THE DEFINING YEARS
PACIFIC ISLANDS, 1945–65

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Preface
Brij V. Lal

Pacific historiography is uneven in its coverage of the different periods in the region's past. In its salad days, the discipline's main focus was on the problems and themes of culture contact, on missionary activity and conversion, on trading and labour recruitment, and on the lives and times of colonial officials and island elites. The main thrust of the research was to demonstrate islander agency. The early part of the 20th century received some attention from historians as, more prominently, did the latter half when the islands were caught in the grip of turbulent events: coups in Fiji, the secessionist movement in Melanesia, the Bougainville crisis. World War Two was covered in great detail by historians and anthropologists as were the politics and processes of decolonisation and the challenges of the post-independence era. Very little work was done on the period from the end of the World War Two to the advent of decolonisation in the mid-1960s.

To fill that gap, the Division of Pacific and Asian History at The Australian National University organised a workshop in December 2003, and this volume is a partial result of that occasion. Not all the papers presented at the workshop are included here. Some have found other outlets while others, presented as work-in-progress, were unable to be re-worked in time for publication. But the papers which are included here give a good sense of the tenor and texture of what was discussed at the workshop.

The papers show that while the post-war years might not have been as dramatic or as colourful as some other periods in Pacific islands history, they were important in laying the foundation for later developments in the region. In a number of places, especially in Melanesia, the convulsions caused by the war produced what we have come to call 'cargo cults' and haphazard proto-nationalist movements, such as the Masina Rule in the Solomon Islands and the John Frum movement in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu). Communications revolution—air and sea transport, radio and cable—touched the lives of even the remotest communities in the islands in this period. The South Pacific Commission was established in Canberra in 1947 by the six colonial powers in the region—Australia, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States—to coordinate developments particularly in agriculture, communications, forestry, fisheries, health, labour, housing and education, and facilitate technical and scientific research. On the geo-political front, territories under the League of Nations Mandate were transferred to the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations.

R.G. Ward writes about the advent of systematic planning for social and
economic developments in the islands that came from new demands for governance, the need for accurate data for planning purposes, and from broader intellectual trends emphasising the critical government role in planning and executing developments. Significant investigations into the population and natural resources of Fiji by Sir Alan Burns and into the economic and social prospects for the Fijian people by Professor O.H.K. Spate, to name only two, held important implications for Fiji and the Fijian people. The establishment of local universities in Papua New Guinea and in Fiji, in 1966 and 1968 respectively, provided the platform for manpower training in the islands for the post-independence period. It can be argued that the setting up institutions of higher learning constituted an important turning point in the modern history of the Pacific islands.

Hank Nelson and William Clarke provide a finely-grained account of the exigencies and the practical difficulties of *kiap* administration in Papua New Guinea. Census taking, a routine exercise at most times, was fraught in the Highlands, writes Nelson, quoting P.K. Moloney who complained that 'he could not find the 'owners of many of the names he called' because 'people adopted different names at different stages of their lives and some could not remember the name they had given at the time of the last patrol.' Clarke writes about his own personal experience of a 'patrol of contact' in the lower Jimi Valley. He emphasises the tenuous nature of the Australian control of Papua New Guinea, and the *kiaps’* reliance on indigenous helpers and carriers. In the 1950s, independence seemed a very remote prospect for PNG, perhaps a couple of generations away, and yet political processes were set in motion which resulted in independence in 1975.

Pacific islands have had their fair share of colourful personalities with their peculiar, sometimes eccentric, visions for their people. Apoloso Nawai of Fiji comes to mind immediately, a man critical of chiefs and the colonial officialdom and agitating for economic freedom for his people, but without success in part because of the enormous pressures against him and in part because of his own muddled thinking. Tom Kabu was not Apolosi, but he too had a vision for his people. As Anthony Yeates writes, Kabu wanted to ‘develop the region of his birth to a level approximating that of Australia as he had experienced it during the war.’ He focussed on cooperative economic activity but also sought to introduce his people to Christianity and western-style dwellings. His activity inevitably aroused suspicion among officials who saw him as a threat to their vision for Papua New Guinea. Kabu failed. Yeates concludes that ‘a valuable opportunity was missed when the momentum of indigenous desire for development, so overwhelming after the war, was lost, frustrated, and worn down by the unfulfilled promises of the Administration and its officers in the
Donovan Storey and Donald Shuster take us away from Melanesia to political developments in Samoa and Palau respectively. The Samoan experience of decolonisation is well known, thanks in large part to the work of Jim Davidson. But Storey takes issue with the conventional view that the 1940s represented a ‘blind spot’ in New Zealand-Samoan history. He sees Prime Minister Peter Fraser’s visit to Samoa was a ‘pivotal moment in New Zealand’s evolving policy’ towards that island, and situates New Zealand attitude in the broader context of international developments such as the setting up of the Trusteeship Council in which Fraser played an important role. Shuster’s account of the beginnings of elected government in Palau tells the story of tension between traditional and modern styles of leadership and of attempts to incorporate, as far as possible, traditional institutions into modern democratic politics. Nonetheless, by the early 1960s, a democratic legislature had been established, political parties formed and a new and western-educated elite at the helm. That process would be replicated in other Pacific islands later in the decade.

Susan Woodburn’s chapter is about a minor episode in the history of the central Pacific British colony of Gilbert and Ellice islands, but it illustrates with admirable clarity the way in which policy was often actually formulated as opposed to how many people would normally assume it was made. Sir Phillip Mitchell, the governor of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commissioner during World War Two, proposed to pare down the administration of the colony and to transfer as much of the routine duties as possible to the islanders themselves. Harry Maude, who later became the Resident Commissioner had other ideas and effectively undermined Mitchell’s proposal while appearing to be duly deferential to his former boss and giving the impression of endorsing it. A chronically shy person, Maude was ever alert to his own interests and concerns. Woodburn says that ‘when we look at the reality of the creation of such documents, and see the myriad and very human elements of conviction, experience, theoretical leanings, personal ambition, insecurities, conflicting demands and imperatives that went into their creation and adoption, it provides a nice counterfoil to cliched view of some monolithic power called colonialism or colonial policy against which historians of particular periods and other post-colonial critiques have been wrong to rage or moralise.’

