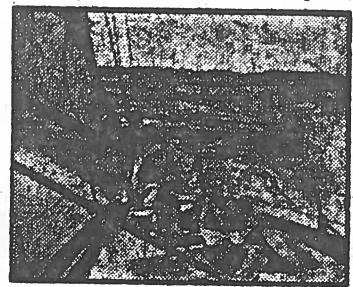


Across the Pacific with the Leda—

We Make A Gift To A Prince

The 54-foot Tauranga yacht Leda has reached Suva, after calling at Tonga on the first stage of her proposed 7000-mile voyage to America. She is crewed by her owners, Sandy and Dooley Wilson, their wives Erica and Kit Wilson, and Dave Woolf, of Tauranga. The three children of Dooley and Kit Wilson—Jan, Ruth, and the baby Nicholas, are with them. Here is an account of one of their adventures at Tonga, with some of their photographs from the voyage.



He left shortly after, jumping adroitly into the bobbing canoe, despite his weight, which we later discovered was around the 20-stone mark. He waved cheerily and said, "See you on Saturday."

A Prince!

We discussed him back in the cabin. Very nice bloke, we said. Must have a fair bit of cash. "Probably some sort of prince or something," said Dave.

Prince! We looked at each other wildly, then dived for the bookcase and grabbed the Pacific Islands Year Book. We turned to Tonga.

"The Crown Prince and heir to the throne, Tupouto'a, succeeded to his father's title of Tungi in 1945," we read. "Matriculating from Newington College, Sydney, he took an honours degree in jurisprudence at Sydney University in 1943. On his return to Tonga in the same year he was

It had been nearly three days in Tonga without doing any fishing, which was one of the main things we had come for. The thought of eating yet another banana from our bunch on the boom was not particularly attractive at the moment, so Dave Woolf and I got our flippers, diving masks, snorkel tubes and spear guns, and paddled across to the nearest reef.

I went over first and spent 10 enchanted minutes gliding down past coral caves, surrounded by hosts of tiny, brilliantly-coloured fishes. I climbed back into the dinghy and kept it off the reef while Dave had a go, but there was nothing worth spearing.

Two Tongans in a little red canoe, who had been watching us, paddled past just as Dave's flippers disappeared from view. A thickset man sitting in the bow of the canoe called out to me.

"Caught anything?" he asked in perfect English?

"No, they're all too small and too quick," I said.

"You'll find it much better over there," and he pointed to a beacon on a reef about a mile away. "I'm going over there now."

I told Dave when he came up, so we rowed back to Leda, picked up my brother and his diving gear, and rowed across to where we could see the canoe. The thickset man who had spoken to me was diving, while the other man kept the canoe alongside.

Diving

The diver had a long snorkel tube, much longer than the ones we use, kept on the surface by a small rubber lifebuoy. He surfaced as we rowed past, grunted and smiled, and dived again.

We spent about two hours cruising up and down the reef, in the warm water discovering a much wider variety of fish but still nothing worth spearing. The fish were all very nervous, and had evidently been well scared by previous divers.

On our way back the canoe came across to intercept us, and we struck up quite a friendly conversation with the man in the bow. We discussed spear-fishing tackle. He said he had taken up the sport three months ago.

Eventually he asked us if we had any spare solid rubber tubing for spear guns. His had perished and it would take a month to six weeks for him to get more from Australia. In the meantime he could not use his good bazooka gun.

We had plenty on board the boat. He asked if he could buy some, and we said that if he came over with us then he could have some. The canoe followed us across, the man in the stern still paddling.

The big Tongan climbed aboard Leda, quite a difficult feat from the narrow, unstable canoe. He introduced himself:

"They call me Tungi," he said.

"Oh," said my brother. "I am Dooley, this is Dave and this is my brother, Sandy." He shook hands with us.

Visitors

The paddler remained sitting in the canoe. "What about him?" asked my brother. Tungi replied that he would stay where he was. But we insisted. "Oh, no, he must come aboard too," we said. So the big native spoke to his companion in Tongan and he too scrambled aboard.

