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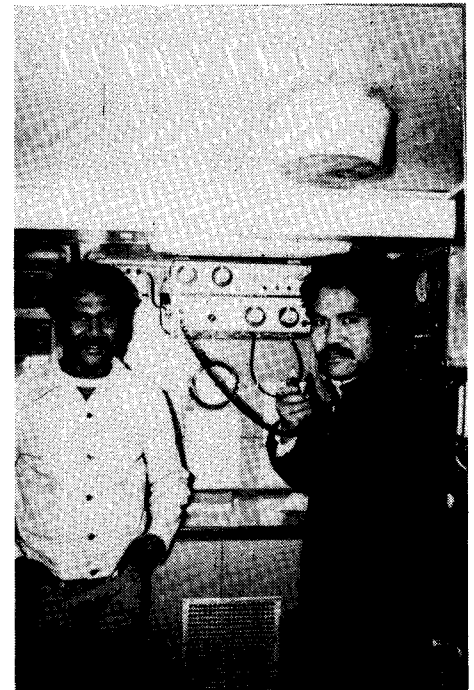
# SPC sponsors fishing trainees

by JAMES CROSSLAND

Fisheries hold the key to economic advancement for many countries in the Pacific, but their proper development requires trained manpower at all levels. As part of its marine resources programme SPC is actively engaged in training fishermen. This is done both through its own projects, such as the

Deep Sea Fisheries Development Project, and by providing funds and arranging training with other organisations. In June 1979 nine young Pacific Islanders sponsored by SPC successfully completed an 18-week fishing cadet course at Nelson Polytechnic, New Zealand.

The Pacific trainees were nominated



*Ione Tinielu and Solomona Aleta from Tokelau in the radio room of the New Zealand fisheries research vessel James Cook.*



*Captain Paul Rendle demonstrates use of azimuth mirror for taking bearings watched by Lale Fehoko (Tonga), Penieli Finau (Tonga), Fatulolo Vave (Tuvalu) and Petelo Vulu (Tokelau).*

by the fisheries departments of their home islands in response to a circular letter from the SPC Fisheries Adviser. Those selected were Gerald Billings from Fiji, Solomona Aleta, Ione Tinielu and Petelo Vulu from Tokelau, Lale Fehoko, Penieli Finau, Tavake Noko'akifolau and Vailele Taukitoku from Tonga, and Fatulolo Vave from Tuvalu. Funding for the course was provided by the New Zealand Government and the Commonwealth Foundation.

With its course for fishing cadets, Nelson Polytechnic has established itself as New Zealand's leading training institute for fishermen. The course was originally designed for young New Zealanders with some previous fishing experience. It combines lectures and practical work at the Polytechnic with periods of sea time on a variety of fishing boats. The basic plan of the course was not changed for the Pacific trainees but was adapted where possible to make it more relevant to fishing methods in the tropics.

The trainees arrived in Nelson during the first week of February and were taken in charge by Captain Paul Rendle,



*This octopus was served at the end of course party. Checking its dimensions are Lale Fehoko (Tonga), Gerald Billings (Fiji), Mrs. Fa'pusi Russell (Samoa), Petelo Vulu (Tokelau) and Penieli Finau (Tonga).*

the Polytechnic's Nautical Tutor and director of the course, and Captain Alastair Robertson, Fishing Technology Tutor. After being shown around the Polytechnic and being issued with protective clothing and sleeping bags the trainees travelled to Greymouth for their first period of sea time. Greymouth lies on the west coast of the South Island and is the centre for a small fleet of tuna vessels. With the assistance of Mr. Gary Burke of Talleys Fisheries, berths were found for all trainees on local boats. Despite some rough weather all gained useful experience in the trolling techniques used for catching albacore.

After a month on the boats the trainees returned to Nelson for a period of lectures and practical work. During this time they attended the Polytechnic daily from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm. Subjects studied included the making and mending of nets, chartwork, engineering, electronic aids (echo sounders, radar, etc.) and marine science. All the trainees worked well and enjoyed this part of the course. Chartwork was a favourite subject, particularly as Captain Rendle had procured charts of the trainees' own islands for their practice exercises. As well as studying hard they integrated well

into social activities, making good use of their guitars and the volley ball courts.

During April a second period of sea time was completed. Trainees were divided into two groups. One group was based at Motueka, a small town not far from Nelson, where they worked on fishing vessels carrying out longlining, set netting and other small-scale fishing methods. The other group assisted on a mussel farm in Pelorus Sound, also close to Nelson. Easter recess coming in the middle of this period provided a suitable time for the two groups to change over. Thanks to the co-operation of fishermen at Motueka and the staff of Talleys Fisheries this practical training was very successful. The enthusiastic support of Mr. Henry Buchanan and Mr. Alastair Lash, joint managers of the mussel farm, ensured the success of that part of the venture.

Gerald Billings spent the period before Easter following a useful programme of visits and experience kindly arranged by Mr. Val Hinds, former SPC Fisheries Officer, and now Assistant Director with New Zealand's Fisheries Management Division. After Easter Gerald joined the research vessel *James Cook* for a two-week voyage.

After this second period of sea time the trainees spent two weeks as observers in processing factories at Motueka and Nelson. They were involved in a full range of experiences in the factory situation, with emphasis on quality control.

The trainees returned to the Polytechnic on 14 May for the final four weeks of the course. This period enabled the planned syllabus to be completed and during the last week the trainees each produced a written report on the course. All nine were successful in obtaining a Polytechnic Course Completion Certificate, a First Aid Certificate and a Restricted Radio Operators Licence. The course concluded with a social evening on 7 June and an award ceremony the next day.

Was the course a success? The trainees thought so – "very worthwhile", "great value", "very good and helpful", "I am looking forward to another similar course" – were some of their comments. Mr. George Pringle, Principal of Nelson Polytechnic, was also very pleased with the way it went: "Regarding the course, generally it was highly successful and apart from some initial homesickness, they were a very happy group". Our own assessment at SPC is that the whole exercise was very well worthwhile and with the co-operation of Nelson Polytechnic it is intended to offer a similar course in 1980. □



*Mr. Ben Middleton assists Lale Fehoko in the net loft.*

Photos by Nelson Evening News.