

WEST NEW BRITAIN PROVINCE

By Lamalua Makara, Provincial Rural Development Officer

West New Britain is subject to two seasons, the north-west and the south-east seasons. The north-west season lasts from October to May and is the wet season for the north coast. The south-east season lasts from May to October and is the wet season for the south coast.

The average rainfall on the north coast is 3 560 mm and on the south coast 7 600 mm.



Lamalua Makara

Lamalua Makara has been Provincial Rural Development Officer of the West New Britain Province for two years. His home area is Aroma in the Central Province. Mr Makara did his primary schooling at Aroma, then went to Iarowari Intermediate School, and Sogeri Senior High School, in the Central Province. He attended Popondetta Agricultural Training Institute (now Popondetta Agricultural College) and then Vudal Agricultural College. His first posting with the Department was to Cape Rodney in his home area. He moved around in the Central Province, to Rigo and Magarida, and then went to Port Moresby for one year for further training. The next posting was to Alotau for one year, then back to the Central Province for another ten months for special rice work at Bereina. From Bereina he came to the West New Britain Province in April, 1974 to take over the job of PRDO. Mr Makara is married with three children. His wife Ava works for the Health Department, as a maternal and child health sister.

West New Britain comprises the western section of the island of New Britain, from Open Bay on the north coast and from Montague Harbour on the south coast.

The intermediate boundary is the main spine of the Nakanai Ranges, to the headwaters of the Wain River.

The coastal strip between Open Bay and the Willaumez Peninsula is a gently sloping coastal plain of volcanic origin.

The southern slopes generally consist of broken limestone ridge country.

The north-western areas tend to be swampy, except around Gloucester area where volcanic soils are found. There are numerous relatively short rivers, flowing from the central range to the north and south coasts.

The whole of the centre of the island is rugged and virtually uninhabited. The main range is the Whiteman Range.

On the north coast the soils are generally of volcanic origin and quite fertile, especially the area extending from the Willaumez Peninsula to Open Bay.

On the south coast the soils are mainly of limestone origin and less fertile than those on the north coast.

The vegetation in the lowlands is tropical rainforest.

The total area of the province is 20 486 km². The area of arable land is 2 345 km², with 3 387 km² of marginal land. About one-fifth of the arable land is being used.

There are 400 km of roads in the Talasea to Hoskins area. The Kimbe to Hoskins road is sealed. There are 96 km of road serving the Hoskins oil palm land settlement scheme.

Roads have been constructed in the Passismanua and Gimi and Rauto areas of the Kandrian district, using Rural Improvement Programme funds.

Hoskins is the main airport and there are nine other airstrips.

Kimbe is connected to STD and ISD telephone services. Government stations and most plantations in the Kimbe, Talasea and Hoskins area are connected to the VHF telephone service. Outstations are connected by radio.

BISMARCK

SEA

0
00
MITU ISLANDS
★ NICILANI

GLOUCESTER

MI. *
Tangr.

EAST NEW BRITAIN

EWASSE

Bamun

Mr. Ujawn

LOLOMAU IS.

34.

1

!

