



Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation  
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#### *About the Institute*

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.

Bitte sorgfältig aufbewahren!

Der Absender wird gebeten, den umrandeten Teil selbst auszufüllen!

# Einlieferungsschein

Gegenstand lt. B. E. 80	(Abkürzungen s. umseitig unter A)			
an- gegebener Wert oder eingesahlter Betrag	DM (in Tausend)	DM (in Tausend)	DM (in Tausend)	DM (in Tausend)
Empfänger	M. Tony			
Bestim- mungsort	Paris VII			

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Tagestempel	Einlieferungs- Nr.	Gewicht	
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January 19, 1952

Mr. Oscar G. Nordman  
Papeete, Tahiti

Dear Mr. Nordman:

Reference is made to my letter of September 10, 1951.

Enclosed, for your information, is copy of letter recently received from Mr. Hoppenstedt. I do not believe that there is any reason why we cannot proceed against de Bisschop and the Cheng Ho. Hoppenstedt apparently does not want to go ahead so is looking for reasons not to. The matters he mentions are largely fabrications.

Very truly yours,

David N. Ingman

DNI:gy  
Enc.

Notation on Envelope: By way of Fiji to make connection with Trapas or Air France Plane at Nandi

*Hoppenstedt  
letter sent to  
Nordman per  
Dege's request*

g1

CONSULAT GENERAL DE FRANCE  
A SAN FRANCISCO

PRÉRE DE RAPPELER LE NUMÉRO  
IN REPLYING REFER TO NUMBER

A 111/A 56 - 808

February 1st, 1952

Mr. Otto Degener  
P.O. Box 187  
Waialua  
Oahu,  
T. H.

Dear Sir:

I wish to inform you that your visa for New Caledonia  
has been granted for one year.

I have not yet received the Governor's decision  
regarding your visa application for French Oceania and I will  
let you know as soon as I receive it.

Truly yours,

The Consul General of France

*Jan 1957*



g1

CONSULAT GENERAL DE FRANCE  
A SAN FRANCISCO

—  
—  
PRIÈRE DE RAPPELER LE NUMÉRO  
IN REPLYING REFER TO NUMBER

A 111/A 56 - 308

February 1st, 1952

Mrs. Otto Degener  
P.O. Box 187  
Waialua  
Oahu,  
T. H.

Dear Sir:

I wish to inform you that your visa for New Caledonia  
has been granted for one year.

I have not yet received the Governor's decision  
regarding your visa application for French Oceania and I will  
let you know as soon as I receive it.

Truly yours,

The Consul General of France

*Jan 1957*

CONSULAT GENERAL DE FRANCE  
A SAN FRANCISCO

PRÉSENTE DE RAPPELER LE NUMÉRO  
IN REPLYING REFER TO NUMBER

A 111/A 56 -508

February 1st, 1952

Mr. Otto Degener  
P.O. Box 187  
Waiialua  
Oahu,  
T. H.

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Truly yours,

The Consul General of France

7 de 1952

H. HOPPENSTEDT

AVOGAT - DÉFENSEUR

BOITE POSTALE : 517

PAPEETE - TAHITI

OCEANIE FRANÇAISE

PAPEETE, LE February 1st 1952

Mr.

Otto DEGENER

Mokuleia Beach

VAIATUA - OAHU T.H.

Dear Mr. Degener,

Your favor of 20 th. ult. through Mr. O. NORMAN duly reached me.

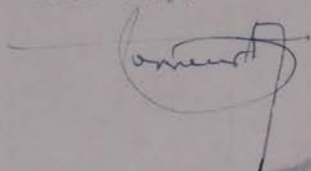
You will excuse me not to write you directly but it is a rule amongst french barristers not to get in touch with their clients as far as they have lawyers.

I take good note of the tenor of your letter especially that you have turned over your power of attorney to Mr. Oscar NORMAN.

As soon as I will receive an answer from Mr. Ingman, concerning a few points especially the mortgage taken favor Mathilde Constable, I will then call on Mr. O. NORMAN.

I wish you a fine botanizing trip; I hope to read in forthcoming FIM relation of your trip as I already did for former trips.

Yours truly.



21  
CONSULAT GENERAL DE FRANCE  
A SAN FRANCISCO

POUR LE NOUVEAU ET VIEUX  
IN VOYAGE EN FRANCE

A 111/A 56 - 308

February 1st, 1952

Mrs. Otto Degener  
P.O. Box 187  
Waialua  
Oahu,  
T. H.

Dear Sir:

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has been granted for one year.

I have not yet received the Governor's decision  
regarding your visa application for French Oceania and I will  
let you know as soon as I receive it.

Truly yours,

The Consul General of France

*J. de Laguerre*

COPY

H. HOPPENSTEDT  
Advocat - Defenseur  
Boite Postale: 517  
Papeete - Tahiti

Oceanie Francaise

Papeete, Le February 1, 1952

Mr.

Otto DEGENER

Mokuleia Beach

WAIALUA - OAHU T.H.

Dear Mr. Degener,

Your favor of 20 th. ult. through Mr. O. NORDMAN duly reached me.

You will excuse me not to write you directly but it is a rule amongst french barristers not to get in touch with their clients as for as they have lawyers.

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I wish you a fine botanizing trip; I hope to read in forthcoming P I M relation of your trip as I already did for former trips.

Yours truly.

/s/ HOPPENSTEDT

*Copied from the original enclosed  
in Degener's letter to Ingman  
dated 3/6/52.*



ADRESSE TELEGRAPHIQUE:  
OCEANIC  
PROVISIONS  
POUR NAVIRES

SERVICE DE RAVITAILLEMENT MARITIME  
MAISON NORDMAN  
FOURNISSEUR - SHIPCHANDLER  
PAPEETE - TAHITI

CABLE ADDRESS  
OCEANIC  
SHIP'S SUPPLIES

February 5, 1952

Dear friend

I have your letter dated Jan. 26, along with the Governor's letter of which I delivered to him as soon I took it off the letter.

I do not advise that your fare should be paid from this end in order to obtain the dollars - in this way only the Bank will get the \$-.

When you come to Papeete declare so much of your dollars to the Port authorities when they board your plane for questioning, some you can put aside well hidden -

Let the \$100.00 you sent to the States rest as it is, and I will settle with you upon your arrival in Tahiti in May: and the Governor

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will surely question me upon receipt of your letter.

The matter of spending \$200<sup>00</sup> a month, is only for the form.

I will reserve a nice top front room for you, in the former M. S. Consulate Building -

I hope when you leave Tahiti, there will be a Mrs Degener following you, will see about that when you get here.

When you come, bring the option papers, the Cheng-Ho Trading Company order releasing the vessel to you.

The rest we will arrange when you arrive.

The letter Mrs Crawford wrote is O.K. Just as I was going to close this letter, another letter was handed

(3)

to me and it contained the  
check of the Bank of Hawaii in the  
sum of \$100<sup>00</sup> (Lihue Branch).

You can rest assured that you  
will obtain permission to enter  
Tahiti; I will see the Governor  
personally.

There is a TEAL SOLENT PLANE  
leaving Suva every month, but there  
is talk of bi-monthly service soon,  
so you won't have no trouble in  
reaching Papeete.

Even if you go to San Francisco  
and catch a boat, there are several  
of them coming to Tahiti.

I am rushing this letter as the  
plane is leaving shortly - so again  
au revoir and Aloha mu mu loa.

Sincerely  
— Oscar —



ADRESSE TELEGRAPHIQUE :  
OCEANIC  
PROVISIONS  
POUR NAVIRES

SERVICE DE RAVITAILLEMENT MARITIME  
MAISON NORDMAN  
FOURNISSEUR - SHIPCHANDLER  
PAPEETE - TAHITI

CABLE ADDRESS  
OCEANIC  
SHIP'S SUPPLIES

February 6, 1952

Mr. David N. Ingman  
attorney at Law  
Honolulu, Hawaii

Dear Maître

Your letter dated January 19,  
just received along with M. Kroppenstedt's  
letter. He discussed the matter with  
Mr. Calamy, and the latter has the  
same opinion of the affair - Let Mr  
Degener come in May, with all the  
documents, option, release of the vessel  
by order of the Cheng Ho Trading Company.  
and in July Mr. Degener shall take  
the vessel over.

Excuse writing as the plane is  
leaving soon, will write again.

Very truly yours  
Oscar S. Nordman

February 6, 1952

Dear friend

Mr. Calamy has arrived at last, and we went through your correspondences, and this is what he has to say:

That you must deposit in Honolulu in escrow, the sum of \$15000, for the payment of the vessel.

Now be careful, it seems that the Cheng Ho Trading Co. has authorized Capt. de Bisschop to alter the interior of the "Cheng Ho" - the engine was moved further aft - the ballast consisting of lead etc. was taken or stolen from the hold - all the wood from the inside of the interior also was given or sold by de B. So be careful in your dealings with the Cheng Ho Trading Company. It was told that de B. had a cable from the Trading Co. giving de B. The right to franchise

the vessel.

Balamy and I, do not like the idea of going to see Maite Hoppenstedt both of us do not like him.

Clear everything in Honolulu before coming to Tahiti; as here in Papeete, there are some that de B. owes money to, -

Before the "Cheng Ho" can do better service, she will have to have a speedier motor; but the hull is in good condition

The price according to your option \$15000, is very fair, and again I warn you to be careful in your dealing with the "Cheng Ho Trading Company" as you will have plenty claims in putting the vessel back in her original conditions.

Reading your letter, you say that you are a bachelor and single well I hope when you come to Tahiti; I will have a girl to make the alteration - Why stay single? Nothing like a nice girl. Will write again. Sincerely Oscar



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AMERICAN EMBASSY, PARIS

February 8, 1952

AMERICAN ATTORNEYS PRACTICING IN PARIS:

While the persons named below are believed to be reliable,  
no responsibility can be assumed by the American Embassy at Paris  
for their ability or integrity.

ALEXANDER, Leon 161 Blvd. Haussmann, Paris 8 (ELY 00-91)  
ALPERMAN, Richard C. 5 Ave. de l'Opéra, Paris (OPE 27-40)  
BARNARD, Robert C. 40 Cours Albert 1er, Paris (BAL 86-80)  
BATTER, Carl Jr. 80 Place Vendôme, Paris (OPE 96-34)  
BECKLEY, Pendleton, 1 Place du Palais Bourbon, Paris (INV 11-51)  
BRIN, Lawrence E. 52 Ave. des Champs Elysées, Paris (BAL 44-74)  
BRODEUR, James, 10 Ave. de Messine, Paris (LAB 64-50)  
CAIRPHELL, Charles, Jr. 10 Place de la Concorde, Paris (ANJ 12-19)  
COMBER, Benjamin H. 5 Ave. de l'Opéra, Paris (OPE 27-40)  
CROGAN, Richard J. 1 Rue du Boccador, Paris (ELY 91-25)  
DAVIER, Paul 11 Rue Chasseloup-Laubat, Paris (SUT 75-64)  
DINES, Donald H. 80 Place Vendôme, Paris (OPE 96-34)  
KEINER, John P. 52 Ave. des Champs Elysées, Paris (ELY 10-31)  
KEITHS, John 11bis Ave. de Madrid, Neuilly (MAI 06-68)  
KEINER, Fred 52 Ave. des Champs Elysées, Paris (BAL 40-14)  
LONG, Malcolm E. 46 Rue du Faubourg St. Monré, Paris (ANJ 44-62)  
LANLEY, Robert H. 27bis Avenue Foch, Paris (COP 59-98)  
MILLER, Gething C. 80 Place Vendôme, Paris (OPE 96-34)  
MOORE, Richard H. 40 Cours Albert 1er, Paris (BAL 86-80)  
PETROFF, Oleg Peter 52 Ave. des Champs Elysées, Paris (BAL 40-14)  
PORTER, Russell H. 64bis Rue de Monceau, Paris (LAB 32-45)  
PORTER, Russell M. 64bis Rue de Monceau, Paris (LAB 32-45)  
PRESTON, William A. 25 Rue Taitbout, Paris (PRO 65-18)  
ROBINSON, John R. 52 Ave. des Champs Elysées, Paris (ELY 01-60)  
SCHWARTZ, Frank 52 Ave. des Champs Elysées, Paris (BAL 40-18)  
SHOUP, Max 52 Ave. des Champs Elysées, Paris (ELY 01-60)  
SPENCER, Richard 69 Quai d'Orsay, Paris (INV 96-45)  
SULLIVAN, Harold 52 Ave. des Champs Elysées, Paris (BAL 44-74)  
SZLAPKA, Stephen S. 32 Ave. de l'Opéra, Paris (OPE 35-67)  
TOREM, Charles 52 Ave. des Champs Elysées, Paris (ELY 01-60)  
WEBB, Thomas 52, Ave. des Champs Elysées, Paris (ELY 01-60)  
WINDELL, Alex H. Moulin de Bar par Pontchartreain, Seine et Oise  
tel: 14 Les Mousseaux

PATENT ATTORNEYS:

MICHAELIS, Karl 20 Ave. de Friedland, Paris (MAG 46-18)

PARIS

FRENCH LAWYERS

Me David LAMBERT, 55 avenue Marceau  
Me. Jean DAILLY, 44 AVENUE D'Iena  
Me L. SHIRMAN, 7 Rond-Point Mirabeau

\* 3 Ave. Bastille Albrecht (Mag. 2639)

## SERVICE DE RAVITAILLEMENT MARITIME

MAISON NORDMAN

FOURNISSEUR — SHIPCHANDLER

PAPEETE — TAHITI.

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES  
THE OCEANIC S.S. CO.  
MATSON NAVIGATION COMPANY  
H.M.N.Z. NAVY  
H.M.A. NAVY  
ETC.

Agent: PACIFIC ISLANDS MONTHLY

February 20th 1952

UNION STEAMSHIP COMPANY  
OF NEW ZEALAND LTD.  
UNITED STATES LINE  
H.M. NAVY  
UNITED STATES NAVY  
ETC.

Mr. David N. Ingman  
Attorney at Law  
Honolulu Hawaii

Dear Mr. Ingman

I want to thank you again for your letter of January 19, and the copy of Maitre Hoppenstedt letter to you.

Mr. Hoppenstedt may be right, thsi rogue of de Bisschop may have done some crooked work as the word is said all along Papeete waterfront.

I was down to the quay yerstday looking over the " CHENG Ho " and I was surprised to hear that she hasnt been on the dry-dock for over a year, and the man who chartered her is bleeding the ship.

Now I suggest that you inform the Cheng Ho Trading and Exploration Limited, that they should act quick and have the party here in charge of the vessel to put her in the slip, for scrapping and painting, and if the above Trading Company wants me to see that it is done, just sent me a wire to that effect.

I have great friends in the Harbor Service, and it is with them that I got the date of the " Cheng Ho's " last being on the dry dock February 17th 1951.

All ships in these waters should go on the slip every 6 months, though the Harbor Master says that the ship is built of TEAK, and that it stands better than ordinary wood, nevertheless she should go on the dry dock.

I want that when Mr. Degener takes the vessel she should be in ship shape and I am doing in his interest. The Harbor Master says that the " Cheng Ho " is rated as the best suitable vessel for these parts and she can carry more than 150 tons of copra.

So I am looking to see Mr. Degener in May, and let things go as it is until he arrives, and I do not suggest of changing the LAWYER, as to start a new one, will change verything, so let Maitre Hoppenstedt, remains in the deal until Mr. Degener arrives

Withe best wishes to you

*Oscar*  
Oscar G. Nordman

Very truly yours

ADRESSE TÉLÉGRAPHIQUE:

OCEANIC

PROVISIONS  
POUR NAVIRES

SERVICE DE RAVITAILLEMENT MARITIME

MAISON NORDMAN

FOURNISSEUR - SHIPCHANDLER

PAPEETE - TAHITI

CABLE ADDRESS

OCEANIC

SHIP'S SUPPLIES

February 20, 1952

Dear friend

I just been down to look over the old "Cheng Ho" just returned from the Pomotus islands, and as they just finished weighing the copra, I got the Customs officer to give me the weight of the copra, it amounted to 158 tons. a very good load.

Now I have two good friend in the Harbor Service - Monsieur G. Bailly, Port Captain, and Capt. Louis Carlson assistant and pilot - this is what I gathered from The latter.

The last time the "Cheng Ho" was on the dry-dock, was February 17<sup>th</sup> 1951 - that makes a year since she was on - a boat especially in these waters should not go more than 6 months, or she will be riddled



with worms -

I wish you notified this to the Cheng Ho Trading & Exploration Co and if not you may be disappointed.

But Captain Carlson, says that as she is built of teak, the worms will not go as much as if she was built of ordinary pine.

Now Captain Carlson, says that de B. have altered much of the interior of the vessel, adding her to carry more than hundred tons below.

That opening in the bow should be covered, as she takes much water from there, wetting much of the deck copra cargo -

As regards to her two engines, which were shifted aft, are good for another 3 years, but accessories and part are needed -

Captain Carlson, also says that she

Oscar Nordman

c/o New York Botanical Garden,  
Bronx Park, New York 58, New York.  
July 7, 1952.

Papeete, Tahiti  
March 1952.

Cheng Ho Trading & Exploring Company, Ltd.,  
Honolulu, Hawaii.

Dear Sirs:

According to the agreement signed between Otto Segener,  
individual, and the Cheng Ho Trading and Exploring Company, Ltd.,  
in Honolulu on July 7, 1947, relative to the option to re-pur-  
chase the junk-yacht "Cheng Ho" for \$ 15,000, the undersigned  
herewith gives notice of his wish to exercise this option. He is  
now ready to pay the \$15,000 for the "Cheng Ho" together with  
her engines, machinery, masts, boats, anchors, cables, tackle,  
furniture etc., as directed, and claim ownership. When this  
ownership transfer has been accomplished, he is prepared to ne-  
gotiate a contract with the Cheng Ho Trading and Exploring Com-  
pany, Ltd., relative to allowing the Company to charter the  
vessel ~~at a sum mutually satisfactory for a limited length of~~  
~~time.~~ *if satisfactory arrangements can be made.*

*You to the "illegal" damage to the*  
*Cheng Ho contrary to contract, the undersigned*  
*claims damages in excess of the \$15,000*  
*option price.* -----  
Very truly yours,

*Otto Segener*  
*Otto Segener*  
*per Oscar Nordman, agent*



Mal de Mer in Tahiti

(March 1952)

by  
Otto Degener

The once fabulous teak and camphor woods junk-yacht Cheug Ho, owned by Mrs. Anne Archbold of Washington, D. C., was used for two scientific expeditions. During the first, Mrs. Archbold, with Dr. & Mrs. Fairchild, as guests, combed the East Indies for plants of horticultural value for America. During the second, Mrs. Archbold, with a group of scientific workers, concentrated on purely biological and geographical studies in and about Fiji and neighboring archipelagoes. It was during this expedition that the writer collected good flowering and fruiting material of a new plant family of the Order Ranales.

With advent of the Second World War, Mrs. Archbold sold the Cheug Ho for \$1,000 to the United States Navy. Anchored in Pearl Harbor, this vessel was used for some time as a weather station. Regaining ownership shortly after the Armistice, Mrs. Archbold next sold the Cheug Ho to the writer.

Impossible for a man of ordinary means to run a 99 ft. long, sea-going vessel like the Cheug Ho, the new owner formed the Cheug Ho Trading & Exploring Company, incorporating in Honolulu. He next sold the Cheug Ho to this company for shares on condition he retain the right to sail at least once a year on the vessel with some fellow scientist to botanize interesting

South Sea Islands while the crew unloaded and loaded cargo. He also reserved the option to purchase his former vessel in the same good condition in which he had sold her (appraised value \$75,000) in July 1952 for \$15,000. Stockholders, besides the writer, were some of his former proteges who had botanized in the Fiji and Hawaiian Islands with him as plant labels in many museums attest; a few local carpenters, fishermen and mechanics; and a former French Consul. This last suave gentleman — with the freedom of the city at his command — was not only a skilled navigator but a skilled schemer as well. None of his companions knew that he was subject to deportation from the United States as an undesirable alien.

The *Cheng Ho* was finally readied, and our Capt. commissioned to set sail with a mixed cargo, including \$10,000 worth of sugar, for Tahiti. He was to sell these American commodities there, returning within six weeks with a cargo of French wares. Instead of returning in six weeks, he returned to Honolulu after eight months, penniless and with but two tons of vanilla beans, then a drug on the market, and a pet pig named "Otto." He had squandered the company's resources, even to the extent of selling launch and equipment, on wine, women and song. Due

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to his piratical mismanagement, a new appraisal by an expert showed the Chey Ho to be worth but \$60,000, a loss of \$15,000 in eight months! In Federal and Territorial Courts during the rash of trials that followed, it was established that the vessel had been registered in the captain's name in Tahiti "instead of that of The Co.," and that this "was due to a clerical error in the office of the Governor of Tahiti."

After the courtroom smoke had cleared, we find that gullible ~~Polynesian~~ relatives of the captain, ~~then current wife~~ Captain had bought up most of our shares, that we had accepted an I. O. U. for \$3,000, and that the winter had reaffirmed his option to purchase the Chey Ho for \$15,000 in July 1952 in the same good condition in which he had sold her. Then the undesirable captain, ordered a second time to be deported; and the friendly grunting "Otto," never permitted to root in Hawaiian soil, sailed from American waters for Tahiti. This transpired four or five years ago.

Failing to receive either principal or interest on the \$3,000 loan, we Americans engaged an attorney in Papeete to represent us. We paid him, as requested, \$100 to translate Chey Ho documents from English into French to facilitate their use in the Papeete Court where our French attorney was to plead for us. Then we paid him, as desired, an additional \$50 for

Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation



some seemingly good reason. With that last payment,  
replies from Papete to our anxious enquiries be-  
came conspicuous by their absence. After about a  
year's frustrating wait, we learned our \$150 had been  
paid in vain.

