

West Irian (New Guinea): a tribesman from the mountains.

Leo Rampen, Executive Producer for CBC's *Man Alive* series, has announced air dates for the three films being co-produced with Religious Television Associates.

**They'll Tell Me When the Tread's Gone: Bob McClure in Sarawak**, a one-hour special programme, will be telecast on December 18th. The release describes it this way: "At 72, the irrepressible Dr. Bob McClure, a former moderator of the United Church, is still at it. In Sarawak (Borneo) he has returned to his old career as a medical missionary. We share with him a few moments in this new adventure in a distant developing country."

**How Long Does It Take a Tree to Grow Here?** compares and contrasts two situations in the Phillipines. One is the Mindanao Agricultural Resettlement Agency (MARA), a joint church-government venture in the creation of a farming community in the violence-torn southerly island. The other is a village of urban poor (Tondo) on the edge of Manila harbour. The former has elements of both imposition and indigenous take-over, of international financing and of local control. In Tondo, however, the people are fighting the government, fighting expropriation, fighting attempts to move them to rural areas where jobs are not available, fighting to get the title to the land which they feel is theirs by law. This half-hour will be shown on CBC-TV on March 12th, 1973.

**The Development Debate** looks at a development project — Leadership Training Centre for the mainstream Protestant church in West Irian, the Western half of New Guinea which is now a territory of Indonesia. The film probes such issues as the relationship among the churches of

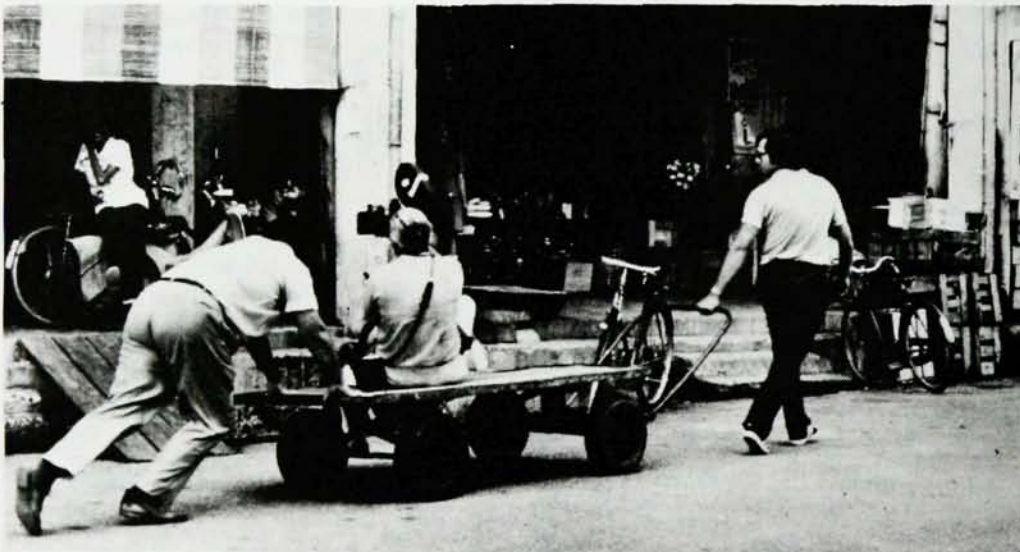
West Irian, the need for and appropriateness of the Centre, the planning process, the role of elitist groups in developing countries, the sensitivities of the people of West Irian (the greater number of whom have just emerged from the stone age) and the effects of massive development aid on the lives of the people there. Scheduled for a March 19th airing, this half hour programme, the same as the others, was shot this past summer by an Interchurch production unit, backed by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and the major Canadian churches. It is the first major attempt by this country's media to delineate some of the issues involved in the 'development debate.'

A three man crew, headed by producer Des McCalmont, travelled great distances in South East Asia to capture on film the inspiring story of Dr. McClure, the events in the Phillipines, and the staggering saga of the natives of West Irian, propelled from the Stone Age into the age of foreign aid.

very complex. They're political, they're social, they're cultural, they're economic. And no definition of 'development' can do justice to them. You can't come at this from up top, you have to sneak in under it and start with the people themselves."

Talking to Flemington about his trip is a sobering experience. He is very liberal in his criticism of existing Western aid policies, claiming that since the standards and criteria for the grants are set by the West, the result is that the applications are formulated by the local governments in exact keeping with these artificially imposed criteria. In other words, priorities are not set by those in the best position to determine them — the people of the region, but by well-meaning theoreticians far away from the realities of everyday life in these areas. The result is, according to Flemington, that social and economic standards for these developing countries are set in the West, and this just bolsters the status quo and the existing establishment. Since the cultural gap is much too wide, no Western nation

## On Location:



A poor man's dolly: producer McCalmont pushing, director Flemington pulling, cameraman de Fay riding high . . . notice Coca Cola sign, they're everywhere. . . .

