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TERRITORIAL REPORT

presented by the

TERRITORY OF WALLIS AND FUTUNA

FISHERIES IN WALLIS AND FUTUNA

I. GENERAL

So far, fishing has only been a minor activity in the Territory of Wallis and Futuna.

Because the people are mostly farmers, there is a shortage of fishing craft; the old Polynesian methods of group fishing (tao faga) have disappeared. Fishing in Wallis and Futuna is insufficient to meet the local demand in fresh fish.

Fishing is confined to what people can "pick up" on the reefs at low tide (shellfish, crayfish) or fish with an improvised handline (lafo lafo) and the odd catch of mullets and sardines with beach seines.

To this can be added fish and shellfish caught by skin-divers, but the quantity is quite small because the lagoon is certainly being depleted in Wallis.

Therefore, the catch does not meet, by far, the local requirements, and the islanders buy in the shops large quantities of frozen fish from New Zealand (jacks).

II. ACHIEVEMENTS

In view of the traditional way of life in Wallis and Futuna, and before going on to more advanced methods, families (Kaiga) needed strong, economical, fishing craft, well suited to local conditions and easy to maintain.

The heavy traditional canoe (vaka uvea), used in the olden days, is difficult to build, can be quite costly and needs a lot of people for maintenance, landing, etc.

Moreover, with the few serviceable canoes available, only a few people could go fishing.

It is remarkable for instance, that only comparatively few adults know the islets (motus) of the Wallis barrier reef!

In Futuna, people fish alone, on the fringing reef, with wooden troughs (Kunete) under very difficult conditions.

Towards the end of 1970, the Service de l'économie rurale, the Department responsible for fisheries development, decided to provide as many islanders as possible with economical and safe fishing craft.

Between November 1970 and June 1972, 35 boats (19 to 22 feet) were built and delivered. At present, 25 craft are on order.

The Department's boat yard, which is located at Apaogo, operates as follows:

<u>Buildings and equipment</u>	One 120 m ² tin shed and 1 "fale" of the same size built with local materials. Usual hand tools, and one Guilliet electric planing machine.
<u>Personnel</u>	Two carpenters and four handymen trained locally.
<u>Craft</u>	Dories and skiffs, flat bottom, plywood, powered by Johnson, Seagull, etc. outboard engines.

The blue-prints come from the United States (Texas Dory 6°, Maine Coast Fisherman, Atkin).

There are 4 main designs:

- 1 Skiff (Carolina), 19 feet
- 1 Dory (Morning Light), 22 feet
- 1 Skiff (Mitty Ann), 20 feet
- 1 Surfboat FAO, 20 feet.

One big St Pierre & Miquelon dory (8.50 m x 2.40 m) and two Polynesian canoes in plywood, 8.50 x 10.50 m. were also built.

Construction:

- Frame, stringers, etc. in finished kaori and tananu.
- Planked in 12 mm marine plywood (Singaply supplied by Carpenter's in Suva).
- Glue (Epoxy or Resobond).
- Special bronze nails (Tower Gripfast, size 1, 1½ and 2 inches) and screws.
- Treated with Xylophen before painting.

Cost price

As the territory is assisting financially, and so that these boats can be more widely distributed, the bare hull is sold at a very low price, which covers only the cost of materials (without engine or labour cost).

Skiff 19 feet	30,000 fr CFP.
Dory and skiff, 20 to 21 feet	40,000 fr CFP.

This solution has been very popular with the islanders.

These boats are out frequently and seen to be used extensively by the villagers. Although it is not easy to evaluate the catch of marine products, it is by no means negligible.

III. PROJECTS

Small craft construction can undoubtedly continue in 1973 and 1974 in particular to meet the needs of Futuna fishermen, but the saturation point will soon be reached.

Moreover, if fishing activities are to be developed, they will necessarily have to concentrate on fishing outside the Wallis lagoon (or around Futuna and Alofi) in the "blue waters" (deep waters).

For this reason, during the second phase, from 1973, the Service de l'économie rurale intends to commission two big St Pierre & Miguelon type dories.

These boats (8.50 m x 2.40 m) have a cockpit and are powered by a 10 to 13 hp diesel engine, and experience has shown that they are exceptionally seaworthy.

A big dory hull has now been built (end 1971) and the engine will be fitted as soon as budgetary considerations make this possible.

With these two boats, crewed by three or four men, it will be possible to conduct, with adequate safety, sea fishing trials in accordance with a programme which we feel will be close to that which Mr V.T. Hinds, SPC Fisheries Officer, outlined in his two reports after he visited Wallis and Futuna (July-August 1969, March 1970).

- (a) Trolling (10 lines)
- (b) Deep long line (boat anchored sheer off the Wallis barrier reef).
- (c) Net trials.
- (d) If all goes well, the Japanese drifting long line on a very small scale.

The writer of this paper took part in trials of this kind at Nosy Bé (Malagasy Republic) with a small crew of five Comoro islanders who were quite easy to train (3,000 m long line cast at 4 or 5 in the morning and hauled early in the afternoon).

Such an operation would be particularly worthwhile in the waters around Futuna and Alofi as lifebait is plentiful (Akule, big-eyed scad, October to March).

However, special Japanese capstans will have to be bought for hauling the line.

As the various trials progress, and in the light of results obtained, some initial storage and marketing facilities will be required for the catch:

- an ice plant
- cold storage facilities
- a marketing organisation (cooperative).

The operation of these big dories must remain a small scale family affair adapted to local conditions and customs, because any larger scale operations seem for the moment technically difficult and uncertain in a territory which is small, has few technicians, a virtually non-existent economy, and whose active population has emigrated to New Caledonia.

For these reasons also, the Service de l'économie rurale did not feel it could include, in its programme, the other activities which had been envisaged during the preparation of the VIth Plan: oyster farming, pearl oysters, turtles, etc., since these activities require proper planning, appropriate resources and qualified personnel.

In any case, any industrial development of marine resources with a base in the territory, can only be properly undertaken after careful, well-organised, technical, social and economical planning.

This is outside the scope of the Service de l'économie rurale.

In conclusion, as things stand, the small achievements and projects outlined above are not without value, since they incite the population to take an interest again in the sea, and make possible a realistic approach to the many problems involved in developing small-scale family fishing in Wallis and Futuna.

IV. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The technical assistance most required at present is as follows:

1. Technical documentation on boat building and maintenance (plywood hulls).
2. As much documentation as possible on construction plans of wood or plywood fishing craft suitable for in a small boat building yard with unqualified labour.

15 - 35 ft dories and skiffs of all types (flat bottom or V-bottom). (It would be most helpful if the blue-print of a 24 feet skiff, used in Alaska and published in FAO "Fishing boats of the world" could be provided).

Surfboats and reef fishing boats, of the types used by FAO in some of the developing countries (India, West African coast).

Sailing plywood catamarans and canoes which could be used for in-shore fishing in Wallis.

3. Documentation (suppliers, prices) regarding materials and fishing gear most likely to be available at reasonable prices.

- Marine plywood, screws, glue (at present these come from Suva).
- Upper works. Products for coating the hulls.
- Fishing gear (lines, spoons, hooks, seines, Japanese long lines and all recommended equipment).
- Safety equipment.
- Air-cooled 10 to 15 hp diesel inboard engine (price, specifications and suppliers).
- An initial freezing plant for storing 3 to 400 kilos of fish and for producing the daily ice requirements (price, specifications and suppliers).

4. Notes and guidance on the operation and management of a small village fishing concern (2 dories and 8 men in all) in the conditions which are specific to Polynesian islands).

(Based on what has already been done in other island groups).

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