

eries wanting to make examples of Māori customary fishers.

Māori reaction was predictably swift and angry. The minister was warned that any attempt to curtail Māori customary fishing rights would simply lead to large-scale civil disobedience by Māori. They were already very angry that the Sealords Deal had removed their commercial fishing rights and reduced the remaining non-commercial rights to regulations. Any further reduction in their rights simply would not be tolerated.

For the first time, the presence of three Māori in cabinet had a significant effect on the outcome. As a result, the minister of fisheries was unable to introduce his preferred regulations and was restricted to only minor amendments to current legislation. A national *hui* of representatives of all tribes was convened. It clearly instructed the minister that Māori would determine what Māori customary fishing regulations would be, and any regulations that did not have Māori support would not be accepted. The prime minister instructed the minister to sort the mess out properly and bring in regulations that had Māori support.

Refusing to accept the position the Māori negotiators had developed after their own extensive consultation with *iwi*, the minister then embarked on his own consultation round with Māori throughout the country. The overwhelming response in *hui* was to simply confirm what the Māori negotiators had already told him. However, he also consulted widely with non-Māori in an attempt bring pressure on Māori to give up their rights. Although he was instructed to complete the job

by April, the results of the consultation round had still not been announced by late June.

In the meantime the media have carried various reports of coastal *hapū* and *iwi* around the North Island in particular, imposing their own traditional management methods over their sea territories by banning commercial fishing until the stocks are sufficiently recovered. Every ban has been imposed because of severe depletion of the *hapū* or *iwi*'s traditional fish stocks. Compliance with the bans has been difficult to monitor, and it is not known how effective they have been. Apart from the minister of fisheries saying that these *rahui* have no legal standing (because they are not mentioned in any legislation) but conceding that they are not illegal, there has been remarkably little public opposition to them. Some *iwi* have reported considerable support, particularly among local communities. Various letters to editors have praised Māori for taking charge where government ministers, under pressure from the fishing industry, have been unable to restrict commercial fishing activities and hence prevent continued depletion.

MARGARET MUTU

NIUE

With a new general election approaching in 1999, the government of Premier Frank Lui is in a far healthier position than at a comparable point during its previous three-year term. In 1995, the Niue Assembly was deadlocked, the government was unable to pass legislation, the opposition Niue People's Party (NPP) unable to topple it

from office. In 1998, however, the party—still Niue's only political party—has a much weaker presence in the assembly, and the most serious challenges to the government have come from within its own ranks.

In October 1997 Premier Lui reorganized his cabinet, removing Terry Coe as minister of finance. Coe, the top polling candidate in 1996 in the islandwide common-roll seats, was given other portfolios. Coe and Lui had differed over a number of policy issues, and the premier replaced him with Aokuso Pavihi, already responsible for the portfolios of Justice, Lands, Economic Affairs, and Private Sector Development. Two months later the premier's own preferences were given little weight by the assembly, when it voted to increase the annual salary of cabinet ministers from NZ\$29,000 to NZ\$48,000, a raise of 60 percent. The move was opposed by Premier Lui, who argued that it was ill timed given Niue's economic problems, hardships faced by many of the island's people, and the government's own requests for further external aid from New Zealand and other sources. Over his objections, the premier's own housing and entertainment allowance was also increased by the assembly. Although the attorney-general rejected claims that the pay raise violated the Niue Constitution, and a subsequent legal challenge from three NPP members of the assembly was adjourned indefinitely, the legislation needed to be passed again, in February, when the initial procedural error was conceded.

A more serious error of judgment occurred in April when a member of the assembly, Umuti Makani, aged

fifty-six, was involved in a fatal hit-and-run accident at Makefu village. Makani, who was found to have been drunk at the time, killed a motorcyclist, John Ben Aholima, aged twenty-seven, who was left to die on a bush-covered rocky outcrop several meters from the roadside. He had been a youth member of the Tuapa Village Council. Makani, who failed to stop following the accident, was sentenced by the chief justice to eighteen months' imprisonment for "drunken driving causing death," as well as six months' imprisonment for failing to stop after an accident, the sentences to be served concurrently. He was also fined \$1000, with half the sum paid to the victim's family. First elected to the Tamakoutoga village seat in 1996, Makani was a deacon and lay preacher in the village church and a member of the Niue public service for thirty years. At the time of the incident he was an associate cabinet minister in the Lui government. On his conviction, the chief electoral officer declared the village seat vacant. In the subsequent by-election, the seat was won by Pita Funaki in a three-way contest.

