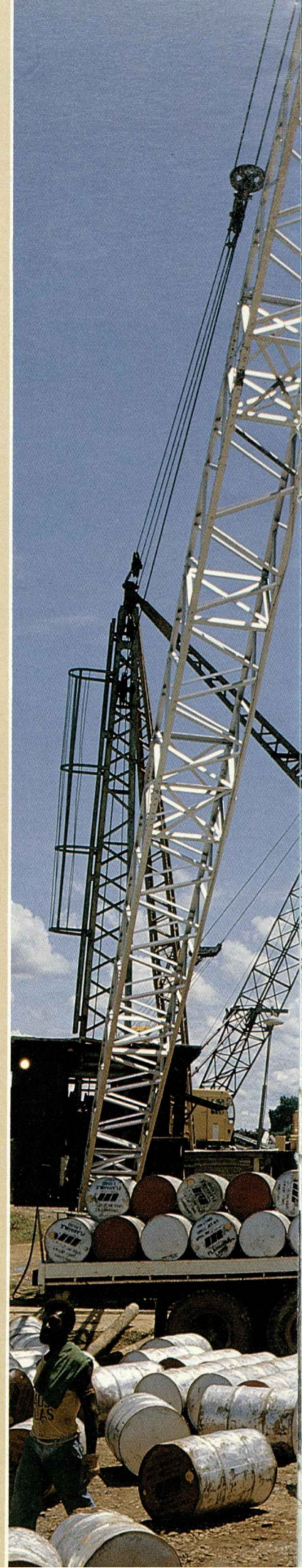
gold bearing ore at the rate of 5.47 million tonnes a year. The second stage, beginning in 1986, sees both gold and copper bearing ores mined, at the rate of 13.68 million tonnes per year. The third stage, beginning in 1989, will see copper mining only at the rate of 16.4 million tonnes a year.

The project calls for the building of over 200 kilometres of pipelines, 170 kilometres of roads, an airport at Tabubil, and shipping facilities at Kiunga and the ocean port site. It represents one of the biggest construction operations of its type in the world. Apart from the mine site itself, whole new towns and facilities are being developed.

At Tabubil Ok Tedi Mining is responsible for laying out the town, building of houses,

schools and health centres. At Kiunga work has begun on the wharf and industrial area. More than 360 housing units will be built at Tabubil before operations begin in 1984. In addition the Ok Menga dam is being built to provide hydro-generating facility to power the mine operation and town of Tabubil. The ultimate operating capacity of Ok Menga is 50 mega-watts.

Tabubil will eventually be home to 6000 people and the riverside port of Kiunga will grow to a town of 4000 by 1984. During the construction stage up to 1984, employment could reach 3500 but when the mine is in full production employment is likely to be around 2000. At present 80% of the workforce are Papua New Guineans



# Building a Legend

**T**HE Californian-based engineering and construction firm which has been awarded the contract to develop the mine at Ok Tedi is one of the true anomalies of American business.

The Bechtel Corporation is a globe-trotting giant that operates throughout the United States and in twenty foreign countries. At the same time the company, in many ways, is so quiet and unobtrusive that many people have never heard of it.

The company, however, was thrust into the world spotlight earlier this year when its Chief Executive, George Schultz, was appointed U.S. Secretary of State after the shock resignation of Alexander Haig.

The privately-owned and operated group based in San Francisco reportedly turned over US\$11.4 billion in 1981. The Bechtel Corporation has done more to change the landscape of the world than any other company this century. Among their engineering feats are the Hoover Dam, the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, the trans-Alaska pipeline, the Mount Newman Iron



Warren A. Bechtel

ore project, the trans-Arabian pipeline and the Washington metro-subway system. Bechtel has an international reputation for finishing jobs on time and under budget.

The company began life as a one-man operation when a young German farmer, Warren Bechtel, decided in 1889 to hire himself out with his team of mules to help build a railway track through notorious Indian country. The company established itself throughout the United States thirty-three years later in 1931 by helping to lead the eight-company consortium that built the Hoover Dam.

Warren Bechtel's son

Stephen did well during World War II by building liberty ships for the United States Navy. Some of these ships were bolted together in under a week. Ironically many of them were sunk by the Japanese around the Papua New Guinean coast during the furious days of 1943. At the war's end Bechtel expanded his company's work and moved into oil refineries and later nuclear power stations. In 1960 Bechtel handed control of the company over to his only son, Stephen Jr., who holds the title of Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. Since the departure of George Schultz to the White House he has also assumed the title of president.

As the business has grown, the Bechtels have become one of the world's wealthiest families. According to Time Magazine, Steve Snr. is said to be worth in excess of \$750 million and his son has a personal fortune estimated at \$200 million.

The respective fortunes have been amassed in a little over eighty years by being the biggest and the best project builders of the twentieth century.





programme for construction and production phases of the project will be formulated. Areas covered by the study include the Ok Tedi and Fly Rivers from the mine to the sea and the ocean port site.

The rapid construction progress is sometimes bewildering to the people in the mine area, who had their first contact with the outside world in 1963. It was then that a Government patrol first entered the cloud covered peaks of the Star Mountain range. Since then, with the discovery of gold and copper, the subsequent exploration and now construction, this remote area of the western province has been catapulted into the modern world.

