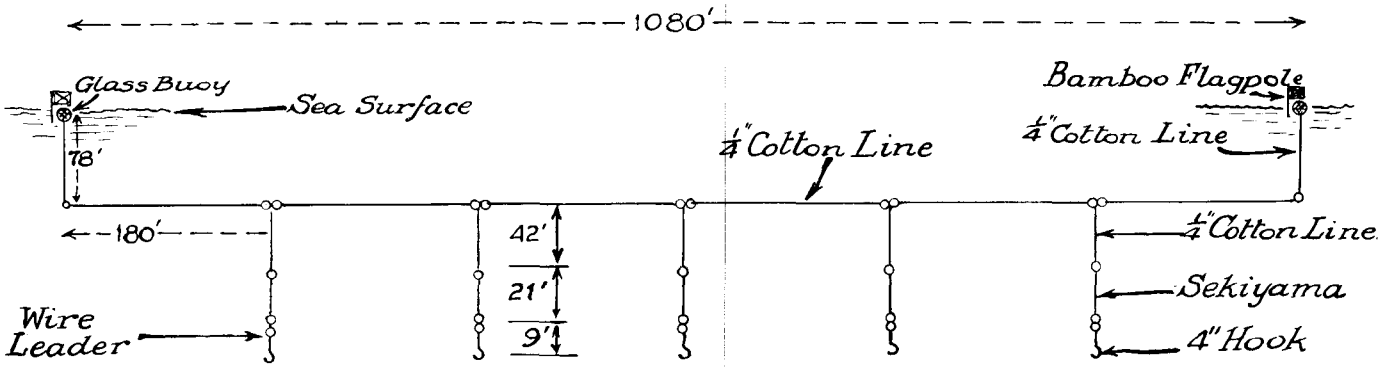
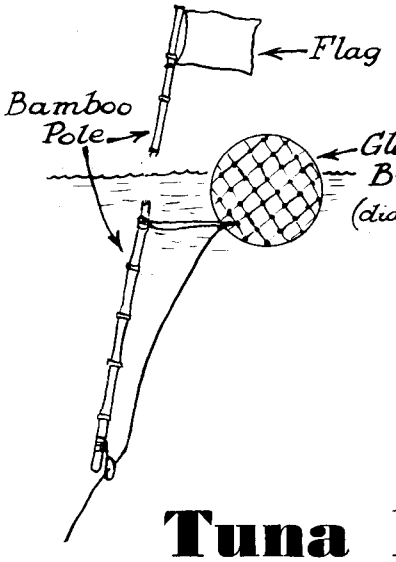




The sketch above shows one basket of a Japanese longline.

Coils of tarred cotton line making up the longline of a Japanese longline boat.

Tuna Fishing With The Japanese Longline

Japanese fishermen use the longline method of catching tuna with outstanding success. Practical details are given below.

By H. VAN PEL

IN the deep seas of the South Pacific, tuna can be found in many places. Since these fish live mostly in clear waters, are fast swimmers, very shy, and do not readily bite on stationary lures, they are obviously rather difficult to catch.

So far, the best type of gear evolved for tuna fishing in this area is the longline. Most *Quarterly Bulletin* readers will have heard of Japanese tuna fishing activities in the South Pacific. These Japanese fishermen use the longline with outstanding success.

This type of gear can be rigged up in various ways, according to the dimensions of the boat, the depth at which the fish stay and at which they find their usual food.

In 1954, the Japanese fishermen delivering tuna to The Van Camp Cannery at Pago Pago, American Samoa, were using about 300 "baskets" of line in each boat, each basket consisting of a cotton mainline divided into six sections, each 30 fathoms[1] long as shown in the illustration. This mainline is set either horizontally or in bights, and is held up by 13-fathom cotton lines bent on to glass floats. A bamboo pole and flag is attached to each float as a marker. From each basket of mainline hang five branch lines, each 13 fathoms long and consisting of three parts, the last of which is a steel wire leader with a tuna hook.