Wishing to see to the collection of the \$3,000 debt  
personally in Tahiti and to take over the Cheug  
Ho according to contract to use as a cargo vessel  
and botanical headquarters for the collection of  
the fast vanishing native flora of the South Seas,  
the winter wrote for visas to Tonga, New Cale-  
donia and Tahiti.

The Queen of the independent Kingdom of Tonga  
now will allow him to reside in her realm for  
six months. The French Governor of New Caledonia,  
where the winter owns no assets, will allow him  
to reside in his islands for one year. But the  
Governor of Tahiti, in whose office "by a  
clerical error," a former French Consul fraudu-  
lently registered the Cheug Ho as his own  
property, has denied the winter a visa to  
visit his islands! By such a conspiracy, he  
very ~~very~~ effectively sabotages the winter from  
collecting for himself and other American citizens  
a \$3,000 debt, and abets and perpetuates a  
swindle begun by a twice deported French  
ex-consul.

Because of the rapacious interest shown

in the future ownership of the Cheug Ho apparently<sup>5</sup>  
by a French ex-counsel, by a <sup>French</sup> clerk in the Office  
of the Governor of Tahiti, by a French Privy Councilor,  
and a French passport official, the writer is re-  
questing \$60,000 from the French Government.

Whether the writer can continue to flood  
your botanical institutions with herbarium  
specimens of living plant fossils from the South  
Seas depends on the outcome of L'affaire Cheug  
Ho.

Dear Sir:

I owned the junk-yacht Cheung Ho and sold her to the Cheung Ho Trading & Exploring Co., now apparently owned mostly or in part by the former Vichy-French Consul Eric de Bisschop, on condition I have the option to purchase her in July 1952 in the same good condition (appraised as worth \$75,000) in which I surrendered her.

It has been apparent for some time that a conspiracy has prevailed to swindle me out of my rights, such as the registration of the ship in Tahiti <sup>in the office of the Governor</sup> in Capt. Eric de Bisschop's name instead of that of the rightful owners, the Cheung Ho Trading & Exploring Co., at the time consisting of a number of American citizens in addition to Capt de Bisschop and 2.) denying me entry to Tahiti where many of my assets, coveted by others, exist.

As it is by your advice, according to the French Consul in San Francisco that I am prevented ~~from~~ <sup>from</sup> visiting Tahiti to protect my assets, I must inform you that I ~~must~~ hold you person





Copy sent to ~~Harvard~~ American Inst. Biol. Sciences, Taram

Mal de Mer in Tahiti  
(April 1932)

by  
Otto Degener

(Submitted for publication to "The American Institute of Biological Sciences"  
east)

The once fabulous teak and campher woods junk-yacht *Chang Ho*, owned by Mrs. Anne Archbold of Washington, D. C., was used for two scientific expeditions. During the first, Mrs. Archbold, with Dr. and Mrs. David Fairchild as guests, combed the East Indies for plants of horticultural value for America. During the second, Mrs. Archbold, with a group of scientific workers, concentrated on purely biological and geographical studies in and about Fiji and neighboring archipelagoes. It was during this expedition that the writer collected good flowering and fruiting material of a new plant family of the Order Ranales.

With advent of the Second World War, Mrs. Archbold sold the *Chang Ho* for \$1.00 to the United States Navy. Anchored in Pearl Harbor, this vessel was used for some time as a weather station. Regaining ownership shortly after the Armistice, Mrs. Archbold next sold the *Chang Ho* to the writer.

Impossible for a man of ordinary means to run a 99 ft., sea-going vessel like the *Chang Ho*, the new owner formed the *Chang Ho Trading & Exploring Co.*, incorporating in Honolulu. He next sold the *Chang Ho* to this company for shares on condition he retain the right to sail at least once a year on the vessel with some fellow scientist to botanize interesting South Sea Islands while the crew unloaded and loaded cargo. He also reserved the option to purchase his former vessel in the same good condition in which he had sold her (appraisal value \$75,000) in July 1932 for \$15,000. Stockholders, besides the writer, were some of his former proteges who had botanized in the Fiji and Hawaiian Islands with him as plant labels in many museums attest; a few local carpenters, fishermen and mechanics; and a former French Consul. This last suave gentleman was not only a skilled navigator but a skilled schemer as well. Some of his companions knew that he - with the freedom of the city at his command - was subject to deportation from the United States as an undesirable alien.

The *Chang Ho* was finally readied, and our Captain ~~John~~, the ex-consul, commissioned to set sail with a mixed cargo, including \$10,000 worth of sugar, for Tahiti. He was to sell these American commodities there, returning within six weeks with a cargo of French wares. Instead of returning in six weeks, he returned to Honolulu after eight months, penniless and with but two tons of vanilla beans, then a drag on the market, and a pet pig named "Otto." He had squandered the company's resources, even to the extent of selling launch and equipment, on wine, women and song. Due to his piratical mismanagement, a new appraisal by



an expert showed the Cheng Ho to be worth but \$60,000, a loss of \$15,000 in eight months! In Federal and Territorial Courts during the rash of trials that followed, it was established that the vessel had been registered in the captain's name in Tahiti "instead of that of the Co.", and that this "was due to a clerical error in the office of the Governor of Tahiti."

After the courtroom smoke had cleared, we find that gullible relatives of the captain had bought up most of our shares, that we had accepted an I.O.U., for \$3,000, and that the writer had reaffirmed his option to purchase the Cheng Ho for \$15,000 in July 1938 in the same good condition in which he had sold her. Then the undesirable captain, ordered a second time to be deported; and the friendly grunting "Ottop," never permitted to root in Hawaiian soil, sailed from American waters in the Cheng Ho for Tahiti. This transpired four or five years ago.

Failing to receive either principal or interest on the \$3,000 loan, we Americans engaged an attorney in Papeete to represent us. We paid him, as requested, \$100 to translate Cheng Ho documents from English into French to facilitate their use in the Papeete Court where our French attorney was to plead for us. Then we paid him as desired, and additional \$50, for some seemingly good reason. With that last payment, replies from Papeete to our anxious enquiries became conspicuous by their absence. After about a year's frustrating wait, we woke up to the fact that our \$150 had been paid in vain.

Wishing to see to the collection of the \$3,000 debt personally in Tahiti and to take over the Cheng Ho according to contract to use as a cargo vessel and botanical headquarters for the collection of the fast vanishing native flora of the South Seas, the writer wrote for visas to Tonga, New Caledonia and Tahiti.

The Queen of the Independent Kingdom of Tonga now will allow him to reside in her realm for six months. The French Governor of New Caledonia, where the writer owns no assets, will allow him to reside in his islands for one year. But the Governor of Tahiti, in whose office "by a clerical error," a former French Consul registered by "error" or fraud the Cheng Ho as his own property, has denied the writer a visa to visit his island! By such act he very effectively antagonizes the writer from collecting for himself and other American citizens a \$3,000 debt, and abets a swindle begun by a twice-deported French ex-consul.

#### *Involved in the Cheng Ho*

Because of the repulsive interest shown in the future ownership of the Cheng Ho apparently by a French ex-consul, by a French clerk in the office of the Governor of Tahiti, by a French Privy Councillor and French passport official, the writer is requesting \$50,000 from the French Government.

Whether the writer can continue to flood your botanical institutions with herbarium specimens of living plant fossils from the South Seas depends on the outcome of l' affaire Cheng Ho.

Mal de Mer in Tahiti

(March 1952)

by  
Otto Degener

The once fabulous teak and camphor woods junk-yacht Chey Ho, owned by Mrs. Anne Archbold of Washington, D.C., was used for two scientific expeditions. During the first, Mrs. Archbold, with Dr. & Mrs. Fairchild as guests, combed the East Indies for plants of horticultural value for America. During the second, Mrs. Archbold, with a group of scientific workers, concentrated on biological and geographical studies in and about Fiji and neighboring archipelagos. It was during this expedition that the writer collected good flowering and fruiting material of a new plant family of the Order Ranales.

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besides the writer, were some of his former proteges who had botanized in the Fiji and Hawaiian Islands with him as plant labels in many museums attest; a few local fishermen, carpenters and mechanics; and a former French Consul. This last suave gentleman - with the freedom of the city at his command - was not only a skilled navigator but a skilled schemer as well. None of ~~his~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~companions~~ <sup>companions</sup> knew that at the time ~~they~~ <sup>they</sup> elected him Captain of ~~their~~ <sup>their</sup> vessel he was subject to deportation from the United States as an undesirable alien.

The Cheep Ho was finally readied, and our Captain commissioned to set sail with a mixed cargo, including \$10,000 worth of sugar, for Tahiti. He was to sell these American Commodities there, returning within six weeks with a cargo of French wares. Instead of returning in six weeks, he returned to Honolulu <sup>after eight months</sup> penniless and with but two tons of vanilla beans, then a drop on the market, and a pet pig named "Otto". He had squandered the company's resources, even to the extent of selling launch and equipment, on wine, women and song. Due to his piratical mismanagement, a new appraisal by an expert showed the Cheep Ho to be worth but \$60,000, a loss of \$15,000 in eight months! In <sup>that</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>trials</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>that followed</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>that followed</sup> Federal and Territorial Courts <sup>which had been</sup> ~~during~~ <sup>was established</sup> that the <sup>registration</sup> ~~signature~~ of the ship in Tahiti in the Captain's name "instead of that of the Co." <sup>and that this</sup> "was due to a clerical error in the office of the Governor of Tahiti."

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the writer owns no assets, will allow him to  
reside in his islands for one year. But the  
Governor of Tahiti, in whose office "by a clerical  
error," a former French Consul fraudulently re-  
gistered the Cheung Ho as his own property, has  
denied the writer a visa to visit his islands!  
By such a conspiracy, he very effectively  
sabotages the writer from collecting for  
himself and other American citizens a \$3,000  
debt, and abets and perpetuates a swindle  
begun by a twice deported French ex-consul.

Whether the writer can continue to flood  
your botanical institutions with herbarium  
specimens of living plant fossils depends  
on the outcome of l'affaire Cheung Ho.

CONSULAT GÉNÉRAL DE FRANCE  
A SAN FRANCISCO

740 TAYLOR STREET  
TÉLÉPHONE TUXEDO 5-0771

PRIMER DE RAPPELER LE NUMERO  
IN REPLYING REFER TO NUMBER

A 111/A 36 - 654

March 1, 1952

Mr. Otto DEGENER  
P.O. Box 187  
Wai'alua  
Oahu,  
T.H.

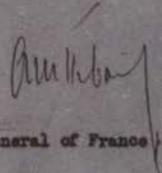
Dear Sir:

I regret to inform you that your visa for Tahiti  
has not been granted.

I am in possession of your money-order of \$ 5,00  
which covers for \$ 2,50 the air-mail postage to New Caledonia  
and Tahiti. Kindly let me have the sum of \$ 8,00 representing  
the difference to cover the fee of your visa to New Caledonia.

As soon as I receive the said amount, I will be glad  
to send you back your passport properly visaed.

Truly yours,

  
The Consul General of France

gJ

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À SAN FRANCISCO

740 TAYLOR STREET  
TÉLÉPHONE TUXEDO 5-0771

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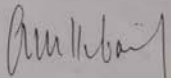
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to send you back your passport properly visaed.

Truly yours,



The Consul General of France



Mailing address: Waialua, Oahu,  
T. Hawaii, U.S.A.  
March 3, 1952.

Dear Oscar:

I hatainized in Kohala, with pack mules, Islands of Hawaii — where I received your letter of Feb. 5 & 6 — and then on little Lanai. Now I am on Maui, and shall answer you. Your discouraging remark about the \$15,000 delayed my writing you until now. \$15,000 is a huge sum for a retired school teacher like me.

I see no purpose in my going to Tahiti at the loss of \$15,000 and instead will probably go to Tonga. If you and possibly Mr. Calamy lack funds to start a new Cheng Ho Company with me, the situation is hopeless. It is best for me to sell my option direct to Mrs. de Bisschop here in Honolulu for American dollars (which I can spend right here) or for a higher sum to the Chinese charterers for French Colonial Francs which will be more difficult for me to spend.

As I see it, the Cheng Ho is worth \$75,000 (or after de B's neglect) at least \$50,000. He, of course, by contract must make good this neglect but as he is probably bankrupt to force \$25,000 payment would be difficult. It may be possible, however, to sue him for the \$3,000 he owes me <sup>and to sue him more</sup> for Cheng Ho repairs so that the \$15,000 option price is canceled. Only a lawyer, like Mr. Calamy, could advise on this.

In other words, I have assets of at least \$50,000 in the Cheng Ho which I can recapture in July 1952 for \$15,000. I am ready to start with you alone or with you and Mr. Calamy a new company if:

1. You and Mr. Calamy or you alone can agree giving me 50% of the shares of the new Cheng Ho company and pay the \$15,000 in American money or,
2. You and Mr. Calamy or you alone give me 50% of the shares and \$30,000 worth of French colonial francs (which are very difficult and inconvenient for me to spend) — I have permission to visit New Caledonia but not yet Tahiti. Capt. de B., due to his friendship for the late Marshall Pabian, will undoubtedly be influential in trying to keep me out of French Territory).



It is so dangerous for me to sell income-producing real estate for \$15,000 and for that receive French francs that I cannot use except by living as a stranger in a strange land, where deB. will constantly try to stir up trouble for me. I have no idea how much the Chinese charterers would pay yearly for the Cheung Ho, nor whether in case of shipwreck the vessel is insured. How then can I invest a sure \$15,000 for an insecure unknown income in French money that I cannot use in the U. S. A.?

I shall wait before offering my opinion to Mrs. deB., until I hear from you. I shall also make no reservations for Tahiti. Have you been to Tonga? I hear little botanizing has been done there. I should discover many new plants.

Aloha nui,

Att

Do you know my friend Edouard Toomaru? Should I come to Tahiti, I should like to visit with him for a week or two before I rent a house <sup>He has invited me.</sup> for myself. I like to rent a house for a month in one place and collect all the plants in the neighborhood. Then I like to rent a house in a different place and collect all the plants that grow there. I would not find so many interesting plants if I remained in one place too long.

## SERVICE DE RAVITAILLEMENT MARITIME

MAISON NORDMAN

FOURNISSEUR — SHIPCHANDLER

PAPEETE — TAHITI.

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES  
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H.M.N.Z. NAVY  
H.M.A. NAVY  
ETC.

Agent: PACIFIC ISLANDS MONTHLY

UNION STEAMSHIP COMPANY  
OF NEW ZEALAND LTD.  
UNITED STATES LINE  
H.M. NAVY  
UNITED STATES NAVY  
ETC.

March 4th 1952

Mr. Otto Degener  
Mokuleia Beach  
Waialua Oahu  
Territory of Hawaii

Dear Friend

I have been going everyday to the drydock to see the work that the carpenters are doing on the " Cheng Ho ". The first day that she reached the drydock, I noticed that a damage was done to her bow under the watermark, and I began to make enquiries, and found out that she went on the reef in the month of december, and also the false keel was severely damaged to the and up to middle false keel.

With the aid of Capt. Louis Carlson, of the Harbor Service, the charterer was forced to make all the necessary repairs, and they were refused to put her into the water unless these commands were executed.

As the plane is leaving tomorrow, I wanted to tell you all about the " Cheng Ho " and she is still on the drydock, and will be there until the 8th of March, making a total of about 20 days drydocking.

M.de Bishop really bled the vessel, I found several places on the hull badly eating by worms, and this is all due that the vessel was in the water little over a year without going on the drydock.

Now there are several patches on the hull, were holes are made by the tarredoes or worms, the hull is now copper painted and still the people here in Tahiti claims that she is the best ship in Tahiti.

I had a long talk with the mechanics that are doing the repairing of the engines and they say, that the ship should have two new 150 H.P. each HEAVY DUTY ATLAS ENGINES to replace the ones that are now on.

With these two new ones, the merchants here will grab and charter the vessel at a good rental, and these are also my opinion.

When the vessel is ready for operation, we will ask for bid, and no doubt she will bring a good profitable rent money, and I will see that whoever gives the most will get the " CHENG HO ".

Will write again, with best wishes

Very Sincerely

Oscar G. Nordman

*COPY*

*Rec'd from  
Nordman*

*3/12/52*

*by air mail*

*The letter is transmitted*

## SERVICE DE RAVITAILLEMENT MARITIME

MAISON NORDMAN

FOURNISSEUR — SHIPCHANDLER

PAPEETE — TAHITI

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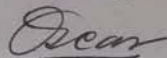
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Agent: PACIFIC ISLANDS MONTHLY

March 5th 1952

UNION STEAMSHIP COMPANY  
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UNITED STATES LINE  
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UNITED STATES NAVY  
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Mr. Otto Degener  
Mokuleia Beach  
Waialua Oahu T.H.

Dear friend

Now that I have told you about the " CHENG HO " being drydocked and that in a few days she will put back in the water.

I had a long talk with Mr. Calamy, regarding your affair, and all he says that the " Cheng Ho Trading and Exploration Company owes him 3000 dollars.

My idea is that in my opinion not to have too much associates in the deal, and I think the less the better, and to eliminate even Mr. Calamy.

You Mr. Degener, you have the money, and we have not especially dollars, in order to retain french registry, the Law says that 51% have to be french owners and 49% foreign, so my name alone will be sufficient for french 51% ownership.

So we will have to talk things over when you arrive in Papeete, and I want you to own the vessel, or else when you take the vessel over in July, in Honolulu you can have the money put in escrow, until all claims against the ship are cleared, and if it could be done you can put the vessel under yours and my name.

I want to help you getting the vessel, as Mr. Calamy says we have to be careful, that if you refuse to take the vessel over for \$15000, others may offer more, as they all says here in Papeete, she is worth more than the above price.

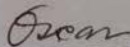
Use your own conscience and judgment in deciding how you will have me interested in the vessel, I will do anything within the LAW to help you, and I would also like to be owner I say part owner of the " Ceng Ho ".

It is very amusing to know how people can talk about others, but in case the Governor refuses you permission to enter Tahiti, I would like you to refer the matter to the GOVERNOR of HAWAII, and the MAYOR of HONOLULU, Hon. Mr. WILSON.

Lets wait the Governor may reverse the decision, but nevertheless, it wont hurt you, all you will have to do is to send the Option and all documents pertaining to your ownership of the " CHENG HO ".

With best wishes

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Oscar G. Nordman



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March 5th 1952

Mr. Otto Degener  
Mokuleia Beach  
Waialua Oahu T.H.

Dear friend

Few days after I delivered your letter to the Governor, asking to be admitted to Tahiti, I went to see the Chef des Affaires Politiques what has been considered Mr. Otto Degener's demand, and this is what he told me?

We have a very bad reports about Mr. Degener, and we are considering his case.

So I answered him " Who told you all this ? probably his enemies, and what about Capt. de Bisschop, I said to him, I have reports that he<sup>is</sup> expelled from American shores, and that he is classed an undesirable.

Then he asked me to put all this in writing, and tell him all I know about Mr. Degener.

In my letter I said " REFUSING ADMISSION TO Mr DEGENER TO ENTER TAHITI, MAY CAUSE SOME SHAKE UP, AND THEY WILL HAVE TO PROVE THAT THE REPORTS ABOUT M. OTTO DEGENER ARE FALSE.... THAT I, WILL OSCAR G. NORDMAN WILL VOUCH FOR Mr. OTTO DEGENER, FURTHER MORE THAT OSCAR G. NORDMAN WILL GARANTY FOR MR. OTTO DEGENER'S STAY WHILE IN TAHITI.

I also stated in my letter that Mr. Degener is coming to Tahiti in the interest of SCIENCE, and is a notable BOTANIST, connected with several Museums, notably the Bishop Museum of Hawaii.

In our conversation, he talked about the " CHENG HO " so in my letter I remarked that the " Cheng Ho's " affairs are in the hands of the Lawyer, Mr. Hoppenstedt, and that Oscar G. Nordman, has been appointed and given Power of Attorney.

This morning, eve of the plane's departure, I wrote another<sup>x</sup> to Mr. ZIEGLER, asking if the Governor has considered Mr. Otto Degener's case, and to now i have no answer.

As soon as I get a report, I will write or wire.  
Again I wish you the best

Very sincerely

Oscar G. Nordman

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3/12/52 by air mail  
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*COPY*  
*\* LETTER*

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H.M.N.Z. NAVY  
H.M.A. NAVY  
ETC.

Agent: PACIFIC ISLANDS MONTHLY

March 5th 1952

UNION STEAMSHIP COMPANY  
OF NEW ZEALAND LTD.  
UNITED STATES LINE  
H.M. NAVY  
UNITED STATES NAVY  
ETC.

Mr. Otto Degener  
Mokuleia Beach  
Waialua Oahu T.H.

Dear friend

Few days after I delivered your letter to the Governor, asking to be admitted to Tahiti, I went to see the Chef des Affaires Politiques what has been considered Mr. Otto Degener's demand, and this is what he told me?

We have a very bad reports about Mr. Degener, and we are considering his case.

So I answered him " Who told you all this ? probably his enemies, and what about Capt. de Bisschop, I said to him, I have reports that he expelled from American shores, and that he is classed an undesirable.

Then he asked me to put all this in writing, and tell him all I know about Mr. Degener.

In my letter I said " REFUSING ADMISSION TO Mr DEGENER TO ENTER TAHITI, MAY CAUSE SOME SHAKE UP, AND THEY WILL HAVE TO PROVE THAT THE REPORTS ABOUT M. OTTO DEGENER ARE FALSE.... THAT I WILL OSCAR G. NORDMAN WILL VOUCH FOR Mr. OTTO DEGENER, FURTHER MORE THAT OSCAR G. NORDMAN WILL GARANTY FOR MR. OTTO DEGENER'S STAY WHILE IN TAHITI.