The final two chapters by Jacqui Leckie and Christine Weir take us to the fields of health and education. Leckie looks at the changing technologies and discourses of mental health in Fiji, and explores the way in which diagnostic techniques and attitudes changed. She shows how cultural understandings and assumptions of mental health problems hampered the efficacy of the new
technologies and how the role of the mental hospital changed in the post-war years from exercising a custodial function to one providing psychiatric care. Christine Weir’s account of the education at All Saints’ Anglican School at Labasa might at first glance appear atypical of the rest of Fiji, but in its broader configurations, it mirrors wider educational developments in the colony. The non-Christian primary and secondary schools in the post-war years also had to grapple with the question of arriving at the right balance between providing moral or spiritual instruction on the one hand and secular education on the other. Like all educational institutions, All Saints’ had to adapt to the changing needs of the times. In this case, by the mid-1960s, the Anglicans had come to accept the ‘inevitability of very limited evangelical success’, and concentrated on academic excellence and the extension of the school of secondary level in the mid-1970s.

To repeat the point I made at the beginning, the much-neglected post-war years may not have seen dramatic changes that some other periods in Pacific islands past witnessed, yet they were a time of silent but nonetheless significant developments as the papers in this volume have suggested. I am grateful to the contributors for revising their papers for publication. Oanh Collins has, as always, been a cheerful helper in the Division of Pacific and Asian History and Maxine MacArthur kindly proof-read the manuscript and assisted in its preparation for publication. Many thanks to the Division of Pacific and Asian History too for its financial and technical assistance in holding the workshop which gave rise to this volume.

Brij V. Lal
The 1950s and 1960s—an Information Age for the South Pacific Islands

R. Gerard Ward

In the years following the end of World War II colonial administrations and governments in the Pacific Islands were faced with a range of new goals, new attitudes towards the roles of government, and consequent new tasks. Brookfield's comment that in Papua New Guinea 'these were years of gradualism and enlightened paternalism in political affairs, coupled with rapid economic expansion that shifted more and more firmly toward emphasis on the indigenous population' (1972:98) is applicable to several other Pacific territories. The desire to foster and re-orient economic and social development required changes in the methods and complexity of administration. New and expanding roles of government led to growth of existing departments and the establishment of new departments, agencies or bureaus, often with primarily technical roles. One consequence of this change was a new demand for information about the lands and peoples of the colonial territories.

The changing attitudes towards colonial governance grew from new intellectual and political contexts within the colonial powers. In the 1930s the need to counter the effects of the world-wide depression and the development of Keynesian ideas of governments manipulating national economies led to the 'New Deal' in the United States, and similar policies in other metropolitan countries (Brookfield, 1975:24-8). The mobilisation of industrial and agricultural production for wartime goals, and controls over the civilian population, such as rationing and manpower allocation, made the people of colonial powers such as Britain, Australia and New Zealand familiar with living in a form of planned economy and society. Some aspects of this style of government, linked with Keynesian economic policies, were carried over into the processes of post-war reconstruction. Governments adopted a more explicitly directorial role in guiding economic and social development than had been common pre-war. In Britain, for example, the rebuilding of towns and cities required central planning and management to integrate the many activities involved. There was recognition that the need to rebuild old, or create new suburbs and towns provided the opportunity to raise the quality of urban and suburban life through application of the ideas of the relatively new disciplines of urban and regional planning. It was clear that if such development were to be successful, it had to be based on accurate data about resources, land availability and quality, population growth and movement, and new social and economic
indicators. Such data could only be obtained from scientifically based social, economic and resource studies and the execution of such studies became an accepted task of government agencies.

Against this metropolitan background, it is not surprising that attitudes towards economic and social development were changing in the colonial administrations of Britain, Australia and New Zealand in accord with the new practices in the home countries. In the Pacific Islands there was more conscious recognition that indigenous involvement in commercial agriculture was increasing and that these new commercial farmers needed assistance. Their complex systems of agriculture—mixing subsistence production and cash cropping—needed to be understood, and access to inputs and marketing arrangements provided. Other associated social trends were emerging. Indigenous people were starting to live outside their villages in larger numbers. Some, depending on non-traditional forms of labour mobilisation, set up farms at a distance from their traditional settlements while others moved into towns. Colonial regulations, which had controlled people's movements and residences, were becoming less effective. In several Pacific colonies or territories it was clear that populations were now increasing, after the declining or relatively static numbers of the first half of the century. There would have to be an expansion of the area of land under agriculture. In the new intellectual climate seeping into the administrations of some Pacific colonies and territories it was felt that governments would have to take the initiative in leading development. This would be costly. Whereas an older view was that colonies should pay for their own administration, there was now recognition that money would have to be spent to promote development. Thus programmes such as the British Colonial Development and Welfare Fund were established; aid programmes initiated; and, in some countries, foundations and other private organisations began to foster studies of colonial territories.

As in the metropolitan countries, colonial planners needed much more information about land, resources, people and societies than had been available hitherto. It is remarkable, from the viewpoint of the early 21st century, how little information was available in the interwar years of the 1920s and 1930s on the resources, environments and agricultural economies of the indigenous populations of the Pacific Islands. In Fiji, administration of 'native affairs' was largely through a form of indirect rule with relatively little attempt by the colonial government to change indigenous life styles or subsistence-based rural village economies. Indeed a number of regulations deliberately limited the opportunities for Fijians to live outside their home villages and move away from the control of their chiefs and their 'traditional' communal obligations. In Papua New Guinea, rural administration was primarily concerned with maintaining peace, while allowing rural life to continue relatively unchanged.
Government by patrol was, for the most part, a light imposition (Clarke, 2005) even if, as Bulmer (1972:122-3) points out, its main goal was ‘the inhibition of feud[s]’ with the ‘main sanction’ being ‘intimidation’. The information flowing back from rural areas to headquarters was limited — head counts of villagers; comments on general health; and reports on matters of law and order. The contributions of governments to rural welfare were often minimal. Even in the early 1970s Bulmer could report that while western medicine had brought great benefits and population growth rates of up to 3 per cent per annum to coastal areas in Papua New Guinea, in remote areas communities were still ‘dying off at an even faster rate without these [benefits]’ (Bulmer, 1972:121).