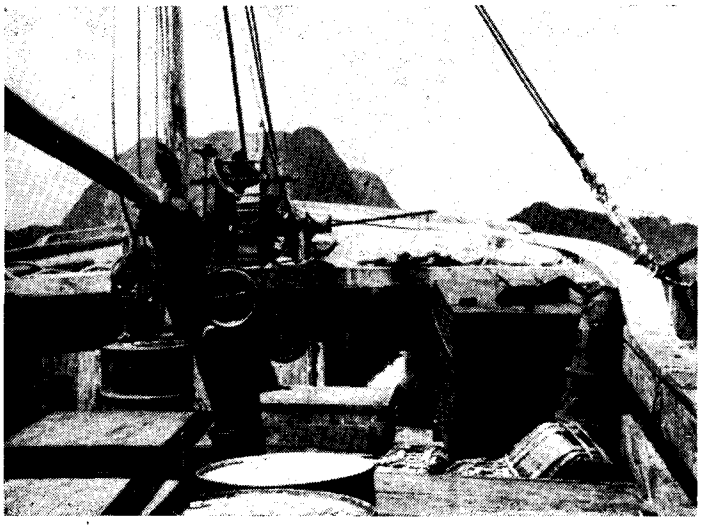
The 300 baskets of mainline can thus be set to cover a maximum distance of 54,000 fathoms, or 53 nautical miles. Needless to say, the hauling is done with the help of a "line hauler", a special type of winch. Including the branch lines, some 74 nautical miles, or 139 km., of line are required for such a longline spreading 1,500 hooks. Obviously, this type of gear is both expensive and bulky.

Saury, a kind of herring, was used for baiting the hooks. This bait had been brought from Japan. Other species can be used but in general bait should be fresh, as tuna is rather "choosy" with anything that does not move.

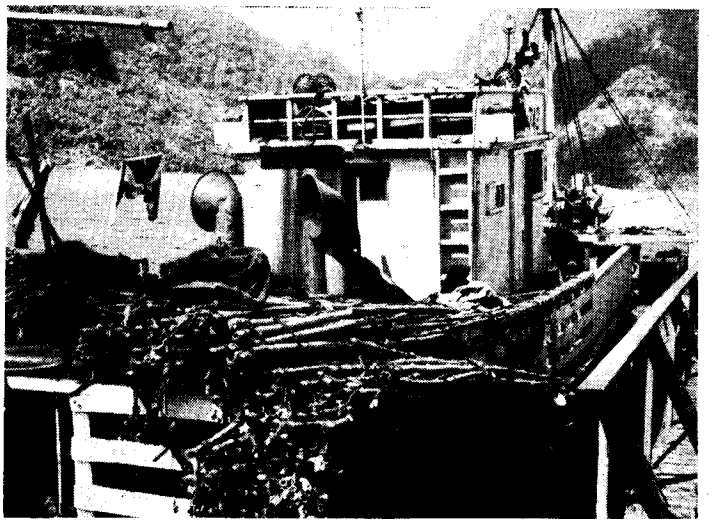
The boats were 150 to 160 tons gross, powered with 210 to 240 BHP diesel engines. Smaller vessels use shorter lines.

Setting and taking in the longline is a strenuous job, occupying from 23 to 28 men night and day, with a bare minimum of rest. Depending on the length of the line, setting may take 4-6 hours and hauling 10-12 hours. Between these operations, other work must be attended

1 One fathom equals 6 feet equals 1.83 metres.



Line-hauler, a special type of winch, on the foredeck.



Line and bamboo poles stowed on a Japanese longline boat.

to. This is repeated every day spent in the fishing area, the duration of each trip being inversely related to the success of the fishing.

Catches ranged from one to five tons a day. Various species of tuna were represented: yellowfin, albacore, bigeyed tuna and skipjack, among which albacore commands the best prices. In addition, the catch included sharks, marlin, sailfish, etc.

The South Pacific Commission will be pleased to supply further details, on request, to anyone interested in this type of fishing.

Research Council Holds Seventh Annual Meeting

LAST month eighteen specialists in education, agriculture and health from island territories throughout the Pacific assembled at Commission headquarters in Nouméa for the seventh annual meeting of the Research Council, which was held from 20th July-1st June.* Representatives of FAO, UNESCO, WHO, the Australian National University, and the Queensland Institute of Medical Research also attended. The Chairman was Mr. W. C. Groves, Director of Education in Papua and New Guinea.