I also stated in my letter that Mr. Degener is coming to Tahiti in the interest of SCIENCE, and is a notable BOTANIST, connected with several Museums, notably the Bishop Museum of Hawaii.

In our conversation, he talked about the " CHENG HO " so in my letter I remarked that the " Cheng Ho's " affairs are in the hands of the Lawyer, Mr. Hoppenstedt, and that Oscar G. Nordman, has been appointed and given Power of Attorney.

x This morning, eve of the plane's departure, I wrote another to Mr. ZIEGLER, asking if the Governor has considered Mr. Otto Degener's case, and to now I have no answer.

As soon as I get a report, I will write or wire.  
Again I wish you the best

Very sincerely  
*Oscar G. Nordman*  
Oscar G. Nordman

x letter



## SERVICE DE RAVITAILLEMENT MARITIME

MAISON NORDMAN  
FOURNISSEUR — SHIPCHANDLER  
PAPEETE — TAHITI.

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES  
THE OCEANIC S.S. CO.  
MATSON NAVIGATION COMPANY  
H.M.N.Z. NAVY  
H.M.A. NAVY  
ETC.

Agent: PACIFIC ISLANDS MONTHLY

UNION STEAMSHIP COMPANY  
OF NEW ZEALAND LTD.  
UNITED STATES LINE  
H.M. NAVY  
UNITED STATES NAVY  
ETC.

March 5, 1952

Dear Mr. Degener

at the last moment I received a phone call from the Chef des Affaires Economiques informing that the Governor will not make a decision for your admission to Tahiti; and that you should apply to the French Consul at San Francisco exposing your situation, with the promise that you are not coming to Tahiti for the "Cheng Ho" affair, also that the Bishop Museum of Hawaii, says that your visit is for their interest, or any institution that is interested, and while in Tahiti you must keep out interfering in connection with the "Cheng Ho".

after he done the talking, I said this to him - I am to interfere in the "Cheng Ho's" affairs, whether Mr. Degener comes to Tahiti or not, you can rest assured that I am going to take M. Degener's place.

2/ Mr. Degener, do as he says - write to the French Consul for a permit to enter Tahiti at least a 3 months stay and when you arrive in Papeete, we will go over matters.

Then if the French Consul object of your coming to Tahiti, get the Governor of Hawaii and the Mayor of Honolulu take the matter up.

One thing I suggest is that I come to Honolulu, and meet you and to talk things over, that you pass me the option and arrange everything with the "Cheng Ho Trading & Exploration Company" I will tell them what I know of the ship "Cheng Ho" and the way de Bisschop bled the vessel - she was on the reef in December.

Think well over what I have said above, it may be well that I come to Honolulu instead of you coming to Tahiti.

My opinion that the Governor is surrounded by persons connected with the "Cheng Ho" chartered party, and influenced him not to allow you to come to Tahiti and that's why he has asked for you to refer to the Consul - The Consul will no

Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation



3 I doubt gives you permission to come to Tahiti, and with this the Governor is out of it.

I do not like the way they are acting towards you - A man is innocent until he is proved guilty - in this case it seems you are condemned on lies, and gossip -

I am ready to go ahead and fight: and tomorrow I am going to see Mr Hoppenstedt, and what he has to say - If I have to take this affair into court, I may choose as counsel, a smart Lawyer, Maître VITRY - That is to say if Maître Hoppenstedt doesn't act fair.

The charter party of the "Cheng Ho" is a Monsieur Gallais, who is a member of the Privy Council, and a friend of the Governor, and he must have influenced the Governor against you.

I am not afraid of any of them when I get the documents in hand, I will ask Justice.

Hoping to hear from you soon.

Very Faithfully yours

Dear



Gen. D. I., Makawao, Maui.  
March 6, 1952.

(Registered Mail)

Dear Dave:

I suspect Hoppenstedt to be a bit on the Barry Levinson order. I enclose his letter for you to read. Oscar Nordman writes he likewise has no faith in Hoppenstedt. I ~~but~~ he never translated the documents from English into French and is just stalling.

Also, I received my visa for New Caledonia but no permit to visit Tahiti as yet. I should not be surprised if de Bisschop & perhaps even H. is blocking it.

So that Nordman, who has my power of attorney can act, I am taking the liberty of officially terminating your services as of March 10. Naturally I shall run for advice to you whenever any developments came up. I also understand, of course, that the \$3,000 Chey Ho debt is being handled on the contingency basis and that if we win, your fee is one-third of that as per agreement.

I just cabled the following to Tahiti:

"H. Hoppenstedt, Papeete, Tahiti: Letter received re terminating lawyer Dugman services March 10 and instruct you turn all Chey Ho papers and translations to Oscar Nordman for study that date.

Otto Degener"

The other cable is:

"Oscar Nordman, Papeete, Tahiti: Cabled Hoppenstedt turn all vessel papers and translations to you March 10 for study.

Degener"

Now what <sup>immediately</sup> wish you to do is to send Hop-  
penstedt a night letter <sup>to the effect</sup> that you are  
withdrawing from the case March 10 and wish  
all letters papers surrendered to Oscar Nordman  
as your successor.

Nordman, the only "friend" we have in Tahiti  
against deBisschop is being hamstrung by this  
Tahitian schyster.

Please air mail the Constable information  
to Hoppenstedt in a letter dated March 10 or  
previously.

I had a grand time on Hawaii, driving  
by jeep to almost the summit of Mauna  
Kea. Then I toured part of the Kohala  
ditch trail by mule. I also visited ~~Tahiti~~  
Kauai. Now I am resting at a friend's  
on Maui. My next island will be  
Molokai. I will be in Honolulu when  
my French visa for Tahiti arrives, and  
then finish up my last testament  
and other odds & ends with you.

Aloha,

Otto



Gen. Del.,  
Makawao, Maui, T.H.  
March 7, 1958?

Dear Sir:

(A 111/A 56-637)

Your letter of March 1<sup>st</sup> was forwarded to me here in Makawao, Maui, where I am botanizing.

~~Not granting me a visa to Tahiti~~

Of course every Nation has the perfect right to refuse entry of any person into their Territory. But for you to refuse me entry into Tahiti means that considerable lies have been spread about me in Tahiti. You will forgive me, therefore, that I shall refute them and clear my good name. I shall not do it ~~until~~ <sup>until</sup> I receive ~~various documents~~ <sup>various documents</sup> from Honolulu, <sup>proving</sup> my statements.

The documents from Honolulu I ~~plan to~~ <sup>should</sup> submit to wish to submit to your Ambassador in Washington. <sup>May</sup> I do so direct or through your ~~intermediate~~ <sup>consulate</sup> <sup>or through my State Department</sup> <sup>to speed results by July 1<sup>st</sup></sup> I shall give you a preliminary glimpse of my situation.

1. I am a botanist and as such ~~sailed~~ <sup>sailed</sup> in the South Seas <sup>in 1940-41</sup> with a scientific party under the leadership of Mrs. Anne McBride



2. With declaration of War, the Cheep Ho was  
taken over by the Navy as <sup>Gen. Del.</sup> Makawao, Maui  
a weather observation vessel.  
March 7, 1952.

3. After the War, Mrs. Anshold enabled me to  
purchase the ~~for~~ her 100 ft long Cheep Ho  
Dear Sirs: to help in botanical exploration.

I am ~~presently~~ living on Maui,

4. Not able to finance expeditions independently  
and not being a seaman, I was talked into  
starting the "Cheep Ho Trading & Exploring"  
by the Frenchman Capt. Eric de Bisschop. The company was  
to engage in trading, & to explore on the various islands during  
5. A major stock holder ~~was~~ was the  
very fine seaman but absolutely unscrupulous  
Eric de Bisschop - ~~later~~ I learned  
later he had been French Consul for the  
Collaborators in Honolulu, had engaged  
in disapproved actions, and ~~had~~ ~~been~~ ~~deported~~ was being deported to the  
islands as an undesirable alien.

I retained the option to purchase the  
6. Cheep Ho in July 1952 for \$15,000 on the  
same condition in which I had turned  
her over to the company.  
7. Capt. de/B. in Tahiti registered the Cheep Ho  
as his property, not the property of our  
Company!

8. We stock holders had one lawsuit after  
another against Capt. de Bisschop, in Honolulu, the  
captain closing everyone. The captain  
~~was~~ was again deported.

9. Capt de/B. presumably is fooling the officials  
in Tahiti concerning me in my attempt

~~French~~

~~Who is to give~~

Tahiti citizens who can give you confidential knowledge about Capt Eric de Bisschop's moral worth are ~~the~~ Monsieur J. Bailly, Port Captain, and Capt Louis Carlson, assistant and Pilot, Papeete; and Mr. Oscar Nordman, ~~not~~ fournisseur, Papeete; also your former Consul <sup>d.o</sup> Prof. A. Pecker, University of Hawaii.





Will the next <sup>new</sup> ~~new~~ paper article in American  
newspapers read: ~~Botanist Degener swindled~~  
~~Degener, botanist and~~ ~~former~~ one-time owner of fabulous  
Cheong Ho, "Botanist Degener, swindled by French  
Consul" etc., etc.

or "Otto Degener, Botanist & writer, to explore  
South Seas on his fabulous junk-gacht  
Cheong Ho, with ~~that of the~~ aid of the  
French Government's aid." It is for you or  
your Ambassador, to decide

# RADIOGRAM

INTER ISLAND

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Send the following message, subject to the terms on the other side, which are hereby agreed to:

OFFICE OF ORIGIN MAKAWAO MAUI

DOUBLE RUSH ( )

DAY MESSAGE ( ) NIGHT LETTER ( ) SHIP ( )

DATE MARCH 10 1952

NO.

FILED

CHECK 25

TOLT OCEANIC  
PAPEETE TAHITI

CONFIRMATION COPY

ADVISE YOU REMAIN TAHITI MY AGENT I PLAN REQUESTING FRENCH AMBASSADOR  
WASHINGTON INVESTIGATE CHENGHO SWINDLE BY TWICE DEPORTED FORMER  
FRENCH CONSUL

DEGENER

CHGE PAIA 7W705/ANTHONY TAM/DEGENER/BN

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OPPENSTEDT  
VOGAT - DÉFENSEUR  
BOITE POSTALE : 517  
PAPEETE - TAHITI  
OCEANIE FRANÇAISE

PAPEETE, LE 11 Mars 1952

Mr.

Otto DEGENER

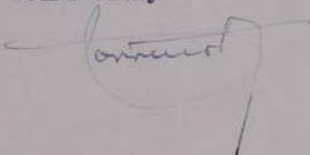
Mokuleia Beach

VAIATUA - OAHU T. H.

Dear Mr. Degener,

I beg to inform you that following your wireless of  
6 th. inst. I have transmitted to Mr. O. Nordman for study  
documents I have in hands.

Yours truly



M. Hanning:  
This is Oppenstedt's  
reply to my asking  
the collection of the debt  
out of his hands and having  
Nordman act as my agent.  
I placed the collection in  
Marcif Degener's hands -  
of course Degener & Nordman  
are still interested as well.  
A.D.  
Please return  
same day



Dear Oscar:

March 11, 1952

I have your telegram asking whether it would be wise for you to come to Honolulu. I doubt it very much, as you are needed right on the spot in Papeete.

The letter from the Consul (No. A 111/A 56-634 of March 11, 1952, 740, Taylor St., San Francisco, Calif.) reads in part: "I regret to inform you that your visa for Tahiti has not been granted."

You must guard against de B. selling the *Cheng Ho* to some unsuspecting buyer who does not know about my option. Should you not print an advertisement in the Tahiti newspaper that Otto Degener owns the option to purchase the *Cheng Ho* in July 1952, and desires correspondence with interested parties? Then give your address for the advertisement and a my agent open the letters & read the contents. By saying that I wish to contact interested parties, it will not appear as though I placed the advertisement because of disagreement with de B.

There is danger of de B. fixing up the *Cheng Ho* (for example, as you say she is in dry dock) and sailing her away to China or Russia to sell. He is entirely unscrupulous, as you know.

Are you sure that \$15,000 in American money must be paid de B.? Cannot ~~he~~ Frank Colonial ~~frank~~ <sup>frank</sup> be paid him? Is it not perhaps even illegal to pay him in American money? Only you, in Tahiti, can answer that.

~~Because of the danger~~  
~~no more friends have regarding the Cheng Ho~~  
~~the matter. With any luck~~

I believe we should get in touch with the head <sup>of the</sup> Chinese ~~and~~ company that is now charter-  
ing the Cheng Ho and tell them the entire story. Then  
we should offer them a 10% (or ~~at least~~ whatever  
you think wisest) reduction in charter price  
if they will agree to furnish the \$15,000 American  
dollars, we signing a contract with them for 5 or 10  
years. Thus we will know from inside on the  
spot if deBisschop plans any tricks with the  
Cheng Ho.

We two also should draw up partnership agree-  
ments, you receiving 51% shares and I 49%,  
~~the Cheng Ho etc., etc.~~

I ~~have written~~ <sup>yesterday</sup> the French Consul regarding  
denial of visa, ~~and~~ explaining how deB. <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~  
attempt to keep me out of Tahiti. ~~The Consul~~  
did grant me a visa for New Caledonia.

Did you finally get all the papers from  
Hoppenstedt? Please, remember, you are boss  
since March 10. Did H. ever translate the  
documents from English to Hawaiian for  
which I paid him about \$150?

Aloha

Now what I wish you to do is to send  
Hoppenstedt a night letter to the effect that you  
are withdrawing from the case and that mortgage  
information

Gen. Del.  
Honolulu, Hawaii  
U.S.A.  
March 12, 1952.

Dear Mr. Hoffmann:

I rushed your letter to attorney Sugman with my instructions that his services in the Cheung Ho fiasco - ~~but not~~ in other matters - were to terminate March 10. He is to return your letter to me but as it has not yet arrived from the island of Oahu to me here on the island of Hawaii, I am assuming you more or less from memory.

As I see it now, I have cleared away what we in America call "red tape". Now this is the status:

1. Mr. Sugman since March 10 is out of the picture.
2. Mr. Oscar Nordman has my Power of Attorney and represents me in Tahiti. By this time you have dealt with him and in the future you will of course continue to do so - Honolulu and Papeete are too far distant for efficient correspondence.

The latest development is the French Consul's refusal to grant me a visa to visit Tahiti! On receiving this news I dropped all other work just where I happened to be - the island of Maui - and rented a house for a month to concentrate on Cheung Ho matters. Now these are my plans, some of them already in action;

1. I am acquainting the French Consul <sup>in Calif.</sup> regarding the Cheung Ho swindle from its very beginning, about 4 or 5 years ago.

2. I have cabled Mr. Nordman <sup>immediately</sup> to airmail a copy of your French translation of the Cheung Ho case to the French Consul who has been informed of its coming. If you failed to make carbon copies, which is unlikely, he is to mail photostats.

3. In view of de Bisschop's statement that registry of the Cheung Ho mi name, instead of that of the Company, was due to a clerical error in the office of the governor of Tahiti - since removed as we know because of the current scandal - shall ask the French Ambassador in Washington to investigate the entire affaire Cheung Ho ~~from the very beginning~~.

4. I am preparing a brochure on the Cheung Ho case for my State Department which, if my petitions in



French circles are ignored, as to contact the French  
Ambassadors in Washington for me. There is good evi-  
dence, as you know, that the Chep Ho was registered under  
the French flag by fraud. If I fail to get justice, I shall  
work to have that placed under the U. S. flag as the first  
act of fraud was perpetrated.

5. I am explaining to the score or so Universities  
and Museums - who expected reports of my Tahiti plants  
the cause of my delay. All are interested in the Chep Ho  
because the results written up in two books, Faircliff's  
and my own.

6. At the end of the Chep Ho case, I shall give a state-  
ment to the Associated Press and Reuters. Whether it  
will be under the heading "Botanist Degener swindled  
of Chep Ho by French Consul" or not, remains to be seen.

People in general are honest, and I have no doubt  
that if the Consul and the Ambassador know the truth, justice  
will prevail. The writer Emil Zola, gained justice by his  
pen; why cannot the writer Otto S. Degener imitate him?

I hope you have read my Fiji book. I was com-  
mended for it by the United Nations. The criticism  
in P. M. by Robinson, who is known as an antiquated  
Mid Victorian, stimulated sales.

Adieu (in Tahiti?)

P. S. Is our New York friend Miss Anita Hoppen-  
stead a connection of yours?

H. Hoppenstedt,  
Papeete, Tahiti.

Lawyer

Letter received so terminating Ingman services March 10 and instruct you turn all ~~papers~~ <sup>Chung Ho papers</sup> and translations to Oscar Nordman for study that date.

Otto Degener

(Oscar Nordman)

Oceanic, Papeete, Tahiti

Cabled Hoppenstedt turn all vessel papers and translations to you March 10 for study.

Degener

Want 2 copies of each

Papeete, le February 11, 1952  
Papeete, Tahiti

Dear Mr. Degener

Your favor of 20 th. ult. through Mr. O. Nordman duly reached me.

You will excuse me not to write you directly, but it is a rule amongst french barristers not to get in touch with their clients as far as they have lawyers

I take good note of the tenor of your letter especially that you have turned over your powers of attorney to Mr. Oscar Nordman.

As soon as I will receive an answer from Mr. Ingman, concerning a few points especially the mortgage taken favor Mathilde Constable, I will then call on Mr. O. Nordman.

I wish you a fine returning trip; I hope to read in forthcoming P.M. relation of your trip as I already did for former trips.

Yours truly,  
H. Hoppenstedt

# RADIOGRAM

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OFFICE OF ORIGIN MAKAWAO, MAUI

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DAY MESSAGE ( )

NIGHT LETTER ( )

SHIP ( )

DATE MARCH 12, 1952

NO.

FILED

2:52 PM

CHECK

27 FGN

TQ T OCEANIC  
PAPEETETAHITI

KEEP ORIGINAL FRENCH HOPPENSTEDT TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS BUT

AIRMAIL CARBON OR PHOTO STAT COPIES TO FRENCH CONSULATE 740

TAYLOR STREET SAN FRANCISCO WITH EXPLANATORY LETTER

DEGENER

Charge To

Our Bill

Other Bill

Message Tax

TOTAL

CHGE 7 W 705 / ANTHONY TAM / MR. DEGENER / MK

FULL RATE MESSAGE UNLESS MARKED OTHERWISE



G. I. Del,  
Makawao, Maui.  
March 14, 1952.

Dear Dave:

I just got a wire from Tahiti that Hoppenstedt never translated the documents from English into French. He is evidently the French type of Levinson. How do I get back the \$150. Must I whistle for it? Who recommended the schyster to begin with?

The American consul is taking over, I believe.

I shall fly to Molokai to botanize for a few days, and then return to Makawao, where you can reach me in an emergency.

Why not come to Molokai too?

Ulo ho,

Otto

GD/gd

CONSULAT GÉNÉRAL DE FRANCE  
À SAN FRANCISCO

740 TAYLOR STREET

TÉLÉPHONE TUXEDO 5-0771

March 14, 1952

PRIÈRE DE RAPPELER LE NUMÉRO  
IN REPLYING REFER TO NUMBER

A III/ A 56 -756

Dear Sir:

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated March 10, regarding your entry into the French Territories of Oceania.

As I informed you in my letter dated March 1st the Governor has denied you the requested visa. He is the only person that has authority to either refuse or accept the applications.

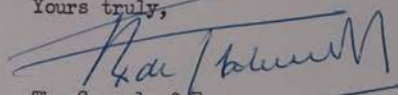
If you feel that this refusal is not warranted, I suggest that you present your documentary evidence directly to the Governor, whom, I am sure, would be quite willing to study them.

It is certain, however, that the action was not taken against you as a measure of discrimination; but certainly as the result of a careful checking by local authorities.

Regarding the caption written on the back of a picture arrived by later mail, I do not believe that it could be of any help in clearing or expediting this matter.

I still have your passeport, and will be pleased to issue you the visa for New-Caledonia as soon as you send me the sum of \$ 8.00

Yours truly,

  
The Consul of France

Mr. Otto DEGENER  
General Delivery  
Makawao, Mani  
Territory of Hawaii

French Consul  
740 Taylor St  
San Francisco

Gen. Del.,

Makawao, Maui.  
March 14, 1952

Dear Sir:

Copy

I paid the French Attorney  
M. Hopfensack, Papeete, Tahiti,  
\$150 to translate the American  
Court and other legal documents  
from English into French. I  
have cabled Tahiti that a carbon  
copy is to be mailed to you for  
study regarding the Cheung Ho case involving  
the former French Consul Eric de  
Bisschop and myself.

To expedite matters, perhaps it may  
well if you likewise wrote Mr Hopfensack.  
I do not know.

Yours sincerely,



Copy

Gen. Del.,  
Makawao, Maui.  
March 14, 1952.

Dear Sirs:

About a year ago I engaged M. Hoppenstedt, an attorney in Papeete, Tahiti, to represent me in the collecting of about \$3,000 owing me by (mainly) Capt de Brochop, as officer of the Cheung Ho Trading & Exploring Co.

Mr. Hoppenstedt received \$150.00 from me to translate pertinent Cheung Ho documents and Honolulu Court proceedings from English into French so they could be more easily used in the French Court in Papeete. I now learn that he never had these translated at all! My agent, Mr. Oscar Wordman just cabled me that Has he stolen my documents? In America a person might be disbarred from practice. May I remind you that we in Hawaii know more about Tahiti affairs than Americans on the Mainland. It is still gossip that a "shake-up" occurred in the <sup>Apprentice</sup> government because of a cement scandal.