Besides the obvious income to Government via additional profits tax, normal company taxes, royalties and, of course, its own shareholding, the project will provide a range of direct and indirect business opportunities to local airlines, shipping companies, primary producers, and many others.

After years of speculation and exploration Ok Tedi is now reality. In less than two years the first gold will come from Mt Fubilan. Before then over K560 million will have been spent to get to the production stage and the project, at completion in 1989, will have cost Ok Tedi Mining Limited in excess of K1000 million.

Hopefully, a small price for a giant "pot of gold". — Noel Browne, a former senior Australian journalist is now employed by Ok Tedi Mining Limited

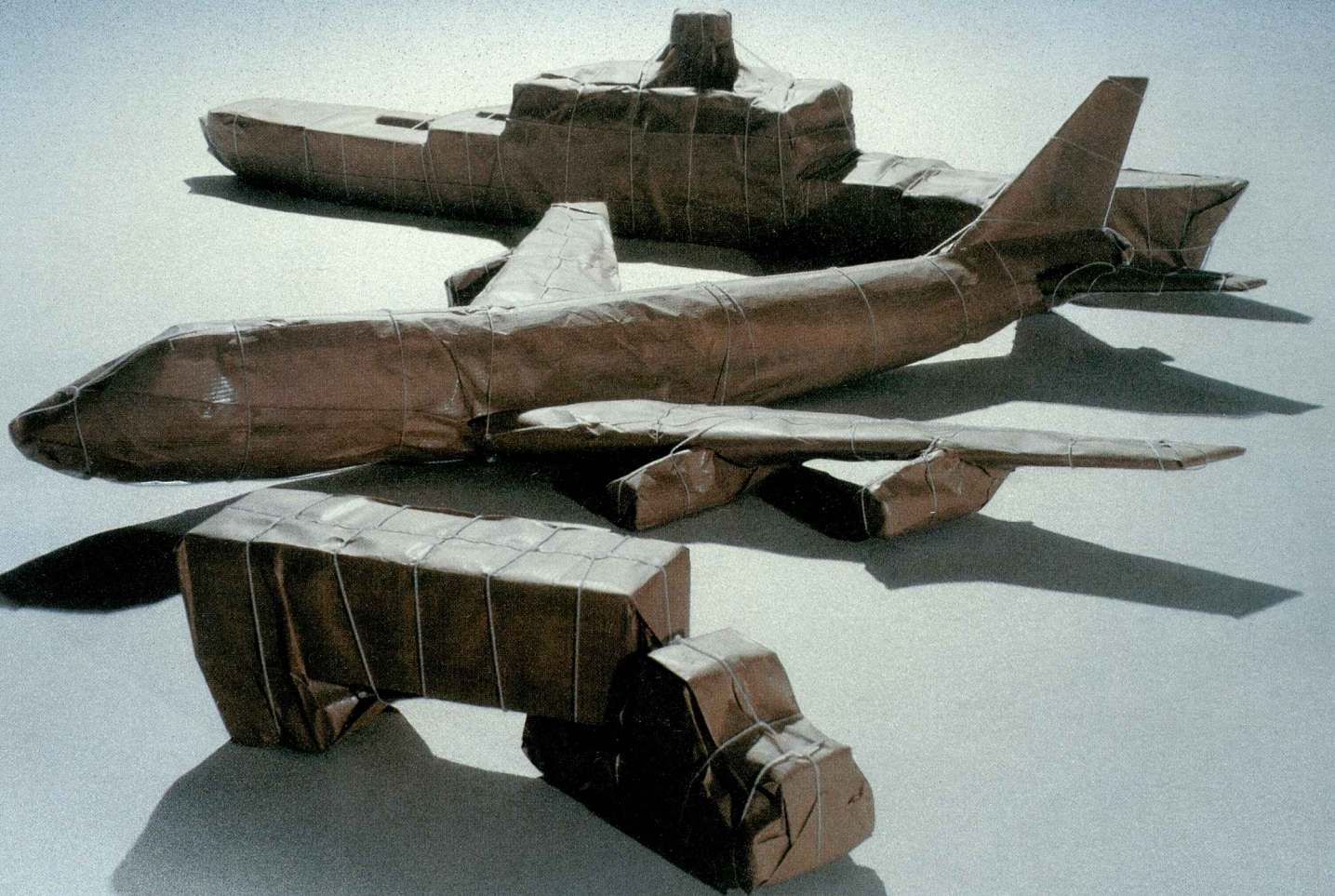
with the remainder coming from Australia, USA, Philippines, Korea, New Zealand and Britain.

The company has spent more than K1 million on an Environmental Impact Study, completed in June this year. The study monitors river flow rates and water quality, the population and body chemistry of fish and other river life and the cultural and dietary habits of the area's indigenous population. This study is presently being reviewed by the Papua New Guinea government. Once assessment has been made to the possible effects a mining operation will have, an on-going environmental management

Top: the Min people have lived in the mine area for thousands of years but only had their first contact with the outside world in 1963; above left: local village people; above right: student at Tabubil school; inset: feeding the computer



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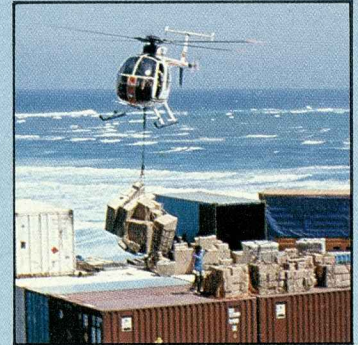
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# OPERATION AIRLIFT!