Another drunk-driving case also involved an assembly member, but fortunately with less serious consequences. Opili Talafasi, member for Hikutavake village, was disqualified from driving after he pleaded guilty to a drunk-driving charge. At the time of his sentencing, the chief justice took the opportunity to criticize Niue's leaders for enacting measures aimed at preventing such offenses while ignoring them themselves. Road safety issues, particularly involving drunk driving, have been given greater

emphasis in recent years, and the crackdown has resulted in some jail sentences. Another Niuean man received a lifetime disqualification after appearing for the third time for driving while intoxicated. There has also been a rise in the reporting of offenses involving violence and sexual assault. By June Niue's once-empty prison beside the island's golf course was full (six of seven cells occupied by full-time residents, and the seventh by a part-timer sentenced to weekend custody).

As ever, the government's principal concern has been with the island's economic prospects, with a range of ideas advanced as solutions for the island's needs. Included among them is a proposal to reestablish Niue's honey industry, which was begun in 1967 and at one time produced 75 tons annually from 1,250 hives. Production has dropped significantly since the industry was fully privatized in 1991, and investment and effort will be needed to restore it to health.

The forestry program is another possibility: a national forestry policy plan for Niue was completed in March. It was compiled by a policy-making committee whose membership included environmental officers, a sawmiller, village officials, and private-sector representatives. Financial support for the planning exercise was provided by the German Forestry Development Project, an overseas aid group that focuses on forestry conservation and development in the Pacific region. The plan outlines conservation practices needed to preserve Niue's fragile environment. If enacted, it

would also establish a code of practice for logging, providing for a greater emphasis on the planting of indigenous trees. Meanwhile, the international quarantine station at Vaiea continues to thrive: the next shipment of alpaca is scheduled to arrive in July. Whereas previously the animals were being held for Australia, this time they are being quarantined for Canadian farmers.

More exotic economic development ideas have focused on the evolving telecommunications sector. Niueans have only begun to access the Internet; free email services are provided to government departments, and a number of private users have also been accommodated by Niue's Internet Users' Society. Niue's limited experience with the "information superhighway" has not deterred the government from exploring it as a route to economic salvation. In March it announced progress in discussions with a Canadian company seeking to set up Internet gambling, which was regarded by the premier as a potentially effective way of generating essential revenue. The Internet gambling scheme was intended to make use of a computer server site in Auckland, established in the Niue consular office there. When the proposal encountered opposition from the New Zealand government, the Canadian company withdrew from the project. However, the government has expressed the hope that another computer server might be available in another Pacific Island country. While some assessments project significant revenues for Niue, others are less optimistic. Concerns have been expressed from those

opposed to gambling, and there have also been warnings about a possible international ban on Internet gambling.

Niue's decision to lease its international telephone code has also led to some controversy and embarrassment after it was learned that the code was being used for "phone sex" calls. Niue's involvement in this activity has continued, however, with claims that 17,500 calls are being lodged weekly through the island's telecom system. The arrangement brings the government about NZ\$2 million a year in fees.

Niue's residents have also benefitted from improvements to Niue's telephone system. In March Niue Telecom announced a plan to install public telephones capable of accepting phone cards in villages around the island. The company has also installed a free phone at the public market in Alofi, the capital, allowing growers to make calls to vendors and giving customers the option of calling stallholders to order produce.

The government has been able to receive funds from a number of sources in addition to the international phone access venture. These include the sale of fishing licenses, the introduction of a more efficient income-tax collection system, and the imposition of rental fees from the alpaca quarantine station and fees for the registration of international businesses. The results have begun to fuel grand expectations. The possibility of an end to income tax has been raised, although this seems somewhat unrealistic given the inability of the government to produce a balanced budget (there was a

deficit of NZ\$1.6 million for the financial year).

