

COFFEE PROPS HOUPHOUET IN IVORY COAST

Grower Incomes Have Doubled

[Second article in a series
on Africa's Ivory Coast.]

BY ROBERT LEE

[Chicago Tribune Press Service]

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast—The incomes of 250,000 Ivoirian farmers who raise coffee and cocoa have doubled in the last six years.

These people, earning on the average \$500 a year, represent the base of President Felix Houphouet-Boigny's support.

The president himself owns a plantation of several thousand acres at Yamoussoukro in the central part of the country and works hard at promoting an image of himself as a farmer-president. He has been known to send out formal invitations reading: "Felix Houphouet-Boigny, planter and president of the republic, and madame request. . . ."

Another Windfall Unlikely

This sentimental rapport notwithstanding, some observers wonder if these farmers' support for Houphouet would be so solid if their pocketbooks stopped growing fatter. It seems certain the coffee and cocoa windfall of recent years will not be repeated.

Until last year the demand for the Ivory Coast's robusta coffee had kept pace with increasing production. Since robustas are preferred for instant coffees, American companies in particular were buying more and more, both for use in instant mixes and with South American strains in blends.

Government Buys Crop

In 1965, however, the Ivory Coast produced 280,000 tons of coffee, more than twice the quantity it is allowed to sell under the international coffee agreements. Farmers' incomes rose anyway, because the government purchased the entire crop at prices reduced by only 20 per cent. But such generosity cannot be expected again this year, according to Siaka Coulibaly, director of foreign trade.

Coulibaly says prices will be reduced to the point where farmers are receiving for their whole crop only as much as the country's quota of coffee can be sold for.

Such price reductions might be unnecessary if this year's crop turned out to be smaller than the last, as a result of adverse weather conditions. But even in this case, coffee farmers' incomes are sure to suffer.

Other Crops Urged

For this reason, the government is urging that land be diverted from coffee to other crops. It is also trying to make the country less dependent on cocoa, which has the disadvantage of being perishable and thus subject to speculation and wild price fluctuation. Unlike coffee, tho, the long-range international outlook for cocoa appears bright.

Among crops the government would like to have farmers raise more of are rice, palm oil, cotton, pineapple, and sugar cane.

President Houphouet has said the Ivory Coast should be self-

sufficient in rice by 1970, altho it imports 70,000 tons a year, some of it from the United States.

Nationalist Chinese rice experts have been called in to assist Ivoirian farmers in starting rice cultures.

Palm Oil Stressed

The government hopes palm oil will become a great new export crop. Some 80,000 acres are being planted with a 32-million-dollar grant from the European Common market.

With this acreage entering production in the early 1970s, the Ivory Coast will join the ranks of the world's great palm oil producers.

Rubber and sugar cane production would also shoot up in the early '70s if the government accepted proposals made by American companies to create new plantations.

Agriculture, especially in the central and northern regions, would be spurred still further if financing could be found for a 162-million-dollar hydro-electric and irrigation project on the Bandama river near the president's model plantation at Yamoussoukro.

Bright Outlook Seen

The combination of all these prospects for increased agricultural production in 5 to 10 years leads business men to predict a new wave of industrial and commercial expansion for the Ivory Coast after 1970.

The only major cloud that no one quite knows how to erase from this idyllic picture is the problem of Africanization of industry and commerce.

[This series will be concluded next Sunday.]

IVORIANS SLOW TO GAIN WHITE COLLAR POSTS

BY ROBERT LEE

[Chicago Tribune Press Service]

[Third of three articles]

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast — In an Abidjan store, the clerk who waits on you is usually an Ivoirian. But the cashier is most frequently French or Lebanese.

At the bank an Ivoirian prepares a withdrawal slip for you. But he always has to have a Frenchman's signature before he can hand it over to a French cashier for payment.

In the offices of the country's leading companies, the only Ivoirians you are likely to see are messengers. Executives and their secretaries are almost exclusively foreigners. There is virtually no such thing as an Ivoirian business man.

A Matter of Concern

This is potentially the Ivory Coast's most explosive problem. Virtually ignored by the government until last August's party congress, Africanization has recently become a subject of growing concern.

The government's position has been that the country cannot afford to sacrifice efficiency by Africanizing too quickly.

"We want most of all to succeed in what we do," a top adviser to President Felix Houphouet-Boigny explained. "Africanization can take place only as soon as there are qualified men to take over the positions of responsibility."

Asks Business to Act

Nevertheless, at a meeting with business men in the presidential palace last January, Houphouet-Boigny made it clear he wanted companies to move faster toward Africanization, especially of relatively unskilled jobs.

Most business men agree this can and should be accomplished. The large French trading companies say it is the small Lebanese merchants who have been dragging their heels. But even such an international giant as Unilever, whose record in utilizing local talent is rated far above average, admits it has been slower to Africanize in the Ivory Coast than in, say, Ghana and Nigeria.

