

ROBINSON ROAD,
LANGWARRIN,
VICTORIA.
A U S T R A L I A .

20th July, 1959.

F. A. E. Devenish Esq.,
Boite Postale 135,
TAHITI,
FRENCH POLYNESIA.

Dear Mr. Devenish,

It was very good of you to take the trouble to write and to send the comprehensive material about Papeete with your letter of the 29th June. In fact, the delay has not affected me at all. I finished writing the book yesterday, but there is a month of revision to be done now, and in the course of that I can very easily incorporate the few words necessary to make the Papeete scenes credible.

When I wrote to the Consul last February, of course, I did not know precisely what I was going to write about the Papeete sequence in the book. One never knows in detail of course what one is going to write in fiction, in advance. In fact when I came to write the scenes, little of the town of Papeete was necessary in the description, most of the scenes occurring on board ships moored in the harbour. However, the information that you have given me does enable me to put in those few words that make the thing quite accurate. I had, for example, visualised the waterfront in Papeete rather in terms of the waterfront at Cannes, in the south of France. That is to say, I had assumed that houses and shops would line the other side of the road. Your Kodachromes showing the trees overhanging the road put the picture much more clearly, and I would certainly have been in error if I had put in a few words of description of Cannes or of Brest thinking that they fitted Papeete.

This is the sort of way in which your information is most helpful. I always like to try to be absolutely accurate in my books in small details, and I might have gone seriously astray in this one.

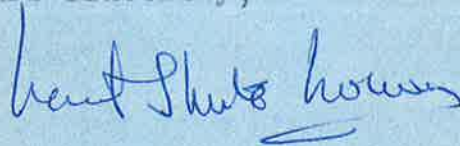
I am sorry that you were not able to cash my cheque, and I would send it back again made out to you personally if it were not for the kind things that you say about my books.

I hope that at some time in the future I may be able to come to Papeete to meet you personally. That will not be for some time however; I have got over my stroke quite well but complete recovery from a thing like this means a long period of sitting at home and taking things very easily. I have to go to England in the English summer of 1960, and I doubt if I shall stir from here till then, but after that it may well be that I shall turn up in Papeete one day and I shall look forward to meeting you and thanking you in person for all your help.

One last word which may amuse you. The Pacific Islands Year Book is not a very reliable guide of course, and this had assured me that there was a British Consul in Papeete. When I received no answer to my letter after about three months, I was a little nettled, and rather maliciously introduced the British Consul as a minor character, representing him as a very unco-operative and bureaucratic type. I called him Mr. Pretyman. Thanks to your letter and your generous help, Mr. Pretyman will now come out of the book altogether in the revision, and will be lost to the world of literature. As a matter of fact, my solicitor to whom I submit every book to be vetted for libel before I send it to the publishers, would probably have made me take him out anyway.

With every good wish, and with renewed thanks for your help.

Yours sincerely,



Nevil Shute Norway.

P.S. I will of course send you a copy of the book on publication.