

tions. The government has established the Tonga Communications Corporation, in place of the previous companies (Cable and Wireless and Tonga Telecom), to run both international and domestic telephone services. The new corporation's immediate plans are to establish a 2.5G GSM cellular telephone service with email and telephone capacity, and to increase Internet accessibility. The government has also issued a license to a second telecommunications carrier, Tonfōn, a fully owned subsidiary of Shoreline Communications, a company headed by the Crown Prince that already produces most of the power for Tonga's electricity supply which is then distributed by the Tonga Electricity Power Board. Through Tonfōn, the prince aims to introduce wireless technology whereby, "the customer should be able to buy a computer, plug it in, pull out an aerial and make a phone call . . . swipe a card on the computer, establish an account, and switch to his favorite TV channel while he is on the phone" (*Matangi Tonga*, June 2001, 16).

The Tonga Human Rights and Democracy Movement, which replaced the former Pro-democracy Movement, maintains a low profile and has announced that it will not formally mount candidates in the elections scheduled for 2002. It recently hosted a workshop to educate the general public, particularly youth, regarding human rights, good governance, and citizens' rights. A second human rights movement, the Tonga Kotoa Movement, formed in May 2001. Its five main objectives are to uphold the divine rights of man, support His Majesty who has been appointed by God, preserve the

Tongan culture, support the rights of all Tongans, and protect the independence of the kingdom. These moves, together with the introduction of a high-speed wireless service and fiber-optic cable to link the central business area of Nuku'alofa—which, the Crown Prince avers, will liberate the common man more than the automobile—demonstrate again the frequently startling juxtaposition of complementary ideas that characterize Tonga. At the very least, they promise interesting future developments on several fronts.

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WALLIS AND FUTUNA

The main subject of political discussion remains the special agreement, yet to be signed, between the French Overseas Territory of Wallis and Futuna and the French Overseas Country of New Caledonia. The Wallis and Futuna representatives, aware that Caledonian representatives want all possible measures taken to decrease Polynesian immigration, are asking the French state for accompanying measures to facilitate local development. At the same time, they are pushing young people to emigrate to metropolitan France. The president of the territorial assembly, Soane Uhila, declared on 4 August 2000: "Training must be made a priority and our Wallisians and Futunians heading elsewhere must be told the truth. If they have the opportunity to find a way of making a home for themselves somewhere else, I advise them to go ahead." In October 2000, during the anticipated visit of a three-member

delegation from the Caledonian government, access to employment for the immigrants of tomorrow and conditions for granting them Caledonian citizenship were discussed. The two Caledonian parties that signed the Noumea Accord—*Front de Libération Nationale Kanak Socialiste*, or FLNKS (for political reasons) and *Rassemblement Pour La Calédonie dans la République*, or RPCR (for reasons related to qualification levels)—agreed that future Wallisian and Futunian immigrants should no longer enjoy the same advantages as before, even though New Caledonian law provides only for positive discrimination. More radical still, the Union for Wallis and Futuna party (UPFW), related to the Socialist party in France, insists that planning for the return of the expatriates must be done now. For party president Pesamino Fihipalai, the equation is simple: “The massive arrival of several thousand people in the archipelago will force the State and its political leaders to take immediate measures to accelerate economic development.” (*Te Fenua Fo’ou*, 20 Oct 2000). French Overseas Minister Christian Paul, who came for a short visit, declared on 23 October that it was necessary “that we determine the activities likely to create jobs; the State cannot take the place of local decision-makers.” At the same time, he specified that the Research Institute for Development had been authorized by the state to study “all proposals for a true course of action in view of the creation of activities generating employment.”

Four projects were proposed to address the problem of the interisland sea service, the second most impor-

tant economic policy issue. The ferry-building project of the semi-public company Société d’Exploitation du Ferry Wallis et Futuna, supported by the two constituencies of Futuna, was finally adopted.

In local politics, the surprise election of the sitting vice president of the territorial assembly, Patalione Kanimoa (independent), as president, led to a reconstruction of political forces. The outgoing president, Soane Uhila (independent), had decided to run again, with a new vice president and with the help of the UPFW. The administrative staff of the *Rassemblement Pour la République* (RPR) was unable to accept the disappearance of its majority (14 out of 20), P Kanimoa and Deputy V Brial set up a new alliance between the majority of the former RPR-independents alliance (8 of 14 elected representatives) and the majority of the elected representatives of the UPFW (4 of 6). The new committee now includes as its president P Kanimoa (independent, 12 votes), as its vice president Pascal Niutoua (independent), first secretary Vetelino Nau (UPWF), and second secretary Michel Lataiueva (RPR). Soane Uhila and five other council members thus created a new party: The Voice of the People of Wallis and Futuna—Union of Democrats, *le’o Uvea mo Futuna*. The new majority, made up of two parties in opposition in metropolitan France, was consoled by the election of the new permanent commission on 16 February, with president Apeleto Likualu (UPWF) and secretary Bernadette Papilio (RPR) each obtaining 16 votes.

As usual, political and administrative relations between Wallis and Futuna are not very good, leading the

Tiafoi to declare to the prefect on 23 August 2000: "Bearing in mind the geographical distance between the two islands, we request the transfer of jurisdiction to those in charge of subsidiary services of Futuna so that they can manage loans directly." During this meeting, the delays concerning the tar-sealing of roads in Futuna and the problems of sea and air transport services were discussed at length.

The referendum on the five-year presidential term of the French republic mobilized more voters in Wallis and Futuna (54.7 percent) than in France (30 percent), and the number who voted yes was likewise higher (83 to 73 percent). The explanation is that only the large national parties (who are all in favor of the proposal) are represented in Wallis and Futuna, which does not have a culture of opposition minority parties.

