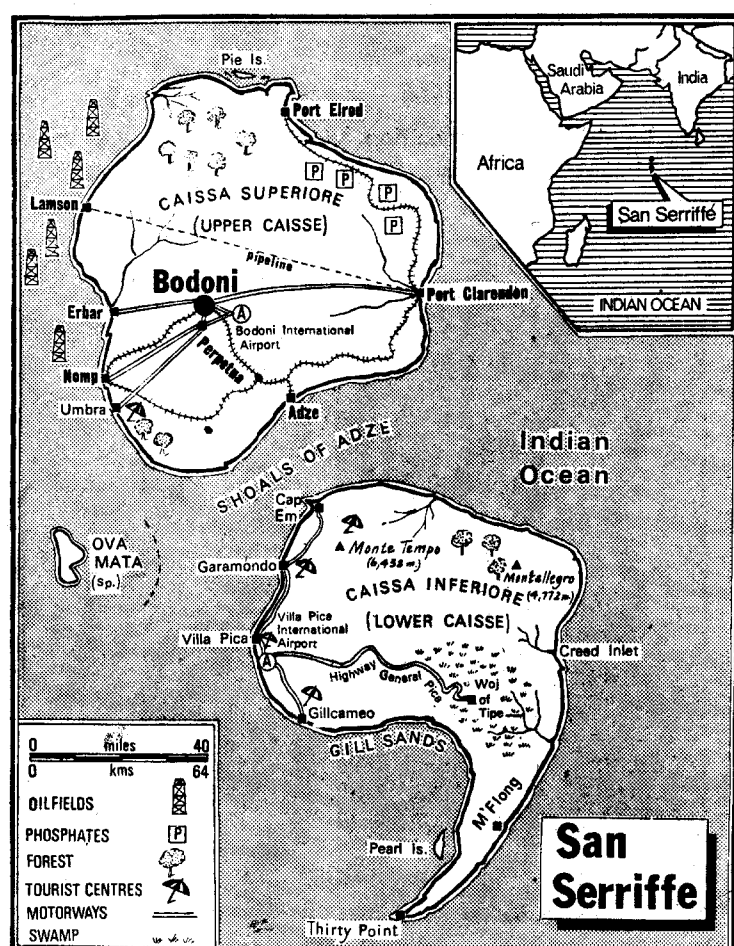
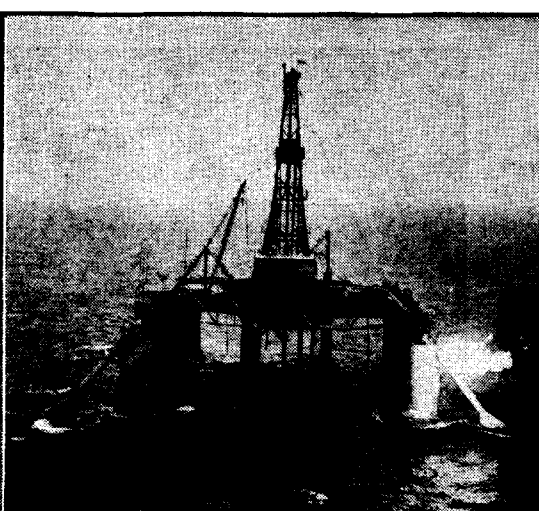
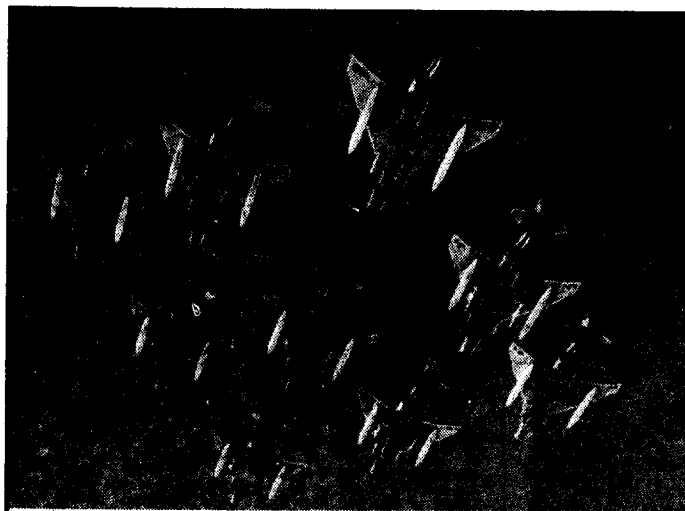


SAN SERRIFFE

a Guardian special report



THE TEN YEARS of independence which San Serriffe celebrates today have been a period of economic expansion and social development probably unrivalled by any other new nation. With this achievement has gone a determined attempt, in part successful, to maintain the outward forms of a parliamentary democracy. This special report, edited and introduced by Geoffrey Taylor, attempts to recount the remarkable transformation in the life of the Republic, to inform British investors and visitors of the opportunities which have been and are being created, and not least to encourage companies trading with the Republic to call attention to their share in its development. Rapid growth brings its own problems, not all of which can be solved in total composure. The survey allows some of those problems to be brought under closer scrutiny.



The President, General M.-J. Pica.

Three point key to prosperity

TO THOSE who have not followed its development at close hand, San Serriffe may be remembered only as a small archipelago, its main islands grouped roughly in the shape of a semicolon, in the Indian Ocean. Until recently, that would have been an adequate description: a punctuation mark, as it were, in a long chapter of oceanic exploration. But

fifteen years ago came the phosphate industry, ten years ago the first tourist packages, and five years ago the resource which has added bounteously to its riches: oil.