Peter Flemington directed the filming on location and is now writing and shaping the footage for television. He describes his task as "mental anguish," "Most of us," he says, "still tend to think about foreign aid in terms of handouts, old clothes, money for Pakistan relief, droughts, earthquakes and so on. But the real issues, the things we should be concerning ourselves with constantly, are

is capable of determining what's best for the Southeast Asians.

In the first film, Dr. McClure is even more outspoken in his criticism. He says that politicians at home build all sorts of 'safeguards' and 'controls' into aid programmes for needy nations, such as the one that stipulates that the money be used to purchase Canadian farm machinery exclusively, and that these measures



do much to endear them to the voters at home, but little in terms of helping the developing nation.

Both Flemington and McClure seem to agree that only local, autonomous control over regional development will solve the problems in that area of the world, and that Canada, along with the other technologically advanced nations, should 'trust' the people to administer and allocate the financial aid themselves. The spectre of the 'ugly American' still lingers on, and the white man is expected to come, provide aid, teach and then go home.

The problem with the present aid set-up is that it doesn't spread the wealth, but tends to benefit the already well-to-do. One Phillipine Senator, upon receiving a shipment of cattle from Australia, calmly fenced them in and said they were his own. He was exposed, but this wasn't an unusual incident.

Another difficulty of major proportions is the tension between the people of many races and religions living in the



*Cameraman Ed de Fay with producer Des McCalmont in Sarawak, Malaysia.*

for these areas is popular revolution coupled with some form of population control, and cites conditions in Indonesia having much improved since the revolt. Suffering is not new for these people, he says, and there is very little understanding of this in the West. One of the reasons for making these films, was to bring to the

some suggestions for prospective crews going to shoot in Southeast Asia:

- A. Make plans known well in advance to local government agencies, but also to Canadian embassies or consulates. Keep in constant touch with Canadian embassies.
- B. Obtain all necessary entry visas, customs clearances, and other required papers well in advance. Also obtain entry permits into restricted areas, and get them in writing. It doesn't pay to go illegally anywhere.
- C. If your budget allows, go in advance to scout locations and get approval from local government agencies. Talk to customs officials, find out about all the necessary forms. Again, verbal permission is not enough, no matter how high the official is giving it. People on lower levels of government service are afraid of losing their jobs and require all forms in quadruplicate.

They speak from experience, so it is well to heed their advice. Many things can happen to cause costly delays and annoyance. The Interchurch unit was constantly mixed up with a Tokyo crew which happened to be shooting in the area at the time. Ed de Fay also adds that one shouldn't plan to shoot before eight in the morning or after four in the afternoon. Local light conditions are just too adverse for color film. An added word of warning: prepare for flights over long distances within the same country. One can fly for a full day and still not leave the territory of West Irian. There is some consolation — many times the flying is done in either one of two Twin Otters presented to Indonesia by the Canadian government, or in an Air Canada Vanguard flown by a Canadian pilot training the local crew.

Flying is the major means of transportation in the jungles of Sarawak, a state in Northern Borneo, now attached to Malay-

# Southeast Asia

by george csaba koller

area. The Chinese suffer blatant discrimination at the hands of the Moslem Malays. In Indonesia, they are not allowed to enter Djakarta (since the bloody revolution that overthrew Sukarno, and massacred staggering numbers of Communists), and need special permits even in the rural areas, just to go up river. The Japanese seem to have invaded S.E. Asia all over again, this time not militarily, but economically. Most cars, airplanes, TV sets, and more and more factories are Japanese built and run, as that nation struggles to solve its population and pollution problems at home by re-locating manufacturing and people abroad. Many Phillipinos are living and working in Indonesia and Malaysia as well, mostly as Christian workers. There were major race riots in Malaysia in 1969, and Indonesia's bloody revolt was in part directed at the ethnic Chinese. As one result, most of the countryside and both rural and urban life are still run by the army.

Flemington thinks that the only hope

Canadian public — most of whom tend to lump all of Southeast Asia together — the subtle and radical differences between various peoples in the area, and also to make it clear that these people must have a say in their own destiny. The Canadian public should realize this, and the policies of the Canadian International Development Agency should reflect these realities.

