



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 November 1981

Dear Michael,

Father Walter Lini's Call on the Prime Minister

The Prime Minister has kindly agreed to receive Father Walter Lini, Prime Minister of Vanuatu, for a courtesy call at 1630 hrs on 23 November. He will be accompanied by Mr Laloyer of the Vanuatu Department of Foreign Affairs.

During his visit to London from 22 - 26 November Father Lini will meet Lord Carrington and be the guest of the Lord Privy Seal at lunch (both on 23 November). At Father Lini's request we have also arranged a call on the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Father Lini is visiting both Paris and London and the main purpose of both visits is to obtain further aid. His main objective in London will be to try to persuade us to maintain the present high level of British aid and in this connection Father Lini will be seeing Mr Marten and ODA officials on 24 November. While ODA will give Father Lini a sympathetic hearing he will not obtain the full amount of budgetary aid that he would like. It is therefore likely that he will address some special pleading to the Prime Minister.

In general conversation with Father Lini the Prime Minister may wish to seek his views on general developments in Vanuatu since Independence in July 1980 and the progress made since the Santo rebellion. She may also wish to enquire about his visit to Paris (16 - 22 November) and his views on the future of the French in the Pacific.

/When the

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street



/ When the Prime Minister met Father Lini in Melbourne at the CHGM he raised three points on which I now attach a short note in case he raises these during his courtesy call. All three points relate to aid and the Prime Minister may feel that Father Lini could be encouraged to take them up with ODA on 24 November.

I should be grateful if you would let me know of any particular points raised during the call on which it might be appropriate to advise ODA before their meetings on 24 November.

/ I attach a personality note on Father Lini.

Yours ever

Roderic Lyne

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary



POINTS RAISED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER BY FATHER LINI AT
CHGM IN OCTOBER

1. " Money being provided by Britain for law and order
should be extended from 5 years to 6".

Point to Make

It is my understanding that we were not aware that
British funds were being used directly for law and
order.

2. " Britain should help establish a loan fund for
dispossessed farmers".

Point to Make

I understand that the Vanuatu Government proposes to
convert freehold tenure to leasehold and is looking
for funds to compensate expatriate landowners. This
proposal would not prima facie be a proper claim for
British aid.

3. " HMG should ask the French to pay their aid
subvention due on 30 September".

Point to Make

Lord Carrington intended raising this with M. Cheysson.
In the event it proved unnecessary to do so as a new
French Ambassador was appointed to Vanuatu and some
French aid unblocked.



ESSENTIAL FACTS

Funds for Law and Order

1. Mr Blaker (then Minister of State, FCO) was approached by Father Lini in Fiji in October 1980 for assistance in providing approximately £850,000 which he needed to pay the salaries of an expanded Police Mobile Unit (PMU). Our High Commissioner in Vila followed up this request and Father Lini undertook to provide a detailed breakdown justifying the force level and associated expenditure.
2. Following the request to Mr Blaker, the PMU then undertook training in Papua New Guinea with PNG and Australian financial assistance and we were not approached again on this subject by Father Lini.
3. The first post-Independence budget which was presented on 25 February 1981 included a provision for the salaries of the mobile force, and we thought it likely therefore that we could consider the request from Father Lini as having lapsed.
4. Nevertheless, it is possible that without further reference to us some British budgetary aid has been used towards the cost of salaries. In principle, we do not wish to encourage this as there could be parliamentary and public criticism for providing British aid to a police force which, at least immediately post-Independence, had forgotten the "minimum force" requirement. There also remains the danger that the police force could be used as a private political army.

Expropriation of Land

5. We understand that the Vanuatu Government intend establishing a Land Control Organisation whose main objective is to change all freehold tenures into leasehold and to return ownership of land to the former "custom" owners. The Vanuatu Government's intention seems to be to compensate former freeholders for improvements only, leaving them to claim compensation for loss of title from the former colonial powers. In order to avoid the reversion of developed land to bush, the Vanuatu Government is seeking help to establish a fund to pay compensation for

/improvements



improvements.

2. We have not been approached formally on this matter by the Vanuatu Government, but we have told them informally that in our view the question of compensation is a matter for the expropriating power and that HMG would not look favourably upon claims for loss of title.

LINI, FATHER WALTER HADYE

Prime Minister.

Born 1942 in North Pentecost. Educated at the St John's Kohimarana Theological College in the Solomon Islands and at St John's Theological College in Auckland.

Ordained an Anglican priest in 1970, he was appointed district priest for Longana, East Aoba. He was active in the foundation in 1971 of the New Hebrides Cultural Association, which later became the National Party and is now the Vanuaaku (Government) Party. In 1974 was elected President of the National Party and obtained leave of absence from his church to devote his time to politics. He was elected to the Representative Assembly in 1975. In 1974 and 1976 he appeared before the UN Committee of 24 as a petitioner on behalf of the National Party. As leader of the Vanuaaku Party he was invited in 1978 to join the Government of National Unity, headed by Father Gerard Leymang, as Deputy Chief Minister. Following the victory of the Vanuaaku Party in the November 1979 elections, was appointed Chief Minister, becoming Prime Minister at independence on 30 July 1980.

Though the first among equals, he is scarcely more than a public relations front for the Council of Ministers, some of whom, indeed, have more political clout. Governing by consensus, he is nevertheless much criticised for indecisive leadership. He is all for the quiet life and is essentially pacific in his attitude toward his colleagues who, with only rare exceptions, he regards with a lofty intellectual and moral disdain. Though vacillating, he is not entirely irresolute. He has a streak of obstinacy which, however, tends to manifest itself over lost causes: he is obdurate on matters of no real moment while permitting himself to be overridden on more substantial issues. Lacking in any degree of ruthlessness, he is habitually overruled in Cabinet even though he frequently shows a more enlightened outlook than do his Ministers. He remains in office less by virtue of his own abilities than by the fear that any move to replace him might have consequences disastrous to fragile Cabinet solidarity. His generally pusillanimous performance in office is reflected in his normal deference to the Party, in whose Executive the real power resides. His initiatives sometimes show qualities of statesmanship but these are swiftly extinguished by almost automatic opposition from his colleagues. Under pressure he has frequently threatened to resign, talking of having done his duty and wanting to return to his flock and the simple life. He has flirted with left-brand socialism in the past, tries hard to conceal his francophobia and, despite bitter criticism of us before independence, has come to see Britain as a true friend.

Urbane, often articulate, he has a presence and civilised demeanour denied most of his Ministers. Can exert considerable charm and is socially relaxed. Carries the burdens of office apparently effortlessly. He genuinely cherishes the democratic concept. A dedicated family man, his private life is unimpeachable, and he is thought to be incorruptible, a rare commodity in Melanesia.

Married (to a Solomon Islander) with five children.

