

NEW IRELAND PROVINCE

By N. Yambi Simbak and Peter Jones

Yambi Simbak is Provincial Rural Development Officer at Kavieng, in the New Ireland Province. He has been at Kavieng since May 1975. He comes from Finschhafen in the Morobe Province. He went to high School at Bugandi in Lae, and then to Vudal on a W.R. Carpenter scholarship. After finishing at Vudal in 1969, he joined CPL and worked on their plantations at Kokopo and Talasea for 10 months. He then resigned from CPL and took up a job with DASF. His first posting with DASF was to Manus, where he first met Peter Jones, who was then PRDO Manus. Later, when Mr Jones transferred to Kavieng, Mr Simbak was acting PRDO Manus for 10 months. In October 1973 he transferred to Buka, then to Kavieng in May 1975. Since then he has been PRDO in Kavieng.

Peter Jones came to Papua New Guinea from Stanthorpe in Queensland. He has spent 6 years in the Madang Province, 2 years in Wau, 2½ years as PRDO in Manus, and has been in Kavieng since December 1972, as PRDO up until May this year when Yambi Simbak took over from him. He is now officer-in-charge Special Projects, New Ireland.

The main island of New Ireland has a narrow coastal fringe rising to a rugged central mountain range of 1 500 to 2 500 m. The outer islands have a similar terrain with the exception of Emira Island which is mainly flat.

Temperature and rainfall patterns are similar to most areas of Papua New Guinea with the south-east "dry" season and the north-west "wet" season. The rainfall pattern however is reversed in the southern end of the main island.

Rainfall varies from 3 220 mm per annum in the northern area of the province to 2 100 mm per annum towards the Namatanai area. Some of the wetter areas of the west coast and offshore islands average 4 400 mm.

New Ireland soil types range from coral sandy soils in coastal areas, to yellow-brown clay-loams inland from the sea front, and shallow limestone-based soils in the mountain areas. There are also isolated locations of soils of volcanic origin.



Yambi Simbak



Peter Jones

Three province has a wide variation in vegetation types ranging from open grassland areas which support *Themeda* spp. and kunai, to secondary regrowth bush, to virgin rainforest. Mangroves occupy mud flats along the coastal areas throughout the province. Millable timbers are in abundance.

Most of the arable land is situated along the coastal fringe. It is estimated that arable and marginal land constitute 60 % of the total land area of 10 193 sq km.

Land disputes have had an adverse effect on agricultural development in New Hanover and central New Ireland. Other parts are relatively free of disputes, with the exception of some densely populated areas.

The Bulominski Highway commences at Kavieng and extends down the east coast to Samarai. This highway is trafficable for most of the year, and work is continuing on its extension as far as Mulima, a further 45 km. Three roads cross the island, at Lakuramai, Karu and Bo. Work is proceeding to complete a west coast artery and so give road access to the greater part of New Ireland.

Spur roads used for timber haulage are numerous in the northern section of New

Ireland. Self-help roads exist on all the islands of the province, the most notable of which are on the Feni and Tanga groups. New Hanover has the worst road system.