The ‘economy’ of the colonies of most concern to administrations in the 1920s and 1930s was that of expatriate enterprise. Agricultural departments, often one of very few technical departments in the administrations, dealt primarily with the expatriate plantation sector. Areas beyond the plantation or mining perimeter were largely ignored, being almost terra incognita. Descriptions of island environments were often sketchy. For example, when read today, an article on the Cook Islands published in *The New Zealand Journal of Science and Technology* in 1928, and presumably then giving new information, is surprising for the very limited nature of the ‘scientific’ information then available on island environments (Anon. 1928). Even 25 years later, basic data were often absent: for example there was still no information on rainfall for the island of Mitiaro in 1953 (Grange and Fox 1953:25).

Censuses of population were one of the few types of systematic surveys conducted before World War II, but these were often little more than head counts. Although censuses had been taken in Western Samoa at five-yearly intervals from 1921, ‘the 1951 census was the first at which an attempt was made to obtain detailed demographic data, chronological age and information relating to fertility, in particular, not being available from earlier censuses’ (Jupp 1958:4). The first census in Tonga to attempt an effective enumeration by age was that of 1939 (McArthur 1967:84), while in French Polynesia such data were still not recorded consistently even in the mid-1950s (McArthur 1967:325-34).

The ‘first full and separate census report for the Cook Islands’ was published in 1968 (Premier’s Department 1968:1). This absence of detailed demographic data was true for many other parts of the region in the interwar and immediate post-war years.

One important increment in printed information during the wartime period came with the production of four volumes on the Pacific Islands in the British Naval Intelligence Division’s series of Geographical Handbooks (Naval Intelligence Division 1943-5). These four ‘Admiralty Handbooks’ were printed
between November 1943 and August 1945 'for official use only', and were written and edited in large part by historian Jim Davidson and anthropologist Raymond Firth (Ward 1994). They represent the best compendium of knowledge on the region available up to that period. Volume 1 provides region-wide surveys of geology, climate, vegetation, history, peoples, economies, administration and communications. The remaining three volumes give detailed accounts of each of the territories of the region, covering similar topics as well as material on languages, social structures, art and traditional and colonial law. Unfortunately, concerns about confidentiality and copyright prevented them from becoming available to the public until the early 1960s when they were quietly released and sold at a low price. Had they been available sooner they would have been invaluable as Pacific Island administrations began planning development programmes in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

The deficiencies in population and resource data were untenable if colonial administrations were to promote economic and social development and draw the indigenous peoples into the modern commercial economy in roles other than as labour units. As Hasluck said of Papua New Guinea in the late 1950s, 'we need to have much more wisdom and understanding in the next 30 years than we were required to have in the past 30 years' (1958: 84). The recognition that scientifically based data were needed in a number of fields ushered in a decade or more of surveys—of agriculture, health, social conditions and, especially, resources. What followed was a very rapid expansion of the information available to administrators in many fields. The remainder of this paper outlines this growth in a few representative fields, but the pattern was repeated in many other fields, through the gathering of medical, economic, social and anthropological data, and the field work of rapidly expanding departments such as agriculture, education, forestry, labour and public works. Government became much more complex and much of its expansion of activities depended on the gathering and use of the new information. For scholars following later this becomes an era with almost a surfeit of data compared with the pre-war years.

**New maps: delimiting the resources**

A basic deficiency in information in the pre-war period was the lack of detailed topographical maps. The charting of coastlines and location of hazards to navigation had proceeded for almost two centuries and was, in the main, thorough. But even in the late 1930s the detail of inland landforms was often sketchy. The main task of lands and survey departments was to prepare cadastral maps identifying the boundaries of land holdings held by expatriates and governments under non-traditional tenure. Such holdings were mostly near
the coast, to which the sea provided access. Land held by indigenous communities was very rarely surveyed, except in the case of Fiji where the variety of customary practice had been codified and generalised by government commissions. Here the boundaries of *mataqali* holdings were surveyed during the first half of the 20th century but the maps showed little topographic information other than rivers and streams, and were not widely available.

Military requirements in the 1940s resulted in a rapid expansion of map production for actual or possible campaign areas. In particular, between 1943 and 1945 several series of maps were produced by the Australian Army Survey Company and the United States Army Corps of Engineers for the northeastern parts of New Guinea, especially the coastal areas, at scales of between 1:20,000 and 1:253,440. They were made possible by the use of the relatively new techniques of aerial photography and photo interpretation. Although used to some extent pre-war, particularly by geologists in New Guinea, aerial photographs could now be taken quickly over large areas and photo interpretation enabled the rapid production of large-scale photo mosaics and topographic maps covering areas that were still largely inaccessible on the ground. Although the military maps were not widely available for public use, they did show how much data could be generated. The value of such materials for development planning quickly became obvious.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s civilian authorities, recognising the needs of postwar development, took up the task. The British Directorate of Overseas Surveys (DOS), in association with the Fiji Department of Lands and Survey, commissioned aerial photography for mapping purposes. Between 1951 and 1954 virtually the whole of Fiji was photographed at approximately 1:40,000 scale, with the coastal and more densely settled parts of the country being covered at the larger scale of 1:16,000 (Ward 1965:248). Preparation of a series of topographic maps by DOS, at a scale of 1:50,000, began promptly and sheets of the first edition, without contours, were published in 1956. The second edition, with contours, appeared in 1958.