I do not know the new Governor, but he is new, and is apparently surrounded by a group of people conspiring to steal my vessel, the Cheung Ho, from me.

They ply him with lies. I, being  
thousands of miles away, cannot ade-  
quately refute lies I know nothing  
about.

The swindler Eric de Bisschoff,  
whose Police record <sup>on file</sup> shows about  
1932 in Cannes, France, you might  
care to investigate, has physical  
control of the case. He actually registers  
her in Tahiti as his own property  
when it belonged to our Company  
of about a dozen stockholders.  
He has the attention of the new  
governor, and is a very adroit speaker.  
That is how she is so successful in  
<sup>her part</sup> international swindles. He belongs

Another man, charterer in part of  
the Chuy Ho in Tahiti is M. Gallois,  
friend of de Bisschoff and  
a member of the Privy Council. Perhaps  
my attorney Mr. Hopfenstedt is  
friendly with such men.

At any rate, the Chuy Ho case  
may become of international interest  
and I question whether your office  
and I can unravel it alone without  
my calling in my State Department  
and your Ambassador ~~at~~ <sup>in</sup> Honolulu.  
I have written Mr. ~~de Bisschoff~~ <sup>de Bisschoff</sup>

<sup>My dear mail</sup>  
Hoped to send you my  
\$150 00 to pay for past cables  
and for future cables you may  
wish to send to Tahiti to surround  
this embargo.

Aloha,

Otto S. Jensen



Gen. Del.,  
Makawao, Maui  
T. Hawaii, U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Hoppensstedt:

By cable this morning I heard you were unable to have the documents and other papers translated according to our agreement and the payment of \$150<sup>00</sup>.

To save time, please write your reasons to your Consul in San Francisco, enclosing my \$150. I owe your Consul quite a bill for cable and other expenses, and I have written him, your my former attorney in Papacete, will send him the cheque.

It is too bad you failed finding a translator during almost a year's time. I should have advised Mrs. Sarah Dexter to do the work.

Atto.,

Otto Degener

Copy

Gen. Del.,  
Makawao, Maui,  
T. Hawaii, U. S. A.  
March 14, 1952.

Dear Oscar:

I have your letters - Oct 20, Dec. 15, Feb. 5, 6, two of Feb. 20, March 4, ~~and~~ and three of March 5 before me. I am reading them all over carefully again. we

1. I do not understand why I must have \$15,000 in escrow in a bank in Honolulu. Why can't let. be paid in \$15,000 worth of French francs less the \$3,000 he owes me and less the damage he has caused to the vessel. Actually, we should bring suit against him for his neglect of hull etc., etc. If we must dig up \$15,000 in cash in American money here in America, we may as well admit we are hopelessly outwitted and give up gracefully now. Most of my money is tied up as \$6,000 in my Fiji book. I get it back fairly slowly year after year, as these books are sold.

2. Why must I be in Tahiti in July for the Chey Ho denouement so long as you are my agent and have my Power of Attorney to act for me? I have been invited to be in Nagasaki, Japan June ~~on a professional business.~~ <sup>on a private business.</sup>

3. Why not recede me your idea of a partnership contract now, so I can study it and add my notes & suggestions. Then we shall know where we stand before we take any action. <sup>it would prejudice our case in Tahiti against me</sup>

4. The Chey Ho, I would not assume ownership of the vessel, but the option for myself, heirs or assigns to repossess it 6 years hence. You suggest that I promise <sup>the government</sup> not to deal in Chey Ho affairs and thus get entry into Tahiti. Please forgive me for not taking your advice. It is my plan not to be on the defensive but rather on the aggressive - not retreat, but attack. So:

a. I have written 3 times in 3 days to the French Consulate, in 740 Taylor Street, San Francisco, Calif. ~~On~~ In the first letter I explained that my purpose in going to Tahiti was to botanize, that I owned the option to purchase the Chey Ho in July 1952 and that then as "passenger" on this trading vessel I had planned to collect plants on all the isolated islands while the vessel was loading & unloading cargo. That was my plan 5 years ago until de Bissachop's trickery spoiled it. In the second letter I sent a newspaper clipping about me appearing in the New York Times of last month, describing me as the leading botanist in



the Pacific. ~~Then~~ I had been distributed to newspapers in America by famous "Reuters". I then simply added: Will the next news article for American newspaper readers have the heading: "Botanist Degener Swindled by French Consul" or "~~Botanist~~ Degener sails on Chey Ho to determine in South Seas with Cooperation of French Government." Then today I sent the third letter to the Consulate in San Francisco. It enclosed an old letter from Admiral Dausfeld, who was head of the entire Pacific Fleet, to the mentioning the Navy's offer of cooperation. ~~It~~ I likewise enclosed a letter to me from Mr. Farrington, our Delegate to Congress, showing interest in the Chey Ho. Thirdly, I added a February full page article in a Boston newspaper, about plants, in which I was prominently mentioned. I added in ink on the margin that as the Chey Ho had been a U.S. Navy vessel, the entire Navy personnel would be interested in the her fate.

b. I have many clippings about the Chey Ho litigation, every one of which describes her lost in Court. Yesterday I took them for photographing. I shall have ~~the~~ copies made quickly and the remaining ~~to~~ as the man has time to do so. The one I shall rush to the French Consul in San Francisco with another explanatory note. The rest I shall then send to important people like the Governor in Tahiti, to you, to the French Ambassador in Washington, to Delegate Farrington in Washington, to the State Department, ~~to~~ to the Museums and institutions who wanted Tahitian botanical specimens from me. These I shall beg to write to your Governor, to your Consul, to your French Ambassador in ~~Washington~~ Paris, etc.

c I am asking a French teacher to translate these newspaper clippings into French. When I get them - unfortunately it will take time - I shall send copies to your Governor, to the Consul in ~~San Francisco~~ Paris and to your Ambassador in Washington; ~~perhaps to newspapers in Paris.~~

d. If need be, I shall have 1,000 copies printed of the English newspaper clippings and 1000 copies printed of the French translations. ~~I shall~~ <sup>I shall</sup> mail them <sup>English ones</sup> to all members of your Chamber of Deputies in Paris and then of Congress in Washington & the remainder to American newspapers. I shall mail the French ones to members of your Chamber of Deputies in Paris and the remainder to French newspapers. Emil Zeller did it with the Dreyfus case. Why cannot I do it with the ~~maker~~ <sup>maker</sup> Chey Ho case? ~~He~~ <sup>He</sup>.



223  
My option to purchase the Cheong Ho is worthless  
if you do not send a letter to the enclosed to the  
Cheong Ho Company. Perhaps you should also  
send a French translation and have both  
printed in your newspaper.

Perhaps you should also print in the news-  
paper:

Avis: A Tous Ceux A Qui Il Appartendra  
le soussigné possède la première option  
à acheter le navire Cheong Ho avec tout  
l'équipement et autres droits importants.  
Comme négocier directement avec M.  
Oscar Nordman, Papete, Tahiti, pour  
avoir des renseignements.

Otto Degener  
Nara lua, Oahu, T. Hawaii

I just received your cable that Hoppenstedt  
did nothing! The Consul is waiting for the carbon copies  
and is waiting for the \$150 I paid Hoppenstedt. This <sup>money</sup> ~~case~~  
the Consul is to use to pay for the cables he sent for me.  
I ~~have~~ have written Mr. Hoppenstedt to  
write the Consul direct as he will want an explana-  
tion.

I am eager for the Noumea Consul's arrival.

Aloha mi

Otto

March 17, 1952

Mr. Otto Degener  
General Delivery  
Makawao, Maui

Dear Otto:

I received your letter of March 14, 1952 this morning and was interested to hear that our friend Hoppenstedt had never translated those documents. If you are able to get down to Tahiti you could probably get the money back from him but there is nothing we can do about it from here.

Hoppenstedt was never recommended to me directly. You will recall that I sent the claim to Guilpain but he was leaving for France so turned it over to Hoppenstedt. It's too bad that we had to get hold of a schyster. I hope the American Consul can do something about it.

A fellow named Deming who claims to be connected with Warner Brothers was in to see me about chartering the Cheng Ho for a few months in connection with a proposed documentary film. I told him that there were a lot of complications but that I thought there was a possibility that something could be worked out.

Please come in to see me as soon as you return to Honolulu.

Sincerely yours,

David N. Ingman

DNI:gy

## SERVICE DE RAVITAILLEMENT MARITIME

MAISON NORDMAN

FOURNISSEUR — SHIPCHANDLER

PAPEETE — TAHITI.

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES  
THE OCEANIC S.S. CO.  
MATSON NAVIGATION COMPANY  
H.M.N.Z. NAVY  
H.M.A. NAVY  
ETC.

Agent: PACIFIC ISLANDS MONTHLY

March 17th 1952

UNION STEAMSHIP COMPANY  
OF NEW ZEALAND LTD.  
UNITED STATES LINE  
H.M. NAVY  
UNITED STATES NAVY  
ETC.

Mr. Otto Degener  
Mokuleia Beach  
Waialua Oahu T.H.

Dear Mr. Degener

Mr. Calamy was at the house to day and he says that you stick by your option to take the vessel over in July, even if you had to take over the ship as it is, as someone might buy while you are discussing the matter, that is what he thinks.

On the other hand he says that you should pass the option over to me, you purchase the vessel make all necessary changes such as putting two new 150 H.P.H.D. Engines ( ATLAS ), that a paper should be drawn that I recognize that the vessel is owned by you less my shares in it, that I should pay you at the time specified in the deal. ( This is only in case that something comes up barring you from having any part in the vessel.

I should think that before long you will be able to overun these difficulties,.

The "~~CG~~ENG HO " with the two new 150 H.P. engines will fetch better charter rentals, and that's all the traders has to say.

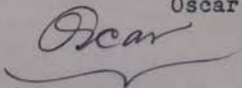
The American Consul is coming on his periodical visits to Tahiti, this happens every six months,. I will have all your papers in readiness when he arrives, especially the cable from the French Consul at San Francisco refusing your visa.

Think well and everything should not go wrong

With best wishes to you

Sincerely

Oscar G. Nordman





DAVID N. INGMAN  
ATTORNEY AT LAW  
410 MERCHANDISE MART BUILDING  
HONOLULU, HAWAII  
PHONE 5-9099

March 17, 1952

Mr. Otto Degener  
General Delivery  
Makawao, Maui

Dear Otto:

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Please come in to see me as soon as you return to Honolulu.

Sincerely yours,

*David N. Ingman*  
David N. Ingman

DNI:gy

H. HOPPENSTEDT

AVOCAT - DÉFENSEUR

BOITE POSTALE : 517

PAPEETE - TAHITI

OCEANIE FRANÇAISE

PAPEETE, LE March 19<sup>th</sup> 1952

Mr.

D. N. INGMAN

Attorney at Law

184, S.O. Hotel St.

H O N O L U L U

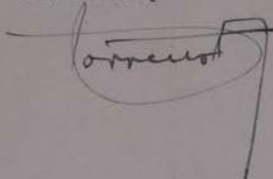
( H A W A I )

Dear Mr. Ingman

Your wireless of 11 th. inst. followed Mr. Degener's one of 6 th. inst.; in the meantime I had already turned over to Mr. Oscar NORDMAN the Cheng Ho papers.

I do not understand this step of Mr. Degener; after having had a lot of trouble to get informations on the matter, I wrote you on October last all details I had of the situation leaving to you the decision to take.

Yours truly



## SERVICE DE RAVITAILLEMENT MARITIME

MAISON NORDMAN

FOURNISSEUR — SHIPCHANDLER

PAPEETE — TAHITI.

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES  
THE OCEANIC S.S. CO.  
MATSON NAVIGATION COMPANY  
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Agent: PACIFIC ISLANDS MONTHLY

March 19th 1952

UNION STEAMSHIP COMPANY  
OF NEW ZEALAND LTD.  
UNITED STATES LINE  
H.M. NAVY  
UNITED STATES NAVY  
ETC.

Mr. Otto Degener  
Mokuleia Beach  
Waialua, Oahu T.H.

Dear Mr. Degener

The following are the several telegrams  
received from you:

CABLED HOPPENSTEDT TURN ALL VESSEL PAPERS AND  
TRANSLATION TO YOU MARCH 10.

SAN FRANCISCO CONSUL REFUSE TAHITI VISA

ADVISE YOU REMAIN TAHITI MY AGENT I PLAN REQUESTING  
FRENCH AMBASSADOR WASHINGTON INVESTIGATE CHENG HO SWINDLE BY  
DEPORTED FORMER FRENCH CONSUL

KEEP ORIGINAL FRENCH HOPPENSTEDT TRANSLATION OF  
DOCUMENTS BUT AIRMAIL CARBON OR PHOTOSTAT COPIES FRENCH  
CONSULATE 740 TAYLOR STREET SAN FRANCISCO WITH EXPLANATORY  
LETTER.

Mr. Hoppenstedt returned all papers and documents  
and contents duly noted.

I phoned Mr. ZIEGLER, who has charge here in Papeete  
of delivering permits and visas for all incoming visitors, he  
was much upset when I informed him that you have been refused  
visa for Tahiti, . I told him that I was going to submit your  
case to the American Consul that is coming to Tahiti arriving here  
at Papeete March 20th and to remain until April 2nd.

The American Consul who is to have office here with  
me, I can talk freely about you. When I told Mr. Calamy that  
the Consul in San Francisco, he said no wonder he is the boy  
friend of Mrs. de Bisschop. +

Enclosed please find the telegram I received from  
the American Consul, when you get through read it please  
return it for my file.

With best wishes

Sincerely

Oscar G. Nordman

*Oscar*

+ refused your  
visa



GD/gd  
CONSULAT GÉNÉRAL DE FRANCE  
À SAN FRANCISCO

740 TAYLOR STREET  
TÉLÉPHONE TUXEDO 5-0771

March 21, 1952

PRIÈRE DE RAPPELER LE NUMÉRO  
IN REPLYING REFER TO NUMBER { A III/ A 56 - 828

Dear Sir:

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of March 14, as well as of your two books arrived later. I thank you for these, and assure you that they convince me of the seriousness of your project, though I have never doubted it before.

I am addressing a letter to the Governor in Papeete this day, enclosing copies of yours of March 10 and 14.

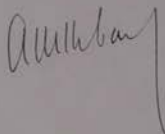
As I previously informed you, it is my belief that he will give his attention to these questions, and take the proper steps either to correct or to confirm the position he has taken in regard to your visa application.

I wish to further call your attention on the fact that he is the only authority that has jurisdiction over the territories of French Oceania. Also, I still think that you should send him directly any documents which you may contemplate to enter as evidence to defend your case.

Yours truly,

The Consul of France

Mr. Otto DEGENER  
General Delivery  
Makawao, Mani  
Territory of Hawai



Copy  
I have rented a little office so I can properly  
handle the Chung Ho case, so please write to  
my new address: Gen. Del., Waikeawao, Maui,  
T. Hawaii, U.S.A.  
March 25, 1952.

Dear Mr. Hoppenstedt:

Thank you for your letter of March 11 in which  
you inform me you transmitted the Chung Ho documents  
to Mr. C. Nordman.

I regret I must charge you \$1,000 00  
for the carbon copies and Chung Ho confidential  
advice you transmitted to Capt. de Bisschop  
and M. Gallois. You can pay me by cheque  
direct to the above address or C/o the French  
Consul, 740 Taylor St., San Francisco, Calif.

I am writing members of Congress - I am  
a Federal as well as Territorial tax payer -  
to ask your Ambassador in Washington  
to pay stockholders and myself claims  
resulting from the Chung Ho fiasco in  
which former and present French Govern-  
ment officials are involved. I wish the  
funds subtracted from the next American  
loan to Paris if it is not paid by the  
Colonial Government before. Aloha,

Otto Degener

Stark unrandeten Teil selbst ausfüllen!

Schein sorgfältig aufbewahren!

# Einlieferungsschein

Gegenstand (z. B. Pfl.)	(Abkürzungen & umseitig)				
an geeigneter Wert oder ein- gezahlter Betrag	DM (in Ziffern)	PF	Nach- nahme	DM (in Ziffern)	PF
Emp- fänger	H. Pöschel				
Bestim- mungsort	Paris				

Postvermerke

Tagesstempel		Einlieferungs- Nr.	Gewicht	
		kg	g	

Postannahme

2. 49. 32. CFM.

C 62 Din A 7





THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS

Mr. David Eugene,  
Merchandise Mart,  
Hotel & Alaska St.,  
Honolulu.

Makawao, Maui.  
March 28, 1952

Dear Dave:

You never returned  
the Hoppens letter  
as requested. I am  
having Ching Ho  
papers photostated  
by a local camera  
enthusiast for \$20 and  
without that letter on  
hand, I risk being  
charged extra. So  
wikeiwiki with that  
letter. He has already  
started.

Aloha,  
Otto

*Copy to Chief des Affaires Economiques, Papeete, Tahiti, Vice Admiral Paul  
Artoli, % French Consulate, Tokyo, Japan; Oscar Wodman, Gov. of  
Tahiti;*

Hakawao, Maui,

T. Hawaii, U. S. A.

March 31, 1952.

The Honorable M. Abelin, Deputy,  
Assemblée National, Palais Bourbon,  
Paris, France.

Dear Sir:

May I be so bold as to request that you and your colleagues investigate what transpires in your beautiful Colony of Tahiti? All is not well. So I am taking the liberty of writing to Deputies of your Assemblée in Paris and to Members of my Congress in Washington.

I am an American citizen born in Grange, New Jersey, in 1899. I taught Botany at the University of Hawaii, was Naturalist of Hawaii National Park, have published five books about Hawaiian plants and a book about the junk-yacht Cheng Ho in Fiji, and have printed scores of smaller articles of purely scientific interest in technical journals. My botanical finds are scattered in Museums throughout the World. In my chosen field, I am respected and well known.

1. In 1940-41 I sailed aboard the palatial 99 ft., long junk-yacht Cheng Ho as one of the guest-scientists of Mrs. Anne Archbold of Washington. In all I spent eight months in Fiji as member of the expedition, some of the results being published by Harvard University in "Sargentia."
2. With entry of the United States into the Second World War, the Cheng Ho was sold to the U. S. Navy as a weather station for \$1.00 for patriotic reasons.
3. With end of hostilities, the U. S. Navy returned the Cheng Ho to Mrs. Archbold, her original owner, for the \$1.00. *I also hired my own Filipino assistant for the trip, paying him fore etc. from Honolulu to Suva & return.*
4. It took me four to five years (without remuneration) to work up my finds, and \$6,000 of my own cash to publish my "Naturalist's South Pacific Expedition: Fiji." This was probably why Mrs Archbold sold me the Cheng Ho at a reasonable price about five years ago. The vessel was to help me continue my search for new South Sea Island plants.
5. I then started the "Cheng Ho Trading & Exploring Company," incorporated in Honolulu, U.S.A., with a dozen or so stockholders, most of them American citizens.
6. I sold the Cheng Ho, valued by an appraiser at \$75,000, to our gov-  
ernment for \$100,000, reserving however the right to operate *my vessel in*



July 1952 for \$15,000 in the same good condition in which I had turned her over to our company. I also reserved the right to take one trip a year in the Cheng Ho with a fellow-scientist for research work.

7. One of these stockholders was the suave Frenchman Capt. Eric deBisschop, one-time Vichy-French Consul in Hawaii, an expert navigator and adventurer who had sailed with M. Tatiboust in a double canoe from Hawaii via South Africa to France. We found him a charming person, and were thus disarmed. We never realized - a fault of our lax immigration officials in Honolulu - that he was even then a deportable undesirable alien running about loose in Honolulu until a ship should arrive to take him to a French port. This penniless adventurer, who lived for a long time in Cannes up to about 1932 and about whom the Police could inform you, thanks to his Hawaiian mother-in-law's savings, controlled about \$5,000 worth of shares in our company. He fools elected him Captain.

8. We furnished the Cheng Ho with cargo, including \$10,000 worth of sugar, a commodity then rationed in Tahiti, and commissioned Captain deBisschop to sail her there. He was to return about six weeks later with French commodities purchased from the sale of the American merchandise entrusted to him.

9. Instead of returning in six weeks, he limped into port penniless with the Cheng Ho about eight months later, with nothing but 2 tons of vanilla beans which were then a drag on the market. He had squandered the company's funds - even sold launch and other ship's equipment to pay his debts - on wine, women and song. At our company's expense he even entertained a French-Tahitian movie actress aboard the Cheng Ho for five weeks.

10. I had learned from disillusioned former crew members (who likewise owned stock) that Capt. deBisschop intended to sell the vanilla, get some sorely needed engine parts in Honolulu, and thereafter sail away never to return within the 3 mile jurisdiction of the United States. This rumor was probably based on fact as later Federal and Circuit Court proceedings in Honolulu proved that "The vessel was registered in Tahiti last year in the name of the ship's captain Eric deBisschop" when the vessel actually belonged to our company consisting of a dozen or so stockholders, most of them American citizens! When confronted with this evidence, like any cornered thief trying to save himself and accomplices, deBisschop gave the excuse that it "was due to a clerical error in the office of the Governor of Tahiti." We in Hawaii remember the removal of a recent Governor of Tahiti following a cement scandal.

11. We had the Cheng Ho appraised again and this time she was valued at \$60,000, a loss of \$15,000 in 8 months under Capt. deBisschop's piratical mismanagement!

12. I and other injured stockholders immediately tied up the vessel for debt in Honolulu and started one lawsuit after another, every one of which we won.