Something to drink, we suggested, as we stepped below. No, thank you, said Tungi; he didn't drink or smoke.

He was wearing red bathing shorts and a white singlet. We three were in wet bathing shorts, and so we remained standing and did not invite him to sit down. I mixed Tungi a drink of lemon and ginger ale, from the refrigerator, and poured beer for the rest of us.

"What about your friend?" I asked, for the other man had remained sitting on deck.

"Well, I think he might be tempted to have a beer," said Tungi, with a smile.

We realized when he was in the cabin that our English-speaking friend was really a very big man.

He had to bend his head in the galley, even between deck-beams, which placed him at least in the six-foot-four class, and yet he appeared thickset, and had legs on him like tree trunks.

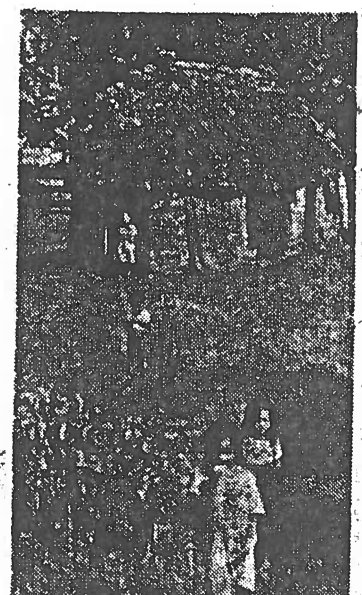
We chatted happily for half an hour, and he told us a great deal about Tonga and what they were doing there, and about his visits to neighbouring islands. He was very interesting, and I gathered that he held quite an important position on the island. Several times I was on the point of asking him what work he did.

A Gift

We produced the rubber tubing, and he was very pleased with it.



Nappies out to air—and white-skinned children.



Blankets out to air—and brown-skinned children.

Even when we told him we wouldn't dream of letting him pay for it he was scrupulously fair about taking only sufficient for his needs, although we had a big roll of the stuff.

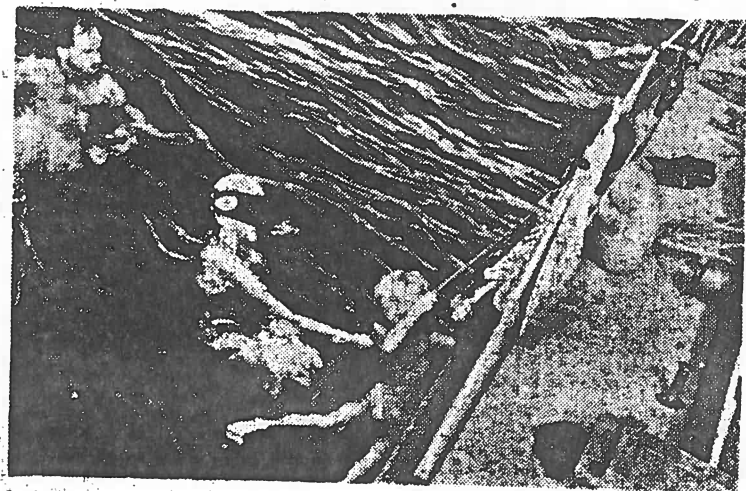
He showed us the fish he had speared, an extraordinary looking thing which he said even he had not seen before. He called it a peacock fish, and said he thought the Auckland Museum might appreciate a specimen, but we found it on deck after he had left.

Finally, as he was leaving, he asked us if we would like to go fishing with him one day in his yacht. We would go further afield, he said, where the fish were bigger and tamer. We thanked him. No, we couldn't go this Saturday, we had been invited to a feast, but the following Saturday would suit admirably.

Where would we go, I asked, as we stepped out into the cockpit once more? Over by that island?

Yes, he said, that was quite a good spot over there. "Actually," he said, rather diffidently, "I own that island there, and there is a good beach, but the fishing is better out at those two more distant islands—I own them too."

"Oh, yes," we said, embarrassed at such wealth of ownership.



Swimming over the side, when the Leda lay becalmed between Ata and Tonga.