Story and pictures: Kirk Franklin

**W**HAT has four major metal parts, weighing 300 kg. each and when put together can construct an airstrip?

The Dadibi and Chimbu people at Karimui stood looking into the sky, filled with amazement. Planes and helicopters had been buzzing over their heads for three days. They watched closely as the men unloaded huge metal parts from the planes and hung them from beneath helicopters. Then the 'choppers' lifted up with a mighty roar and flew off to the west.

If they could have taken the 12-minute helicopter ride, they would have found the answer to the riddle. For there at Negabo, the parts were unloaded from the helicopters and assembled into a four wheel drive tractor!

Negabo is situated in the foothills of the western slopes of Mt Karimui. The Chimbu provincial government has wanted to develop the area for some time, but has needed an airstrip there in order to do it. Knowing that the Summer Institute of Linguistics was working in the area too, the provincial govern-



*Above: a twelve minute helicopter flight saves weeks; left: the dense jungle at Negabo; local people watch (below) as the tractor engine is landed*

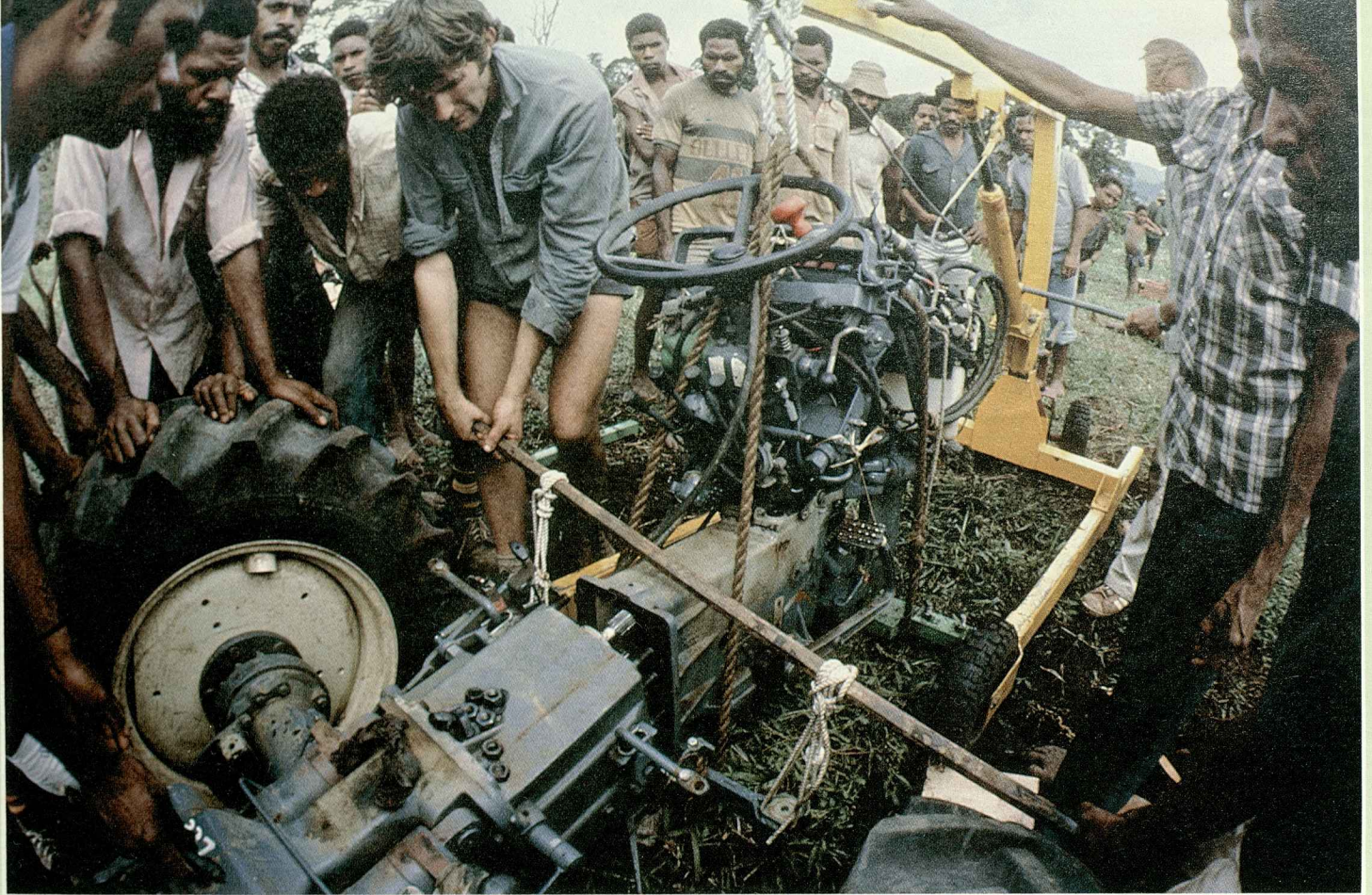


ment asked SIL to build the airstrip. SIL's tractor will be used for the job.