13. I and some, but not all, of the other swindled stockholders sold our shares to the deBisschop faction - the fine old Hawaiian lady coming to her son-in-law's rescue with the necessary cash. I retained my original

option to purchase the Cheng Ho in the same original good condition (appraised at \$75,000) for \$15,000 in July 1952. Also, I and other stockholders accepted I. O. U.s from the deBisschop faction for a total of about \$3,000. He then allowed deBisschop to sail out of U. S., waters with the Cheng Ho, he incidentally being subject to deportation as an undesirable alien a second time.

14. My option to purchase the Cheng Ho in July for \$15,000 is not far off. It was my intention to incorporate anew with the Tahitian shipping agent and Chandler M. Oscar Nordman as partner. It was my purpose, as originally five years ago, to use the Cheng Ho as a general copra and trading vessel, I botanizing various isolated South Sea Islands while cargo is being unloaded and loaded.

15. To collect the \$3,000 debt from deBisschop for myself and other stockholders, we engaged about a year ago M. Henri Hoppenstedt, a Pa-peeete attorney, to represent us. He received from us, his clients, various Court and other documents regarding the Cheng Ho case and was paid \$100 to translate them from English into French so they could be more readily used in a French Court. Later he wanted another \$50 out of us Americans. Now I learn from Tahiti that M. Hoppenstedt never made any translations at all even though he kept our \$150. Whether he has stolen any of the contract papers or sold them to Capt. deBisschop depends on his professional integrity.

16. deBisschop, a ne'er-do-well with no assets except control of the Cheng Ho until July 1952, has allowed the Cheng Ho, built of costly teak and camphor woods, to deteriorate in a wanton manner. He has kept her in tropical waters continuously for about a year, allowing shipworms to bore into the hull. Caulking will never make good such fundamental damage. He had her pile up on the reef in December, causing additional serious damage. He has torn out the interior, making the vessel one vast shell of a hold! This man, who cannot even pay the yearly interest on the loan, cannot possibly make good such damage and replace the teak and camphor wood parts he had removed to sell or give away. How can I ever use the vessel as my option contract provided?

17. To collect the debt for myself and other stockholders, to take over the Cheng Ho - I was not then aware of her shipwreck and serious neglect - in July 1952, to start a new company, and to do some botanizing, I last December requested visas for Tonga, New Caledonia and Tahiti. A visa has been granted me by the independent Kingdom of Tonga for six months. As you can see from the enclosed photocasts, a visa has been granted me for one year to visit the French Colony of New Caledonia (where I have no assets to collect). But where I have a vessel worth \$75,000 and where a former French Consul owes me and other Americans whom I represent approximately \$3,000 cash, my request to the Governor of Tahiti for permission to visit his islands "has not been granted."

This is not a simple case whereby one single French private citizen swindles one single American private citizen. Is it not rather a conspiracy involving past and present French Government officials continuing to swindle a group of American citizens? The one swindler is a

twice deported French ex-consul. "Due to a clerical error in the office of the Governor of Tahiti" the Cheng Ho was registered, by "error" or fraud, as the Frenchman's property when she belonged rightfully to an American company. Then perhaps this same ex-consul or some interested associate on the Governor's Privy Council, exerts his influence to sabotage an American citizen (representing other American citizens) from visiting Tahiti to better fight for justice. What I think about the famed attorney M. Henri Hoppenstedt who was engaged to represent us Americans and accepted \$150, I need not put in writing.

Because of the rapacious interest shown by French Government officials, past and present, in the coming ownership of the Cheng Ho and the payment of the \$3,000 Debt, I request your Assemblée Nationale to investigate the situation in your Colony of Tahiti. I feel your Government should.

1. Immediately pay me and other stockholders approximately \$3,000 plus interest.
2. On July 1, 1952, pay me sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000), which represents the original appraised value of the teak and camphor woods Cheng Ho less the \$15,000 I contracted to pay for her return in her original condition (appraised at \$75,000).

Yours very truly,

*Chs. Leger*



INGMAN AND INGMAN

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

410 MERCHANDISE MART - 184 SO. HOTEL ST.  
HONOLULU, HAWAII

April 7, 1949

WINSTON C. INGMAN  
DAVID N. INGMAN

PHONE 59099

Mr. Otto Degener  
Mokuleia Beach  
Waialua, Oahu

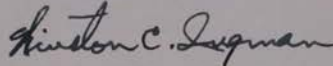
Dear Mr. Degener:

We have a copy of communication from the French consul at San Francisco stating that under French law a ship of over 100 tons cannot be transferred to a foreigner; that therefore the French Government cannot see to the honoring of your option.

Will you please come in and discuss this with me the next time you are in town.

Very truly yours,

INGMAN AND INGMAN



Winston C. Ingman

WCI:gy

Makawao, Maui, T.Hawaii, U.S.A.  
April 11, 1952.

Dear Mr. Taran:

When you had your office on the second floor in Waikiki attempting to get a square deal in starting your Hawaiian-Tahitian airline, you may remember I inquired about fares for myself. I am writing you now because you, more than most residents of Tahiti, know Americans and understand their language. I could never translate what I am writing in French. Now I wish to make it clear that I not for one moment suspect your present Governor of any wrong-doing but I am not so sure that a man whose fingers got stuck in cement may not have tried to put his greasy palms on my Cheng Ho. ~~Now~~ am I so sure about some local men who may give vicious council to a Governor new to the islands and hence not yet able to judge his true friends from his false.

Well, here is my story: Just as powerful and evil forces in America unjustly wrecked your dream (because it was a wise dream and they were jealous), so powerful and greedy forces in Tahiti threaten to wreck my dream. I plan to fight for my rights, and so am writing letters of complaint, at least two per day: one to a member of my American Congress (why should I not when I am a taxpayer) and the other to one of the Deputies of your Assemblée Nationale. From a Mainland French Consulate I received about 300 names, and I am starting with M. Abelin and ending with M. Vallon. There is no Z. I am omitting Communist members and gentlemen with names like Ndraye Sidi El Mokkter, believing Mauretania would not be particularly interested in Tahiti, but who can tell? Also, I am spending some time writing different articles about the Cheng Ho for different groups of readers. This is quite some work as the articles must be different to cater to different tastes. Enclosed is a sample. It is timely for the people of Tahiti to read so, if you do not mind, please give it to the editor of your largest newspaper for me. Perhaps he himself can translate it into good French, or perhaps M. Henri Hoppenstedt can do so who has \$150 belonging to us for work he evidently never accomplished.

1. In 1940-41 I sailed aboard the palatial 99 ft., long junk-yacht Cheng Ho as one of the guest-scientists of Mrs. Anna Archbold of Washington. In all I spent eight months in Fiji as member of the expedition, some of the results being published by Harvard University in "Sargautia."

2. With entry of the United States into the Second World War, the Cheng Ho was sold to the U. S. Navy as a weather station for \$1.00 for patriotic reasons.

3. With end of hostilities, the U. S. Navy returned the Cheng Ho to Mrs. Archbold, her original owner, for the \$1.00.

4. It took me four to five years (without remuneration) to work up my finds, and \$6,000 of my own cash to publish my "Naturalist's South Pacific Expedition: Fiji." This was probably why Mrs. Archbold sold me the Cheng Ho at a reasonable price about five years ago. The vessel was to help me continue my search for new South Sea Island plants.

5. I then started the "Cheng Ho Trading & Exploring Company," incorporated in Honolulu, with a dozen or so stockholders, most of them American citizens.

6. I sold the Cheng Ho, valued by an appraiser at \$75,000, to our company for shares, reserving however the option to purchase my vessel in July 1952 for \$15,000 in the same good condition in which I had turned her over to our company. I also reserved the right to take one trip a year in the Cheng Ho with a fellow-scientist for research work.

7. One of these stockholders was the suave Frenchman Capt. Eric deBisschop, one-time Vichy-French Consul in Hawaii, an expert navigator and adventurer who had sailed with M. Tatibouet in a double canoe from Hawaii via South Africa to France. We found him a charming person, and were thus disarmed. We never realized - a fault of our lax immigration officials in Honolulu - that he was even then a deportable undesirable alien running about loose in Honolulu until a ship should arrive to remove him to a French port. This penniless adventurer, who lived in Cannes for a long time where his record is known, thanks to his Hawaiian mother-in-law's saving, controlled about \$5,000 worth of shares in our company. We fools elected him captain.

8. We furnished the Cheng Ho with cargo, including \$10,000 worth of sugar as you probably will remember, and commissioned Capt. deBisschop to sail her there. He was to return about six weeks later with French commodities purchased from the sale of the American merchandise entrusted to him.

9. Instead of returning in six weeks, he limped into port penniless with the Cheng Ho about eight months later, with nothing but 2 Tons of vanilla beans which were then a drug on the market. He had squandered the company's funds - even sold launch and other ship's equipment to pay his private debts - on wine, women and song. At our company's expense he even entertained a French-Tahitian movie actress aboard the Cheng Ho for five weeks.

10. I had learned from disillusioned former crew members (who likewise owned stock) that Capt. deBisschop intended to sell the vanilla, get some sorely needed engine parts in Honolulu, and thereafter sail away never to return within the 3 mile jurisdiction of the United States.



additional damage. He has torn out the interior, making the vessel one vast shell of a hoid! This man, who cannot even pay the yearly interest on the loan, cannot possibly make good such damage and replace the teak and camphor wood parts he had removed to sell or give away. How can I ever use the vessel as my option contract provided?

17. To collect the debt for myself and other stockholders, to take over the *Chang Ho* - I was not then aware of her shipwreck and serious neglect - in July 1932, to start a new company, and to do some botanizing, I last December requested visas for Tonga, New Caledonia and Tahiti. A visa has been granted me by the independent Kingdom of Tonga for six months. As you can see from the enclosed reproductions, a visa has been granted me for one year to visit the French Colony of New Caledonia (where I have no assets to collect). But where I have a vessel worth \$75,000 and where a former French Consul owes me and other Americans whom I represent approximately \$3,000 cash, my request ~~was~~ to the Governor of Tahiti for permission to visit his islands "has not been granted."

This is not a simple case, as I am explaining to your Deputies in Paris and my Congressman in Washington, whereby one single French private citizen swindles one single American private citizen. Is it not rather a conspiracy involving past and present French Government officials continuing to swindle a group of American citizens? The one swindler is a twice deported French ex-consul. "Due to a clerical error in the office of the Governor of Tahiti" the *Chang Ho* was registered by "error" or fraud as the Frenchman's property when she belonged rightfully to an American company. Then perhaps this same ex-consul or some associate on the Governor's Privy Council exerts his influence to sabotage any American citizen (representing other American citizens) from visiting Tahiti better to fight for justice. What I think about the famed attorney M. Henri Hoppenstedt who was engaged to represent us Americans and accepted \$150 I need not put in writing. I would, however, recommend that such a man's previous dealings in law be reviewed to see if he might have ever erred similarly.

Here I feel, M. Taran, that a few dishonest greedy men for less than \$100,000 in tiny Tahiti are bold enough to jeopardise the friendship worth millions of two great Nations. People of America and France - and I include 99% of the people in Tahiti too - won't stand for such nonsense when once their representatives and their newspapers tell them. It will set back any hope for tourism in Tahiti for a generation.

Because of the rapacious interest shown by past ~~was~~ and present Colonial Government officials in Tahiti, I am asking the Government in Paris to pay the \$3,000 debt plus interest and \$60,000 (which represents the original appraised value \$75,000, less the \$15,000 I contracted to pay for her return) of the *Chang Ho*.

Aloha,

This rumor was probably based on fact as later Federal and Circuit Court proceedings in Honolulu proved that "The vessel was registered in Tahiti last year in the name of the ship's captain Eric de-Bisschop" when the vessel actually belonged to our company consisting of a dozen or so stockholders, most of them American citizens! When confronted with this evidence, like any cornered thief trying to save himself and accomplices, deBisschop gave the excuse that it "was due to a clerical error in the office of the Governor of Tahiti." We in Hawaii remember the removal of a recent Governor of Tahiti following a cement scandal.

11. We had the Cheng Ho appraised again and this time she was valued at \$60,000, a loss of \$15,000 in 8 months under Capt. deBisschop's piratical mismanagement!

12. I and other injured stockholders immediately tied up the vessel for debt in Honolulu and started one lawsuit after another, every one of which we won.

13. I and some, but not all, of the other swindled stockholders sold our shares to the deBisschop faction - the fine old Hawaiian lady coming to her son-in-law's rescue with the necessary cash. I retained my original option to purchase the Cheng Ho in the same original good condition (appraised at \$75,000) for \$15,000 in July 1952. Also, I and other stockholders accepted I.O.U.s from the deBisschop faction for a total of about \$2,000. We then allowed deBisschop to sail out of U. S. waters with the Cheng Ho, he incidentally being subject to deportation as an undesirable alien a second time.

14. My option to purchase the Cheng Ho in July for \$15,000 is not far off. It was my intention to incorporate anew with the Tahitian shipping agent and chemist M. Oscar Nordman as partner. It was my purpose, as originally five years ago, to use the Cheng Ho as a general cargo and trading vessel, I botani ing various isolated islands in the South Seas while cargo is being unloaded and loaded.

15. To collect the \$2,000 debt from deBisschop for myself and other stockholders, we engaged about a year ago M. Henri Hoppenstedt, a Paapeste attorney, to represent us. He received from us, his clients, various Court and other documents regarding the Cheng Ho case and was paid \$100 to translate them from English into French so they could be more readily used in a French Court. Later he wangled another \$50 out of us Americans. Now I learn from Tahiti that M. Hoppenstedt never made any translations at all even though he kept our \$150. Whether he has stolen any of the contract papers or sold them to Capt. deBisschop depends on his professional integrity.

16. deBisschop, a ne'er-do-well with no assets except control of the Cheng Ho until July 1952, has allowed the Cheng Ho, built of costly teak and camphor woods, to deteriorate in a wanton manner. He has kept her in tropical water continuously for about a year, allowing shipworms to bore into the hull. Caulking will never make good such fundamental damage. He had her pile up, on the reef in December, causing

Mal de Mer in Tahiti

(April 1952)

by

Otto Gegeuer

(Submitted for publication to "The American Institute of Biological Sciences")

The once fabulous teak and camphor woods junk-yacht Cheng Ho, owned by Mrs. Anne Archbold of Washington, D.C., was used for two scientific expeditions. During the first, Mrs. Archbold, with Dr. and Mrs. Fairchild as guests, combed the East Indies for plants of horticultural value for America. During the second, Mrs. Archbold, with a group of scientific workers, concentrated on purely biological and geographical studies in and about Fiji and neighboring archipelagoes. It was during this expedition that the writer collected good flowering and fruiting material of a new plant family of the Order Ranales.

With advent of the Second World War, Mrs. Archbold sold the Cheng Ho for \$100 to the United States Navy. Anchored in Pearl Harbor, this vessel was used for some time as a weather station. Regaining ownership shortly after the Armistice, Mrs. Archbold next sold the Cheng Ho to the writer.

Impossible for a man of ordinary means to run a 99 ft. long, sea-going vessel like the Cheng Ho, the new owner formed the Cheng Ho Trading & Exploring Company, incorporating in Honolulu. He next sold the Cheng Ho to this company for shares on condition he retain the right to sail at least once a year on the vessel with some fellow scientist to botanize interesting



South Sea Islands while the crew unloaded and loaded cargo. He also reserved the option to purchase his former vessel in the same good condition in which he had sold her (appraisal value \$75,000) in July 1952 for \$15,000. Stockholders, besides the writer, were some of his former proteges who had botanized in the Fiji and Hawaiian Islands with him as plant labels in many museums etc.; a few local carpenters, fishermen and mechanics; and a former French Consul. This last suave gentleman — with the freedom of the city at his command — was not only a skilled navigator but a skilled schemer as well. None of his companions knew that he was subject to deportation from the United States as an undesirable alien.

The Cheug Ho was finally readied, and our Captain commissioned to set sail with a mixed cargo, including \$10,000 worth of sugar, for Tahiti. He was to sell these American commodities there, returning within six weeks with a cargo of French wares. Instead of returning in six weeks, he returned to Honolulu after eight months, penniless and with but two tons of vanilla beans, then a drug on the market, and a pet pig named "Otto." He had squandered the company's resources, even to the extent of selling launch and equipment, on wine, women and song. Due to his piratical mismanagement, a new appraisal by an expert showed the Cheug Ho to be worth but \$60,000, a loss of \$15,000 in eight months! In Federal and Territorial Courts during the rash of trials that followed, it was established that the vessel

Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation

had been registered in the Captain's name in Tahiti<sup>3</sup>  
"instead of that of the Co., and that this "was due to  
a clerical error in the office of the Governor of Tahiti."

After the courtroom smoke had cleared, we  
find that gullible ~~Polynesian~~ relatives of the ~~captain~~  
~~then current wife~~ captain had bought up most  
of our shares, that we had accepted an I. O. U.,  
for \$3,000, and that the writer had reaffirmed  
his option to purchase the Chey Ho for \$15,000  
in July 1952 in the same good condition in which  
he had sold her. Then the undesirable captain,  
ordered a second time to be deported; and the friendly  
grunting "Otho," never permitted to root in Hawaiian  
soil, sailed from American waters for Tahiti.  
This transpired four or five years ago.

Failing to receive either principal or interest on  
the \$3,000 loan, we Americans engaged an attorney  
in Papeete to represent us. We paid him, as  
requested, \$100 to translate Chey Ho documents  
from English into French to facilitate their  
use in the Papeete Court where our French  
attorney was to plead for us. Then we paid him,  
as decided, an additional \$50 for some seemingly  
good reason. With that last payment, replies  
from Papeete to our anxious enquiries became  
conspicuous by their absence. After about a year's  
frustrating wait, we learned our \$150 had been  
paid in vain.

Wishing to see to the collection of the \$3,000  
debt personally in Tahiti and to take over the  
Chey Ho according to contract to use as a cargo

vessel and botanical headquarters for the collection of <sup>4</sup>  
the fast vanishing native flora of the South Seas,  
the writer wrote for visas to Tonga, New Caledonia and Tahiti.

The Queen of the independent Kingdom of Tonga now will allow him to reside in her realm for six months. The French Governor of New Caledonia, where the writer owns no assets, will allow him to reside in his island for one year. But the Governor of Tahiti, in whose office "by a clerical error," a former French Consul fraudulently registered the Cheung Ho as his own property, has denied the writer a visa to visit his islands! By such a <sup>act</sup> conspiracy, he very effectively sabotages the writer from collecting for himself and other American citizens a \$3,000 debt, and abets and perpetuates a swindle begun by a twice deported French ex-consul.

Because of the rapacious interest shown in the future ownership of the Cheung Ho apparently by a French ex-consul, by a French clerk in the Office of the Governor of Tahiti, by a French Privy Counsellor and a French passport official, the writer is requesting \$60,000 from the French government.

Whether the writer can continue to flood your botanical institutions with herbarium specimens of living plant fossils from the South Seas depends on the outcome of l'affaire Cheung Ho.



Makawao, Maui, T. H.  
April 1, 1932.

State Department,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sirs:

In reply to my letter of March 20 to him, Mr. Farrington, Delegate from Hawaii, wrote me March 27 that he had forwarded my letter about the yacht Cheng Ho and the French ex-consul to your Department for study. In the corner of his letter I noted that a carbon copy had been transmitted or retained thus "cc-Mrs. Turner." Perhaps that will better help identify the correspondence.

Since rushing my letter to Mr. Farrington, I have been able to get photostats made bearing on the case. Please file these with the correspondence.

Sincerely yours,

*C. M. Lyman*

# RECEIPT FOR REGISTERED ARTICLE No.

398

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From Otto Hegener (Sender) Main, S.H.

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April 3, 1952

Mr. Otto Degener  
General Delivery  
Makawao, Maui

Dear Otto:

There is nothing in my files to indicate what letter you wish returned to you. However, I assume it is the enclosed although there seems to be nothing of any import in it.

Please let me know if I can be of any assistance to you.

Sincerely,

David N. Ingman

DNI:gy  
Enc.

*original of Hopper's letter  
to Degener dated 4/21/52*



*Similar to Mr. Edward Lohmeyer, New; Miss Robbins; Gray Herb. Riley Allen; Mr. Bull; Captain Abbot; Mrs. Wm. L. Knowland; Private Office, Ritz, Wash., D.C.; Mr. Taran. Papariki, Tahiti; Rep. John E. Rowley, Mass.;*  
Makawao, Maui, T. H.  
April 3, 1952.

My dear Senator Knowland:

I have written a letter of protest to Mr. Farrington, my Delegate from Hawaii to Congress - who is taking the matter up with the State Department. I am writing you also because the French Consulate, 740 Taylor Street, San Francisco, handling passports for residents of Hawaii, is located in your State, and Hawaii is not far distant from your shores.

I am backing up my statements - contracts are also available in my hands or at my lawyer's for study - with copies of newspaper clippings. These are not selected by me but were just taken at random, whether they favor or disfavor our case. I planned writing you a week ago but the printer had not completed his work.

I was born in Orange, New Jersey, in 1899. I taught Botany at the University of Hawaii, was Naturalist at Hawaii National Park, have published five books about Hawaiian plants and a book about the vessel Cheng Ho and Fiji, and have printed scores of smaller articles of purely scientific interest in technical journals. My botanical finds are scattered throughout Museums and scientific institutions - including the Smithsonian - in the United States and elsewhere. In my chosen field I am respected and moderately well known.

