

International News

CHILE

There is a new "*hogar*" (boarding house) for Rapanui students, located in the part of Viña del Mar that is known as Recreo. The *hogar* now has 30 Rapanui students, 5 more than last year. The *hogar* provides free meals for the students, pays for their studies in private establishments, their uniforms and medical expenses, among other things. Formerly there were two *hogares*, located at various times in Viña, Valparaíso, and in Quilpue, where the students were separated by sex. The new establishment has both sexes at one boarding house. This latest *hogar de Isla de Pasqua* was inaugurated in May and will permit young islanders to continue their studies on the continent.

The inauguration party included invited guests and Rapanui dancers and the ceremony ended with a traditional *curanto* (earth oven). The director of the *hogar* is Rodolfo Castillo; it is financed by the Fondo de Ministros under the Ministry of the Interior.

25 May, *El Mercurio de Valparaiso*

FRANCE

Dr. Adolfo Fernandez Correa, a director of the Fonck Museum in Viña del Mar, Chile, attended the inauguration of the Easter Island exhibition in Bordeaux. The following is his report.

On April 20th, the inauguration of an exhibition of Easter Island and Polynesia was held at the Musée d'Aquitaine in Bordeaux, France. In attendance were Mr. Alain Juppe, Prime Minister of France and Mayor of Bordeaux; Sr. Jacobo Hey Paoa, Governor of Easter Island; Sr. Jaime Estevez, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Chilean Congress; and Sr. J. Manuel Morales, the Chilean Ambassador to France. Officially-invited visitors from Chilean museums included the Rev. Fernando Vasquez and Dr. Adolfo Fernandez C.; Sra. Marta Cruz-Coke M. and Sr. Angel Cabeza M. from the Dirección de Bibliotecas, Archivos y Museos (DIBAM); and Sra. Perla Fontecilla of the Ministry of Education. Bordeaux itself is an old and beautiful city with many cultural activities, located on the banks of the river Garonne and surrounded by the famous vineyards of Medoc.

The objects exhibited were loaned principally by Chilean museums, including the Englert Museum of Easter Island, the Museums of Natural History of Santiago and La Serena, the La Merced Museum in Santiago, and the Fonck Museum in Viña del Mar. These last two supplied nearly 40% of the exhibition. There also were some pieces from private European collections. The same exhibition was shown with great success in Milan, Italy, and in Barcelona, Spain.

Without any doubt, the main attraction was the authentic *moai* loaned by the city of La Serena. It was placed in a large hall behind which was a wall with an immense photograph of the flank of the Rano Raraku volcano, cleverly illuminated so that it seemed like a late afternoon on the island. The visitors entering this hall were greatly impressed and spoke only in whispers. Three full-sized reproductions of *moai* stood in front of the museum.

The intent of the exhibition was to give an idea of the

cultures of the Polynesian region, with emphasis on the artistic aspects. Easter Island was featured. The head Curator, Mrs. Chantal Orgogozo, was responsible for mounting the exhibition. It was organized in the form of a circular walkway of several floors around the great hall where the *moai* was installed, enabling visitors to admire the statue from all different angles. One entered this through an area that represented the bridge of a sailing ship of the epoch of Captain Cook. Corresponding maps and navigation instruments were displayed. The original drawings of Pierre Loti were especially interesting.

In several glassed-in enclosures were objects representative of Melanesia, Micronesia, Tahiti, Hawaii, etc. Farther along came a large display of Rapanui objects, many shown for the first time outside of Chile; for example, original *rongorongo* tablets, the eye of a *moai*, etc.

The Museum d'Aquitaine provided brochures, posters, and a handsome catalogue, didactic material for students, and offered specialized information by means of a computer. Also there was a roundtable discussion of Rapa Nui with specialists from around the world in which some ten different topics were included such as navigation, analysis of astronomical studies, and the *rongorongo* script.

The exposition will be open until September 15 of this year and then the pieces loaned by Chile will be returned. The museum is expecting thousands of visitors who will have the only opportunity of seeing collected in one place some of the most representative examples of these cultures, especially Rapanui. The exhibit also allows the European world to see a part of the attractive patrimony of Chile.

UNITED STATES

Las Vegas, Nevada. Two "replicas" of Easter Island statues have been removed from the front of the Tropicana hotel in Vegas. They were created for entrance decorations to the gambling casino/hotel in 1991, but recently fell from favor as part of the hotel remodeling. They will be replaced with a "classic Victorian garden". The statues (locally called Tiki gods) were 35 feet tall and each weighed 300,000 pounds. See RNJ 8(2):48 for a view of one of the statue heads in juxtaposition with the MGM-Grand lion and a pyramid. As is typically the case, these fake statue heads were inaccurate and really ugly versions of our beloved Rapa Nui *moai*.

What's New in Polynesia

BIKINI ATOLL

To most, Bikini is just a swimsuit. To thousands who were there when the bombs went off 50 years ago, it is a tragedy. This October, the National Academy of Sciences is to announce results of a study to determine whether sailors and soldiers present at the 1946 tests have died at unusually high rates, possibly due to radiation exposure. And in November, the Bikinians, with millions of dollars won in claims against the US, plan to begin the "scrape"--removal of radioactive topsoil from their island so they can return to it.