23

3

—

—

WEST NEW BRITAIN

KANDRIAN

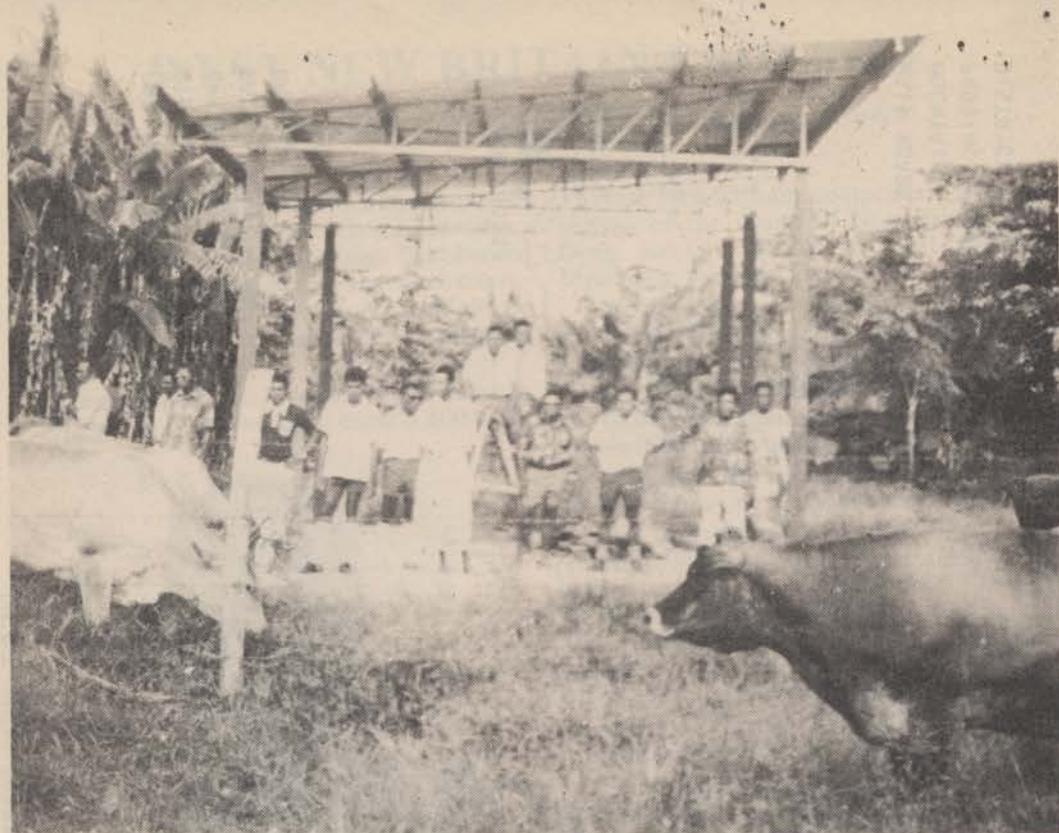
GASMA TA

SOLOMON

SEA

HARVEST—VOL. 3, NO. 4—1976

141



Area Authority members visiting cattle-holding centre at Kapore.

Radio West New Britain operates from studios in Kimbe.

There is an overseas wharf at Kimbe. Most coastal shipping is between Rabaul and Lae.

People

The population of the province is about 71 500.

There are four language groups in the West Nakanai, five in Central Nakanai, three in East Nakanai, thirteen in Kandrian district, seven in Talasea district, as well as language groups from all over Papua New Guinea on the oil palm scheme.

Health of the coastal people is satisfactory, but protein level is low in the diet of inland people.

There is a provincial hospital at Kimbe, and rural health centres at eight other centres. Most mission stations have medical facilities and work in close co-operation with government officers.

There are 59 community schools, 2 vocational centres, and 2 high schools. A third high school is planned for 1976-77.

Missions

The main missions are the Catholic and the United Church. There are some Anglican missions, mainly on the south coast.

Most other denominations are represented with small followings.

Most missions have small plantings of copra and cocoa and some have oil palm.

The missions are actively involved in agricultural development and education.

Political

There are six local government councils: Hoskins (tax rate K10 men), Nakanai (K10 men, K2 women), Talasea (K13), Bali-witu (K8), Cape Gloucester (K6), and Kandrian (K7 men).

There is an Area Authority, but its

activities are limited at this stage.

Members of the national parliament are J. Maneke (West New Britain Regional), G. Masa (Kandrian-Gloucester) and H. Humphries (Talasea). Mr Humphries gives valuable assistance in following up matters concerning the local farmer.

Other notable community leaders are Soa Ukia of Uasilau, a clan leader and leading businessman in his area, Simogun Peter, a leader from the Sepik of the Dagua people at Kapore, and Tangoli Nuli of Woganakai village. Mention should also be made of leaders Napasisio, Sokinga Komaro, Kulo Agorang Pro, Ande Kalu, Boas Galia, Rapa Keta and Mataime.

Economy

There are no major land disputes. However, in the Bola area of the Talasea district, many disputes over fishing rights are hindering development.

