

which urged Rabuka to “completely reject and throw out of the window with precipitated [*sic*] haste the devilish concept of government of national unity” (*FT*, 22 Dec 1992). The Fijian National United Front supported the idea but on the condition that Fijian interests always remain paramount. Many members of Rabuka’s own party agreed that non-Fijian parties will be

#### NEW CALEDONIA

Leaders of the *Front de libération nationale kanak et socialiste* (FLNKS) had set 1992 as the date of the first assessment of the Matignon Accords. There were many meetings of the various pro-independence parties during the year, although final results will not be known until after the FLNKS conven-

—predominantly Melanesian—segment of the population, which feels excluded from the benefits of the Matignon Accords.

In September, two elections were held, a week apart. On 20 September, New Caledonian voters, along with all other French citizens, expressed their opinions in a referendum on the Maasticht Treaty concerning the future of the European Economic Community. No real political campaign on this issue was mounted in the territory and, apart from televised statements by metropolitan French political parties, few utterances were made by local politicians to induce voters to participate. Only about a third of the registered voters turned out at the polls, a bare

senator Dick Ukeiwe, member of the *Rassemblement pour la Calédonie dans la République* (RPCR, the largest anti-independence party), had expressed his intention of running for another term, his party's nomination committee preferred to put forward Simon Loueckhote, current president of the Territorial Congress. Dick Ukeiwe decided to run anyway, with the support of the smaller anti-independence group *Calédonie demain* (Caledonia Tomorrow). The other anti-independence parties gave their support to the RPCR candidate, with the *Front calédonien* calling for blank ballots in the first round of voting. At the other end of the political spectrum, the FLNKS nominated Rock Wamvta, a member of its largest fac-

party president Jacques Lafleur. The split took place over Maurice Nenou's decision to run in the March 1993 legislative elections, and over what he perceived to be a lack of consultation in the running of the party. The two men had finally made their peace by the end of May, but these tensions led to the creation of a new movement within the RPCR, called *Mouvement des Calédoniens libres* (Movement of Free Caledonians), which gathered some Melanesian elected representatives around Dick Ukeiwe. The movement, which called for a more democratic approach within the anti-independence party,

People in September. This convention, which was attended by a number of traditional high chiefs, decided to reject elections and political parties in favor of a return to traditional Melanesian forms of authority and an immediate move toward independence. The great surprise of the convention was the nomination of Charles Attiti, high chief of the Goro tribe and RPCR militant, as spokesman for the convention and the Kanak people. He resigned from the position the following month, claiming that he had been misled about the non-political nature of the convention.

The conflict that had opposed Coo-

alities involved, the fundamental question of a clear definition of the respective roles of the political and traditional (chiefly) authorities has yet to be answered in New Caledonia.

The slowing down of economic activity, evident over the past two years, persisted during 1992. The nickel industry, which produces the main export commodity, was in crisis following a sharp drop in world ore

Secretary-General Ieremia Tabai of the Forum Secretariat came on an official visit, the first Forum official to do so. The South Pacific Commission finally decided to keep its headquarters in Noumea, although this had to be decided by a vote, rather than by consensus as had been the Commission's tradition in the past.

FRANÇOIS SODTER

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