

Napidakoe

Napidakoe Navitu, the organisation with the exotic sounding name, is perhaps the most significant thing to emerge from the battles, both verbal and physical, over land on Bougainville.

It grew out of the determination of villagers to stand together to keep the Administration from taking their land for the Conzinc Riotinto copper project.

But, after that fight is over, Napidakoe will not come to an end.

Its 10 native leaders and the one white man with a hand on the helm see it continuing to expand and develop into a real force in New Guinea politics.

Independence for Bougainville is the foundation of the Napidakoe philosophy.

In the climate of the complex political structure of native versus Administration and Conzinc Riotinto on Bougainville this secessionist feeling has plenty to feed on.

Napidakoe Navitu — the first word is an anagram of initials of villages in the Kieta sub-district, and Navitu means association — has developed from

meetings among native leaders such as Mr Paul Lapun, the MHA for Bougainville South and Mr Raphael Bele, a leader of the Rorovana people, and Mr Barry Middlemiss, an overseer on the 1000-acre Arawa plantation.

The meetings started about March when the Administration first announced its intentions of taking over the Arawa plantation, Arawa native land and Rorovana native land for the copper project.

At first, the meetings were haphazard, unorganised, and often clandestine.

But later as aims and policies were formulated, they became more regular and organised.

Most people were attending and finally in

July it was agreed to form the association.

The first meeting was on July 6 and it was decided to incorporate the Association as the Napidakoe Navitu Political and Benevolent Association.

Mr Charles Miriori, from Anganal in the foothills of the Kieri Valley in the Kieta sub-district, was elected president, and Mr Peter Teona from Bairimi was elected vice-president.

Mr Middlemiss became the secretary and Mr Bele treasurer.

AIMS

Recently in his home on the Arawa plantation, Mr Middlemiss discussed the structure aims and ideals of Napidakoe.

The aim had been to form some association

● JAMES HALL reports on the new association which is gaining power on Bougainville.

that would be representative of all the people in the Kieta area first.

Later, it could be expanded to other parts of Bougainville—already definite efforts have been made in this direction.

Mr Middlemiss with Mr Lapun and Mr Bele recently visited Buka to seek support for the association's fight for the Rorovana land.

These sojourns for support ended somewhat embarrassingly for the association when Mr Donatus Mola, MHA for Bougainville North, declared he wanted to have nothing to do with Mr Middlemiss.

"But," Mr Middlemiss said, "we have widespread support in this area."

There were more than 5000 members on the books and the association had representatives in each of the 72 villages in the Kieta sub-district.

There were 11 members on the executive council, each representing a specific area in

Navitu

A new association born of the bitter land battle

Australia to study and of schemes to assist members in distress.

But, Napidakoe's political plans were more concrete.

"We hope to put up candidates to contest the next House of Assembly elections in 1972," Mr Middlemiss said.

One wondered why this was only a hope and not a definite aim.

But talks with other members of the association, particularly some of the leaders pointed to the answer.

Napidakoe wants independence for Bougainville, and as soon as possible.

There were even those who talked of independence within two years.

This has grown out of the possessive feeling of many Bougainvillians towards the copper that is under the hills of their island.

ACCEPTED

Many times the villagers have asked the Administration and other people why they

There is a strong possibility of initial talks being held on this matter either in Kieta or Port Moresby before the end of the year.

AWKWARD

A non-joining together of the two organisations would leave Mr Lapun in an awkward position in 1972.

After that it had another pressing aim — to form a workers' association on the island.

"There are a lot more workers being brought to Bougainville now for the copper project," he said.

"Also, CRA is hiring more and more Bougainville villagers to work for it.

"These people are going to need some sort of industrial organisation and Napidakoe will try to form this."

But any workers' association would be more to protect the rights of the Bougainville people from outsiders than anything

Mr Middlemiss claims he has been inspired in his protests on behalf of the people by the Administration's bungling and inept approach to the handling of the land situation.

"They completely ignored the culture of the people and their social structure," he said.

"Through Napidakoe we hope to give these things the prominence in affairs that they deserve.

"This is a rich island," Mr Middlemiss said.

"It has a sound agricultural economy and it now has copper.

"There is a great political awareness among the people but only within the limits of independence.

"The people do not like outsiders and they want to populate their own island and to develop it by themselves.

"This is what has motivated the formation of Napidakoe and this is what will continue to motivate its





● **THE** man in the background (arrowed) is Barry Middlemiss. He is actively involved in the dispute over the Rorovana land, and the newly-formed Napikadoe Navitu — but so far has not sought the spotlight

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There were 11 members on the executive council, each representing a specific area in the sub-district.

Mr Lapun had been chosen as the president of the executive council, a position that could cause some personal conflict for Mr Lapun, the deputy Parliamentary Leader of the Pangu Party, as the association develops.

PERSONALITY

Mr Middlemiss indicated that the association had a dual personality.

"We are both a political and a welfare-cultural organisation" he said.

"First of all we want to unify the people of Bougainville.

"Then we want to regenerate an interest in their cultural heritage and also to help Bougainville advance both socially and economically."

Mr Middlemiss spoke of plans to establish scholarships to send Bougainville people to

villages towards the copper that is under the hills of their island.

ACCEPTED

Many times the villagers have asked the Administration and other people why they cannot tell CRA to go away until after Bougainville independence and then re-negotiate an agreement with the new government.

But, political independence before the next House of Assembly elections is more a hope than an ideal at this stage.

It appears that there will be candidates at the next national elections carrying the Napidakoe colors.

Mr Middlemiss himself even hinted that he might be one of them.

But, any candidate might carry two sets of colors — those of Napidakoe and of Pangu.

Mr Middlemiss said Napidakoe would definitely consider an association with Pangu.

It could hardly think any other way with one of its leading members also being a prominent figure in the Pangu Party.

These people are going to need some sort of industrial organisation and Napidakoe will try to form this."

But any workers' association would be more to protect the rights of the Bougainville people from outsiders than anything else.

"The people do not like outsiders and they want to populate their own island and to develop it by themselves.

"This is what has motivated the formation of Napidakoe and this is what will continue to motivate its thinking."

ON BOTH SIDES OF THE FENCE



● **Mr Donatus Mola** (North Bougainville) ... wants nothing to do with Middlemiss.



● **Mr. Paul Lapun** (South Bougainville) ... playing an active role in the association.