The chief reason, according to a Unilever spokesman, is the unavailability of educated personnel. The Ivory Coast did not have a high school until the mid-1950s. Even now, less than half the school-age population is in school, and only one in five persons is considered literate.

Most Join Government

Most Ivoirians who obtain high school or university degrees enter government service.

A few Frenchmen remain in positions of executive authority in the government, but most of those who are left are technical advisers.

Private enterprise is far from turning the corner. Almost everyone agrees Africanization is desirable, from cold economic logic if for no other reason. Even if an African and a European receive the equal base salaries for doing the same job, the European costs his company about 75 per cent more in special vacation and medical benefits.

However, most Africans do not receive base salaries equal to those of the Europeans they replace. In some cases they get only a half or a third as much.

Ivory Coast Has Plans to Convert 15 Miles of Tropical Rain Forest Into African Riviera

By ROBERT LEE

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast—An ice-skating rink among palm trees, Disneyland of African animals. An 18-hole golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones with surrounding bungalows for rent to tourists. And an assortment of hotels and motels to suit every traveler's budget.

These are the essentials of a multi-million dollar plan to turn a 15-mile stretch of tropical rain forest along a coastal lagoon east of Abidjan into an African Riviera.

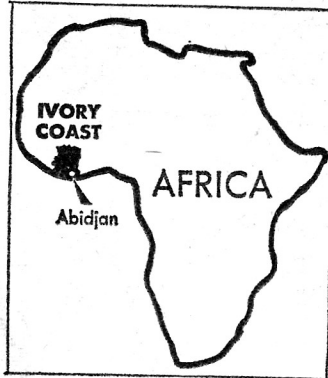
THE PROMOTERS, an Israeli businessman and the Ivory Coast government, hope it will make the coast West Africa's first major vacation spot.

Already the Ivoirian capital, Abidjan, has become a favorite stopover for British businessmen going from Sierra Leone to Ghana or Nigeria. And travelers with business in several countries along the coast find excuses to stay an extra day or two in Abidjan to enjoy luxurious hotels and French cuisine.

In fact, businessmen keep Abidjan's four first-rate hotels so full that there is little room for tourists. The best of them, the Hotel Ivoire, a 207-room establishment with two nightclubs and a swimming pool, is booked months in advance during the busiest seasons. (A double room with a view of the lagoon costs \$18.)

Although only three-years old, the Ivoire has already begun a three-phase expansion program. The first phase, including a 600-seat movie theater and a 10-lane bowling alley, will be completed next month.

THIS FALL the hotel will build a native-style village on its grounds to house as many as 1,000 members of France's popular vacation association, the Club Mediteranee, on its first visit to the Ivory Coast.



cier, Moshe Mayer, believe the country will need twice that many beds by 1972. By that time they expect the Ivory Coast to be attracting 200,000 tourists a year, although it probably drew no more than 200 last year.

"WE HAVE just begun to wake up," says Alain Gabala, director of the Ivoirian National Tourist Office. "And already events are passing us by. Our problem is not where to find tourists but where to put them."

Some observers believe Mayer and the government are nevertheless dreaming when they talk about an "African Riviera."

According to a previously published estimate, the project could cost as much as \$300 million over a period of 10 or 15 years. It would include medium- and high-cost permanent housing, built around existing African villages, as well as tourist accommodations.

But a spokesman for Mayer said he had seen no reliable estimates of total cost and knew of no basis for the \$300-million figure. The spokesman said other private investors would undoubtedly be asked to participate in the project once the foundations had been laid.

THE GOVERNMENT has hired William Pereira, the Los Angeles urbanist, to design the entire undertaking. At the end of the rainy season, it plans to begin cutting roads into

according to government tourism experts.

They believe they can attract large numbers of Swedes, for instance, to spend the winter months. "We can guarantee them sun from December through March," one official points out.

Another thing the Ivory Coast offers that few other African countries can is a six-year record of political stability.

SMALL GROUPS of 20 or 30 tourists have started to find their way here and officials believe the pace will pick up as soon as they can offer guided tours of the country.

Tours of Abidjan itself are being offered for the first time this week. Prices are \$5 for each of two day-time tours and \$16 for dinner and visits to two nightclubs.

Organized tours of the interior are as yet impossible because of the lack of hotel accommodations. The government plans to remedy this problem in the next two or three years.

This year it is constructing 30-room hotels at Daloa and Man, two important centers of Ivoirian folklore. A similar hotel has already been built at Korhogo in the North, where Ivoirian artisans are most active, and another is planned for Sassandra on the coast next year.

A total of 180 beds will be added to existing hotel facilities at Bouna in the extreme Northeast to accommodate visitors to

the country's national game park.