These topographic maps and photographs became basic tools for further surveys of geology, soils and land use. They allowed the Geological Survey Department to begin a systematic geological survey of the whole of Fiji, the first bulletin being published in 1958 (Houtz 1958). The first systematic soil survey of Fiji involved collaboration between the New Zealand Soil Bureau and the Fiji Department of Agriculture. Most of the fieldwork was completed by the end of the 1950s and land classification maps at a scale of 1:126,720, showing the potential of land for different uses were published in the mid-1960s (Twyford and Wright 1965).
In the early 1950s population growth in Western Samoa was causing concern within the administration but there were still no maps of Western Samoa at a scale large enough to use as the base for detailed resource surveys. The need for accurate and scientific information on resources was recognised and in 1953-4 Western Samoa was covered by aerial photography at a scale of approximately 1:21,000 (Fox 1962:23). The photographs, and an excellent series of photo mosaics at a scale of 1:20,000, were used in the mid-1950s as the bases for major studies of three key resource topics – geology, soils and land use. Photo interpretation by the New Zealand Department of Lands and Survey was later field checked by the Department of Lands and Survey, Western Samoa, and an excellent series of 1:20,000 topographic maps was drawn by the Samoan Department of Lands and Survey and published in the late 1960s.

Photography and topographical mapping continued in other territories through the following decades, with metropolitan organisations, such as the Directorate of Overseas Surveys, the French Institut Géographique National (IGN), and the New Zealand Department of Lands and Surveys producing series for the Solomon Islands, Kiribati, New Hebrides, New Caledonia, French Polynesia and the Cook Islands.

After the soil surveys, land use studies in Samoa, Fiji and the Cook Islands determined what land was currently in use, and what might be available for future development. In Western Samoa land use surveys were conducted by the Lands and Survey Department and the Department of Geography, University of Auckland, the former resulting in a series of unpublished land use maps at a scale of 1:20,000 and the latter in detailed studies of land use and related matters in sample villages, plantations and settlements, and general land use maps at approximately 1:200,000 (Fox and Cumberland 1962).

The land use survey of Fiji involved fieldwork between 1958 and 1961 and aerial photo interpretation in London using photography made available by the Directorate of Overseas Surveys. The initial land use maps, covering the three main islands, were at a scale of 1:50,000 and used the new topographic maps as
a base. Final publication was at a scale of 1:250,000 (Ward 1965). Other land surveys were completed in 1968 and 1978 at scales of 1:50,000 by DOS and the Land Use Section of the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture and Forests respectively, thus providing a unique opportunity for examining land use changes in relation to land quality over two decades (Ward 1985).

The much smaller size of the Cook Islands made it possible for the soils of the southern Cook Islands to be studied and mapped at a reconnaissance level in 1950 without the benefit of large scale topographic maps (Grange and Fox 1953). Land use surveys of part of Rarotonga were conducted by academic researchers from the University of Canterbury in 1950-51 (Johnston 1959). Subsequently, aerial photographs taken in the early 1960s allowed the production of detailed topographic maps at a scale of 1:15,840 by the New Zealand Lands and Survey Department. More extensive land use studies by geographers from Massey University followed, leading to the publication of land use maps at the very large scale of 1:7,920 (e.g. Allen 1971).

In Papua New Guinea the Australian Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) addressed the need for more knowledge of physical resources. In the context of very limited existing information and difficult land to traverse, the CSIRO used aerial photographs and field checks to identify areas with ‘relatively uniform land components (land units) ... arranged in larger spatially contiguous but recurrent patterns to form complexes (land systems)’. Each land system had ‘an assembly of land units which are geographically and/or geomorphologically related, and throughout which there is a recurring pattern of landform, soils, and vegetation’ (Bellamy 1986:8). The land systems approach enabled extensive areas of difficult country to be surveyed relatively quickly. Teams from the CSIRO completed a series of land resources reports on different parts of Papua New Guinea and these were published from 1964 onwards. Subsequently, thematic maps and systematic studies of the geomorphology (Löffler 1977), vegetation (Paijmans 1976) and soils (Bleeker 1983) of the whole country were published.

The volume of published material produced by the Land Research Division of CSIRO in the 1960s and early 1970s is extraordinary. Of 562 titles of publications related to Papua New Guinea’s geography which were published in the years 1961 to 1975, and listed in a bibliography of that country’s geographical studies (Lea et al. 1975), at least 205 were produced by people working in that Division.

The Australian Commonwealth Bureau of Mineral Resources also established projects in Papua New Guinea and expanded knowledge of the area’s geological
and mineral resources. Extended by the work of private sector prospectors, and
drawing on the pre-war prospecting reports, this knowledge laid the basis for
the great expansion of the country's mineral industry after the mid-1960s.

In the Solomon Islands a DOS team also used a land systems approach in their
surveys, and then distinguished a set of 43 'agricultural opportunity areas' which
had 'above average potential' for an expansion of commercial agriculture
(Hansell and Wall, 1975: 135-8). Here, as in Papua New Guinea, these surveys
formed a base for the more detailed surveys needed for planning individual
projects.

In the New Hebrides, New Caledonia and French Polynesia, the French Office
de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique Outre-Mer (ORSTOM) undertook
many studies of the physical and social environments and published many
specialist reports and thematic and topographic maps. Subsequently, these
studies and the IGN's topographical maps were the bases for detailed atlases of
these territories (Quantin 1966-78; ORSTOM 1981).

As the trend towards independence accelerated in early 1970s, the extraordinary
burst of environmental and land use surveys by individual scholars, government
agencies, or advisers commissioned by governments in the previous two
decades, meant that most Pacific territories were, in the main, extremely well
served with the basic environmental information needed for development
planning. They were no longer terra incognita in this respect. Nevertheless work
has continued until the present on refining and extending understanding of
resource and land utilisation in most countries. The advent of computer-driven
Geographical Information System (GIS) techniques has been important in
allowing much more efficient access to the resource, land use and other spatial
data of the original and later surveys, especially in Papua New Guinea (see
Vovola and Allen 2001). Indeed, Papua New Guinea's land resources and land
use are now better described by detailed maps, GIS and other data bases than
most other countries in Asia and the Pacific.