1. In 1940-41 I sailed aboard the palatial 99 ft. long junk-yacht Cheng Ho as one of the guest scientists of Mrs. Arne Archbold of Reservoir Road, Washington, D.C. In all I spent eight months in Fiji as member of the expedition, some of the results being published by Harvard University in "Sargentia."
2. With our entry in the Second World War, the Cheng Ho was sold to the Navy as a weather station for \$1.00.
3. With end of hostilities, the Navy returned the Cheng Ho to Mrs. Archbold, her original owner.
4. It took me four to five years (without remuneration) to work up my finds, and \$6,000 of my own cash to publish my "Naturalist's South Pacific Expedition: Fiji." This was probably why Mrs. Archbold sold me the Cheng Ho at a reasonable price about five years ago. The vessel was to help me continue my search for new South Sea island plants.
5. I then started the "Cheng Ho Trading & Exploring Company," incorporated in Honolulu, with a dozen or so stockholders, most of them American citizens.

6. I sold the Cheng Ho, valued by an appraiser at \$75,000, to our company for shares, reserving however the option to purchase the vessel in the same good condition in which I had turned her over to our company. I also reserved the right to take one trip a year in the Cheng Ho with a fellow-scientist for research work. This last right I never used when I heard the rumor that our captain had been acquitted of murder in France years before.

7. One of these stockholders was the suave Frenchman Captain Eric deBisschop, one-time Vichy-French Consul in Hawaii, an expert navigator and adventurer who had sailed with the Frenchman Tatibouet in a double canoe from Hawaii via South Africa to France. We found him a charming person, and were thus disarmed. We never realized - a fault of our lax immigration officials in Honolulu - that he was even then a deportable undesirable alien running around loose in Honolulu until a ship should arrive to remove him to a French port. If you will check the confidential files of the Honolulu Immigration Station, I believe you will find that deBisschop is a French convict and a former advisor to a Communist War Lord in China. This penniless adventurer, glamorous yet altogether ruthless, thanks to his Hawaiian mother-in-law's savings, controlled about \$5,000 worth of shares in our company. We fools elected him Captain.

8. We furnished the Cheng Ho with cargo, including \$10,000 worth of sugar, a commodity then rationed in Tahiti, and commissioned Capt. deBisschop to sail there. He was to return about six weeks later with French commodities purchased from the sale of the American merchandise entrusted to him.

9. Instead of returning in six weeks, he slipped into port penniless with the Cheng Ho about eight months later, with nothing but 2 Tons of vanilla beans which were then a drug on the market. He had squandered the company's funds - even sold launch and other ship's equipment to pay his debts - on wine, women and song. At our company's expense he even entertained a French-Tahitian movie actress as his concubine aboard the Cheng Ho for five weeks.

10. I had heard from disillusioned former crew members (who likewise owned stock) that Capt. deBisschop intended to sell the vanilla, get some sorely needed engine parts in Honolulu, and thereafter sail away never to return within the 3 mile jurisdiction of the United States. This rumor was probably based on fact as later Federal and Circuit Court proceedings in Honolulu proved that "The vessel was registered in Tahiti last year in the name of the ship's captain Eric deBisschop" when the vessel actually belonged to our company consisting of a dozen or so stockholders, most of them American citizens! When confronted with this evidence, like any cornered thief trying to save himself and accomplices, deBisschop gave the excuse that it "was due to a clerical error in the office of the Governor of Tahiti."

11. We had the Cheng Ho appraised again and this time she was valued at \$60,000, a loss of \$15,000 in 8 months under Captain deBisschop's first-

ical mismanagement!

12. I and other injured stockholders immediately tied up the vessel for debt in Honolulu and started one lawsuit after another, every one of which we won.

13. I and some, but not all, of the other swindled stockholders sold our shares to the deBisschop faction - the fine old Hawaiian lady coming to her son-in-law's rescue with the necessary cash. I, as usual, retained my original option to purchase the Cheng Ho in the same original good condition (appraised at \$75,000) for \$15,000 in July 1952. Also, I and other stockholders foolishly accepted I.O.U.s from the deBisschop faction for a total of about \$2,000. We then allowed deBisschop to sail out of U.S. waters with the Cheng Ho, he incidentally being subject to deportation as an undesirable alien a second time.

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15. To collect the \$2,000 debt from deBisschop for myself and other stockholders, we engaged about a year ago Mr. Hoppensstedt, a Papeete attorney, to represent us. He received from us, his clients, various Court and other documents regarding the Cheng Ho case and was paid \$100 to translate them from English into French so they could be more readily used in a French Court. Later he wangled another \$50 out of us Americans. Now I hear from Tahiti that Mr. Hoppensstedt never made any translations at all though he kept the \$150. Whether he has stolen any of the contract papers or sold them to Capt. deBisschop I do not know.

16. deBisschop, a ne'er-do-well with practically no assets except rights in the Cheng Ho until July 1952, has allowed the vessel, built of costly teak and camphor woods, to deteriorate in a wanton manner. He has kept her in the water continuously for about a year, allowing shipworms to bore into the hull. Caulking will never make good such fundamental damage. He had her pile on the reef in December, causing additional serious damage. He has torn out the interior, making the vessel one vast shell of a hold! This man, who can't even pay the yearly interest on the loan, cannot possibly make good such damage and replace the teak and camphor wood parts he removed to sell or give away. How can I ever use the vessel as my option contract provided?

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visa has been granted me for one year to visit the French colony of New Caledonia (where I have no assets to collect). But where I have a vessel worth \$75,000 and where a former French Consul owes me and other Americans (whom I represent) approximately \$1,000 cash, my request to the Governor of Tahiti for permission to visit his islands "has not been granted."

This is not a simple case where one single French private citizen swindles one single American citizen. Is it not rather a conspiracy involving past and present French Government officials continuing to swindle a group of American citizens? The one swindler is a twice deported French ex-consul. "Due to a clerical error in the office of the Governor of Tahiti," he apparently induced a confederate by "error" or fraud to register the Cheng Ho as the Frenchman's property when she belonged rightfully to an American company. It is a case where this same Frenchman or perhaps his business associate on the new Governor's Privy Council, exerts his influence to sabotage an American citizen (representing other American citizens) from visiting Tahiti to better fight for justice. What I think about the famed attorney M. Henri Hopenstedt, who was engaged to represent us Americans and received \$100, I need not put in writing.

I feel reasonably sure that some government officials in Tahiti consider us American perfectly fair game. We hand out billions of dollars right and left in Paris. Surely we won't protest, so these colonialists believe, if they help themselves to a vessel worth a mere \$75,000. I feel it is time we called a halt to this nonsense of handouts of American tax payers' cash to ingrates, and for a change used the good old-fashioned "big stick" of Teddy Roosevelt's days to demand respect.

In conclusion I, Federal tax payer, appeal to you and some of your colleagues to call these injustices by former and present French Government Officials to the attention of the French Consuls in your State and to the French Ambassador in Washington, and to ask them to make amends.

I wish payment of,

1. The debt amounting to about \$1,000, plus interest, to myself and other American citizens immediately.
2. Sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000) cash. This sum represents the original appraised value of the \$75,000 teak and camphor woods junk-yaht Cheng Ho less the \$15,000 I contracted to pay for her return in her original condition.

Very truly yours,

Makawao, Maui, T. Hawaii.  
April 6, 1958.

Dear Sir:

I am writing to members of my Government, particularly to Mr. Farrington, Delegate to Congress, and to Deputies of your Assemblée Nationale. Now I take the liberty of writing to you as well.

I am an American citizen and taxpayer, born in Orango, New Jersey. I taught Botany at the University of Hawaii, was Naturalist at Hawaii National Park under the Department of the Interior, have published five books about Hawaiian plants and a book about the vessel Cheng Ho and Fiji, and have printed scores of smaller articles of purely scientific interest in technical journals. My botanical finds are scattered throughout Museums and scientific institutions - including the Smithsonian - in the United States and elsewhere. In my chosen field I am respected and moderately well known.

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7. One of these stockholders was the suave Frenchman Capt. Aris de-

Biaschop, one-time Vichy-French Consul in Hawaii, an expert navigator and adventurer who sailed with the Frenchman Tatibouat in a *Jeune* canoe from Hawaii via South Africa to France. He found him a charming person, and were thus disarmed. He never realized - a fault of our lax immigration officials in Honolulu - that he was even then a deportable undesirable alien running around loose in Honolulu until a ship would arrive to take him away to some French port. This penniless adventurer, glamorous yet altogether ruthless, thanks to his Hawaiian mother-in-law's savings, controlled about \$5,000 worth of shares in our company; I controlled more. He fooled elected him Captain.

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readily used in a French Court. Later he sampled another \$40 out of  
us Americans. Now I hear from Tahiti that Mr. Hoppstedt never made  
any translations at all though he kept the \$100. Whether he has stolen  
any of the contract papers or sold them to Capt. *deSisachop* depends  
on his professional integrity.

16. *deSisachop*, a ne'er-do-well with practically no assets except rights  
in the *Chang Ho* until July 1962, has allowed the vessel, built of cost-  
ly teak and camphor woods, to deteriorate in a ruinous manner. He has  
kept her in the water continuously for about a year, allowing ship-  
worms to bore into the hull. Caulking will never make good such funda-  
mental damage. He had her pile on the reef in December, causing addi-  
tional serious damage. He has torn out the interior, making the ves-  
sel one vast shell of a hulk! This man, who cannot even pay the yearly  
interest on the \$3,000 loan, cannot possibly make good such damage  
and replace the teak and camphor woods parts he removed to sell or  
give away. How can I ever use the vessel as my option contract pro-  
vided?

17. To collect the debt for myself and other stockholders, to take  
over the *Chang Ho* - I was not then aware of her shipwreck and other  
damage - in July 1962, to start a new company, and to do some botan-  
izing, I last December requested visas for Tonga, New Caledonia and  
Tahiti. A visa has been granted me by the Independent Kingdom of Tonga  
for six months. As you can see from the enclosed copies, a visa has  
been granted me for one year to visit the French Colony of New Caledonia  
(where I have no assets to collect. But where I have a vessel  
worth 70,000 and where a former French Consul once was and other  
Americans approximately 25,000 each, my request to the Governor of  
Tahiti for permission to visit his islands has not been granted.  
Quite a coincidence!

18. This is not a simple case where one single French private citizen  
swindles one single American private citizen. Is it not rather a con-  
spiracy involving past and present French Government officials contin-  
uing a swindle begun in Honolulu by a professional crook with a police  
record in France?

Some of us stockholders believe that because we taxpayers hand out  
billions of dollars right and left in Paris, some greedy past and pres-  
ent petty officials in tiny Tahiti feel we will not protest their steal-  
ing a mere \$3,000 from us good natured, stupid Americans. Naturally,

54

if we are swindled in July, I shall try to emulate Emile Zola and write articles for the newspapers about "mal de mer in Tahiti" for the American and French public to read. The average citizen is honest and will not tolerate injustice.

Of course, I am disturbed that perhaps the scoundrels in Tahiti may take subtle action against Mr. Fordman for wishing to become my partner and showing friendship to Americans. With Tahiti so close to American territory it is a mystery to me why your Colonial Office in Paris permits the wrecking of goodwill built up by "Friendship Trains" etc., etc., by men who have never been in America or are prejudiced against her because of their deportation as undesirable aliens. Why does not the Colonial Office for a change appoint men with savoir faire of American ways, like M. Fordman or M. Taran (who have lived in America) to places of responsibility?

Yours very truly,

*Dupl to English*

Hakawao, Maui, T. H., U.S.A.  
April 8, 1963.

Dear Sirs:

May I be so bold as to request that the Assemblée Nationale investigate what transpires in your beautiful colony of Tahiti. All is not well. So I am taking the liberty of writing to members of your Assemblée in Paris and to members of my Congress in Washington.

I am an American citizen born in Orange, New Jersey, U.S.A., in 1899. I taught Botany at the University of Hawaii, was Naturalist of Hawaii National Park under the Department of the Interior, have published five books about Hawaiian plants and a book about the junk-yaht *Chang Ho* in Fiji, and have printed scores of smaller articles of purely scientific interest in technical journals. My botanical discoveries are scattered in Museums throughout the world. In my chosen field, I am respected and well known.

1. In 1940-41 I sailed aboard the palatial 98 ft., long junk-yaht *Chang Ho* as one of the great-scientists of Mrs. Anne Archbold of Washington. In all I spent eight months in Fiji as member of the expedition, some of the results being published by Harvard University.
2. With entry of the United States into the Second World War, the *Chang Ho* was sold to the U.S. Navy for \$1.00 for patriotic reasons.
3. With end of hostilities, the U.S. Navy returned the *Chang Ho* to Mrs. Archbold, her original owner, for the \$1.00.
4. It took me four to five years (without remuneration) to work up my finds, and \$6,000 of my own cash to publish my book "Naturalist's South Pacific Expedition: Fiji." This was probably why Mrs. Archbold sold me the *Chang Ho* at a reasonable price about five years ago. The vessel was to help me continue my search for new South Sea Island plants.
5. I then started the "Chang Ho Trading & Exploring Company," incorporated in Honolulu, U.S.A., with a dozen or so stockholders, most of them American citizens.
6. I sold the *Chang Ho*, valued by appraisal at \$75,000, to our company for shares, reserving however the option to purchase my vessel in July 1952 for \$15,000 in the same good condition in which I had turned her over to our company. I also reserved the right to take one trip a year in the *Chang Ho* with a fellow-scientist for research. I never took advantage of this right when I heard the Captain, who lived long in Cannes before 1932, had a police record.
7. One of these stockholders was the suave Frenchman Capt. Aris Demichschop, one-time Vichy-French Consul in Hawaii, an expert navigator who, with M. Tetibouet, sailed in a double canoe from Hawaii to France. He found him a charming person, and were thus disarmed. He never realized that he was then a deportable *chasse-marché* after running about loose in Honolulu until a ship should arrive to take him away to a French port. This penniless adventurer, who lived for a long in Cannes, thanks to his mother-in-law's savings, controlled about \$5,000 worth of shares in our company. I controlled more. He foolishly elected him Capt.
8. He furnished the *Chang Ho* with cargo, including \$10,000 worth of a sugar then rationed in Tahiti, and co-opted Capt. Demichschop to sail her there, he was to return about six weeks later with French commodities purchased from the proceeds of the sale of the American



merchandise entrusted to him.

9. Instead of returning in six weeks, he limped into port penniless with the Cheng Ho about eight months later, with nothing but 3 tons of vanilla beans which were then a drug on the market. He had squandered our company's funds - even sold launch and other ship's equipment to pay his debts - on wine, women and song. At our company's expense he even entertained a French-Tahitian actress aboard the Cheng Ho for five weeks.

10. I had learned from former disillusioned crew members (who likewise owned stock) that Capt. deBisschop intended to sell the vanilla to buy some sorely needed engine parts in Honolulu, and thereafter sail away never to return within the 2 mile jurisdiction of the United States. This rumor was probably based on fact as later Federal and Circuit Court proceedings in Honolulu proved that "The vessel was registered in Tahiti last year in the name of the ship's captain Aris deBisschop" when the vessel actually belonged to our company consisting of a dozen or so stockholders, most of them American citizens! When confronted with this evidence, like any cornered thief trying to save himself and accomplices, deBisschop gave the excuse that it "was due to a clerical error in the office of the Governor of Tahiti." He in Hawaii remember the removal of a recent Governor of Tahiti following a cement scandal.

11. We had the Cheng Ho appraised again and this time she was valued at \$60,000, a loss of \$18,000 in 8 months under Capt. deBisschop's pitiful mismanagement!

12. I and other injured stockholders immediately tied up our vessel for debt in Honolulu and started one lawsuit after another, every one of which we won. The enclosed copies of newspaper clippings, selected at random whether they favor or disfavor deBisschop, will give you an idea how the French ex-consul and the Cheng Ho figured in the news.

13. I and some, but not all, of the other swindled stockholders sold our shares to the deBisschop faction, the fine old Hawaiian lady coming to her son-in-law's rescue with the necessary cash. I retained my original option to purchase the Cheng Ho in the same original good condition (appraised at \$78,000) for \$18,000 in July 1962. Also, I and other stockholders foolishly accepted I.O.U.s from the deBisschop faction for a total of about \$1,000. We then allowed deBisschop to sail out of U.S. waters with the Cheng Ho, he incidentally being subject to deportation as an undesirable alien a second time.

14. My option to purchase the Cheng Ho in July for \$18,000 is not far off. It was my intention to incorporate anew with the Tahitian shipping agent and Chandler M. Oscar Nordman as partner. It was my purpose, as originally five years ago, to use the Cheng Ho as a general cargo and trading vessel, I botanizing various isolated South Sea Islands while cargo is being unloaded and loaded.

15. To collect the \$8,000 debt from deBisschop for myself and other stockholders, we engaged about a year ago M. Henri Roppenstedt, a Paapeste attorney, to represent us. He received from us, his clients, various Court and other documents regarding the Cheng Ho case and was paid \$100 to translate them from English into French so they could be more readily used in a French Court. Later he wangled another \$50 out of us Americans. Now I learn from Tahiti that M. Roppenstedt never made any translations at all even though he kept our \$150. Whether he has stolen any of the contract papers or sold them to Capt. deBisschop depends on his professional integrity.

16. deBisschop, a ne'er-do-well with practically no assets except control of the Cheng Ho until July 1962, has allowed the Cheng Ho, built

3

of costly teak and camphor woods, to deteriorate in a wanton manner. He has kept her in tropical waters continuously for about a year, allowing shipworms to bore into the hull. Caulking will never make good such fundamental damage. He had her pile up on the reef in December, causing additional serious injury. He has torn out the interior, making the vessel one vast shell of a hold! This man, who cannot even pay the yearly interest on the \$5,000 loan, cannot possibly make good such damage and replace the teak and camphor woods parts he had removed to sell or give away. How can I ever use the vessel as my option contract provided?

17. To collect the debt for myself and other stockholders, to take over the Cheng Ho - I was not then aware of her shipwreck and serious neglect - in July 1952, to start a new company, and to do some botanizing, I last December requested visas to visit Tonga, New Caledonia, and Tahiti. A visa has been granted me by the independent Kingdom of Tonga for six months. As you can see from the enclosed copies, a visa has been granted me for one year to visit the French Colony of New Caledonia (where I have no assets to collect). But where I have a vessel worth \$75,000 and where a former French Consul owes me and other Americans whom I represent approximately \$5,000 cash, my request to the Governor of Tahiti for permission to visit his islands "has not been granted." Coincidence remarkable!

This is not a simple case whereby one single French exconvict swindles one single American private citizen. It is not rather a conspiracy involving past and present French Government officials continuing to swindle a group of American citizens? That is what I wish your and my Governments to investigate. The one swindler is a twice deported French ex-consul. "Due to a clerical error in the office of the Governor of Tahiti" the Cheng Ho was registered, by "error" or fraud, as the Frenchman's property when she belonged rightfully to an American company. Then perhaps this same ex-consul or some interested associate on the Governor's Privy Council, exerts his influence to sabotage an American citizen (representing other American citizens) from visiting Tahiti to better fight for justice. What I think of the famed attorney M. Henri Hoppenstedt who was engaged to represent us Americans and accepted \$150, I need not put in writing. Why send a "Friendship Train" to America and then allow a few greedy Colonials to wreck this favorable publicity? An investigation will avoid this.

Because of the rapacious interest shown by French Government officials, past and present, in the coming ownership of the Cheng Ho and the payment of the \$5,000 debt, I request your Assemblée Nationale to investigate the situation in your Colony of Tahiti. I feel your Government should,

1. Immediately pay me and other ~~stake~~ stockholders approximately \$5,000, plus interest.
2. On July, 1952, pay me sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000), which sum represents the original appraised value (\$75,000) of the teak and camphor woods Cheng Ho less the \$15,000 I contracted to pay for her return in her original condition.

Yours very truly,



TERRITORY OF HAWAII  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HONOLULU

April 8, 1952

Mr. Otto Degener  
c/o General Delivery  
Makawao, Maui

Dear Mr. Degener:

When I received your recent letter concerning the junk, Ching Ho, I referred it to the Department of the Attorney General for study and recommendations. The following is quoted from the Attorney General's letter dated March 31, 1952:

"The Ching Ho, which is now in Tahiti, is apparently owned by the Ching Ho Trading and Exploring Co., Ltd., a Hawaiian corporation, and is reported to be registered as a French vessel in Papete, Tahiti. Mr. Degener claims to have an option to purchase the vessel in July, 1952.

"The solution to Mr. Degener's problem is for him to exercise his option in July 1952 by purchasing the Ching Ho from the Hawaiian corporation which presently owns the vessel. In this matter the Governor of Hawaii cannot be of assistance to Mr. Degener. If Degener purchases the vessel he will then for the first time be entitled to possession of the Ching Ho, which can be accomplished by the necessary legal steps in the courts of Tahiti. The Governor of Hawaii could then only assist Mr. Degener by requesting the authorities in Tahiti to allow Degener to enter Tahiti in order that he be afforded an opportunity to recover possession and control of the Ching Ho."

As indicated by the Attorney General, I can be of assistance to you when it is necessary for you or your representative to go to Tahiti to take over the Ching Ho. Since this problem has already been before the courts, I do not feel that the Office of the Governor should make a direct effort to



Mr. Degener

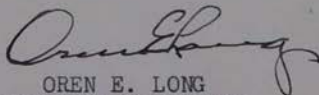
-2-

April 8, 1952

settle the points at issue. I will be glad to write to the Governor of Tahiti in behalf of your desire to enter that island. Your check in the amount of \$1.00 is being returned.

Before writing to the Governor of Tahiti, I shall wait to receive further comments from you.

Sincerely yours,



OREN E. LONG  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

Encl.

P.S. With reference to your letter of March 14, we did not receive any word regarding the arrival of the American Consul of Noumea. If he did come to Honolulu, he did not contact the Governor's office at any time.

  
O.E.L.

