



Left: Mr. van Pel discusses the sun-drying of fish with Thomas Weasu, who attended the SPC-FAO fisheries training course at Commission headquarters in 1956. He is now in charge of a fisheries project at Insobabi Island, Netherlands New Guinea.



Right: Assistant Fisheries Officer Gerard Ipsen of the same territory, who also attended the fisheries course, is shown here wearing the aqua-lung he uses for shell investigations in depths of up to thirty fathoms.

## Fisheries Development In The South Pacific

*In July 1954 the South Pacific Commission appointed a fisheries officer to carry out the recommendations of the Fisheries Conference held at Commission headquarters in May 1952, his main task being to stimulate development of fisheries in the region. Below he reviews progress made to date.*

By H. van PEL

IT was in July 1954 that the South Pacific Commission, by appointing a fisheries officer, began to play an active role in the development of fisheries in the South Pacific region.

Since then fourteen major territorial surveys have been carried out through which local administrations have been given advice on their fisheries problems. A corresponding number of reports contain accounts of the present status of fisheries in each territory as well as appropriate recommendations, many of which have already been applied.

### Variety Of Subjects

The various subjects treated include transplantation of shellfish, fish culture, stocking natural waters, fish preservation, organization of sea and inland fisheries, protection of natural resources, fishing gear and craft, and salt production.

In the course of each survey, information is given in the field, while sometimes

Experimental freshwater fish ponds under construction in Col d'Amieu by the Forestry Department of New Caledonia. They will shortly be stocked with fry from the Commission's ponds at Port Laguerre.



demonstrations are held for administration officers and fishermen. In a few instances, projects have been started on the spot.

Information is also provided by articles in the *Quarterly Bulletin*. It is very gratifying to see the response and great interest evidenced by letters received from government officials and private individuals, and by visits to Commission headquarters. Enquiries from territories having a Fisheries Department are referred to that authority. The remainder, which are still numerous, are dealt with by correspondence.

The co-operation received from scientific organizations within and outside the Commission's area enables us to relay valuable information. Their constant assistance by far exceeds the little help we are able to give in exchange.



In the Van Camp fish cannery at Pago Pago, American Samoa. Japanese longliners keep the factory supplied with tuna.

### SPC-FAO Fisheries Training Course

The highlight of the period under review was the Fisheries Training Course organized under the joint sponsorship of the South Pacific Commission and the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations.

A total of twenty-five trainees representing fourteen territories attended the Course for a period of three months. The classes covered a wide range of subjects, both theoretical and practical. They were conducted by instructors assigned by FAO or selected locally from the *Institut Francais d'Océanie*, the South Pacific Commission, and the Administration. Outings were organized in order to allow the trainees to observe and practice new techniques explained during the Course.<sup>1</sup>

Successful results are already apparent in a number of islands, where trainees have been assigned to various positions in the fisheries field.

### Practical Fisheries Handbooks

A series of booklets was recently started. The first was *Fish Preservation Simplified*, which describes simple methods for preserving surplus catches of fish over short or long periods. It is practically sold out.

It will be followed shortly by two others; one dealing with the construction and care of tilapia ponds; the other giving advice on the care of fishing nets. These pocket-size publications are designed to convey ideas for the improvement of the fishing industry. The text is simple, clear, and well illustrated.

### Fish Farming Investigations

Investigations on fish cultivation and pond hygiene continue, both at our two small ponds in New Caledonia and numerous others in various territories.

With students who attended the SPC-FAO fisheries training course in December 1956, Mr. van Pel (fourth from right) discusses local fishery techniques with M. Garcia (third from right), skipper of the motor fishing boat "La Paloma".

(An article briefly reviewing our work in this field appears elsewhere in this issue.)

### Fisheries Project Programme

Our programme in the fisheries project is divided into three main categories, (i) surveys and recommendations, (ii) education, and (iii) assistance for implementation of recommendations.

**SURVEYS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Surveys have already been carried out in most territories, and recommendations made accordingly. This work represents the first step towards improvement and development.

**EDUCATION:** The second category, education, falls into two sections:

(a) The training of junior officers who, upon their return to their respective territories, can implement, under supervision, the various recommendations made by local fisheries authorities or by visiting experts. This was the aim of the Fisheries Training Course mentioned above.

(b) More specific and practical demonstrations to help local fishermen in mastering new techniques.

**ASSISTANCE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS:** This third category involves assistance that is necessarily long-term. Current projects (i.e. stocking of natural waters, shell transplantation, introduction of new species, etc.) are under way and have produced some satisfactory results, but will need to be pursued in the future.

It is only through the co-operation of the governments concerned that our common aim will be reached; to develop fish production. To illustrate the point, small motor fishing boats could be used to advantage in a number of places, while coastal fish traps might be introduced to some suitable areas with great profit.

There are already examples of such development in fisheries in the South Pacific Commission's area—in New Caledonia and French Polynesia for instance—where in the main towns of Noumea and Papeete, respectively, fish is available in sufficient quantities. Small motor fishing boats are responsible for most of the catches.

However, small motor fishing boats require money, and that is a commodity most of the people in the South Pacific directly interested in fisheries usually do not possess in large amounts. It is hoped that islands can raise funds for these boats, collectively, or that another solution can be found.

<sup>1</sup> An official report on the Course was published by FAO, Rome, under the title *Report on the South Pacific Fisheries Training Course at Nouméa, New Caledonia* (FAO Report No. 753).