What is gradually disappearing, however, is New Zealand financial aid. Its contribution to the government's budget continues to fall by NZ\$250,000 each year. By mid-1998 it had been reduced to NZ\$4 million, with NZ\$2.5 million for special projects (compared to NZ\$3 million the previous year). New Zealand support seems to be further jeopardized by the ongoing migration of Niueans to New Zealand. The August 1997 census put the island's population at 2,080, a drop of 300 since the previous tally. The population has continued to decline, and it is now estimated at about 1,900 people. The figures indicate the negligible effect of programs and policies designed both to keep Niueans on the island and to encourage some of those who have left to return.

The readiness of Niueans to emigrate to New Zealand confounds planners and complicates some economic policies. There are concerns, for instance, about the number of abandoned homes on the island, as they can provide breeding grounds for rats and mosquitoes. Public health concerns are not the only consequences of emigration. Vacant properties and questions over untitled customary land also raise problems for economic development and environmental protection. In another example a proposed "baby bonus"—NZ\$500 to be paid to each mother on the birth of a child—did not proceed after suggestions were made that the program might encourage some young girls to have babies in order to purchase air fares to New

Zealand, where income support from the New Zealand government would be available. On the other hand, the amount of financial support being sent back by Niueans in New Zealand to relatives still living on Niue has apparently increased substantially. Overseas remittances are funding the purchase of consumer goods, including Japanese-imported vehicles. The increase in funds being sent back (generally in cash) reflects economic difficulties for families on the island, including the high price of food, import duties, and the lack of regular incomes.

The "baby bonus" proposal was made to advance population growth. Another proposal, to double the existing child welfare allowance to NZ\$240, was designed to keep Niueans on the island. The increase would have added about NZ\$100,000 to the NZ\$680,000 spent on welfare and pensions. The 1998 budget provided for a more modest increase in the child benefit, which rose by \$20 to NZ\$150.

With the 1999 election in mind, the mid-1998 budget included a tax cut that was substantial in the context of the Niuean economy. Most of Niue's 420 public servants received a back-dated tax rebate, averaging an extra \$10 per week. The tax cut (effectively the first pay increase for public servants for many years) will deprive the government of about \$200,000 in revenue. As noted, this comes at a time when New Zealand aid to Niue continues to fall. The government has begun to explore the possibility of establishing a trust fund for Niue, similar to the successful Tuvalu fund. While earnings would allow the government to meet its spending require-

ments, it is difficult to see how it will attract the international financial support needed to get the fund into operation.

Much less is now heard about tourism serving as the ultimate source of prosperity. The island's most modern (and expensive) hotel, the Matavai Resort, opened with much fanfare, has been forced to lay off staff as a result of low tourism levels. At the same time, the state-owned Niue Hotel has experienced significant losses and has been put up for sale by the government. Not surprisingly, given its low occupancy rate, there has been difficulty finding a buyer. The government has been advised to sell its 51 percent shareholding in the Matavai Resort. At present Niue is attracting too few tourists to fill both of these hotels, as well as a number of other premises run by the private sector.

The costs of a thus-far-unsuccessful tourism industry have been considerable. The tourism sector has absorbed in the past year NZ\$450,000 in aid from New Zealand; NZ\$213,000 from the Niue government; and a further NZ\$210,000 in subsidies paid to Royal Tongan Airlines (Niue's national carrier) to compensate it for empty seats on its weekly round-trip flights from Tonga.

Efforts to diversify Niue's foreign aid donors have been of limited success. However, the United Nations Development Program has agreed to provide Niue with NZ\$3 million for national development purposes over a five-year period. The funding is expected to be used to conduct and analyze surveys designed to improve tourism revenue through possible

expansion of whale and dolphin watching activities and upgraded ocean diving areas. A household income and expenditure survey is to be carried out, in part to attempt to discover more about the estimated NZ\$4 million (much of it in the form of cash remittances) that apparently circulates through the Niuean economy but is untraceable.

United States assistance has come from several sources. A team of United States Navy Seabees arrived on Niue in June to start wharf extensions at Alofi. The project, expected to take three months to complete, will allow more ships to tie up alongside and to load and unload their cargoes more quickly. The Seabees are being housed at a youth center (whose premises they have upgraded and furnished). There are five Peace Corps volunteers on Niue, working in agriculture, development banking, finance, and education, and a former volunteer is employed on the island with a contract to run the government's computer services.