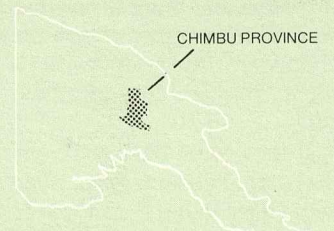
The Summer Institute of Linguistics is an international scientific organization whose purpose is to do linguistic investigation of minority languages wherever they may be found. They provide a writing system and literature for the

local people.

The Dadibi population is divided into two groups with an eight hour walk between. The eastern area is home for 3,500 Dadibis. More than 4,500 live in the western section. This new airstrip will mean that medical facilities, businesses and some industry can now be developed for the people there as well as a



**Top:** the components of the tractor are bolted together; the wheels arrive by helicopter (left) and the tractor is ready to roll (above)



furthering of the SIL literacy work.

The tractor was dismantled at Aiyura airstrip near Ukarumpa, in the Eastern Highlands. SIL provided the aircraft and pilots to do the transporting of it, first to Karimui and then to Negabo. Three 206 planes made thirteen 35-minute flights taking it, in 17 pieces, to Karimui. Each load weighed approximately 480 kg.

Waiting at Karimui were three SIL men who would be involved in the airstrip construction. The first night the men camped at the airstrip with the tractor parts inside the circle of their tents.

The next day the helicopter arrived and began to shuttle the parts over to Negabo. Pilots Bob Bartels and Bob Weimer accomplished the airlift in 18 chopper flights, a total of almost

6,000 kg. transported in a little over one day.

Two of the construction men were taken over to Negabo in the first helicopter flight so they could begin assembling the tractor. The Dadibi helped them as much as they could, and any lack of mechanical ability was more than met by their enthusiasm for the project. By the end of the day, the tractor was assembled, ready for use.

Construction of the airstrip is expected to take six to eight months. Had the tractor not been flown in, it would have been a three year job by hand.

The exercise proved to be a classic example of the theory "new problems find new solutions".