San Serriffe's currency, the Corona, is linked to its oil, making it one of the hardest in the world. It seems to appreciate, to the concern of foreign bankers, with every barrel that flows down the pipeline from the west coast to Port Clarendon. The people, likewise, are linked to the life of island insouciance which they once enjoyed and from which the Government, under General M.-J. Pica, is trying hard to advance them.

Although it is true that the resulting social tensions are evident even to the most transient visitor, he will also find a kindly and tolerant people: tolerant, in the eyes of people who cherish parliamentary institutions, to a fault. President Pica's emphasis on economic development, which he rightly sees as the best way to enrich the islands, has led to practices which some observers describe as authoritarian and which the Opposition, under the ageing Mr Ralph Baskerville, believes are only temporary.

From a diet of mutton, goat cheese, and damson wine it is a far cry to the international cuisine offered at many of the big hotels. The thatched huts still occupied by the irrepressible Flongs, an indigenous people at the tip of the southern island, are generations away from the two international airports at Bodoni, the capital, and Villa Pica. Yet something of the old tradition remains and not all that has gone was worth preserving.

Like his predecessors General Pica inherited the old antagonisms between descendants of the original Spanish and Portuguese colonists and those of the later English arrivals, sometimes humorously derided as the semicolons. Under the inspiration of his regime those feuds are forgotten. Wealth has made it pos-

sible to solve, for the time being, San Serriffe's most acute physical problem. Early explorers placed the islands as much as three hundred miles farther west, and recent research has shown that they were almost correct.

The constant erosion of the western coasts, with corresponding accumulation on the east, is a process which, unless arrested, will bring

LANDMARKS IN HISTORY

- 1421 Discovered by adventurers recruited by John Street, an English admiral of Henry the Navigator. The crew made their historic landfall in the Shoals of Adze.
- 1432-39 Portuguese and Spanish colonisation.
- 1659 Annexed by Britain.
- 1815 Ceded to Portugal.
- 1824-36 The condominium.
- April 1, 1967 Independence under Social Democratic Government.
- June, 1967 Seizure of power by Colonel Hispalis.
- August, 1969 Seizure of power by General Minon.
- May 11, 1971 General M.-J. Pica assumes responsibility for the Government.

the Republic into collision with Sri Lanka. (Bodoni, now in the centre of the north island, Upper Caisse, was originally a port.) As an expedient, lighters make the daily journey from the new wharf at Port Clarendon, built by Costains, to take shingle from the eastern coasts and put it back where it belongs.

Wealth — and again it is the key to anyone interested

in San Serriffe — is itself creating more wealth for the islanders, particularly for those highly placed in the Administration. By making the islands a tax haven and creating duty-free zones round Port Clarendon and Bodoni all Governments since that of Colonel Hispalis, which took office soon after independence, have attracted much hot and some questionable money to the islands. Once there, it has tended to stay. A number of large British companies are known to be interested in exploiting this aspect of San Serriffe's financial profile.

In almost all the social and public services San Serriffe is much in advance of comparable countries, with three geriatric teaching hospitals and a pioneer pre-school psychiatric unit attached to the university at Perpetua.

The university itself has begun to acquire an international reputation for its work on thermonuclear fusion and other alternative energy sources. And the schools are attempting a unique synthesis of the old and new so that in addition to mainstream subjects a San Serriffe teenager may well be offered pearl-diving as an "A" level choice.

British policy towards the Republic is described by the Embassy as "basically letting the chums get on with the show." General Pica's Government is firmly allied with the West, to which his surprisingly powerful air force is a source of comfort in a potentially difficult area of operation. He has been known to ask, however, whether the West is firmly allied with him.

Western Governments are aware of the fragile nature of previous Administrations and, while obviously avoiding any overt involvement in local politics, would not be disinclined to do business with a successor, should General Pica wish to lay down the mantle of office. Of that, however, there is no sign.

Geoffrey Taylor

GUIDE TO THE REPUBLIC

Location: North-east of the Seychelle Islands; Colombo 1,550 miles.
 Area: 9,724 sq. m.
 Population (1973 census): 1,782,724 consisting of (approx.) Europeans and mixed race 640,000; Flongs 574,000; Creoles 271,000; Malaysians 117,000; Arabs 92,000; others 88,000.
 Capital: Bodoni.

Tourist centres: Garamondo, Villa Pica, Gillicameo, Cap Em, Umbra.
 Climate: Oceanic equatorial. Rains mainly May-October and early January.
 Currency: The San Serriffe Corona (100 ems) has become one of the hardest currencies, standing at C1 = £4.30.
 Travel: San Serriffe Airways from Gatwick or via Mogadishu.

Health: Smallpox, cholera, typhus, and lassa fever vaccinations required.
 Customs: No Customs duties are levied on tourists or commercial importers.
 Language: English is the working language. Caslon is used on ceremonial occasions, and there is a language (Ki-flong) indigenous to the Flongs.

If you've got a photograph of San Serriffe, Kodak would like to see it.

The beauty of San Serriffe is legendary. From the serene, stately grandeur of the Cap Em Opera House to the hustle and bustle of the harbour at Port Clarendon, the islands abound in colourful memories just waiting to be faithfully captured on Kodak film.

Kodak are looking for photographs, taken by amateur photographers, which truly reflect the evanescent beauty of these fabulous islands.

They will be collected together to form an Exhibition, entitled "The Legendary Beauty of San Serriffe," which will be mounted at this time, next year.

If you have a photograph of San Serriffe which you feel might be suitable for the Exhibition, please ring 01-499 5316 before noon today.



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Applications, with the names of two referees, should be addressed to the Registrar, En Perpetua Universitij do San Serriffe, B.P. 24, Bodoni, San Serriffe, and should be accompanied by a suitable consideration.