Economies and societies

The need for understanding of the economic and social structures of the
colonies was also becoming obvious in the immediate post-war years and
governments funded a number of studies. For example, the first nutrition
survey in Papua New Guinea was made in 1947 (Hipsley and Clements 1950).
In the 1950s Wilson studied the economic structure of the New Hebrides
(Wilson 1966); Stace reported on Samoa (1956) and H. Belshaw and Stace on
the Cook Islands (n.d.); Davidson and Aikman became advisers in designing the
constitutions for Western Samoa and the Cook Islands (Davidson 1967); Spate
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studied the problems of and prospects for *The Fijian People* (1959); and the Burns Commission reported on population growth, resources and development strategies for Fiji (Burns et al. 1960). Similar reports were commissioned for several other territories, though not all were published. For example in the late 1940s the Australian Minister for Territories, Paul Hasluck, commissioned O.H.K. Spate, C.S. Belshaw and T.W. Swan to report on the problems of economic development of Papua and New Guinea and, in Hasluck's words, they provided 'a basic document in any study of the post-war economic policy' (Hasluck 1976:141). Yet this important report was not published.

The establishment of the South Pacific Commission (SPC) in 1948 added an international dimension to the flow of material related to development by disseminating information which might be valuable across a number of territories. Many specialist reports were commissioned by the SPC, over 90 being published in its first 8 years, 1949 to 1956. These studies ranged over many fields including co-operative movements, community development, plant and animal quarantine, education, medical and nutritional problems, management of crops such as cocoa, coffee and coconuts, and fisheries resources. In the 1970s and later years, after many Pacific Island countries had achieved independence, other multinational agencies, such as the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, became major contributors. An increasing number of regional institutions such as the South Pacific Forum (1971), South Pacific Bureau of Economic Cooperation (1972), the Committee for Coordination of Joint Prospecting for Mineral Resources in South Pacific Offshore Areas (1972), and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (1980) were established to undertake research and provide data and advice on development and other matters of regional importance. The flow of reports from such organizations has continued unabated.

At a national level, with the increasing demand for accurate and quantifiable information, departments or bureaus of statistics were set up in most of the Pacific Island territories. The amount of statistical material regularly available to governments increased rapidly. Subsequently the setting up of planning offices in many territories marked the acceptance that governments had a primary role in fostering and directing economic and social development.

In Fiji, budget planning for development began soon after the Second World War but 'more sophisticated planning was closely tied to the introduction by the United Kingdom of the Commonwealth Development and Welfare grant scheme. Under the scheme British colonies were required to submit development plans in order to qualify for financial aid' (Central Planning Office 1970:5). Fiji's first development plan covered the years 1949-1958, with later
plans covering five-year periods. The first five-yearly plans of both Tonga and Samoa covered the years 1966-1970 and both series have been maintained since then. The Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony also published a plan in the late 1960s and since independence Kiribati and Tuvalu have published development plans regularly. In the early 1960s Australia invited the World Bank to prepare a five-year development plan for Papua New Guinea and this was published in 1965 (World Bank 1965). In the late 1960s the Office of Programming and Coordination, the precursor to the Central Planning Office, was established and it commissioned a second plan prepared by consultants from the University of East Anglia (Overseas Development Group 1973; Allen 1983:225).

Statistical and planning offices have continued to produce economic and social plans, population and agricultural censuses, and official surveys and reports on a host of themes. Sometimes these were not formally published and thus not readily available outside the countries concerned. This is still true in some cases. Nevertheless they represent a very large increment in information compared to that available to administrators in the pre-war decades.

The detail and volume of this new body of data are revealed in works published by several operational departments. For example, road construction and improvement became a major goal in Papua New Guinea in the 1960s. Engineering consultants produced reports on many existing and proposed roads and the Coordinator of Transport provided funding for academics in the University of Papua New Guinea and the Australian National University’s New Guinea Research Unit to undertake work under a ‘Joint Programme of Studies in the Transport Process’, and several monographs were published (eg. Bouchard 1972 and 1973). Consultancies and surveys by staff enabled the Department of Public Works to produce a Road Inventory consisting of 51 maps at a scale of 1:250,000 showing every road in the country, its quality and characteristics, and the location, type of construction and load-bearing capacity of every bridge (Department of Public Works 1967). For a developing territory it was a remarkably detailed source. By the late 1960s comparable major data sources could be found in fields such as agriculture, forestry, health, education and public works in many Pacific Island countries.

**A flood of academics**

In the first decades of the 20th century the Pacific Islands attracted the interest of a few university-based scholars, the majority of whom were anthropologists. In the 1930s F.E. Williams was appointed Government Anthropologist in Papua, indicating the administration's recognition of the need to know more about indigenous societies. Although several ‘expeditions’ comprising groups of
academics were mounted, in the main the academic contributions to knowledge of the Pacific Islands prior to the Second World War were relatively few and were contributed by individuals, including missionaries. Few were related to the requirements of government policies.

This situation changed soon after the Second World War. With the growing direct involvement of metropolitan governments, both in shaping their own economies, and in fostering development in their colonies, came recognition of the need to build human capital, both at home and in the dependent territories. Social sciences became more popular disciplines and their relevance to developing colonies was signalled in the United Kingdom by the establishment of the Colonial Social Science Research Council which funded many studies in British colonies, including several in the Pacific.

Universities expanded rapidly in size and number in metropolitan countries and colonial powers. Research also became a relatively more important function in these institutions and policy issues often guided research themes. All these trends led to a growing reservoir of academics, based in developed countries, interested in undertaking research in the dependent territories of the Pacific Islands.

The land use studies of Western Samoa, Fiji and the Cook Islands were early examples of the very rapid expansion of university-based research studies in the Pacific Islands in the 1950s and the following decade. Anthropology, linguistics, geography and economics were amongst the most prominent disciplines in the 1950s but geology, botany, zoology and other physical sciences were represented. Historians and sociologists were also involved. Papua New Guinea became a particular focus for anthropologists and Bulmer documented the post-war expansion of intensive ethnographic studies in that country. Of 129 'traditional societies which have [by 1969] been the subject of [139] intensive ethnographic enquiries', 20 had been studied by 1929, a further 23 between 1929 and 1949, 31 in the decade to 1959 and another 65 in the next decade to 1969 (Bulmer 1970: 93-6). A similar pattern is evident in studies related to the geography of the country. Of 646 studies recorded by Lea et al. (1975), only 51 were published before 1951, 33 between 1951 and 1960, 315 between 1961 and 1970, and a further 247 by mid 1975. Many of the academic studies of the Pacific Islands in the 1960s were undertaken by PhD students and their theses became a great source of information in several disciplines.