H. HOPPENSTEDT

AVOCAT - DÉPENSEUR

BOITE POSTALE : 617

PAPEETE - TAHITI

OCEANIE FRANÇAISE

PAPEETE, LE

April 8<sup>th</sup>

19 52

Mr.

Otto DEGENER

Gen. Def. Makawao Maui

H A W A I

Dear Sir

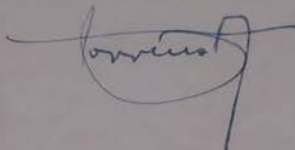
According to your request, I have written to Mr. The Consul General de France in San Francisco and explained him that after having inquired for months and months in your Cheng Ho affair, I had given you all details through Mr. Ingman and I was waiting his answer.

I have received your letter of 25 th. ult; I do not understand your writing concerning my transmission of confidential carbon copies and advice to Capt. De Bisshop and Mr. Gallois. Who is the person who writes you such lies !!!

You can inform any member of the Congress you want ; I can answer them that the Cheng Ho affair is not a fiasco but may become it because you left unanswered my letter to Mr. Ingman of October 19 th. 1951.

Justice I want, just like yourself; but I want it through thorough study of the question; I did not translate your documents because I feel it unnecessary after the informations I got here and which I transmitted to you through Mr. Ingman; I was waiting an answer which would have allowed me to act in the best of your interests; you drop the matter you loose time once more.

You say the Cheng Ho affair is a fiasco ? No, sir, but it may become it the way you are acting .



DR. PHILIP M. CORBOY  
TELEPHONE 56418  
565 YOUNG HOTEL BUILDING  
HONOLULU 13, T. H.

April 11, 1952.

Dear Mr. Degener:

In reply to your request concerning  
l'Affaire CHENG HO please be informed that  
the vessel in question is supposed to be out  
of Tahitian waters and on its way to Honolulu.

Hoping this bit of information will be  
helpful to you, I am,

respectfully yours,

*P. M. Corboy M.D.*  
P.M. Corboy M.D.



4/14/52

Dear Governor Long:

Thank you for your informational letter of April 8.

~~As~~ I own the ~~option~~ <sup>this July 1952</sup> to purchase the Cheug Ho at \$15,000, at the appraised value of \$75,000. <sup>during her first voyage lasting</sup> ~~As~~ the vessel <sup>for</sup> eight months depreciated \$15,000, I hesitate to pay out \$15,000 for what obviously is not worth \$75,000. This is my non-legal attitude towards ~~the~~ any Attorney General's findings.

<sup>As a layman and taxpayer</sup> I have complained to the same of our Congress in Washington and to a number of the Deputies of the Assemblée Nationale in Paris concerning the entire Cheug Ho fiasco. <sup>perhaps</sup> ~~which~~ This prompted a letter, date April 11, from Dr. Corboy, French Consular agent, to write me under date of April 11: "In reply to your request concerning l'Affaire Cheug Ho please be informed that the vessel in question is supposed to be out of Tahitian waters and on its way to Honolulu," apparently.

~~As~~ The Cheug Ho situation is in a state of flux, ~~the~~ I shall do little until I get more information. Thank you again for your interest in this matter.

<sup>Left part</sup> By the way, I have been sending out the enclosed sheets to Washington & Paris.

Regarding my March 14 letter concerning the American Consul of Noumea I regret I misunderstood the cable I received from Papete about him.

He, Mr. Haring, was not coming to Honolulu  
at all but to ~~Papeete~~ going to Papeete on  
official business. ~~He~~ <sup>He</sup> ~~stayed~~ <sup>learned today</sup> 9 ~~he~~ he studied  
pertinent <sup>court</sup> documents & contracts but have not  
heard from Mr. Haring direct



THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO  
American Consulate,  
Nouméa, New Caledonia,  
April 16, 1952.

Mr. Otto Degener,  
Makawoo, Mani,  
Territory of Hawaii.

Dear Mr. Degener:

I have your letter of March 27, 1952, addressed to me during my short visit in Tahiti. I understand from your letter and from the correspondence in the hands of Oscar G. Nordman, that the Consulate could be of most assistance to you if it could assure you that you could enter Tahiti prior to the date of July when you wish to assert an option on the junk, "Cheng-Ho" and/or to prosecute some legal action in the local courts.

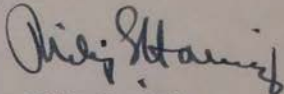
On an impersonal basis, but to assure that American citizens would be given every opportunity to exercise legal claims, including their access to local courts when necessary, I inquired whether an American citizen would be denied a visa to Tahiti if such purpose were his sole reason for requesting a visa to Tahiti. I was given every assurance that seeking to assert a legal claim, including application to Tahiti courts, would not be a barrier to the issuance of a visitor's visa to an American citizen. However, I was also told that it is occasionally difficult to establish from applicants exactly what their purpose is in seeking to visit Tahiti. In some instances French consular officers have sometimes referred the applications to the Governor of the French Establishments in Oceania and visas have been denied.

You may or may not be applicable to this case, but I was given to understand that your application at one time was put on the basis of seeking only to enter Tahiti to do botanical research. Erroneous as that may be, I can only suggest that you make a brief and direct application to the nearest French



Consul again, setting forth precisely your purposes in seeking a visit to Tahiti and offering at the same time evidence of your return passage or assets to assure the Tahitian Government that you will depart at the end of an approved visit.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Philip E. Haring". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "P".

Philip E. Haring  
American Consul

210.9  
PEH:cjj

New address: Gen. Del., Honolulu, T. H.  
April 17, 1952.

Dear Oscar:

I have left the Island of Maui, and my address is simply the above. In about a month I shall be in New York and Washington. Just write me to the above address and my mail will be forwarded to whatever city I happen to be. My sister lives in New York, not too far from Washington.

Do you know that Raoul B. was appointed against the wishes of the French Ambassador in Washington? I believe Daladier pushed the appointment. Why, I do not know.

I have your long welcome letter of April 2 and I think we must realize that since we started corresponding in December, we have accomplished little and that the Cheung Ho is gradually slipping away from both of us.

1. First of all you have never informed me what profit I would get yearly from the Cheung Ho should I get her back - remember, it would be in French Colonial France, hardly practical for me to spend.

2. You have never written me what you would contribute to the partnership if I turn over 51% of the shares in the vessel, and never mailed me a tentative partnership agreement as requested.

3. During the last five years de Busschop's actions have cost me a goodly sum in lawyers' and Court commissions and fees. This money is actually

expenses in keeping the Cheep Ho available for our contemplated company. My trip to Washington and back to Hawaii next month will alone cost me another \$1,000 or so.

4. Our partnership agreement is so hazy - hardly 2 months before the option lapses forever - that I am discouraged regarding it and am hardly bothering about it. <sup>as I am not very serious</sup> I am waiting for your next move. Instead of bothering about a hazy partnership, as you know I am working on the entirely different problem of asking the French government in Paris to pay me \$60,000 damages for the apparent imminent theft of the Cheep Ho <sup>from my present</sup> French government officials.

5. I cannot waste good and sure \$15,000 in my pocket for an unknown quantity of French Colonial Francs that I may or may not earn by future business with the Cheep Ho. What if the vessel sinks? Is it insured? For how much? etc. Also, if I am not allowed in French Territory how do I use up any French francs I earn?

6. You and the American Consul believe I want to go to Tahiti to collect plants. I don't at all! Only if I needed to go to Tahiti to untangle the Cheep Ho - Hopkinstedts farce would I collect plants there for recreation. It takes money and work



to collect plants - it is no favor to me to be<sup>2</sup>  
allowed to spend my money and my time to  
work up Tahitian plants free for the French  
Government! The Government of New Guinea  
has offered to conduct me to four different places  
above the snow line on their fascinating is-  
land, all expenses paid, including sight see-  
ing trips. Why should I bother with Tahiti?  
To be sure, it would be nice to see Tahiti but  
no more interesting than my past visits to  
such islands as Bermuda, Cuba and Nassau  
in the Atlantic or Hawaii and Liji in the  
Pacific. Furthermore, should I collect plants  
in the mountains of Tahiti; a governor,  
a privy councillor, a sea captain and an  
advocate might all go on a hunting trip  
for pigs or goats in the same vicinity.  
Who knows how close a stray shot  
may come in my direction. No thank  
you, Oscar, botanizing in the mountains  
of Tahiti is too dangerous.

7. There is no need at all for \$15,000 to get the  
Chey Ho. You have my Power of Attorney. Hop-  
plustedt was to attach the Chey Ho for the  
\$3,000+ debt de Bisschop owes me and friends.  
You should have attached the vessel for debt  
while she was on the drydock - now she  
may not return to Tahiti before July!

I can give you Power-of-Attorney to collect another \$3,000+, a debt de/Bisschop owes Mrs. Robinson of Maui (she is mother-in-law of George Archer Ceram whom you must know). In other words you should have attached the Cheung Ho long ago for a debt of almost \$7000 and forced payment or put up the Cheung Ho for public auction to the highest bidder. No one would have bid against us two so long as I own the July option. Why don't you do that immediately? Cannot you attach her when she reaches any French port. I do hear, however, that the Chinese Tahitian <sup>lady</sup> Mrs. Morgan is now on the Cheung Ho on her way to Honolulu, de/B. may be trying to run off with the vessel to a place like Fiji. Look out. I warned your Governor that if the Cheung Ho were allowed to escape, I would hold him responsible.

Now I shall read your April 2 letter over again and answer the questions as they come:

Do you remember the 13 photostats of published Cheung Ho matter of which I mailed you a set? I had 200 sets printed and today I have only about 25 sets left. I must have mailed about 175 to Congressmen in Washington and Deputies in Paris. An investigation by both governments is sure to follow. <sup>Tomorrow I am handing my 4-page letter translated into French</sup> As discovered in the Honolulu Courts about 5 years ago, the Cheung Ho was registered in Tahiti by de/Bisschop in "error". I was never for it and can-

I will have 200 copies of the University. I will have 200 copies of the University. I will have 200 copies of the University.







sider the registry fraudulent. But if you wish to <sup>be</sup> partner it may be just as well not to confuse things at this time about what flag the Cheep Ho is under. We should tackle one problem at a time.

My confidence in your integrity I showed in signing over my Power-of-Attorney but signing over the option to you is quite another matter. We are both over 50 years old. Should you fall ill or be hit by an automobile and die, you can imagine what would happen to the Cheep Ho ownership. She would belong to your heirs. It is not a question of honesty but just good business not to risk getting into such a situation. The way to avoid that is for you to leave cash in escrow in a Honolulu bank to the value of the Cheep Ho. Then I could always "buy" the Cheep Ho with that from your heirs should anything happen to you.

You ask how much cash I can spare to help buy the Cheep Ho. That I have already answered. Send me a partnership contract that you think is fair. I will go over it with my lawyer and make changes if necessary. Then when such papers are signed, I shall try to get the additional \$3,000 debt from Mrs. Robinson to send you to collect. (You can start with mine first to hold the vessel.) That will be equivalent to about \$7000 of the option price. But naturally Mrs. Robinson will either want some of your 5% of the shares (in the name of her French son-in-law Craun) or payment of that \$3000 from profits of our new company. The latter would be best. Why have 3 partners? But we move too slowly. July <sup>may</sup> ~~be~~ <sup>can arrange</sup> here before I ~~can~~ <sup>can</sup> finish you & Mrs. Robinson (who lives on Maui).

TO SHIPS AT SEA

**FAST**

# DIRECT

NUMBER

3.65

**CHECK**

TIME

# RADIOGRAM

**SENDER'S**

NAME AND ADDRESS

to

SENDER PLEASE SPECIFY ROUTE:

## INSERT "RCA"

Please rush complete ~~draft~~ <sup>(Chengho)</sup> report State Department  
and write general news for lawyer  
<sup>(and)</sup> dees Degener Honolulu.

Send the above Radiogram subject to the conditions, regulations and rates as set forth in the applicable tariff of RCA Communications, Inc., and on file with the regulatory authorities.

**RCA COMMUNICATIONS, INC., A SERVICE OF RADIO CORPORATION OF AMERICA**

PETITION N° 62 du 20 Avril 1952

M. Otto DEGENER, citoyen américain résidant aux Iles Hawai se plaint, d'une part de ce qu'un visa d'entrée à Tahiti lui ait été refusé par les Autorités locales, d'autre part des agissements de ses associés pour l'exploitation commerciale en Océanie de la jonque "CHENG HO" sur laquelle il possède des droits.

Cette pétition a été renvoyée le 7 Novembre 1952 au Ministre de la France d'Outre-Mer sur le rapport fait par M. MINJOZ, au nom de la Commission du suffrage universel, du règlement et des pétitions.

---

Réponse de M. le Ministre de la France  
d'Outre-Mer.

---

Monsieur le Président,

Vous avez bien voulu me transmettre aux fins d'examen une pétition de M. Otto DEGENER, citoyen américain, résidant aux Iles Hawai, qui se plaint, d'une part de ce qu'un visa d'entrée à Tahiti lui ait été refusé par les Autorités locales, d'autre part des agissements de ses associés pour l'exploitation commerciale en Océanie de la jonque "CHENG-HO" sur laquelle il possède des droits.

J'ai l'honneur de vous faire connaître que le Gouverneur des Etablissements Français de l'Océanie à qui avait été communiquée précédemment une première requête de M. DEGENER adressée directement au Département de la France d'Outre-Mer, m'a informé à la date du 24 Juillet dernier, qu'il avait accordé à l'intéressé le visa d'entrée à Tahiti qu'il sollicitait. M. DEGENER a donc déjà reçu satisfaction sur le premier point qui fait l'objet de sa pétition.

En ce qui concerne par ailleurs les conflits qui l'opposent, en Océanie, à M. de BISSCHOP ou à d'autres personnes, pour la propriété ou l'exploitation de la jonque "CHENG-HO", le Gouverneur des Etablissements Français de l'Océanie, à qui des renseignements avaient été demandés sur cette affaire, a fait savoir qu'il s'agissait d'un différend d'ordre commercial qui relevait uniquement de la compétence

.../...



des tribunaux de Papeete et auquel, bien entendu, l'Administration ne peut que rester étrangère.

Contrairement aux allégations de M. DEGENER, l'Autorité Administrative locale n'a nullement pris parti dans ce différend. Seule, la francisation de la jonque "CHENG-HO", intervenue par erreur à la suite des démarches faites par M. de BISSCHOP, pourrait être reprochée au service des Douanes de Papeete, mais cette erreur matérielle a été réparée aussitôt qu'elle a été connue.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Président, l'expression de ma haute considération.

Signé : Pierre Fleisslin.

Waialua, Oahu (Hawaii), U. S. A.

le 20 avril, 1952

Monsieur,

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17. Afin de faire des recherches botaniques, afin de recouvrer les dettes pour les autres actionnaires et pour moi-même, et afin de reprendre contrôle du "Cheng Ho" en juillet 1952 pour commencer une nouvelle société (j'ignorais alors l'accident sur le récif et le mauvais entretien sérieux et continu), j'ai demandé en décembre des visas pour visiter Tonga, la Nouvelle-Calédonie, et Tahiti. J'ai pu avoir un visa pour le royaume indépendant de Tonga pour six mois, et j'ai des lettres du consul général français à San Francisco, m'accordant un visa d'un an pour visiter la Nouvelle-Calédonie (où je n'ai pas de possessions à recouvrer). Mais là où j'ai un vaisseau dont la valeur originelle était de \$75.000, et là où un ancien consul français nous doit à moi et à d'autres citoyens américains environ \$3.000, ma demande de visa "has not been granted" ("n'a pas été accordée"). Coïncidence remarquable!

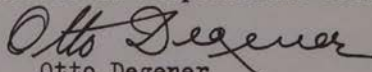
Ce n'est pas un simple cas où un seul citoyen français a escroqué un seul citoyen américain. N'est-ce pas plutôt une conspiration entre d'anciens et d'actuels fonctionnaires du gouvernement français qui continuent à escroquer un groupe de citoyens américains? Le meneur du jeu est ancien consul français deux fois expulsé par le gouvernement des Etats-Unis. "Dû à une faute de copiste au bureau du gouverneur de Tahiti", le "Cheng Ho" a été enregistré, par "erreur" ou par fraude, comme propriété d'un Français alors qu'il appartenait à une société américaine. Alors, peut-être que ce même ex-consul ou quelque associé intéressé membre du conseil privé du gouverneur font agir leur influence pour escroquer un citoyen américain (défenseur d'autres citoyens américains) et pour l'empêcher de visiter Tahiti pour mieux faire valoir ses droits. Et par coïncidence aussi, le consulat à San-Francisco, d'où vient le refus de visa pour Tahiti, emploie Raoul Bernard, ami intime du Capitaine et de Madame deBisschop. Ce que je pense du fameux avocat français Maître Henri Hoppenstedt, qui a été engagé à nous représenter, et qui a accepté \$150, je n'en dis rien. Mais pourquoi envoyer un "Train de la Reconnaissance Française," et puis permettre à quelques fonctionnaires avaricieux et

malhonnêtes (parmi tous les justes) de détruire toute cette entente amicale, pour gagner \$63.000? Une enquête évitera tout cela. Votre ancien consul à Honolulu a des renseignements de première main sur le Capitaine deBisschop et l'affaire du "Cheng Ho", puisqu'il s'est occupé de l'affaire il y a cinq ans.

A cause de l'intérêt rapace montré des fonctionnaires anciens et actuels, du gouvernement français, pour le prochain contrôle du "Cheng Ho" et le paiement de la dette de \$3.000, je demande à votre Assemblée Nationale de faire une enquête sur l'affaire du "Cheng Ho" dans votre colonie de Tahiti. Je pense que votre gouvernement devrait:

1. Nous rendre à moi et aux autres actionnaires offensés environ \$3.000 (trois mille dollars) plus les intérêts.
2. Me rembourser à moi \$60.000 (soixante mille dollars), ce qui représente la valeur originelle de \$75.000 (soixante-quinze mille dollars) du bateau unique en bois de teck et de camphre, moins \$15.000 (quinze mille dollars) que je me suis engagé à payer le "Cheng Ho."

Veuillez agréer, monsieur, l'assurance de ma respectueuse considération.

  
Otto Degener



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17. Afin de faire des recherches botaniques, afin de recouvrer les dettes pour les autres actionnaires et pour moi-même, et afin de reprendre contrôle du "Cheng Ho" en juillet 1952 pour commencer une nouvelle société (j'ignorais alors l'accident sur le récif et le mauvais entretien sérieux et continu), j'ai demandé en décembre des visas pour visiter Tonga, la Nouvelle-Calédonie, et Tahiti. J'ai pu avoir un visa pour le royaume indépendant de Tonga pour six mois, et j'ai des lettres du consul général français à San Francisco, m'accordant un visa d'un an pour visiter la Nouvelle-Calédonie (où je n'ai pas de possessions à recouvrer). Mais là où j'ai un vaisseau dont la valeur originelle était de \$75.000, et là où un ancien consul français nous doit à moi et à d'autres citoyens américains environ \$3.000, ma demande de visa "has not been granted" ("n'a pas été accordée"). Coïncidence remarquable!

Ce n'est pas un simple cas où un seul citoyen français a escroqué un seul citoyen américain. N'est-ce pas plutôt une conspiration entre d'anciens et d'actuels fonctionnaires du gouvernement français qui continuent à escroquer un groupe de citoyens américains? Le meneur du jeu est ancien consul français deux fois expulsé par le gouvernement des Etats-Unis. "Dû à une faute de copiste au bureau du gouverneur de Tahiti", le "Cheng Ho" a été enregistré, par "erreur" ou par fraude, comme propriété d'un Français alors qu'il appartenait à une société américaine. Alors, peut-être que ce même ex-consul ou quelque associé intéressé membre du conseil privé du gouverneur font agir leur influence pour escroquer un citoyen américain (défenseur d'autres citoyens américains) et pour l'empêcher de visiter Tahiti pour mieux faire valoir ses droits. Et par coïncidence aussi, le consulat à San-Francisco, d'où vient le refus de visa pour Tahiti, emploie Raoul Bernard, ami intime du Capitaine et de Madame deBisschop. Ce que je pense du fameux avocat français Maître Henri Hoppenstedt, qui a été engagé à nous représenter, et qui a accepté \$150, je n'en dis rien. Mais pourquoi envoyer un "Train de la Reconnaissance Française," et puis permettre à quelques fonctionnaires avaricieux et

malhonnêtes (parmi tous les justes) de détruire toute cette entente amicale, pour gagner \$63.000? Une enquête évitera tout cela. Votre ancien consul à Honolulu a des renseignements de première main sur le Capitaine deBisschop et l'affaire du "Cheng Ho", puisqu'il s'est occupé de l'affaire il y a cinq ans.

A cause de l'intérêt rapace montré des fonctionnaires anciens et actuels, du gouvernement français, pour le prochain contrôle du "Cheng Ho" et le paiement de la dette de \$3.000, je demande à votre Assemblée Nationale de faire une enquête sur l'affaire du "Cheng Ho" dans votre colonie de Tahiti. Je pense que votre gouvernement devrait:

1. Nous rendre à moi et aux autres actionnaires offensés environ \$3.000 (trois mille dollars) plus les intérêts.
2. Me rembourser à moi \$60.000 (soixante mille dollars), ce qui représente la valeur originelle de \$75.000 (soixante-quinze mille dollars) du bateau unique en bois de teck et de camphre, moins \$15.000 (quinze mille dollars) que je me suis engagé à payer le "Cheng Ho."

Veuillez agréer, monsieur, l'assurance de ma respectueuse considération.