Oil palm development

Oil palm is the most important cash crop in the West New Britain Province. The smallholder oil palm is financed by the World Bank and regarded as a national project. The estates of New Britain Palm Oil Development (NBPOD) at Cape Hoskins and the Trans Pacific Palm Oil (TPPO) at Biala, comprising administration, estate plantations and processing and marketing facilities, form the basic nucleus for surrounding settler and village plantings.

The main palm oil settlement plantings are at Kavagara (near Talasea), Kapore, Tamba, Sarakolok, Buvusi, Galai, and Kavui (at Cape Hoskins). Village plantings are at Hoskins.

Settlement plantings on 1 560 blocks amount to 5 800 ha plus 200 village blocks of 640 ha.

Smallholder production is 98 700 tonnes fresh fruit bunch (ffb) per annum; and NBPOD (2 800 ha) 50 000 tonnes ffb per annum. Prices over the past 12 months ranged from K8.00/tonne ffb (farm gate) to K16.00—average of K13/tonne.

Development of the nucleus estate smallholder scheme was commenced at Biala in 1972 with the first settlers planned to arrive in 1975. However, because of a dispute between the Japanese company running the nucleus estate and the government the blocks were not allocated. Despite the dispute infrastructure development has continued.

Sali Malase and Tiaru subdivisions of approximately 300 blocks are now ready for settlers. Wilelo development is well advanced and the new Biala town is substantially completed. As the dispute with the Japanese company could not be resolved the government acquired the estate and is now operating it as a government-owned company and is now attempting to interest experienced oil palm companies in the project. When a new agreement is reached for the nucleus estate it is anticipated that the scheme will develop rapidly and realize the potential of 2 000 ha estate and 4 000 ha smallholder plantings.

A research and seed-breeding station at Dami (near Hoskins) was set up by Harrisons & Crosfield (PNG) Ltd in 1968. This has now been taken over by NBPOD. Papua New Guinea is now not only self-sufficient in oil palm seed but can export.

By 1981 total production for West New Britain could be 280 000 tonnes.

Other development

Generally in the past, West New Britain people have not been very enthusiastic about economic development. However, since the development of the oil palm scheme, there has been a tendency for a few village individuals to become aware of economic development.

Apart from the recently introduced oil palm, coconut and cocoa are the main crops.

The main agricultural policy is to increase coconut and cocoa plantings as required by village people.

It is the Department's policy to establish a fishing industry in the province.

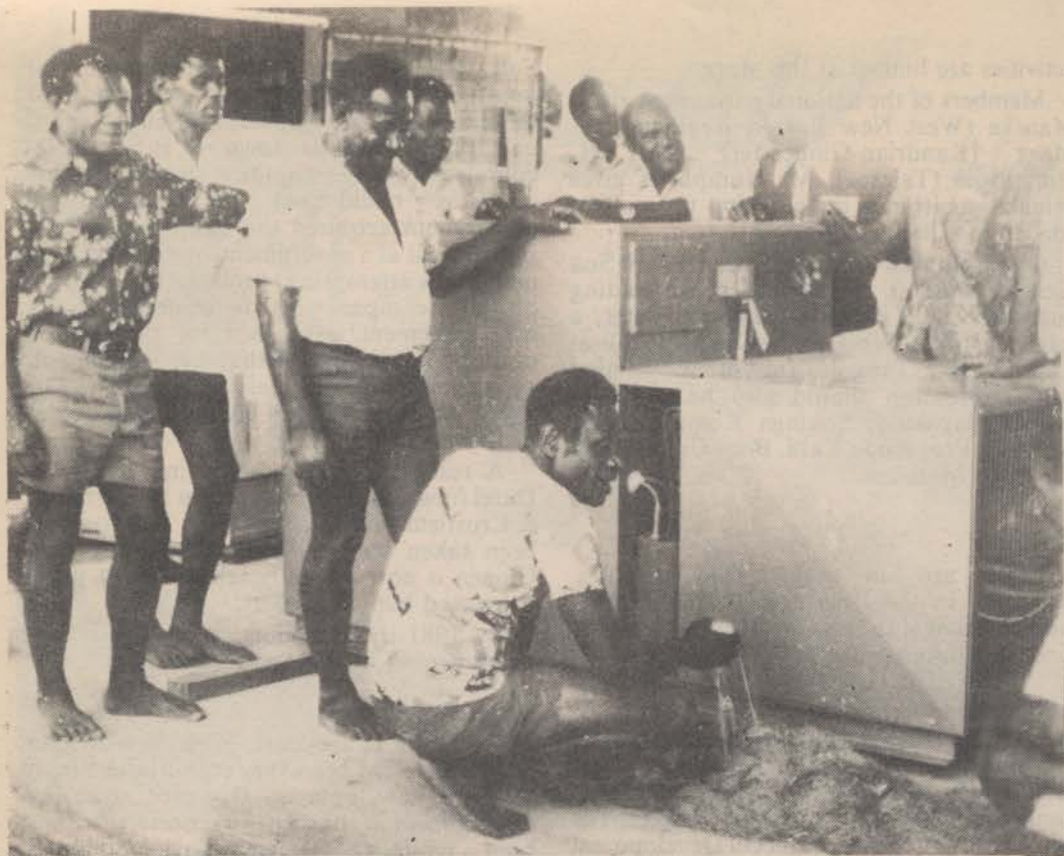
There are four clan land rationalization schemes in the Hoskins area, for coconut and cocoa. There is one in the Gasmata area of the Kandrian district.