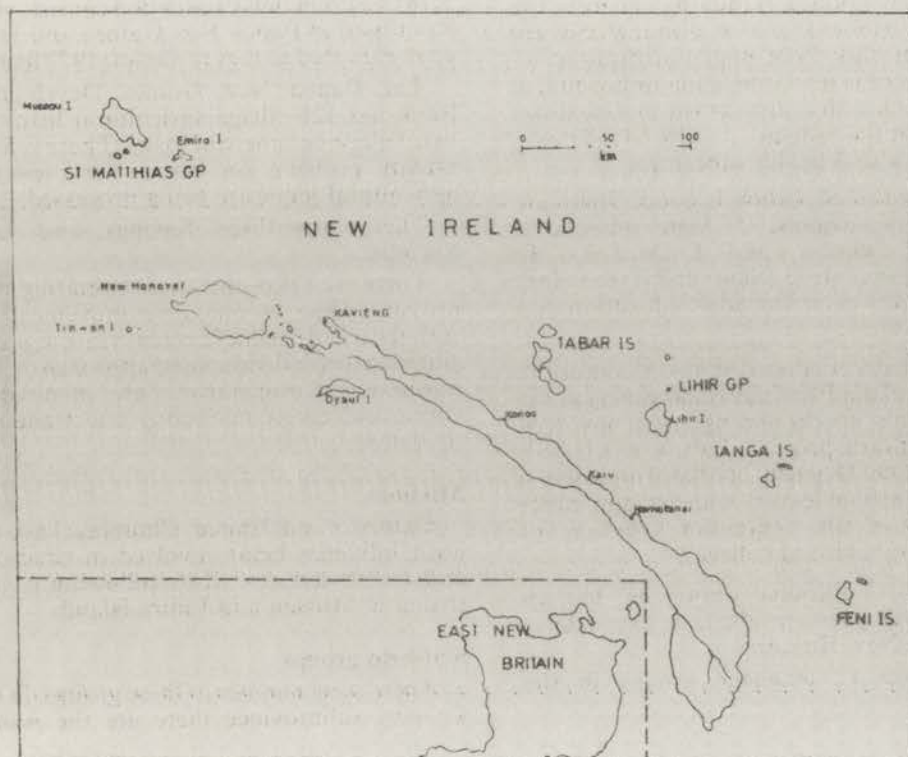
There are light aircraft strips scattered throughout the province including most island groups.

Kavieng is connected to the STD and ISD telephone systems and Namatanai may be contacted by connection through Lae. There are 40 radio telephones in the province some of which are unserviceable.

The NBC has a radio station in Kavieng (Maus bilong Soda Wara Antap) which provides an excellent medium of contact with the majority of villages in the province.

New Ireland has by Papua New Guinea standards a good transport system which includes coastal shipping to most centres. There is an overseas wharf at Kavieng and approximately 20 small coastal wharves in the province.

With the exception of southern Namatanai and at times the outer islands, most areas of the province are easily accessible.



DASF is establishing base camps in isolated areas so as to maintain farmer contact. These camps are being partly financed by the Rural Improvement Programme.

People

The total population of the province is 55 987, split between the three subprovinces as follows: Lamet 14 290, Namatanai 21 098 and Kavieng 20 599.

There are approximately 8 300 engaged in agricultural and forestry pursuits including plantations.

Members of the National Parliament for the province are Julius Chan (Minister for Finance and member for Namatanai), Obed Boas (regional member for New Ireland), and Perry Kwan (member for Kavieng). Some of the other prominent community leaders are, in Namatanai, D. Lanzarotte, an Area Authority member; in Konos, the President of the Area Authority, Nicholas Brokam; in Kavieng, Mazakmat, a traditional leader, and in Lamet, Walla Gukguk. These are only a few among the long list of traditional, business and political leaders.

The standard of health is very high by Papua New Guinea standards. There is no general nutritional problem although cases of infant mortality from poor nutrition occur. The province is served by a major hospital at Kavieng, 9 health centres at various locations throughout the province and by 64 aid posts. There are also 3 health subcentres.

Standard of education is good. There are 96 primary schools, 5 high schools, 3 vocational schools, and 1 skulanka. In addition there are 3 community secondary centres which cater for adult education at a secondary level.

The impact of education in agriculture in the New Ireland Province is increasing as the high schools are becoming more involved with agricultural projects. Liaison with DASF is good. The Department has employed a number of school leavers who are now either employed in the extension service or attending agricultural colleges.

The Puas Vocational Centre has had an impact on village rice production, particularly at Puas on New Hanover.

There are 17 language groups in the province.

The New Ireland people have the major goal of an improved standard of living based on improved education, better health services, private ownership of vehicles, better housing and the development of business opportunities. People from other provinces are permitted a significant degree of involvement in agricultural development, which is in contrast to most other provinces in Papua New Guinea. In most parts of New Ireland the people enjoy a relaxed way of life, at the same time taking full advantage of their economic advancement.

Economy

The main crop is copra. There are 170 copra plantations many of which are interplanted with cocoa. There is a total of 224 agricultural leases comprising an area of 19 194 ha. There are 70 freehold properties with a total area of approximately 5 600 ha.