ROBERT LEE is a Minneapolis Tribune staff writer on leave of absence under a William P. Gray foreign correspondent's fellowship.

PLAN FOR AFRICAN RIVIERA

By ROBERT D. LEE

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast — An ice-skating rink among palm trees; a Disneyland of African animals; an 18-hole golf course with surrounding bungalows for rent to tourists; an assortment of hotels and motels suitable for all budgets.

These are the essentials of a multimillion-dollar plan to turn a 15-mile stretch of tropical rain forest into an African Riviera. The site borders on a coastal region east of Abidjan, and the promoters, an Israeli businessman and the Ivoirian Government, hope it will make the Ivory Coast the first major vacation spot in West Africa.

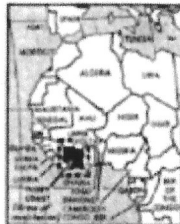
Abidjan, the Ivoirian capital, is already a favorite stopover for British businessmen going from Sierra Leone to Ghana or Nigeria. Many of them find excuses to stay an extra day or two in Abidjan in order to enjoy its luxurious hotels and French cuisine.

Rush With Businessmen

Businessmen keep Abidjan's four first-rate hotels so full that there is little room for tourists. The best hotel in the Ivory, a 207-room establishment with two night clubs and a swimming pool, however, is booked months in advance during the busiest seasons. Although only three years old, the Ivoire, has begun a three-phase expansion program. The first phase, including a 500-seat movie theater and a 16-lane bowling alley, will be completed soon.

Next fall, a native-style village will be built on the hotel grounds. It will be used to house as many as 1,000 members of France's popular vacation association, the Club Méditerranée, on its first tour to the Ivory Coast.

In the third phase, 300



rooms will be added to the hotel, bringing to about 2,000 the number of hotel beds available in the Ivory Coast.

The Ivoire is owned by the Government and by an Israeli businessman, Moshe Mayer. They believe the country will need about 4,000 hotel beds by 1972. By that time, they expect the Ivory Coast to be attracting 200,000 tourists a year, although it probably drew no more than 200 last year.

"We have just begun to wake up," says Alain Gbaha, director of the Ivoirian National Tourist Office. "And already events are passing us by. Our problem is not where to find tourists, but where to put them."

Some observers believe Mr. Mayer and the Government are nevertheless dreaming when they talk about their "African Riviera."

According to a previously published estimate, the project could cost as much

as \$300-million over 10 or 15 years. It would include medium- and high-cost permanent housing, as well as tourist accommodations.

But a spokesman for Mr. Mayer said he had not seen any reliable estimates of total costs, and knew of no basis for the \$300-million figure. The spokesman said other private investors would undoubtedly be asked to participate in the project, once the foundations had been laid.

The Government plans to start cutting roads into the area at the end of the summer rainy season, and the Mayer group will subsequently begin work on the golf course. Its designer is Robert Trent Jones of the United States, a leading golf architect.

Where will the tourists come from? From both Europe and the United States, say Government tourism experts.

Guaranteed Sun

For example, they believe they can attract large numbers of Swedes during the winter months. "We can guarantee them sun from December through March," one official asserted.

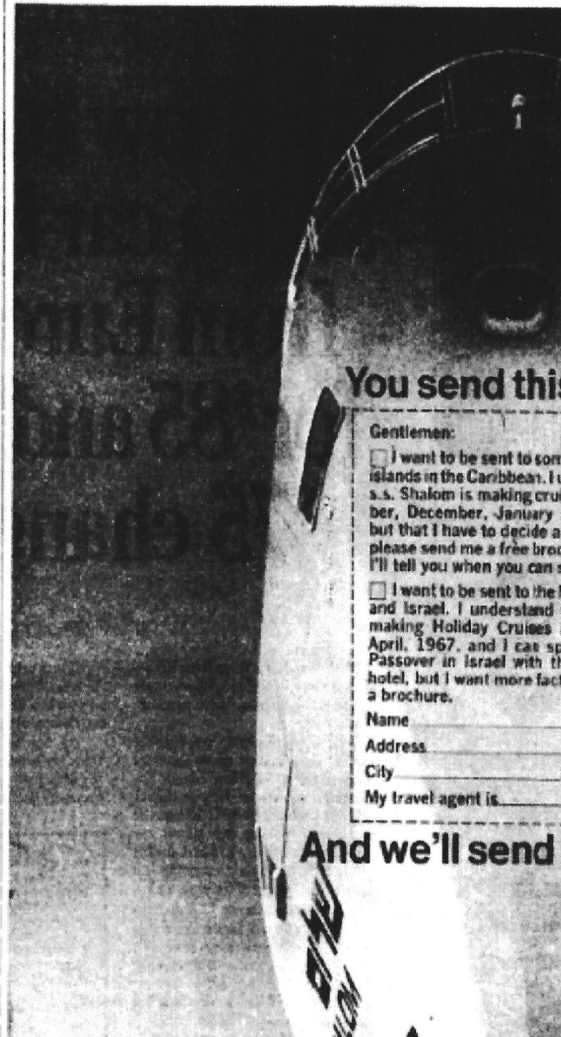
Small groups of 20 or 30 tourists have started to find their way here. Many more would come, the Government tourist agency believes. If guided tours of the interior were available, they probably will be when hotel accommodations increase.

