



Left—in ten hours, this boat covers the sixty-odd sea miles separating Makatea from Rangiroa to return with a load of iced fish packed in crates with sawdust; on right—the 1,000 cu. ft. cold-storage room, in which fish for the Papeete market is kept in good condition. At far right, a stack of aluminium fish containers.

# Fisheries Development in French Polynesia

By Louis Devambez\*

## Cold Storage

**O**VER THE last few months, crushed ice and cold storage have helped modify the traditional aspects of fishing in French Polynesia.

For a long time, the fishermen of Tahiti and of the neighbouring island of Moorea were able to keep the Papeete market well supplied. Recently, however, in addition it has become necessary to call on the resources of the Tuamotu Islands in order to keep the capital supplied with fish.

A cold-storage room of one-thousand cubic feet storage capacity has now been built at Rangiroa, in the Tuamotu Islands, to store, and perhaps later to deep-freeze the fish, which are caught in huge fixed traps made of stones. This cold-storage installation was opened in April, 1964, and at the end of May the *Paraita*, a refrigerated vessel with a capacity of 12 tons of fish, began operation.

Another change has recently been made in the method of marketing sea foods: instead of the traditional "string" of fish (of uncertain weight) being offered for sale, fish are now sold by the kilogram.

## New Fishing Methods

An eight-man team, consisting of four fishermen, a boatbuilder, an engineer, a ship owner, and a representative of the Administration, went to Honolulu re-

\* Fisheries Officer, South Pacific Commission.



Schooners collecting copra in the Tuamotu Islands will be able to obtain ice from the factory on Rangiroa and to complete their load with a few tons of fish before returning to Papeete.

cently to study the fishing methods and types of fishing craft used there for supplying the local market.

The team was scheduled to stay for one month in Hawaii, where it planned to buy a tuna boat and sail it back to Tahiti.

Particular attention was also to be paid to the longlining technique, which seemed capable of considerably improving tuna production in French Polynesia.

In 1961 pearl-culture trials were initiated in the Hikueru lagoon (Tua-

motu Islands), with the assistance of a Japanese expert. Despite difficulties caused by the distance from Papeete, and by the lack of facilities, etc., 827 pearl oysters were operated upon there.

In pearl culture, a certain mortality is inevitable; at Hikueru, for instance, losses amounted to 304 oysters, or 36.7 per cent. However, 276 pearls were harvested, representing a production percentage of 33.5 per cent. Other trials are currently being carried out at Bora Bora.

Experts consider that such pearls, with a diameter equal to or over 10 millimetres, could rank as high quality gems. However, they emphasize the necessity for controlled production and marketing, which, they contend, is the only guarantee of steady prices and sound reputation.



Some of the fish stored at Rangiroa—left to right—a large barracuda, a bunch of small barracudas, and a "string" of small lagoon fish.