Fishing is growing in importance, and the new National Fisheries School at Kavieng when opened in 1977 will take 100 students per year.

Forest areas are fairly extensive. Current rights are 3 351 ha in 8 separate areas. There is a potential of 6 102 ha with a possible further 1 781 ha potential. Production consists of 250 cu m used in Papua New Guinea and 33 042 cu m exported as logs to Japan (1972 figures).

The Papua New Guinea Development Bank has 128 village agricultural loans and two village commercial loans. There is a bad arrears problem on loans. Very few new agricultural loans are being processed.

There are three Savings and Loan Societies.

There are 17 co-operatives operating in the province. The co-operative movement has suffered a bad decline in recent years as people adopt a more individualistic approach to their businesses. Co-operatives are involved in copra and cocoa marketing and tradestore operation.

Missions

Catholic and United Churches have the most influence being involved in education and health services. SDA following is very strong in Mussau and Emira Islands.

Self-help groups

There are a number of these groups. In the Kavieng subprovince there are the Alinga

Bina group and the Usia group, involved with produce. The Munmaf group is involved with transportation and the Salamana group with store goods.

In New Hanover the Tutukul Isukula Association is in copra production. The Moloung group is mainly concerned with politics although expresses interest in assisting rural development. In Emira there is a boat-building group.

In New Hanover, at Pua, there is a Rice Growers' Association.

In Kono there is the Kuluan cocoa fermentary group, the Lamasay fishing group, Lossu No. 2 cocoa growers, Lavatbura village fishing group and the Mapua cocoa growers on Tabar Island.

In Namatanai there is the Saruai cocoa fermentary group. Women's clubs have taken over the running of village rest houses in some villages.

Political

There are five local government councils: Mussau-Emira, Mattas, Tikana, Central New Ireland and Namatanai. Sections of New Hanover are not under local government council. Tax rate in the various council areas varies from K2.50 for women in Central New Ireland to K11.50 for men in Namatanai. In most councils women are taxed.

The Central New Ireland and Namatanai councils give effective support for agricultural developments.

The Minister for Finance and MP for Namatanai, Mr Julius Chan, has displayed an active interest in agricultural development and has an agricultural business of his own.

The Area Authority is active and helpful. However, much can be done towards making Authority members more fully aware of DASIF programmes so that Area Authority plans and DASIF programmes are in accord.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Cocoanuts

This is the largest industry in the province. There are 170 expatriate-owned copra plantations with a total area of 24 794 ha. Village plantings are 20 100 ha.

Total copra production for 1974-75 was 21 200 tonnes.

Pests and diseases are not a significant problem throughout the province.

A steady increase in planting of 3 % each year is aimed at. Plantings by 1981 will thus be 23 350 ha.

DASF supervises construction of copra driers when required. In 1975 10 copra driers financed by the Development Bank and Rural Improvement Programme were constructed. Construction of processing facilities to produce good quality copra is being encouraged in all areas.

Fertilizer is available under Rural Improvement Programme subsidy. Fertilizer applications are carried out by some growers on young palms. DASF will demonstrate and supervise the use of agricultural chemicals including fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and fungicides to local planters.

Marketing is not a problem except on offshore islands. DASF assists local government councils in marketing of produce. The Copra Marketing Board has a main depot at Kavieng and a subdepot at Namatanai.

Coconuts are often interplanted with cocoa. Areas in New Hanover, Kavieng subprovince, Central New Ireland and Namatanai have been encouraged to interplant with cocoa in a programme begun in 1977.

The industry is expected to continue to develop as planned, unless continuing low price for copra reduces interest by growers.

Cocoa

Cocoa is next to coconuts in importance in the province. Present locally owned plantings are 790 ha, with an annual production of 393 tonnes. Cocoa production from expatriate-owned plantations is 800 tonnes.

Pests and diseases are insignificant. Recent high prices encourage increased plantings. Expansion work is in general only restricted by shortage of funds and shortage of trained staff in some areas.