The timber industry is very important in the province. Stettin Bay Lumber Co., situated at Buluma, is quite a large concern. Other sawmills are situated at Bakada, Ulumona and Biala on the north coast.

Savings and Loan Societies are quite active, especially in the Talasea to Hoskins area and most particularly in the Hoskins oil palm scheme.

The Papua New Guinea Development Bank is very active in giving loans in the province.

There are ten Producers' Co-operative Societies. Seven of these co-operatives also



Area Authority members visiting fishery establishment at Kimbe.

conduct retail activities.

A Co-operative Wholesale Society is established in Kimbe and will shortly be opening a branch store at Biala.

Numerous groups have been formed to establish village trade stores, to purchase vehicles and to operate PMVs. The Bali-witu, though being somewhat isolated, have developed a sense of self-help in forming copra groups for marketing of copra etc.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Coconuts

There are about 10 000 ha of village coconuts, with a production of 4 500 tonnes per annum. There are 23 plantation producing both copra and cocoa. Production of copra from plantations is approximately 10 000 tonnes.

The interest of the people in coconut

planting is generally low. Transport to Kimbe is one of the problems.

Harrisons & Crosfield operate the Copra Marketing Board agency in Kimbe. Village growers can either market their produce directly to the Copra Marketing Board, or through traders or growers' co-operative societies.

A continued increase in plantings is planned: 110 ha in 1976-77, 200 ha in 1977-78, 260 ha in 1978-79 and 280 ha in 1979-80.

Production will be increased by 105 tonnes in the coming year and is expected to reach 10 000 tonnes (from village plantings) by 1981. A possible restriction to this is that expected low prices may discourage production.

Twenty-seven copra driers will be erected in 1976-77: 7 at Hoskins, 6 at Talasea, 10 at Kandrian, 3 at Ewasse and 1 at Salelubu.

Fifteen driers will be erected the following year, and 30 in 1978-79.

Investigations will be carried out into the possibility of using a new plastic drier design, in 1977-78.

The Department will liaise with other departments, banks, suppliers and councils to solve the problems with supply of construction materials.

A pest control programme is being carried out with the assistance of the Lowlands Agricultural Experiment Station at Keravat in East New Britain.

The Department will assist with solving marketing and transport problems. In 1976-77 we will co-ordinate ships to carry copra from villages at Kimbe. If possible, the Department will buy copra where no other buying service is available.

The following year a survey will be carried out on the possibility of councils buying a boat for copra shipment.

Private buyers will be encouraged to buy copra from village people, in a programme planned for 1978-79.