Another example of academics providing what became a base line socio-economic study was that carried out in Kiribati and Tuvalu by academics from Victoria University of Wellington between 1971 and 1974. The reports were
republished as a series, beginning in 1982 (Geddes et al. 1982-4), and have since proved invaluable as a datum against which to assess change in these two countries. For example, in 1989 the Government of Kiribati and UNDP supported a study by Lawrence to ‘assess changes on Tamana between 1971-74 and 1989 in relation to the impact of the loss of phosphate income, continuing rural-urban migration, indigenous development initiatives and the impact of the UNDP Integrated Atoll Development Project’ (Lawrence 1989: 2). Studies such as that of Kiribati in 1971-74, and the others described above, now provide very valuable benchmarks for the assessment of socio-economic change in the region and allow present-day scholars to give a much better time perspective than was possible for their predecessors of the 1950s.

Fostering education for the indigenous people was another key post-war goal and while the focus was initially placed on the primary level, the need for people trained at secondary and higher levels soon became clear. Many public, as distinct from mission, high schools were established throughout the region in the 1950s, followed by teacher training and technical institutions and finally, in the mid-1960s, universities. The University of Papua New Guinea started teaching in 1965; the University of the South Pacific, Fiji, in 1968. While the training of students who were expected to take leading roles in their own countries was the universities’ primary task, staff at both universities began research studies in many fields.

In Papua New Guinea the Australian National University’s Research School of Pacific Studies had established the New Guinea Research Unit in Port Moresby in 1961. The NGRU became a base for many researchers and, over the next 14 years, published over 60 monographs, mostly on themes related to economic and social development. The wave of research results was reflected in the starting of several new academic journals focused on the Pacific Islands in the 1950s and 1960s, and subsequently to the emergence of specialist publishers, notably the Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, whose aim was to encourage writing by Pacific Islanders.

The late 1960s saw students and graduates of the Pacific Island universities joining the expatriate academics who had hitherto dominated publications on the region. In 1968, at the Second Waigani Seminar held in the University of Papua New Guinea only 3 of 31 papers were presented by indigenous islanders (Inglis 1969). Only two years later, at the Fourth Waigani Seminar, Pacific Islanders contributed almost one-third of the papers (Ward 1970). From the early 1970s the process of ‘localisation’ speeded up as trained indigenous staff replaced expatriate public servants. The formulation of policy started to be ‘indigenised’ as independence approached but much of the provision of
technical information has continued to be largely in the hands of expatriates.

*The era of consultants*

As the colonial administrations needed more and more information and advice for policy formation in the early 1950s it was obvious that they had to look outside their own resources, especially as emphasis in recruitment of administrative officers had tended in the past to be placed on generalists rather than technical experts. As shown above, apart from contributing to the dramatic expansion of knowledge about the colonial territories, some academics became important advisors to the colonial governments and administrations. They ushered in the age of the ‘expert’ (Spate 1961), and it was fortunate they were able to draw on the foundation provided by the new maps, census results, databases and academic monographs that flooded out after 1950.

From the early 1960s the amount of foreign aid given to the Pacific Islands, and other developing regions, by the colonial powers and other developed countries increased rapidly. The process of aid giving also became more bureaucratic and formalized. Studies required to assess needs and to plan projects were increasingly put out to tender and consultancy firms increased in number, range of expertise and size. Professional consultants became the major source of advice to governments and administrations in many fields. One result of this has been that although the overall volume of studies related to development issues in the region increased greatly in and after the 1970s, a smaller relative proportion of total studies in the region have been formally published and thus have entered the public domain. Much of the material produced in consultancy reports has had very limited circulation and has not found its way into secure deposit or university libraries. Unfortunately there is a high risk that much of this material, costly to provide, will prove ephemeral. It could even happen that historians of social and economic change in the middle of the 21st century will find that, in some fields, the body of material available to them from the 1950s and 1960s is greater than that from the 1990s.

After the 1950s and 1960s the roles and styles of government and administration had changed irrevocably from those of the 1930s. The information explosion of the 1950s and 1960s was both part cause and part consequence of this change.
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The View from the Sub-District

Hank Nelson

In 1953 the two Australian Territories of Papua and New Guinea were divided into 15 Districts and these were further divided into 51 Sub-Districts. The Department of District Services and Native Affairs had a total of 385 officers, and after accounting for those on leave, on courses, or retained at headquarters, it had about 300 to distribute through the districts and sub-districts. Over fifty were in just two districts, the long-contacted Central District and New Britain. In other districts there were around ten to twenty officers. In the Southern Highlands there were 11, Western District 14 and Gulf 13. That is, 38 men were responsible for the administration of over half the population and area of Papua. No government officers from any other departments served in the Southern Highlands, in the Gulf just four, and from the Western District five (one Works, one Education and two from Public Health). The whole of the highlands were then divided into just three districts, Southern, Western and Eastern. They were administered by 51 officers from DDSNA. Public Health, the Department with the next greatest number of officers, had just 13. The distribution of Australian officers was much the same in Northern, Sepik and Bougainville; the total numbers of service department officers exceeded those from DDSNA only in Central, Manus, New Britain and Morobe. In 1953 for most people in Papua and New Guinea Australian administration was whatever was done by the *kiaps*, the field officers of DDSNA.

For most people, government was the patrol. In the year ending on 30 June 1953 the Australian administration had carried out 402 patrols, each averaging about 24 days. In addition, there were over 200 surveys more grandly titled 'Inspections by District Commissioners'. On many patrols there were two

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1 Manus was a District and was not further divided.
3 Several of the education officers in Central, Morobe and New Britain were there to teach the children of Australians. In Madang District there were 23 DDSNA, 12 Health, 5 Agriculture, 2 Education, 5 telecommunications etc.
DDSNA officers, sometimes just one, only five or six Papua New Guinean police, a Native Medical Assistant, an interpreter, and carriers, often recruited village to village. As there were 150 patrol officer and 59 cadet patrol officer positions in the public service compared to 40 Assistant District Commissioners and twenty District Commissioners, it was inevitable that most patrols were carried out by young patrol officers and cadets who had recently joined the expanding postwar service. Sometimes the patrol also included a European Medical Assistant, but there simply were not enough of them to travel with most patrols. A Separate Department of Health patrols made further demands on its few officers: it had just 13 European officers to cover all the highlands. There was even less likely to be an agricultural officer on patrol: five districts had no agricultural officers and another five had three or less.