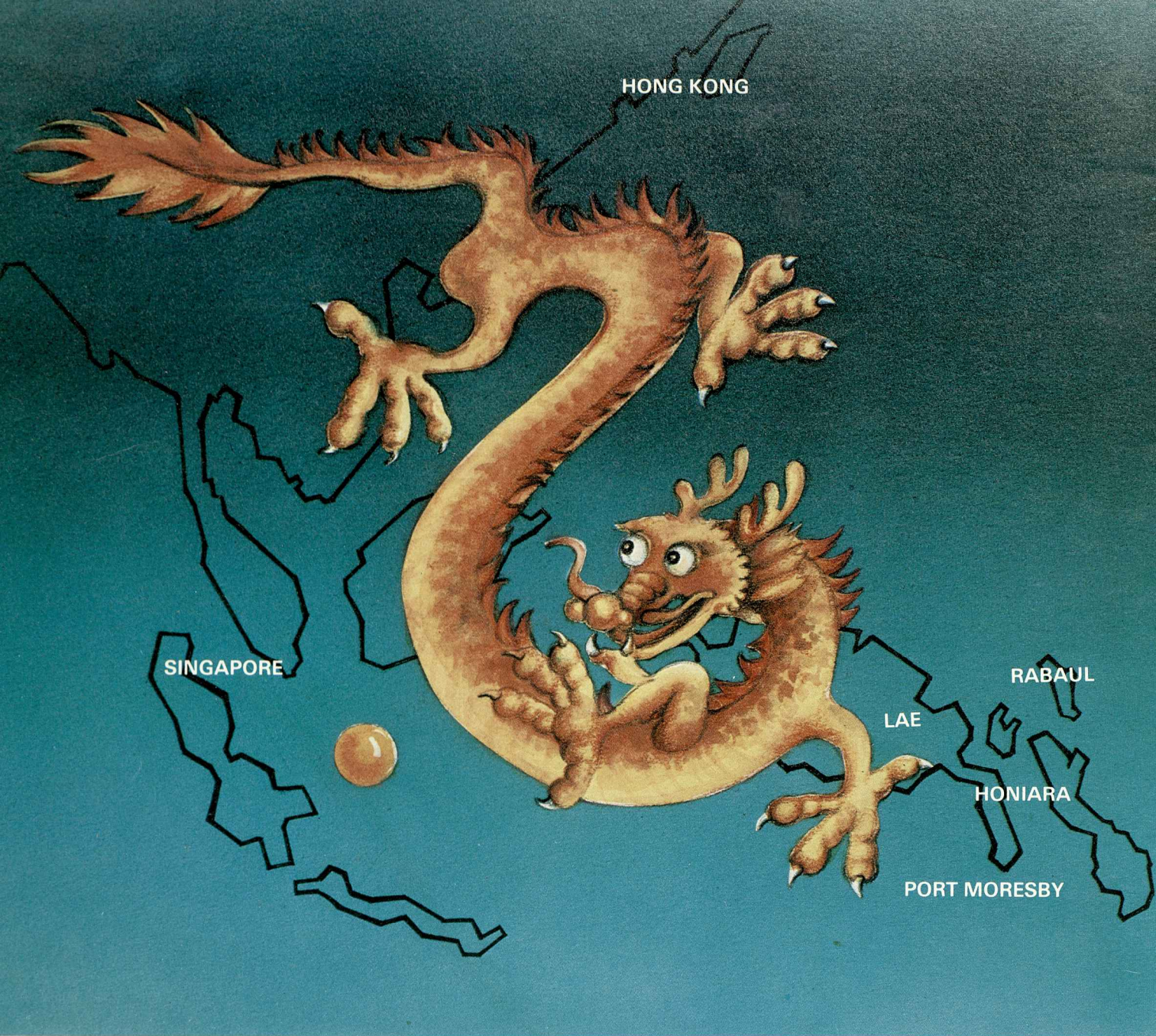


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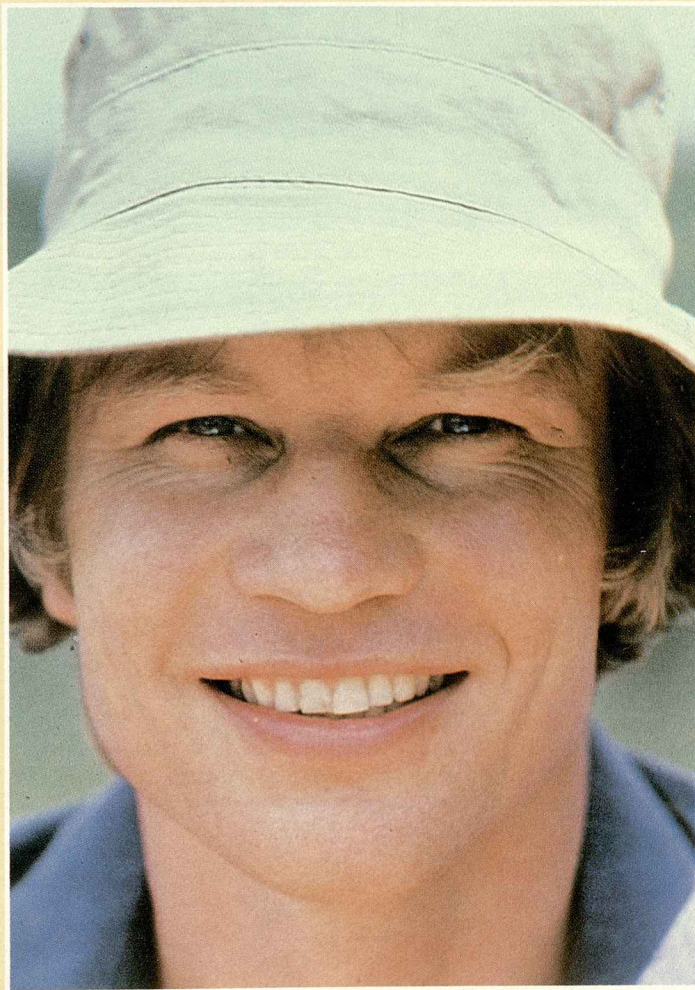
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# STAR GAZING

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*Blond, blue-eyed, six feet tall and boyishly handsome, British film star Michael York has captivated audiences the world over with his roles in no less than 25 feature films. But on his first visit to Papua New Guinea, the actor turned on-looker — and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.*

*Though internationally recognised as a film star, Michael York began his career on the stage. Born in the south of England in 1942, he studied drama and joined the National Youth Theatre while still at school.*

*His interest in theatre blossomed while he was at Oxford and after graduating with an Honours degree in*

*Arts, he joined the Dundee Repertory Theatre in Scotland. A gruelling schedule of three plays a week rapidly turned the Oxford Dramatic Society player into a young actor of such luminary promise that in 1964 he was accepted by both the National Theatre and The Royal Shakespeare Company. He joined the National, largely*

*because of the attractions of working with one of his idols — Sir Laurence Olivier.*

*Over the next couple of years one success followed another and Mr York played a variety of roles in theatres from *The Old Vic* to the *Chichester Festival*.*

*In 1967, he left the National Theatre Company to make his first film — and*

*Michael York, movie star, was on his way. That film, a Columbia production of *'The Taming of the Shrew'*, co-starring Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor was the first of many personal and professional triumphs for Michael York. Among the other films in which he has played are the experimental *'Accident'*, written by Harold Pinter and co-starring Dirk Bogarde, and a line-up of block-busters of the order of *'Murder on the Orient Express'*, *'The Three Musketeers'* and *'England Made Me'*.*

*Michael York "discovered" Paradise in Papua New Guinea as he explains in the following article.*

**W**HY Papua New Guinea? Why not! comes the enthusiastic answer. Truth to say, I had always been haunted by the exotic appeal of this country ever since a school friend took the unimaginably romantic step of abandoning the prosaic urbanities of England for a teaching job in distant Papua. This boyhood stab of curiosity was revived recently in Paris where I was working with William Holden on a film. He is a Papua New Guinea enthusiast and filled my avid ears with tales of extraordinary tribal cultures and astonishing local art.

So when the chance of taking a short holiday in Papua New Guinea presented itself on a return trip to Europe from Australia, I seized it with enthusiasm. To say that I was not disappointed is a ridiculous understatement: it was an unforgettable trip. By profession and inclination a seasoned traveller, I am not yet a jaded one.

Although the strangeness of foreign travel has been vitiated almost everywhere by the omnipresence of spoken English and the general uniformity of international hotels, nothing could really prepare me for some of the sights and sensations we experienced. They are all trapped on film, but before the living memory of them fades and blurs into colourful confusion, let me try to expose them here on paper, and hope that the many sharp-focussed images in the mind transfer successfully into words.