In 1975 plantings were increased by 3 % in all areas. In 1976 an increase of 3 % is again aimed at, to 812 ha. Increased plantings will continue, especially in remoter areas. Interplanting under coconuts will be encouraged. By 1981 the total planting is expected to be 975 ha.

The possibility of resettlement schemes in sparsely populated areas, e.g. Muliamia, will



Boat being constructed for the Area Authority for resale to New Hanover copra producing groups for copra transport.

be investigated. If feasible, resettlement schemes will be established between 1979 and 1981.

More cocoa fermentaries are being built throughout the province. Three new fermentaries were built in 1975, at Sarauai, Mapua and Pakinsela. Decentralization of processing facilities will continue throughout the next five years.

New areas expected to come into production by 1979 are Kavieng subprovince, west coast and the islands, and west coast Namatanai.

Production of dry beans will be increased by increased processing facilities available to growers.

Local Government Council funds have been offered for 1976-77, and these will be used to supply planting materials—plastic bags etc.

As well as encouraging new plantings and building fermentaries, DASF assists with pest and disease control, and assists with management of fermentaries and marketing.

There are three cocoa buyers in Kavieng who purchase processed bean. Wet bean is purchased on both east and west coast by a

number of buyers. Pakinsela Cocoa Co-operative operates in the west coast of Namatanai.

Fisheries

Two fishing companies operate in the province. Gollin Kyokuyo Co., based at Kavieng, exported 9 000 tonnes of frozen tuna in 1975. Starkist Fishing Co. recently started operations in the New Hanover area with 8 catcher boats.

Gollin Kyokuyo has a fish-smoking factory near Kavieng with a capacity to process 10 tonnes of tuna a day.

DASF provides an inspection service to the tuna fishing industry and assists with the distribution of bait royalties—estimated at K100 000 in 1976.

Papua New Guineans participate in the tuna industry as fishermen, on catchers and mother ships, and there are long term possibilities for participation in baiting.

The National Fisheries School is to be built at Kavieng. Japan will provide about K1.6 million for the construction of the fisheries school in 1976. The number of students graduating annually from the school will be 100.

A local fishing industry is being developed.

In 1974-75 nearly 23 tonnes of fish were purchased at the Kavieng depot, and 69 kg of crabs. Crab purchasing also commenced at New Hanover.

Purchases of fish for the first quarter of 1975-76 increased by 86 % over the same period last year. We expect to purchase over 25 000 kg of fish this year. Price rises have increased people's interest in fishing.

The first stage of a crayfish project has been established at Emira. A crab project will be established at Taskul in 1976.

DASF will continue to provide assistance towards the establishment of a fish and seafoods industry at Kavieng, and it is expected that excess fish will continue to be marketed in Rabaul.

New village projects may be developed at New Hanover, Konos and Namatanai in 1978, depending on the interest of the people.

Freezers and marketing outlets will be organized for all projects which prove successful.

Rice

There are 30 ha of rice, and 12 tonnes were produced last year. There is potential for a large expansion, and the long term programme aims to increase the production to 1 100 tonnes, on 450 ha, by 1981. Success will depend on increased farmer participation in the project.

There are at present 80 farmers planting rice. At a training programme held last year, 154 farmers attended.

It is interesting to note that these farmers all paid a fee to attend the courses. The rice training programme aims to be self-sufficient, and farmers pay K1 for a one-day course, or K2 for a three-day course. Rice grown in the training programme contributes towards the food supplied to the farmers attending. Another feature of the programme is that farmers are allowed to bring their wives and members of their family for no extra charge.

There are a number of problems for the industry.

In a dry season such as 1974, when rainfall was half the usual amount, yields were low. This combined with falling price reduced farmers' interest.

Rising fertilizer cost added to these difficulties.

Armyworm, chinch bug and brown plant hopper were observed as 'major pests but outbreaks were controlled.

Another problem was that some farmers were unwilling to plant large enough fields.

Farmers will have to face other problems this year. The closing of the agricultural supplier in Kavieng means that DASF staff will be more occupied with arranging supplies for farmers. The council decision to cancel the fertilizer subsidy will raise the price to farmers.