The cameraman for the project was Ed de Fay, film manager at Berkeley Studios of the United Church of Canada. He travelled with Flemington and McCalmont through thousands of miles of vaccinations, baggage checks, and frustrating red tape. They carried a new Bolex 16mm Pro camera to test it out under rugged shooting conditions, along with a small, silent Arriflex and several quartz lights for indoor filming. Ektachrome Commercial (7252) and high speed Ektachrome EF (7242) — the usual documentary stocks — were chosen for dependability.

Ed de Fay and Peter Flemington have





*West Irian (New Guinea): smoking old woman in mountain tribal village.*

sia. Covered solidly with towering rainforests and low mountain ranges, only the coastal areas of the state and the occasional valleys are open and settled. Christ Hospital, where Dr. Bob McClure and his wife are living and working for two years now, is situated in one of these river valleys. It is a river society, there are no roads, and a man's status is high if he has an outboard motor on his boat. McClure says in the film at one point: "There are one hundred motor bikes and three hundred outboards." Cars are almost non-existent, and unnecessary. Some of the patients travel great distances over the mountains on foot to get to the hospital. The journey might take six or seven days.

They even come from neighboring states, these natives seeking treatment. Since the hospital is supported by the Methodist Church from the United States, it has excellent facilities, and McClure takes pride in saying repeatedly throughout the film, that his patients get the best of care, the same as they would get in the West. It is touching to see these people, most of whom are primitive tribesmen and fishermen, placing all their trust in a stranger, a white man, and permitting him to cut open their bodies, disinfect their sores, and give them strange tasting medicine.

The film actually shows McClure performing an operation on a young woman with tuberculosis. Her case illustrates one

of the most acute problems in the area, overpopulation. She is only in her mid-twenties, yet has already given birth to eight children, and is now riddled with disease. McClure attempts to tie her fallopian tubes so that she won't get pregnant again — another bout with labor might literally kill her. But TB has mucked up her insides so badly, that he has to give up. Chances are she won't be able to conceive again, anyway.

When McClure was working with Dr. Norman Bethune in China where he spent twenty-five years of his professional life, he was asked a loaded riddle concerning a woman and a child by none other than Mao Tse-tung. As the story goes, Mao, Chou En-lai, Bethune and McClure met in a hidden cave during the Chinese Revolution. Mao asked both Bethune and McClure the same question, to test their loyalty. "If a woman and a child and a guerilla fighter came in, all wounded, who should get first priority?" Bob McClure remembers: "Chou and Mao weren't in any doubt... the idea was that you worked on the fighter, because he was fighting world revolution. I'm not fighting the world revolution. I refuse to be involved in the political aspects. War is hell. It brings suffering and suffering involves all of us, if we have any conscience at all, in doing relief work." Bethune was ideologically committed to the struggle, McClure was a true humanitarian. Their ways parted.

Dr. Robert McClure, seventy-two, has spent forty-five years of his life in medical missionary work in India, China, and the Gaza strip. Still active in North Borneo, there isn't a trace of pretension about him. A friendly and verbose person, he dominates the film with a tireless stream of ideas, that from a man of his age sound refreshing and downright radical. It's not idle chatter or reminiscing, either, but constructive, clear thinking about the future of that part of the world and the true meaning of being a Christian in the sense of going out and really helping people.

His life is his preaching, his actions are a native of Sarawak gets a lesson in filmmaking, Dr. McClure in background.



nobler than a sermon, and *They'll Tell Me When the Tread's Gone* at least enables us to spend an hour with this man, even if we can't join him in person.

In addition to McCalmont, Flemington and de Fay, Dennis Fraude worked on post-production sound, and Mike Foytenyi did the editing. Technically, the shoot was plagued with problems, but the crew managed to overcome them admirably. The results would never betray the fact that a considerable amount of footage had to be force-processed because of a faulty iris in a zoom lens. Nor the incident, where grown men were crawling around on their hands and knees in the dust of an Asian road, trying to find a tiny screw that fell out of the Bolex. Irreplaceable, on such a location. A sharp-eyed guide finally found that one, but it must have caused some heart tremors for producer Des McCalmont.

Some more recent headaches involve the fast-changing political situations in some of the regions where they filmed. In the Phillipines, the government declared a state of emergency since the crew returned, and during the crackdown on dissidents, many of the people interviewed were jailed. The completion of the soundtrack on that programme is being held up until the very last minute before air time, so that the latest developments can be included, at least in the narration.

Producer McCalmont still manages to be optimistic: "We've returned encouraged about the way in which the Church and people are working together on these projects — sometimes on their own, sometimes aided by government. However, we've been made aware that new projects and new techniques place a heavy demand for education and understanding upon those of us at home who are concerned about the task of the church... we urgently need to develop the kind of respect and trust that is borne only out of mutual concerns and informed understanding. These films are designed to constitute one step in that process." ●