Cocoa

There are about 1 155 ha of village cocoa,

producing 350 tonnes per annum. Approximately 200 ha are immature.

Plantation production is 1 000 tonnes per annum.

Cocoa has great potential in the province. It is grown mainly in the Nakanai area and the Bola area of Talasea district.

It is planned to increase village plantings by 200 ha by 1981. The main increases will be Kandrian (90 ha) and Biala (40).

Total smallholder annual production for the province should be 500 tonnes dry beans by 1982.

In 1976-77 cocoa nurseries will be established at Talasea, Kandrian and Hoskins.

Cocoa processing facilities will be improved at Talasea in 1976-78. Processing facilities will be established at Hoskins in 1979-80 and a drier will be erected for the Ubili and Modu area. Two more driers will be erected at Biala in 1980-81.

A shortage of clonal cocoa cuttings from Keravat may hinder the planting programme. If there is lack of interest at Talasea the expected planting may not be achieved.



Subsistence

This programme aims to ensure that village people have enough food at all times. It was found that there is an abundance of taro, sweet potato, corn, greens, nuts, peanuts etc. A substantial amount of root crops, peanuts etc. are available in local markets on Saturdays. This activity plays an important role in providing food for people.

Rice will be introduced to Gasmata and Gloucester areas in 1976-77, for family consumption only.

There have been no results from a sugar-cane trial at Gloucester and Hoskins. This trial will be maintained in 1976-77. Sugar will also be promoted as a subsistence crop only.

In 1976-77 vegetable seed will be made available to oil palm settlers as well as to villagers. Vegetable growing will be encouraged at community schools.

Farmers will be assisted to market sago.

Further betel nut growing for cash will be encouraged.

Replacement of imported foods by locally grown crops is aimed at.

Market facilities will be provided in areas where they are needed in 1978-79.

In 1979-80 a survey is planned to determine alternative uses for food crops should the production exceed local demand.

Cattle

There are three smallholder cattle projects at Talasea and three at Hoskins. There are 108 head on these projects.

There are 420 head on expatriate plantations.

Cattle is a new activity. Gloucester council is setting up a demonstration project. A cattle holding paddock and slaughtering facilities will be established at Kapore and Nahavio. This will accelerate the development of the cattle industry.

The cattle holding paddock at Kapore will be stocked in 1977-78.

In 1976-77 three new projects will be established at Hoskins and one at Talasea. Two more projects will be investigated, one at Kandrian and one at Hoskins.

One hundred ha of improved pasture will be established on projects at Hoskins, Gloucester and Talasea.

The cattle population in the Hoskins and Talasea area will increase each year to an

estimated 3 000 head by 1981.

In 1976-77 the Area Authority will establish slaughtering facilities at Nahavio. The Department will negotiate the possibility of setting up a large-scale cattle project.

It is expected that the province's beef requirements will be supplied locally by 1978.

Pigs and poultry

There are two pigs projects financed by the Development Bank at Biala, with ten pigs.

There are about 120 pigs owned by plantations etc., 20 by vocational centres and 15 by societies.

Pigs and poultry are not commercially successful.

Good pig and poultry stock will be introduced to villages.

In 1979-80 20 weaners will be supplied to settlers at Biala.

Fishing

People from Hoskins, Kombes, Biriai and Kilenge are traditional subsistence fishermen.

There are two commercial fishermen at Talasea.

A fishing group at Hoskins has lost interest, as they experienced transport difficulties last year and failed to sell 680 kg of fish.

Other problems are due to shortage of ice or freezer facilities, and shortage of nets. There are disputes over fishing grounds between net owners and villagers.

The present demand for fish in Kimbe is 3 tonnes a month. The 1976-77 programme aims to increase the fish catch for sale to 10 tonnes per annum.

Councils or private traders will be encouraged to make fishing gear available.

The Department will encourage the Hoskins fishermen's association to become interested again. The Department will assist in marketing of local catches in order to develop marketing facilities. An ice-making machine and coolroom will be installed at Kimbe.