Customary politics continues in its own fashion. Because of various undercurrents between the two kingdoms of Futuna, the king of Sigave and most of his subjects did not participate in the territorial festival held on 29 July 2000 in the kingdom of Alo. As happens every year, a number of customary chiefs resigned or were deposed, leading to healthy competition between the *aliki* families. On 23 October, during the French overseas minister's visit, the new minister of health and justice (*fotuatamai*) was installed by the king. Tisimasi Heafala, a former priest returned to civilian life, became educational adviser in charge of local languages and head of Catholic education. In November, Kusitino Toa became the new minister of the sea (*ulimonua*). Aged 46, father of five children, and a store owner, he

was a territorial councillor from 1987 to 1992 and chief of the village of Vailala for five years. His arrival at the great *chefferie* signified royal willingness to renew this ancient institution. The nomination on 23 December of Tisimasi (Dismas) Heafala as *kivalu* (prime minister) confirmed this trend.

Meanwhile, customary-political relationships became increasingly problematic. Tino Manuohalalo, a Caledonian politician of Wallisian origins, declared on 20 October 2000: "We cannot ask for evolution and at the same time maintain an outdated, obsolete system. . . . Wallis and Futuna must have the courage to review the problem completely, to think collectively about political power, customary practices, religion and the administration." At this time Po'oi Fotofili, a member of one of the royal families, applied for permission to examine the accounts of the Uvea constituency relating to the villages of his district (Hihifo). His association, Defense of Citizens, gave the prefect a sixty-page audit implicating a customary minister and the chief of the Hihifo district for use of forged documents and misuse of public funds. If the total expenses corresponded to the planning budget, their allocation left something to be desired, as gift vouchers were allegedly exchanged, in whole or in part, for cash.

The administration remained important to the economy. The new prefect, Alain Waquet, was nominated to the cabinet in Paris on 12 July 2000. Research showed that at the end of 2000 Wallis had nineteen thousand adult pigs divided among 1,380 non-trading family farms, which increasingly use commercial feed.

Pollution of the environment by liquid manure aroused concern.

The French National Navy patrol boat *La Moqueuse* participated in the 14 July 2000 ceremonies in Futuna. On this occasion, a sponsorship charter was signed between the two kingdoms and the ship's captain in charge of monitoring the exclusive economic zone of the territory. Of the sixteen Wallisian "woodcutters" sent to metropolitan France in May 2000 by the National Agency for the Integration of Overseas Workers and their Families to assist in cutting up the trees blown down around Paris during the January storms, only three came home after two months of training. Moreover, the elected representatives hope to use the agency in the future to allow young people lacking qualifications to enter the employment market of metropolitan France. To date, Wallisians and Futunians who have emigrated to France primarily join the army, sports teams, and security firms.

As in other French Overseas Territories, a representative of the mediator of the republic is appointed to settle disputes between the state and the citizens. After thirty-five years spent in public accounts, Malia Feleu was appointed to this volunteer post in August 2000, for a nonrenewable six-year period. Her settling in was slightly disturbed, as the *levelua* (king) of Wallis made his reluctance known.

Although the budget of the territory remained roughly the same between 1995 and 2000, the share devoted to investment decreased by 28 percent. However, the private sector continued to grow slowly, paralleling the increase in transfers from the state to the territory, and reflecting the return of an

unknown number of expatriates, now retired. All available statistics on the territory can be consulted on the internet via a website created by the head of the statistics department, Gaston Lutui <www.wallis.co.nc/stat>. The proposed territorial budget for 2001 includes FCFP 2.63 billion for operations and FCFP 644 million for investment. Revenue is essentially derived from indirect taxes (FCFP 1.3 billion), the post office (FCFP 409 million), the state tobacco industry (FCFP 205 million), and the tax on electricity (FCFP 54 million).

Since October 2000, a metallic one-million-liter capacity tank of diesel oil has provided a three-month statutory strategic reserve. The economy of the territory remains linked to subsistence farming and the creation of an offshore fishing business; Patita Ulutuipaletai has fitted out a fourteen-meter long-lining vessel that catches on average 500 kilograms per week. On 5 January 2001 the licensing schedule for registration was set at a price range FCFP 1.8–54 million. In addition, shipowners will have to pay an annual French registration fee of 5 percent of the initial amount.

Education has of course played a decisive role in the development potential of the two archipelagoes. Regarding study grants (FCFP 133 million in 2001), Head of Department Soane Vehika reinforced testing and continued to favor destinations such as France (81, including 22 in secondary school) and French Polynesia (33, including 23 in secondary school). Another 301 student grant-holders went to New Caledonia, including more than 250 in senior high schools.

After attempts failed to classify

as a historic monument the military twin-engined plane (*Neptune*) kept at the Hihifo aerodrome since 1984, it was dynamited and sunk at sea in July 2000. The weekly *Te Fenua Fo'ou* has a new owner and a new editorial staff. As of March 2001, it had published a Caledonian version including specific information about the expatriate community. In June 2001, the great *chef-ferie* of Wallis threatened to close the weekly because of a photo (illustrating an article on the budgetary problems of the Wallis constituency) whose interpretation could give rise to confusion. In October 2000, the territory participated in the Arts Festival of the Pacific, after a problem concerning the size of delegations was

settled according to the percentage of population represented by Wallis (60 percent) and Futuna. At the same time, a magnificent exhibition entitled Uvea-Wallis: An Island Fished Up By the Gods was held for four months at the Museum of Fine Arts in Chartres. Finally, in March 2001, the Friends of Wallis and Futuna association published the first local annual scientific journal: the *Cahiers de Wallis et Futuna* (Post Box 13, Futuna).

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Reference

Te Fenua Fo'ou. Weekly.