The Government is constructing 35-room hotels in Daloa and Man, two important centers of Ivoirian folklore. A similar hotel is being completed at Korhogo in the North, the home of some of the country's best artisans, and another is planned for Sassandra, on the coast.

A hotel of 180 beds will be added to existing hotel facilities at Boua, in the extreme northeast, to accommodate visitors to the Ivory Coast's national game park.

TRAVEL

TRAVEL



You send this

Gentlemen:

I want to be sent to some islands in the Caribbean. I understand that the S.S. Shalom is making cruises in December, January and February, but that I have to decide a date. Please send me a free brochure. I'll tell you when you can send it.

I want to be sent to the West Bank and Israel. I understand that you are making Holiday Cruises in April, 1967, and I can spend Passover in Israel with the hotel, but I want more facts. Please send me a brochure.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

My travel agent is _____

And we'll send you

TRAVEL

TRAVEL

EUROPE by CAR

Ivory Coast Head: China Wants Africa, Not U.S.

By ROBERT LEE

YAMOUSSOUKRO, Ivory Coast — The president of the Ivory Coast, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, looking relaxed in gabardine shirt and trousers and a tan felt hat, stood for three quarters of an hour in the shade of two rows of palm trees answering the questions of American Peace Corps volunteers who crowded around him.

The 73 Peace Corps members working in the Ivory Coast were guests of the president at his model plantation in Yamoussoukro, 180 miles northwest of Abidjan.

He took them on a brief tour of his newly cleared fields of rice and ignames (similar to potatoes), then offered everyone cool drinks and a chance to ask questions.

The volunteers came up with so many — all short, simple and phrased in good French — that the 60-year-old president had trouble finding chances to mop his brow.

HE BALKED at only one question: "Mr. President, if a ruler loses the support of his people, do you think countries like Russia and the United States should continue to give him aid?"

The president laughed. He had just explained that he believed President Sekou Toure of Guinea, once a close friend and associate in the Reassemblement Democratique Africain (RDA), had led the Guinean people astray.

"Ah! That I can't say," replied Houphouet - Boigny. "You are my guests." The

Americans joined him in laughter.

Only three days earlier the number two man in the Ivoirian government, Phillippe Yace, who is president of the assembly and secretary - general of the Democratic party of the Ivory Coast, had said in Paris, France, it was the "oxygen tent" of American economic assistance that allowed President Toure to remain uncommitted to any single policy.

"IN EFFECT, we have the impression that at the same time Sekou Toure is holding out his hand to the United States, his heart is in Peking," said Yace. American aid to Guinea amounted to about \$20 million last year.

Houphouet - Boigny told his guests from the Peace Corps that Chinese communism was a greater danger to Africa than to the United States.

"If they win," he said "they won't go to your country, which already has enough people. They will come to Africa. This won't happen tomorrow, but two centuries is nothing in the history of the world."

The president explained why he thinks socialism is not adaptable to the needs of Guinea.

"SOCIALISM means a distribution of wealth," he said. "But first there must be something to distribute."

He pointed to Russian failures in agriculture as evidence that socialism would be equally unsuited to the Ivory Coast, where 90 per cent of the population depends on the soil for existence.

"Here I can make a plan-

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tation as big as I like (he has several thousand acres of coffee, cocoa, rice, igname, and other crops) because I am not keeping the land from someone else. Since there are only four million of us, there is plenty of land for everybody."

THE IVOIRIAN problem, he said, is not how to divide the land but to get as much as possible of it into cultivation. The government hopes the country will be self-sufficient in food by 1975.

The chief of protocol finally broke up the session with the cry: "The president of the republic is served." And Houphouet - Boigny and his elegant young wife led the way past a 50-yard-long buffet to the head table.

The Americans were invited to help themselves to caviar sandwiches, roast mutton, tiny pizzas, slices of tenderloin and foofoo, an African dish made from ignames for which many Peace Corps members have acquired a taste.

To go with it there was white wine from Alsace, red wine from Bordeaux, champagne from Champagne and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony from somewhere up in a palm tree.

What the guests could not finish, which was a quite a bit, was devoured by two dozen local children who came running into the garden as the president got up from the table and led the party toward his air-conditioned country house.

ROBERT LEE is a Minneapolis Tribune staff writer on leave under a William P. Gray foreign correspondent fellowship.