The reports submitted after each patrol were numbered according to the sub-district and reporting year, and enclosed within a cover listing all costs (stores carried, gifts to carriers, food bought en route and canoe hire), the dates of the previous District Service and medical patrols, and each village population, including numbers of births and deaths, movements in and out, and the total numbers of both men and women who might be recruited as labourers. The report itself began with an initial page giving the place, dates and purpose of the patrol, all European and Papua New Guinean personnel, and a map reference. The diary of the patrol, typed from notes taken at the time, gave a daily four or five-line summary of movement and action. After some ‘general remarks’, the report followed headings allowing comments on ‘native affairs’, village housing, schools, roads, bridges, airstrips, agriculture and livestock, village officials, missions, the census, rest houses, cases arbitrated or determined in the courts for native affairs (‘native matters’ in Papua), timber resources, labour recruitment, health and hygiene, and anthropology. The conclusion often returned to the object of the patrol. The officer in charge of the patrol included comments of the performance of his colleagues, the police and medical assistants. So Patrol Officer Jeffery Daugherty, after a patrol into the Kaugel and Nebilyer valleys in 1952, wrote that Constable Hurrendua was:

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5 There were over 100 on the public service establishment.
6 That includes doctors as well as European Medical Assistants.
7 The agriculture officers were concentrated in Central, Morobe, New Britain and Eastern Highlands. The Aiyura experimental station near Kainantu explains the apparently high numbers in the Eastern Highlands.
A constable with exceptional personality and has a strong influence on the people. Is at the moment in charge of Tambil Base Camp. Uniform and equipment fair only.8

And Patrol Officer H.G. Routley wrote of Constable Dom:

This constable is typical of the stolid, plotting policeman of fiction. He unquestioningly carried out all duties allotted to him to the best of his ability, and was not once guilty of complaining. An excellent constable, but unfortunately not a suitable type for promotion.9

In their reports the government officers rarely admitted—as they did in their reminiscences—that the police sometimes controlled events and withheld information or lied when they thought it appropriate.10

The typing up of the report by the returned officer was time-consuming. Many reports covered over twenty foolscap pages of careful single-spaced typing punched through several carbons. If the average length of a patrol report in 1952-1953 was only ten pages, then they provided some 4000 pages of comment from all 51 sub-districts.11 Sent to the District Commissioner who commented and forwarded them to the Director of DDSNA, they were eventually bound and stored in one of the many louvred windowed offices in Konedobu.12 They were essential reading for field and headquarters officers, and continue to be invaluable to Papua New Guineans and others who want to understand the policies, assumptions and actions of Australia’s administration.

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8 Mount Hagen Patrol Report 3 of 1951/52. Nearly all the patrols quoted here were collected by Dr Norma McArthur, then at the ANU and making a study of the demographic data collected by field officers in Papua and New Guinea. Her files from all districts are held in the Division of Pacific and Asian History. The quotes are from the original patrol reports, but many do not have the covers or are brief excerpts and so the patrol number and the name of the reporting officer are not attached.


10 In 1953 there were also 35 Patrol Posts where patrols started. Some Patrol Posts were subsequently important (eg Kiunga and Ialibu) while others were temporarily on the administrative map.

11 That was where they were when I first read them in the late 1960s.
While the reports often have patrols that ‘departed’ and ‘proceeded’ rather than ‘left’ and ‘went’, and new officers were guided by the style of previous reports, some writers displayed an individuality in style and selection of topics. An officer returning to Wabag after a long patrol to Porgera wrote:

The Lagaip is a wide spreading basin with the mountains of the horizon dim in the distance and many many homesteads scattered about in its hills and ridges. The whole floor of this valley is covered with cultivation, dotted with ceremonial grounds and ringed by tall casuarina pines. To travel in the valley systems after days in the mountains and forest is a real pleasure.\(^\text{13}\)

Trying to describe the houses at Chenap upstream from Ambunti on the Sepik an officer said that they well constructed, conical in shape and ‘Actually they look like a huge parachute draped over a central pole’.\(^\text{14}\) Another officer on the eastern edge of the Eastern Highlands said that the women’s houses were ‘perched like sparrows’ nests on crazy sticks – one wonders how they support a human’s weight’.\(^\text{15}\)

In their reports officers included more than was strictly ‘administration’. Patrolling out of Wakunai in north east Bougainville, a kia\(p\) was the target of duel missions. He wrote:

At the Kusi Roman Catholic Mission school a choral programme lasting about 20 minutes was staged by Sironga, the native teacher, for the patrol’s benefit. Apparently regarding this as a precedent native teachers at Pusupa (Methodist) and Rarie (S.D.A.) eagerly sought permission for and put on after dinner hymn-singing outside the rest-house, in the latter case lasting about an hour and a half. Vocal strength, rather than sweetness, highlighted these sessions, but teachers and singers were thanked in each case for the gesture. The National Anthem was sung at Tianana as the patrol entered the village.\(^\text{16}\)

On the Sepik near the junctions with the April and Leonard Schultz Rivers a patrol officer noticed that the young men had remarkably large penises. He assured his superiors that he had made discreet enquiries, and discovered that the youths went into the bush each day and massaged their penises with nettles,

\(^{13}\) Wabag Patrol Report 3-4 of 1952/3.

\(^{14}\) Ambunti Patrol Report 6 of 1952/3. ‘Chenap’ later spelt Zenap.

\(^{15}\) Kainantu Patrol report 9 of 1952/3.