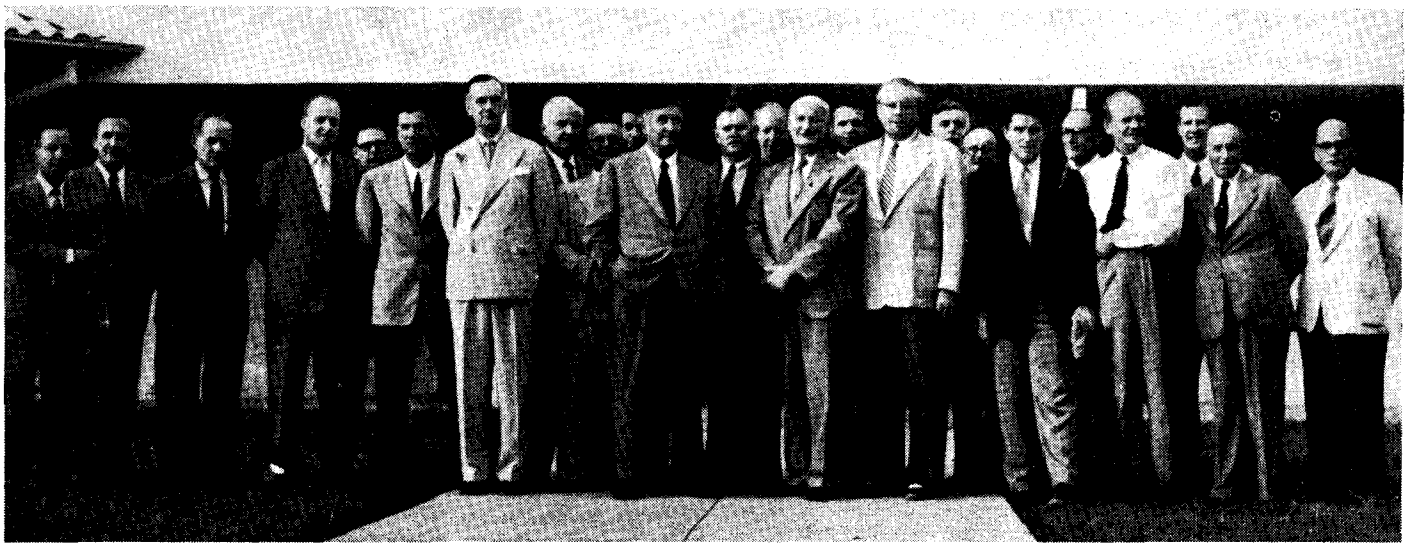
The meeting was opened by Dr. Ralph Clairon Bedell, Secretary-General of the South Pacific Commission.

The Council reviewed the Commission's activities during the preceding twelve months, and made recommendations for its work programme for 1956.

Topics discussed included the campaign against the rhinoceros beetle and other pests, improvement of fisheries, improvement of pastures and introduction of livestock, promotion of cooperative societies, provision of literature for island readers, atoll development, tropical school and dispensary design, and regional training of community leaders. Best methods of successfully pooling territorial technical services and skills were also discussed.

Recommendations made by the Research Council will be considered by the Commission at its Fourteenth Session, to be held in Nouméa next October.

* The Research Council is the Commission's expert advisory body. Its twenty-two specialist members comprise eighteen who are mainly technical officers from territorial administrations, and four permanent officers of the Commission.



Members of the Research Council for 1955, and principal officers of the Commission, photographed during the Council's seventh meeting held at Commission headquarters last month. Left to right: Dr. F. Bugnicourt, Mr. J. Ryan, Prof. E. L. Massal, Dr. L. G. Poole, Mr. J. E. Willoughby, Med. Ltd. Col. G. Boussier, Mr. G. K. Roth, Dr. H. Kroeskamp, Mr. W. N. A. Allison, Dr. J. E. Kennedy, Mr. D. R. A. Eden, Mr. B. E. V. Parham, Prof. O. H. K. Spate, Mr. W. C. Groves (Chairman), Mr. H. J. Coolidge, Dr. Ralph C. Bedell (Secretary-General), Dr. A. H. J. Kroon, Mr. H. M. Phillips, Mr. J. C. Cool, Dr. Cecil Miles, Mr. H. E. Maude, Dr. E. M. Ojala, Dr. T. C. Lonie, Dr. A. Perk.