Cold-smoking preservation will be encouraged at Talasea where ice supply is a problem.

A submission will be drawn up for foreign aid for a proposed pilot project in the province.

The following year catching will be



Vice-president of Gloucester local government council Molai Asap, inspecting his sun-dried birds-eye chillies.

consolidated at 10 tonnes per annum, mainly from the Hoskins area. The number of gill nets will be three.

Ice blocks will be supplied to fishermen at Hoskins and Talasea.

Local people will be trained to do net mending for other villagers.

In 1978-79 we will investigate the possibility of establishing a small-scale fish processing industry, with fishing ships and factory. If feasible, this will be established the following year.

In the Hoskins area, the catch will be increased to 12 tonnes per annum in 1978-79 and the number of gill nets will be increased to five. In 1980-81 the catch will be increased to 15 tonnes per annum. All the local catch should be processed and consumed by the local town population.

Wildlife

One hundred thousand megapode eggs are

collected each year.

The Pokili megapode nesting area has been declared as a wildlife management area. The wildlife committee at Pokili is very effective. Wildlife staff will continue to assist the committee.

There is a considerable amount of wildlife activity in the province, but shortage of staff is holding up progress.

Crocodile farms

Four crocodile pens have been stocked. The four groups are selling crocodile skins. Initially, K2 000 worth of skins were sold in two months.

Shortage of fish could hamper the success of the crocodile farms.

In 1976-77 it is expected that about K11 000 worth of skins will be purchased from the province. The Department will provide a market for crocodile skins.

Farmers will be shown how to improve

skin quality using Murpine preservation.

In 1977-78 the number of crocodile farms will be increased to six. The value of skins will rise to K15 000 in 1978-79.

A wildlife station will be developed for demonstration to villagers in 1978-79.

The possibility of establishing a small-scale tannery for crocodile skins and cattle hide will be investigated. If possible this tannery will be established in 1980-81.

In 1978-79 we will investigate the possibility of a villager starting a skin-buying business. If possible a villager will be buying skins and selling them to a dealer by 1980-81.

The number of crocodile farms will be increased to eight in 1979-80.

Cassowary farms

Two cassowary farms, at Berema and Sambaltepun, will be established in 1976-77. Two more will be established the following year.

Chillies

Chillies have good potential. About 5 000 kg per annum are produced, from Kandrian,

where Sagsag school produced 40 kg, and from Gloucester.

In 1976-77 the aim is to plant 25 ha in the Kandrian area, and 2 ha in the Gloucester area. Chillies will be introduced as a cash crop at Arawe and Gasmata. Production is expected to be 10 000 kg.

Production will increase annually until it reaches about 30 000 kg in 1980-81.

Hot air driers will be constructed in 1976-77 at Kandrian, and in 1978-79 at Gloucester.

Coffee

There are 25 ha of coffee, in the Kandrian area. Production is about 860 kg per annum.

Village coffee plantings are not expanding very much due to interest in higher-priced crops and processing and marketing problems. With the present increased coffee prices it is expected that there will be renewed interest.

Arrangements will be made with a community school to harvest the garden at Esili. The Department will continue purchasing parchment coffee.

From 1977 to 1981 an increase of plantings to 30 ha is planned.

NATIONAL FISHERIES COLLEGE OPENS NEXT YEAR

The new National Fisheries College at Kavieng will commence operations next year.

Construction work on the college buildings is due for completion during January, 1977. It will then take two months to install equipment and furniture before the first student intake in April.

Courses offered during 1977 will be confined to in-service and upgrading training for serving fisheries officers.

Commencing in 1978 the college will offer a three-year diploma course in fishing; a two-year certificate course and short courses to cater for the needs of village fishermen.

"Papua New Guineans will be given first priority when students are being selected but it is anticipated that some students from other Pacific countries will also be accepted", he said.

Initially the college will accommodate 60 students but space for more students will be created if this is required. Accommodation will include space for eight to ten women students.

The college is hoping to recruit a woman graduate who will be head of the women's training.

Mr Mola said the existing fisheries training school at Madang will be closed down.