The first thing one learned is that travel in Papua New Guinea is mostly by air and that our Port Moresby-bound Boeing had a noble lineage going back to the pioneer days of air transportation.

I always like to fly to a new country on its national airline. One gets a taste of things to come.

The sun set on our first day in Port Moresby, dropping behind the green hills that surround the capital city as we



paddled in the warm water that washes its beaches. One was already in the captive embraces of the Tropics, lulled by balmy air and enervated by a sweet lassitude. However, the next morning we were up with the sun again to catch our flight to Madang.

Fortunately, Papua New Guinea follows the eminently sensible Australian custom of providing each hotel room with

tea-making facilities, and this early-morning dose of caffeine provided a welcome boost to locomotion.

The plane went via Goroka and as it dropped through towering columns of cumulus and between green mountain ridges for its landing in this highland town, we marvelled again at this machine that was supremely responsible for opening up the country. It brought forcibly

to mind the surprising statistic that in the 1920's and 30's Papua New Guinea was the world leader in air freight operations, and its pilots, who earned their wings servicing gold fields and mission stations across punishing and uncompromising terrain, are among the most experienced of their breed.

Madang, with its parks and palm-fringed beaches, provided a relaxing interlude despite the





neighbours brought matters amusingly down to earth.

The sun smiled on us the next day. As we flew to the soggy Amboin airstrip, it lit up the huge primeval landscape that unfolded beneath us — a limitless panorama of forests and mountains bisected by serpentine, cocoa-coloured rivers, with the odd mountain piercing the purple horizon. Our destination, the Karawari Lodge which lies on a tributary of the mighty Sepik river, is one of those extraordinary tourist experiences that no brochure or travel literature can adequately describe.

Perched on the back of a breezy ridge above the river, it commands a panoramic view of

faded notice on one of the beaches exhorting one to watch out for crocodiles! That night the hotel provided us with our first singsing, a performance characterised — as were all subsequent singsings we were lucky enough to experience — by uninhibited enthusiasm, grace and spontaneity.

We found refuge — and the best apple-pie this side of Vienna — at the modern Highlander Hotel. It continued to rain all night and the next day we were forced to alter our plan of flying into the Sepik region as the airstrip at Amboin was water-logged. This set-back provided an unexpected bonus as we were able to see something of the region before moving on.

A market is always a focus of local activity and Mt Hagen's is no exception. People arrived from far with their wares and laid them out in tempting rows. Piles of peanuts, bananas, avocados and cabbages on one side, and on the other, looking like exhibits in some exotic flower-show, were piles of colourful skirts and blouses. An old gentleman, combining the old with the new by wearing a Western-style jacket with his 'arse-grass', bargained for betel nut, while in the shade a lady sat patiently making an intricately patterned string bilum bag, using her

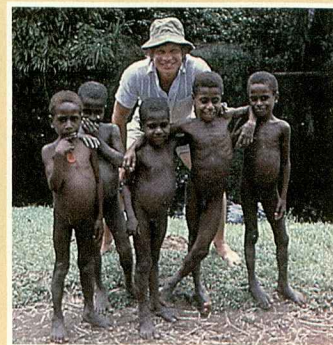


hand as a spindle for the bright threads.

The warming sun seemed to draw colour from the earth and to intensify the brightness of clothes and smiles. Gaudy poinsettias grew in orderly abandon and that afternoon we drove out to the Baiyer River Bird Sanctuary along an ochre dirt road fringed with clumps of yellow daisies across a panorama of rainbow-streaked clouds and

mountains.

The sanctuary lies deep within a shady rain forest which provides an exhilaratingly theatrical setting for the birds themselves. 'Paradise' is perhaps their most accurate, and certainly their most evocative, description for, fleet and fiery feathered, they really do not seem of this world. However, the strident "Hello Cockies!" from two cheerful cockatoo



the region and, from the welcoming cold towel onwards, it provides every creature comfort. There is even no need to paddle ones own canoe: water buses speed one along between rushy banks from one point of interest to another. Flowers flame through the forest gloom and white egrets cut flashes through the heavy air.

Our first encounter with a local tribe was unforgettable. We climbed up a spindly ladder to a large room in which, in dramatically sombre contrast to the sunshine outside, some fantastically dressed forms were just visible in the smoky half-light. As the eye adjusted to the atmosphere, one saw feathers and grass and bizarre make-ups and bone jewellery and whites of eyes that glowed in the pungent gloom. Then a wooden drum started pounding, the chanting began, and the floor started to



sway rhythmically to the beat of the dance.

It was all so unexpected and unfamiliar, and quite overpowering. Our applause was genuine and unfeigned — and charmingly returned by the performers. The feeling of having stepped back into another time, another age, only left one as we emerged into the sunshine for that quintessential twentieth-century rite — the group photograph.

After a sequence of solemn poses, the villagers relaxed with smiles and cigarettes, and went about their daily business. We saw sago being painstakingly prepared, watched a game of spinning tops and shopped for the remarkably attractive, and reasonably priced, local artifacts. One's very action was followed by the indifferent eyes of tribes of slim-line dogs, and the curious gaze of children. They are the inheritors of a new and rapidly developing country. Mercifully, however, the growing influx of tourists does not seem to have corrupted the people as it has elsewhere along more well-trodden paths. There is no sense of being exploited on the part of either guest or host.