Niue's twenty-third annual constitution celebrations in 1997 were low-key because of financial constraints. There were no visiting delegations of Niueans from New Zealand, and two ministers—half the cabinet—traveled to New Zealand to attend celebrations in Auckland. However, a new meteorology office was opened during Constitution Weekend in a special complex built for it near the airport. The New Zealand Meteorological Office is funding the service at least until 2005 and has responsibility for maintenance of the hi-tech equipment at the site. Cyclone and storm tracking data will be available to Niue via a satellite link

that forms part of the region's early warning system for tropical storms. In addition, a Japanese seismologist has installed earthquake-monitoring equipment as part of a joint United States–Japan program to monitor seismological activity in the South Pacific.

Despite its small population, Niue's greenhouse gas emissions are among the worst in the world—on a per capita basis. There are 591 privately owned motorcars, 197 motorcycles, and 100 government vehicles. To their emissions are added those from domestic refrigerators in almost every home and a number of large commercial freezers. A United Nations–funded climate-change study has begun, with NZ\$400,000 spent on preliminary investigations. Niue's aspirations for membership in international organizations has shifted from United Nations specialized agencies, however, to international sport—specifically, the International Olympic Committee. Niue's application follows Nauru's admission (after a four-year consideration).

With elections approaching, the government has proposed establishment of an electoral commission to supervise elections and the registration of electors. The legislation would also set an age limit for members of the assembly (seventy), reduce polling hours (from 8 AM–6 PM to 9 AM–4 PM), and allow an absentee ballot for Niue residents overseas on training courses or government business. The electoral commission would also be authorized to conduct an election runoff in the case of a tie, thus putting an end to recent experiences when the toss of a coin or the selection of a name from a hat determined the

winner of a seat in the assembly. Another initiative came to nothing, however, when the sole recommendation of the constitution review committee was rejected by the assembly. Ironically, the proposal was designed to make it easier to amend the constitution.

Preparations for the next election include a change of leadership for the Niue People's Party. The party's president is Young Vivian, while Sani Lakatani has become parliamentary leader (replacing Robert Rex, Junior, now treasurer). A more significant influence on Niue's elections may be its decline in population and economic resilience. The possibility of a reduction in the size of the Niue Assembly from twenty—already small for a legislative body—has been raised. If negative trends are not reversed, a restructuring of the political institutions of the world's smallest self-governing mini-state may not be too long in coming.

STEPHEN LEVINE

TOKELAU

The political scene in Tokelau has been reviewed for this journal by Professor Stephen Levine for the past decade. His analyses were based on the official view from Wellington and, in particular, the yearly reports presented to the New Zealand Parliament by the New Zealand-based administrator of Tokelau, an official in the Ministry of Foreign Relations and Trade. Professor Levine should be commended for his thorough and insightful analyses of the political situation in Tokelau from afar. I have found them very valuable. However, my perspective will necessarily

be quite different. It is a view from Tokelau, based primarily on observations and discussions there during the past year (1997–98) that I first place in recent historical context.

Political development in Tokelau is part of a wider "development" initiative in operation in Tokelau since the 1970s, relating to the "Question of Tokelau." The "question" refers to the "special relationship" between Tokelau and New Zealand, the future of that relationship, and Tokelau's future status. The "blueprint" for such development was set in motion when Foreign Affairs took over the administration of Tokelau from the former Māori and Island Affairs Department in 1975. From then onward, New Zealand was committed to putting Tokelau on a path toward self-government because, as a former administrator of Tokelau reasoned, New Zealand was committed to the United Nations Charter and the principle of self-determination (Corner 1984). This reasoning has been repeatedly quoted by subsequent administrators as evidenced by the 1996 Administrator's Report: "New Zealand, as the state responsible for the administration of Tokelau, has an obligation, by virtue of New Zealand's membership of the United Nations, to develop self-government in Tokelau" (1996, 5). Tokelau's response from the start has consistently been the same: that both Tokelau and New Zealand take a slower approach. New Zealand officials continued to assure Tokelau that New Zealand would always respect the wishes of the people of Tokelau. Former New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange echoed this respect by