Anticipated lower world rice prices will hurt the programme, especially if copra prices rise at the same time.

However, the present programme is as follows.

The present 80 farmers will be encouraged to expand planting to an average of 2 000 sq m (1/5 ha) each. New farmers will be encouraged to plant first fields of about 200 sq m. A target of 300 new farmers is projected, with an annual yield of 150 tonnes (two crops per year).

Training courses will continue.

Farmers will be encouraged to buy their own machinery. A rice huller will be installed at a school in the Namatanai area. The Lihir Island rice mill will be installed.

Two new rice hullers and one replacement are planned for 1977. As rice milling machinery comes up for replacement, more sophisticated equipment with whitening capacity will replace it.

In the long term, some experienced farmers may expand to large-scale production. Surplus production may be available by 1980 for export to other provinces.

Fruit and vegetables

DASF aims are to provide planting material and equipment at cost to villagers, with the help of council funds. Increased production is aimed at both to improve village diet and to serve as a minor cash crop.

Greater supply of all types of vegetables to town and station markets will be encouraged. Planting of seasonal crops with good economic return, e.g. watermelons and corn, will be emphasized.

The 1975 production of fresh food for sale was 750 tonnes. With co-operation from Lamerika plantation, fresh food purchasing was commenced on the east coast, at Dalum.



Two members of the New Ireland Area Authority, Tavita Leri (left) and Willy Schulz (right) discuss weed problems in rice with PRDO Yambi Simbak (centre).

This food is produced on the Lelet Plateau and problems of communication and supply have been to be overcome.

Production of seeds continued at Tigak in 1975.

Namatani Local Government Council granted K1 000 for purchase of agricultural supplies and seed purchase and distribution was undertaken to Namatanai and Konos.

Until other organizations develop, DASF will continue to provide planting materials using council funds, and will assist with marketing, especially of seasonal crops.

It is expected that production will be increased to replace an increasing amount of imported food by 1980.

Machinery used for rice production will also be used in the vegetable industry. Vegetables may be incorporated in rotation with rice crops.

However, the growth of this industry may be hampered by adverse weather conditions or pest problems. People may also find that copra and cocoa give better returns.

Rubber

There are two plantations, totalling about 750 ha. Smallholder plantings are only 25 ha. Mussau is the only village development in the province.

Low prices are associated with lack of interest in production from existing stands. Tapping of 3 ha was undertaken at Konos in 1975, and the unprocessed sheet was sold to Libba plantation. There are approximately 8 ha tappable at Konos and Namatanai. There is scarcely any interest in producing RSS.

DASF will encourage tapping of existing stands at Konos and Namatanai.

Clonal seed is available from Suma plantation, and nurseries have been established at Mussau. Seventeen ha have been established, and 20 ha will be planted in 1976. More nurseries will be established at Tigak and Mussau. A request for a second project at Mussau will be investigated.

Assistance in processing and marketing rubber will be given in Central New Ireland, with the assistance of plantation facilities, if

the owners of existing rubber plantings show interest in the crop.

It is planned that 40 ha will be planted at Mussau in 1977-79, to complete the project of 75 ha at Lamakanauru. Cover-crop will be established on this project. Rural Improvement Programme funds will be applied to this project, to provide road access to the project (1977) and for processing facilities (1978).

Nursery development and planting will be continued at Mussau if other villagers commence rubber projects. Three smallholder factories will be established on the Lamakanauru project. DASF will assist with production and processing.

Training courses in rubber tapping and management are planned for 1979 and 1980.

Cattle

There are 5 local cattle projects with a total of 76 head, and 1 956 head of cattle on expatriate-owned plantations.

There are two slaughterhouses, at Lakuramau and Mageh plantations, which offer their facilities for project cattle slaughter.

There is a generally poor response by the people to cattle project development proposals. Shortage of staff and land disputes have hindered development in some cases.

DASF programme includes assistance to both plantations and village projects. The general aim is to upgrade and increase existing herds, to introduce improved management practices, and to establish improved pastures on all projects.