Times are, of course, changing.

Dug-out canoes are now occasionally powered by out-board motors, and I even saw a solar heating panel protruding from a sago-thatched hut. Churches now stand alongside ancestral Haus Tamberans and head-hunting is today mimed for tourist entertainment, albeit with hair-raising authenticity. Modern rhythms are entering the musical repertoire. I refer in particular to one memorable evening, the occasion of my wife's birthday, when we were serenaded after dinner by a local bamboo band. It seemed that the whole village turned out to witness the event as, spreading slowly from the door, the room

filled with inquisitive faces.

Inhibitions broken down by birthday cake and soda-pop, one by one the children joined in the revels that culminated in a conga-line that snaked round the packed room like the updated version of some tribal dance.

Early the following day we left the enchanted spot. Our dance partners of the previous night, now soberly enconced in school, serenaded our departure with a distant but rousing rendition of their national anthem. We returned to the Highlands and travelled down the mountainous spine of this tortuous terrain to Goroka. En route, we were splendidly entertained by

the passing scene, as well as professionally by mud-men, cane-swallowers and an astonishing repertory company called the Chimbu Players who demonstrated once and for all that sheer uninhibited enthusiasm of performance makes the microphones, lights and scenery of more elaborate entertainments totally redundant.

We passed the newly planted wealth of tea and coffee plantations, crossed a hundred racing rivers and roller-coasted up and down a thousand hills. Finally we were back in Port Moresby and, saddest of all, back in the airport departure lounge. I am writing this on a Singapore-bound jet. As the hours and miles speed by, I realise that distance does lend enchantment and I look back with a growing sense of pleasure and astonishment at what we encountered. At the same time, I cannot withhold a pang of frustration, for I realise that I have but scraped the surface of a new land and a new experience.

What of those unvisited towns, and those outer islands awaiting discovery? There is just one simple solution — I'll have to return.

# STAMPS of PAPUA NEW GUINEA



## Another exciting way to learn more of Papua New Guinea is through collecting our postage stamps.

Stamps of Papua New Guinea are produced and issued by the Philatelic Bureau for the Postal Administration of Papua New Guinea to meet the postal requirements of all official and agent Post Offices through the country. However, the Philatelic Bureau also has keen interest in our valuable customers who collect stamps as part of their favourite hobby.

As part of the stamp issue policy, it keeps values of stamp issues reasonably consistent with postal requirements and at the same time depicting only Papua New Guinea subjects and topics. Stamps of Papua New Guinea tell stories of historical events, fauna and flora, traditional arts and crafts, folklore, etc.

Featured here are some of the beautiful birds, insects and animals that one can find so fascinating to read about through our beautiful stamps.

### Philatelic services available:

- Philatelic packages
- Stamp issues
- Philatelic news
- Mailing list
- Postage on orders
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*Interested persons wishing to secure further information and details on above services may write to:*

The Manager,  
PNG Philatelic Bureau,  
PO Box 160 (AN),  
PORT MORESBY  
Telephone: 274124



# PESTS in PARADISE

## Rose Beetle (*Adoretus versutus*)

The rose beetle is active only at night. It chews holes in the leaves of a wide range of shrubs and trees, but is particularly fond of butterfly flower, cocoa, guava, hibiscus and rose leaves. It has also been reported as a pest in cocoa nurseries. The larvae feed on the roots of various plants. This particular species of rose beetle is native to Southern Asia but has been introduced to Fiji, Samoa and Tonga.



Even in Paradise not everything in the garden is rosy. In Papua New Guinea scientists and agriculturalists are working to control a number of pests which cause untold millions of kinas worth of damage. Some of the most serious pests attack the crops that form the staple diet of the people, or provide potential. Earlier this year two entomologists from the Mount Albert Research Centre in New Zealand visited Papua New Guinea to record some of the pests on film. The operation was part of a long term project to control the pests. Barry Ekyll and fellow entomologist Peter Madison

plan to continue their photographic safari throughout the South Pacific area to assist in the development of control methods to combat the pests. It's an interesting exercise to watch. Armed with a pocket magnifier, a strange assortment of glass tubes, bottles, sweeping nets and other things peculiar to entomologists Peter makes a comic scene as he darts from bush to bush and from vegetable patch to vegetable patch. The entire performance is punctuated with cries of delight as he discovers another species of insect nonchalantly munching on some vital crop. Barry follows up with a specially

equipped 35 mm camera to record the location and the insect at feeding time. The unsuspecting bug is then swept into a cavernous plastic bag for transportation back to their hotel where it is to be photographed in detail. The photographs are taken on a converted drill stand which allows magnification up to six times life size. During their visit Peter and Barry took two thousand photographs of bugs. They plan to produce a series of information brochures about the major pests to help the local people deal with them.



### The New Guinea Rhinoceros Beetle (*Scapanes*)

This beetle bores into the buds of the young palms causing great damage. The larvae of the beetle live under rotting wood in the forests. Control is difficult, but it is hoped that a virus disease may be effective in controlling the Rhinoceros Beetle. In Fiji, Samoa and Tonga this virus has been very useful in controlling the pest.