*Otto Degener*  
Otto Degener



*(English)  
Hawaii  
est sud)*

Waialua, Oahu (Hawaii), U. S. A.  
le 20 avril, 1952

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Monsieur,

Pourriez-vous deviner pourquoi j'ai pu avoir facilement un visa pour la Nouvelle-Calédonie, mais que par contre, je n'ai pas pu en obtenir un pour Tahiti? Tout ne va pas bien dans cette île. Est-ce que j'ose demander à l'Assemblée Nationale d'enquêter ce qui se passe dans cette colonie ravissante? J'écris en même temps aux membres de notre "Congress" à Washington, D. C.

Je suis citoyen américain, né à Orange (New Jersey) en 1899. J'ai été professeur de botanique à l'Université d'Hawaii; et naturaliste au Parc National d'Hawaii, dans le "Department of the Interior" du gouvernement américain. Je suis l'auteur de cinq livres sur la flore hawaïenne, et d'un sixième sur le yacht "Cheng Ho" aux Iles de Viti, aussi bien que d'un grand nombre d'articles d'intérêt purement scientifiques dans des revues botaniques. Mes découvertes botaniques sont répandues dans des musées de tous les pays. Ma réputation est faite dans le domaine de la botanique; je suis bien connu, et je possède deux diplômes universitaires.

1. En 1940-41, je me suis embarqué à bord du jonque-yacht luxueux (30 mètres de long) "Cheng Ho", invité par Mrs. Anne Archbold de Washington, D. C., en tant que savant. En tout, j'ai passé huit mois aux Iles de Viti comme membre de l'expédition, et quelques-uns des résultats de mes recherches ont été publiés par Harvard University.

2. Quand les Etats-Unis sont entrés dans la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale, le "Cheng Ho" a été vendu à la Marine Américaine pour des raisons patriotiques, pour un dollar.

3. A la fin des hostilités, la Marine Américaine a rendu le "Cheng Ho" à Mrs. Archbold, sa propriétaire d'origine, pour le même prix (un dollar).

4. J'ai mis quatre ou cinq ans (sans récompense) à préparer mes découvertes, et la publication de mon livre "Naturalist's South Pacific Expedition: Fiji" (dont je suis moi-même l'éditeur) m'a coûté \$6.000 (six mille dollars). C'est probablement à cause de son intérêt scientifique que Mrs. Archbold m'a vendu le "Cheng Ho" à un prix avantageux, il y a à peu près cinq ans. Le bateau devait me servir dans la recherche de nouvelles plantes des îles du Pacifique du Sud.

5. En 1947, j'ai fondé la société anonyme "Cheng Ho Trading and Exploring Company", à Honolulu, U. S. A., avec un quinzaine d'actionnaires, dont la plupart sont des citoyens américains.

6. J'ai vendu le "Cheng Ho", dont le commissaire-priseur avait fixé la valeur à \$75.000 (soixante-quinze mille dollars), à notre société, en recevant en paiement des actions de la société. Je l'ai vendu sous deux conditions: 1<sup>o</sup>, je me suis réservé l'option de le racheter au mois de juillet de 1952 pour \$15.000 (quinze mille dollars); 2<sup>o</sup>, j'avais le droit d'emmener le "Cheng Ho" pour un voyage par an avec un camarade-savant pour des recherches scientifiques. Je n'ai jamais profité de ce dernier droit après avoir appris que le capitaine du vaisseau, qui avait habité Cannes pendant longtemps avant 1932, avait un casier judiciaire peu enviable.

7. Ce même capitaine, qui était aussi actionnaire de la société, est le suave Français Eric deBisschop, ancien consul français (sous le régime de Vichy) à Hawaii, un navigateur expert qui, avec un certain M. Tatibouet, qui n'a jamais recueilli l'honneur qu'il méritait, est allé d'Hawaii en France dans un canoë double. Nous avons trouvé le Capitaine deBisschop d'un charme désarmant; nous n'avons pas soupçonné que c'était un vagabond indésirable, et que le gouvernement américain n'attendait pour l'expulser que l'arrivée d'un vaisseau français qui l'emmènerait. Cet aventurier sans



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ressources avait pris les économies de sa belle-mère hawaïenne pour acheter \$5.000 (cinq mille dollars) d'actions de notre société. Moi personnellement, j'en avais davantage. Mais nous étions assez dupes pour le nommer capitaine.

8. Nous avons muni le "Cheng Ho" de cargaison, y compris du sucre (alors rationné à Tahiti) d'une valeur de \$10.000 (dix mille dollars), et nous avons envoyé le Capitaine deBisschop aux Iles de la Société. Il devait revenir au bout de six semaines environ avec une cargaison de marchandises françaises qu'il devait acheter là-bas avec le montant de la vente des marchandises américaines qu'il emportait.

9. Au lieu de revenir après six semaines, il est revenu à Honolulu sans le sou avec le "Cheng Ho" huit mois plus tard, avec un misérable chargement de deux tonnes de gousses de vanille, qui étaient pratiquement invendables en Amérique. Il avait dépensé l'argent de notre société--il avait même vendu la vedette et d'autres objets de l'armement du vaisseau--pour faire la fête. Au dépens de notre société, il avait invité une actrice de cinéma tahitienne-française à passer cinq semaines à bord du "Cheng Ho."

10. Entretemps, j'avais retrouvé à Honolulu quelques anciens membres de l'équipage (eux aussi actionnaires) que le Capitaine deBisschop avait renvoyés. Ceux-ci m'ont appris que le capitaine avait l'intention de vendre la vanille à Honolulu pour acheter des pièces de rechange dont le moteur avait très besoin, et de repartir ensuite sans jamais revenir dans le territoire des Etats-Unis. Cette rumeur était sans doute basée sur la vérité, car un procès dans le tribunal du gouvernement des Etats-Unis à Honolulu a révélé que "the vessel was registered in Tahiti last year in the name of the ship's captain Eric deBisschop" (le vaisseau a été enregistré l'année dernière (1947) à Tahiti au nom du capitaine Eric deBisschop), tandis que le vaisseau était en vérité la propriété des actionnaires de la société. Devant ces preuves, comme n'importe quel criminel attrapé, qui essaie de se sauver avec ses complices, deBisschop s'est excusé en disant que ce malentendu "was due to a clerical error in the office of the Governor of Tahiti" ("était dû à une faute de copiste au bureau du gouverneur de Tahiti"). Cela nous a rappelé à nous autres d'Honolulu la révocation d'un gouverneur de Tahiti lors d'un scandale au sujet de la vente irrégulière de ciment.

11. Nous avons fait de nouveau examiner le "Cheng Ho" par le commissaire-priseur, qui cette fois-ci en a fixé la valeur à \$60.000 (soixante mille dollars), une perte de \$15.000 (quinze mille dollars) en huit mois sous le commandement malhonnête du Capitaine deBisschop.

12. Quelques-uns des actionnaires de notre société étaient du côté du Capitaine deBisschop, mais nous autres avons immobilisé le bateau immédiatement pour dette, à Honolulu, et avons commencé aussitôt une suite de procès, que nous avons tous gagnés. Des coupures de journaux de l'époque, recueillies au hasard, qu'elles soient pour ou contre le capitaine deBisschop, indiquent comment l'ancien consul français et le "Cheng Ho" ont figuré dans la presse, pour le déshonneur de la France.

13. Quelques-uns des actionnaires, moi y compris mais pas tous, ont vendu leurs actions aux partisans du Capitaine deBisschop, sa belle-mère sauvant son gendre encore une fois d'une façon superbe, avec l'argent nécessaire. Comme toujours, j'ai gardé mon option d'acheter le "Cheng Ho" en juillet 1952 pour \$15.000. En plus, d'autres actionnaires et moi-même avons accepté des reconnaissances de dette de ce groupe du capitaine, dont le montant s'élève à la somme de \$3.000 (trois mille dollars) environ. Ensuite, nous avons autorisé le Capitaine deBisschop de quitter le territoire des Etats-Unis avec le "Cheng Ho". Lui, d'ailleurs, était une deuxième fois sous menace d'expulsion par le gouvernement américain, comme étranger indésirable.



14. Maintenant, mon option arrive à terme, car au mois de juillet je dois avoir la possibilité de racheter le "Cheng Ho" pour \$15.000. J'ai l'intention de refaire une société anonyme avec comme partenaire M. Oscar Nordmann, agent de voyages et fournisseur de bateaux à Tahiti. Je projette, comme avant, d'utiliser le "Cheng Ho" pour le commerce de copra, tout en poursuivant mes recherches botaniques pendant le chargement et le déchargement du bateau.

15. Afin de recouvrer les \$3.000 que nous doit le Capitaine deBisschop, les autres créanciers et moi-même avons engagé il y a un an environ Maître Henri Hoppenstedt, avocat à Papeete, comme notre représentant. Nous ses clients lui avons envoyé des documents divers concernant l'affaire du "Cheng Ho", et en plus \$100 (cent dollars) pour défrayer la traduction de ces documents en français, pour faciliter le procès. Plus tard, il nous a soutiré encore \$50 (cinquante dollars), pour des raisons qui nous paraissaient valables. Depuis, j'ai appris que Me. Hoppenstedt n'a jamais rien traduit, n'a pas du tout commencé de procès, mais il a bien gardé nos \$150. Peut-être, en proie à une regrettable confusion, pense-t-il être l'avocat du Capitaine deBisschop.

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A cause de l'intérêt rapace montré des fonctionnaires anciens et actuels, du gouvernement français, pour le prochain contrôle du "Cheng Ho" et le paiement de la dette de \$3.000, je demande à votre Assemblée Nationale de faire une enquête sur l'affaire du "Cheng Ho" dans votre colonie de Tahiti. Je pense que votre gouvernement devrait:

1. Nous rendre à moi et aux autres actionnaires offensés environ \$3.000 (trois mille dollars) plus les intérêts.
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Veuillez agréer, monsieur, l'assurance de ma respectueuse considération.

*Otto Degener*  
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*(This is one of the early drafts of the letter later translated in photo of which 15 here have copy)*  
Waialua, Capu,  
Makawao, Maui, I. Hawaii, U.S.A.  
April 26, 1952.

Dear Sir:

All is not well in Tahiti. May I be so bold as to request the Assemblée Nationale to investigate what transpires in this beautiful Colony? I am taking the liberty, also, of writing to members of my Congress in Washington.

I am an American citizen born in Orange, New Jersey, in 1899, I taught Botany at the University of Hawaii, and was Naturalist of Hawaii National Park under the Department of the Interior, have published five books about Hawaiian plants and a book about the junk-yacht Cheng Ho in Fiji, and have printed scores of smaller articles of purely scientific interest in technical journals. My botanical discoveries are scattered in Museums throughout the world. In my chosen field I am respected and well known, *and hold two university degrees.*

1. In 1940-41 I sailed aboard the palatial 99 ft., long junk-yacht Cheng Ho as one of the guest scientists of Mrs. Anne Archbold of Washington. In all I spent eight months in Fiji as member of the Expedition, some of the results being published by Harvard University.

2. With entry of the United States into the Second World War, the Cheng Ho was sold to the U.S.Navy for \$1.00 for patriotic reasons.

3. With end of hostilities, the U.S.Navy returned the Cheng Ho to Mrs. Archbold, her original owner, for the same \$1.00.

4. It took me four to five years (without remuneration) to work up my finds, and \$6,000 of my own cash to publish my book "Naturalist's South Pacific Expedition: Fiji." This was probably why Mrs. Archbold sold me the Cheng Ho at a reasonable price about five years ago. The vessel was to help me in my search for new South Sea Island plants.

5. I then started the "Cheng Ho Trading & Exploring Company," incorporated in Honolulu, U.S.A., with a dozen or so stockholders, most of them American citizens.

6. I sold the Cheng Ho, valued by appraisal at \$75,000, to our company for shares, reserving however the option to purchase my vessel in July 1952 for \$15,000 ~~in the same good condition in which I had turned her over to our company.~~ I also reserved the right to take one trip a year in the Cheng Ho with a fellow-scientist for research. I never took advantage of this right when I heard the Captain, who lived long in Cannes before 1932, had a ~~reliable~~ *unimpeachable* record.



7. One of the stockholders was the suave Frenchman Capt. Eric deBisschop, one-time Vichy-French Consul in Hawaii, and expert navigator who, with M. Tatibouet who never got the credit he deserved, sailed a double canoe from Hawaii to France. We found him a charming person, and were thus disarmed. We never realized that he was even then a deportable undesirable alien running about loose in Honolulu until a ship should arrive to take him away to a French port. This penniless adventurer, thanks to his Hawaiian mother-in-law's savings, controlled about \$5,000 worth of shares in our company. I controlled more. We fools elected him captain.

8. We furnished the Cheng Ho with cargo, including \$10,000 worth of sugar then rationed in Tahiti, and commissioned Capt. deBisschop to sail her there. He was to return about six weeks later with French commodities purchased from the proceeds of the sale of the American merchandise entrusted to him.

9. Instead of returning in six weeks, he limped into port penniless with the Cheng Ho about eight months later, with nothing but 2 Tons of vanilla beans which were then a drug on the market. He had squandered our company's funds - even sold launch and other ship's equipment to pay his debts - on wine, women and song. At our company's expense he even entertained a French-Tahitian cinema actress aboard the Cheng Ho for five weeks.

10. I had learned from former disillusioned crew members recently returned (who likewise owned stock) that Capt. deBisschop intended to sell the vanilla to buy some sorely needed engine parts in Honolulu, and thereafter sail away never to return within the 3 mile jurisdiction of the United States. This rumor was probably based on fact as later, Federal and Circuit Court proceedings in Honolulu proved that "the vessel was registered in Tahiti last year in the name of the ship's captain Eric deBisschop" when the vessel actually belonged to our company consisting of a dozen or so stockholders, most of them American citizens! When confronted with this evidence, like any cornered thief trying to save himself and his accomplices, deBisschop gave the excuse that it "was due to a clerical error in the office of the Governor of Tahiti." We in Hawaii remember the removal of a recent Governor of Tahiti following a cement scandal.

11. We had the Cheng Ho appraised again and this time she was valued at \$60,000, a loss of \$15,000 in 8 months under Capt. deBisschop's piratical mismanagement.

12. I and other injured stockholders immediately tied up the vessel for debt in Honolulu and started one lawsuit after another, every one of which we won. The enclosed copies of newspaper clippings, collected at random whether they favor or disfavor deBisschop, will give you an idea how the French ex-Consul and the Cheng Ho figured in the news -

not to the credit of France.

13. I and some, but not all, of the other swindled stockholders sold our shares to the deBisschop faction, the fine old Hawaiian lady coming to her son-in-law's rescue with the necessary cash. I retained my original option as always to purchase the Cheng Ho in the same good condition (appraised at \$75,000) for \$15,000 in July 1952. Also, I and other stockholders foolishly accepted I.O.U.s from the deBisschop faction for a total of about \$3,000. We then allowed deBisschop to sail out of U.S., waters with the Cheng Ho, he incidentally being subject to deportation as an undesirable alien a second time.

14. My option to purchase the Cheng Ho in July for \$15,000 is not far off. It was my intention to incorporate anew with the Tahitian shipping agent and Chandler M. Oscar Nordman as partner. It was my purpose, as originally five years ago, to use the Cheng Ho as a general copra and trading vessel, I botanizing various isolated South Sea Islands while cargo is being unloaded and loaded.

15. To collect the \$3,000 debt from deBisschop for myself and other stockholders, we engaged about a year ago M. Henri Hoppenstedt, a papeete attorney, to represent us. He received from us, his clients, various Court and other documents regarding the Cheng Ho case and was paid \$100 to translate them from English into French so they could be more easily used in a French Court. Later he wangled another \$50 out of us Americans for some seemingly good reason. Now I learn from Tahiti that M. Hoppenstedt never made any translations at all even though he has kept our \$150. Perhaps he is confused and thinks he represents the Captain.

16. deBisschop, a ne'er-do-well with practically no assets except control of the Cheng Ho until July 1952, has allowed the Cheng Ho, built of costly teak and camphor woods, to deteriorate in a wanton manner. He has kept her in the water continuously for about a year, allowing shipworms to bore into the hull. Caulking will never make good such fundamental damage. He had her pile up on the reef in December, causing additional serious damage. He has torn out the interior, making the vessel one vast shell of a hold! This man, who cannot even pay the yearly interest on the \$3,000 loan, cannot possibly make good such damage and replace the teak and camphor woods parts he had removed to sell or give away. How can I ever use the vessel as my option contract provides?

17. To collect the debt for myself and other stockholders, to take over the Cheng Ho in July 1952 in order to start a new company - I was not then aware of her shipwreck and serious neglect - and to botanize, I last December requested visas to visit Tonga, New Caledonia and Tahiti. A visa has been granted me by the independent Kingdom of Tonga for six months. As you can see from the enclosed copies of letters from San Francisco, a visa has been granted me for one year to visit the French Colony of New Caledonia (where I have no assets to collect).



TERRITORY OF HAWAII  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HONOLULU

April 22, 1952

Mr. Otto Degener  
c/o General Delivery  
Makawao, Maui

Dear Mr. Degener:

I have read with a great deal of interest your letter of April 13, 1952, with attached materials. Apparently there is nothing of a specific nature that I can do to be of assistance to you at this time. The letters and materials attached are being returned to you, since they may be of value to you.

Sincerely yours,

OREN E. LONG  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

Encls.





THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO  
American Consulate,  
Nouméa, New Caledonia,  
April 24, 1952.

Mr. Otto Degener,  
Makawoo, Mani,  
Territory of Hawaii.

Dear Mr. Degener:

Reference is made to your telegram of April 17 and the Consulate's letter of April 16, concerning your desire to travel to Tahiti and to obtain a settlement of legal questions on the junk "Cheng-Ho". I presume that the letter of April 16 provides you and your lawyer with the information you desire.

The Department of State is being kept informed of this case but I trust that your new approach to the French Consul has been successful and that you may already have authority to return to Tahiti as you desire.

Yours very truly,

Philip E. Haring  
American Consul

210.9  
FEH:cjj

Wailua, Oahu, T.H.  
April 28, 1952

Dear Sirs:

You may remember that Mr. Farrington, Delegate from Hawaii to Congress, wrote you in my behalf regarding the 97 ft. long <sup>yacht</sup> ~~boat~~ <sup>Chang</sup> Ho. Later I mailed you photolitho prints of newspaper clippings regarding the Chang Ho, in and out of Federal and Territorial Courts. I likewise added a long explanatory letter.

I returned to Oahu April 14 and ~~studied~~ <sup>studied</sup> my case with my local attorney. I also studied my contracts, deposited on this island. With these before me I have rewritten my previous English letter in French making a few <sup>changes</sup> with corrections. I enclose a copy <sup>for</sup> your files.

~~Here~~ Mr. Harney, our Consul in New Caledonia, was recently in Tahiti, and studied my case. I took the liberty of wiring him to report to you. Before receiving my message, he had sent a letter off to me, which I recently received. Evidently he missed the point of my complaint. I am not interested in ~~getting~~ <sup>getting</sup> a visa ~~for~~ <sup>to</sup> Tahiti at all. I am interested in collecting for myself and a few other local stockholders, over \$3000 owing us by Capt. Eric de Bisschop ~~our former~~.

the Duc de Bisschoffs faction. Also, I wish to re-  
possess my former vessel, receiving damages for the  
unwarranted neglect and ripping out of teak and  
cannon ~~the~~ wood cabins and equipment. In-  
cidentally, my attorney and I believe the registra-  
tion of the vessel under the French flag was  
a fraud, but here <sup>in Hawaïi</sup> we lack the details regarding  
this action.

Because past and present French govern-  
ment Officials are evidently <sup>conspiring to</sup> sabotage my  
rights (~~rights~~) and those of friends of mine  
to whom I in good faith sold shares, I  
am requesting the French Government  
to pay me the \$3000 debt with interest  
and to pay me \$60,000 for the Chep Ho. Copies  
of this ~~letter~~ French letter I am mailing  
to Deputés of the Assemblée Nationale  
in Paris. They certainly should ~~learn~~ <sup>learn</sup>  
what transpires in their Colony of Tahiti.

Paris removed Governor Anziani  
(replacing him with M. Petitbon) because  
of his participation in a graft scandal in-  
volving the purchase of cement for Tahiti.  
The so-called "clerical error" of registering the  
Chep Ho in the Captain's name in the Office of the  
Governor of Tahiti does not involve present  
Governor Petitbon but more likely the  
dishonest Anziani. Yours sincerely,



Form 3806-S (Rev. 7-51)

Receipt for Registered Article No. 348860

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POSTMARK

Fee paid \_\_\_\_\_ cents. Class postage \_\_\_\_\_

Declared value \_\_\_\_\_ Surcharge paid, \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Accepting employee will place his initials in space indicating restricted delivery.

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JUN 6 1952  
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SERVICE DE RAVITAILLEMENT MARITIME

MAISON NORDMAN

FOURNISSEUR — SHIPCHANDLER

PAPEETE — TAHITI.

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES  
THE OCEANIC S.S. CO.  
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H.M.N.Z. NAVY  
H.M.A. NAVY  
ETC.

Agent: PACIFIC ISLANDS MONTHLY

UNION STEAMSHIP COMPANY  
OF NEW ZEALAND LTD.  
UNITED STATES LINE  
H.M. NAVY  
UNITED STATES NAVY  
ETC.

April 29, 1952

Dear Friend

I have decided to send a letter to Eric de Bisschop, of your intention to exercise the option existing between yourself and The Cheng Ho Trading & Exploration Company Ltd.

This letter has been registered with "AVIS DE RECEPTION" we will see what he is going to do -

When the time comes, he will be unable to restore the ship in her original way, perhaps instead of \$15,000 - that you would to pay - it will be much less, deducting the \$3000 -

Enclosed please find two copies of the letter addressed to E. de B. and the P.O. Receipt  
Faithfully yours Oscar