DASF assists with marketing of beef and beef inspection services.

In 1976-77 an increase from 76 head to 120 head is aimed at for locally owned projects, and an increase of the plantation herd from 2 018 to 2 200. A turnoff of 200 beasts is expected for this year.

In 1976 it is expected that 4 new projects will commence on Taskul subdivision, and 3 new projects in Namatanai and Kavieng subprovinces will be investigated. Pasture improvement programmes will begin on these new projects as they are established.

A programme of pest and disease control is underway. In 1975 eradication of feral cattle commenced, and this will continue until about 1978, when it is expected that all remaining feral cattle will have been

destroyed. This is necessary to prevent pests and diseases spreading from wild cattle to project and plantation cattle.

The cattle industry is expected to develop gradually in the province, with an increase in both plantation and village herds to the stage where all local needs are supplied. By 1981 the aim is to have 170 village cattle and 3 000 plantation cattle, with an annual turnoff of 300 beasts.

Poultry

There are 4 intensive poultry projects, 2 of them owned by high schools and 2 by local farmers. They include 1 475 layers, 200 broilers and 50 ducks.

Two new projects are being established in the Kavieng area. High schools have received a total of K2 600 of Rural Improvement Programme funds for expansion.

The present developments aim to supply the needs of the province, by about 1978.

DASF provides management advice, and assists with pest and disease control. We are attempting to have a feed supply agency established at Kavieng. Substitute of local carbohydrates will be arranged if possible.

In addition, DASF assists villagers to purchase improved stock including ducks.

Pigs

Village pigs are in abundance, and DASF and high schools have supplied 120 weaners to 15 farmers during the last year.

Other projects, mainly high schools, have 137 pigs.

Assistance has been given to Manggai, Utu and Mongop high schools to establish projects which will provide pigs for distribution.

Village farmers are assisted to purchase improved stock from high schools and DASF.

Intensive projects in the village are discouraged because of poor husbandry. A policy of upgrading village pigs on a village system of management by introducing improved stock is being followed.

Replacement breeding stock is difficult to obtain from Rabaul. Demand for weaners currently exceeds supply.

DASF assists with pest and disease control.

DASF will phase out as a distribution agent as high schools are able to meet the demand for the province. The department will continue to supply improved breeding stock to high schools up to 1978. The department will continue to advise on management and will assist with pest and disease control.

Coffee

The coffee industry is very small. There are only 2 ha at present being harvested, out of a total planting of 20 ha.

Present production is only 100 kg of parchment coffee per year. In 1975 2 ha of coffee were rejuvenated. The poor response to this work indicates a lack of interest in coffee production. The policy will be to continue rejuvenation of the remaining coffee plantings where interest is shown. Otherwise people will be advised to replant with cocoa and coconuts.

DASF will demonstrate processing where requested, and will purchase parchment coffee produced. In 1976 the aim is to produce 300 kg.

The production from existing plots is expected to increase up to 1 tonne by 1981. No additional plantings are expected.

Spices

A small area in the Namatanai subprovince has been planted to pepper—1 ha. No harvesting has been undertaken.

The availability of higher yielding cash crops such as coconuts and cocoa limit spices development, and people are not interested in spices.

Pepper will be encouraged only where conditions make alternative crops uneconomic, or in situations where individual farmers particularly wish to grow pepper. By 1981 plantings may be increased to 6 ha.

DASF will assist with marketing—local sales and to New Guinea Islands Produce Co., Rabaul.

Wildlife

There is little activity at present. An area of 1 ha has been fenced at Liga for wildfowl protection. It will be made a wildlife management area.

Crocodile population and farming potential is being investigated at New Hanover and Namatanai. Little interest is being shown by the people.

A wildlife officer is necessary if a useful programme on wildlife is to be carried out. If an officer is obtained, demonstration crocodile farms will be established at Kavieng (possibly at Utu high school), and at Taskul. Village farms will be established if requested. DASF will arrange marketing of crocodile skins.

In 1977 DASF will investigate other wildfowl egg grounds in the province and take action to have them protected by declaration as wildlife management areas.