**Fruit-piercing Moth**  
*(Othreis fullonia)*

This moth is unusual in being amongst only a few of its group in which it is the adult and not the larva or caterpillar that does the damage. The tongue of the moth has a sharp tip and saw-toothed edge which it uses to pierce ripe fruit. It sucks the juice from the fruit of citrus, guava and mango. The fruit then begins to rot. The fruit-piercing moth is widespread in tropical Asia and the Pacific.

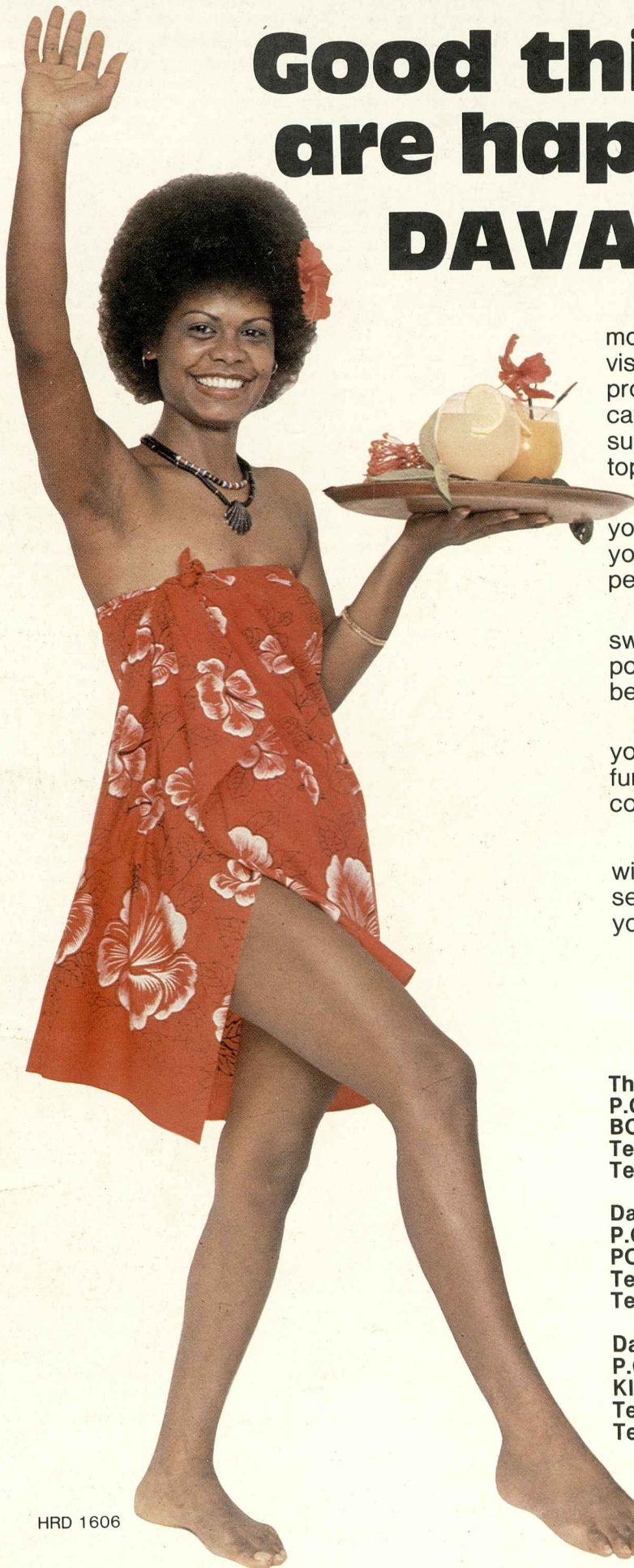
**Coconut Stick Insect**  
*(Graeffea crouanii)*

The coconut stick insect is widespread in the Pacific. It chews coconut leaves and can sometimes even defoliate palms. The eggs are laid by the females in the palm crowns; they fall to the ground, where many are eaten by ants and other ground predators. Wasp parasites of the eggs of this stick insect may be important in future biological control programmes.





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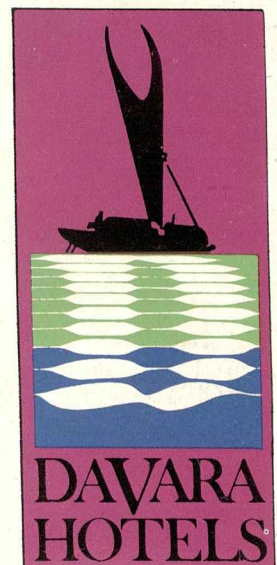
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# It's no wonder most Australians spend their holidays at home.

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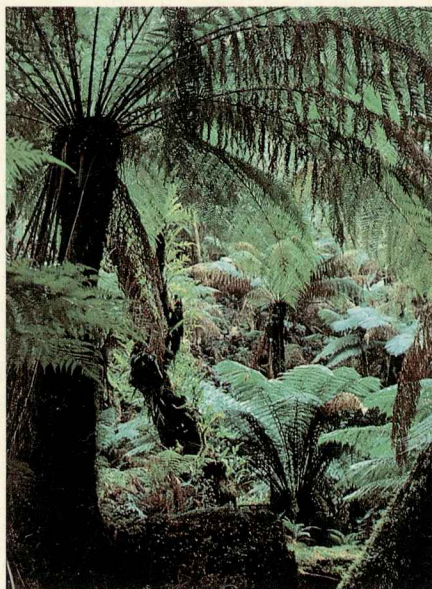
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