

SIXTH TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES

(Suva, Fiji, 23 - 27 July 1973)

F.443/1/5.

COUNTRY STATEMENT

BRITISH SOLOMON ISLANDS PROTECTORATE

1. The country's skipjack fishery potential appears now to have been proved and a Joint Venture Agreement was signed on the 4th November 1972 between representatives of the Government and the Taiyo Fishing Company of Tokyo. The Government representatives were assisted in the negotiations by advisers provided by the United Nations Development Programme and the United Kingdom and with this help it was able to obtain an agreement described by various experts as a model of its kind. The Agreement which was ratified by Council last November provides for the incorporation of a private company, capitalised at \$A.1,000,000, half of which is being provided in cash by Taiyo and half by low interest loans raised by the Joint Venture Company. 25% of the share capital has been transferred to the Government without cost and the Government has the option of buying a further 24% later. Revenue will be derived from the start of the operation from an export duty on frozen tuna starting at 7% of the f.o.b. price and increasing to 10% in the fourth year. Excellent employment opportunities exist for Solomon Islanders both on sea and on shore. The freezer and canning plant at Tulagi is nearly complete. A training programme for Solomon Islanders by the Company is now being undertaken. Catches have been fairly good, the majority of these being sent to American Samoa for canning, with a small quantity going to Japan. The parent company, Taiyo of Tokyo, undertook an experimental deep-sea longlining venture for 3 months based on Honiara, with 9 Solomon Islanders on board, earlier this year. Catches were reasonably good.
2. Local interest in beche de mer continued, 1972 exports being ten times those in 1971.
3. A Chinese entrepreneur has started a small shark-fin industry. The Coral Seas Fishing and Trading Company, now under largely new ownership, continues its operations and has plans for expansion in mind; it buys crayfish from local fishermen. A small crocodile farm has been started by local people near Auki, Malaita.
4. The Fisheries Ordinance (No. 13 of 1972) was passed in August last year, as were Regulations made under it.
5. A Fisheries Office and an Assistant Fisheries Officer (a U.N.A. volunteer) took up post in September last year.