\(^{16}\) Kieta sub-district, patrol from Wakunai, Sept 1953.
resulting – not surprisingly - in ‘intense irritation and swelling’.\textsuperscript{17}

On most occasions the field officers were restrained in their comments on their fellows. As Ian Downs has pointed out, you could write a report that had headquarters asking ‘all kinds of asinine questions’ or you could imply that fellow officers were efficient and the district running smoothly and ‘therefore the district officer’ (and your boss) ‘was doing a good job’.\textsuperscript{18} Fortunately, not all officers were so circumspect. Patrol Officer H.G. Routley travelling through the islands and mud flats of Goaribari admitted that as a non-swimmer he was anxious and incompetent in a ‘hollow log paddled by primitive and fatalistic tribesmen’, but that his companion, Cadet Patrol Officer H.S. Pegg, was a disaster on land:

If there was a weak point in a board walk, or a log that rolled when stepped on, he was sure to find it. On only two occasions did he miss, once when the board walk at Aimahe collapsed shortly after he had passed over it, and once when the floor of the rest house at Ubua gave way.\textsuperscript{19}

Cadet Patrol Officer Pegg survived to lead the next patrol to the Goaribari. This time, he said, he was able to obtain willing paddlers and fast canoes, but he still seems to have had some trouble on land as he timed his arrival off villages at low tide and had to wade several hundred yards knee-deep in oozing mud to make the landings.\textsuperscript{20}

A Cadet Patrol Officer in the Eastern Highlands explained that after hearing a case in the court for native affairs he decided that the woman complainant was just trying to cause trouble between her husband and another man. He ‘castigated’ her and dismissed the case. The woman went home and a few days later committed suicide.\textsuperscript{21} It is a stark revelation of one village tragedy on a colonial frontier. Another officer returned to Aitape after a patrol into the Palei and Maimai areas pointed out that previous patrols had been rare and some villages had not been visited since the last of the prewar patrols. He could not restrain himself: ‘An absence of four and a half years between patrols is long enough, surely, but an absence of twelve years, even with an intervening war, is,

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{17} Ambunti Patrol Report 6 of 1952/3.
\textsuperscript{19} Kikori Patrol Report 10 of 1950/1.
\textsuperscript{20} Kikori Patrol Report 8 of 1951/2.
\textsuperscript{21} Kumiava Patrol Report 17 of 1952/3. No conclusions can be drawn about what caused the woman to commit suicide.
\end{footnotesize}
perhaps, excessive, to say the least.” The cautionary ‘perhaps’ did not blunt the message.

It is a relief to the researcher to find that reports written within a hierarchical bureaucracy and following a prescribed structure have not been shorn of all reflection of the personality, side interests and prejudices of the writer; and that freedom increases their value as the most comprehensive statements about what Australians were doing and trying to do when in actual contact with the peoples of Papua and New Guinea.

One basic task for all field officers was to have people lain, that is, they wanted all the people in a village to line up in family groups and have their names entered in a village book. On later ‘census’ patrols, the kiaps would again ask the people to lain, and then they could check all births, deaths and migrations; how many were away at school or working; they could identify those wanted as witnesses or suspects in cases before the courts; and they had a basic document helping them understand land ownership and marriages. An accurate census was essential, its making and maintenance were measures of the extent of government control, and once established the village books were a tool of the administration. But making and checking a village census was often difficult.

The first problem was that many people did not live in villages. Often, the basic group to be recorded in the ‘village’ book had to be created. The Nagovisi of southern Bougainville lived in scattered hamlets and to please the kiaps they had built villages, but they were the field officers admitted ‘only lines of houses which the natives pretend to occupy when a patrol is in the area’. A Cadet Patrol Officer climbed across the Finisterres to reach people on the headwaters of the Gusap and other rivers flowing into the Markham. The villages were, he said deserted, and the people returning to their old ways of living in isolated family groups. He drew a pessimistic picture of the consequences: the village officials would be ignored, houses poorly built and the walking tracks neglected. In Bundi, on the highland fringe of the Madang District, the people were also leaving their new villages. Made up of concentrations of up to 300 people, the villages were, the kiap conceded, arbitrary concentrations of people with no desire and no kin ties to hold them together. Patrols out of Bogia and Saidor on the north coast noted that the ‘tendency for the “independent hamlet” remained’, and that some people who had never joined the concentrated villages were clearly determined to continue to live in their house

22 Aitape Patrol Report 4 of 1952/3.
23 Extract from a Buin patrol in the McArthur files.
24 Saidor Patrol Report 3 of 1951/2.
and place. Further west near Vanimo the kiap said that the people should be encouraged to leave their ‘pitiful collections of houses, with a small and ragged population’ and form a compact village under ‘one central figure of authority’. In the Taiora on the east of the Highlands the people had come down from their ‘straggling collections of loosely associated hamlets perched on various ridges’ to build their houses around a cleared square. But further west through the Highlands many people were still dispersed. Among the recently contacted Huri of the Tari Valley the kiap reported:

They do not live in villages, and do not even have established meeting places, but live in small huts scattered through the gardens and bush, usually one family to a hut.

Each man and his family may have land rights in as many as six different places, often some distance apart, and he moves between these places according to the seasons of the state of the gardens. In many instances a family is forced to move because of nearby fighting.

On the Hagen-Sepik patrol Jim Taylor, on arriving at Faram near Telfomin, noted that he had reached the first village since the Eastern Highlands—and the patrol had passed through thousands and thousands of people.

By contrast, in the Western District field officers encountered an excess concentration of people. In the Lake Murray area and south into the Bamu delta a village was one longhouse. The longhouses varied in size with the number of people, but one among the newly contacted Supei west of the Strickland River was 25 feet wide, 50 feet long and 25 feet high at its highest. All the longhouses were heavily barricaded. In the longer contacted Fly Estuary there was just one longhouse left, at Wapi, but there the people were said to be planning to build individual houses.

Those writing about Papuan and New Guinea communities that did not traditionally live in villages have sometimes indicated that they dealt with

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26 Kainantu Patrol Report 5 of 1951/2.
27 Eastern Highlands, Kumiava Patrol Post Report 17 of 1952/3 regrets the ‘hindrance to efficient administration’ of having people in small hamlets.
28 Extract from Southern Highlands patrol report of 1953.
30 Lake Murray Patrol Report 7-9 of 1953.
31 Daru Patrol Report 5 of 1952.
exceptions, but patrol reports from Bougainville to Aitape show that the village was the exception. But for the Australian administration, the village was essential. A government based on patrolling had to have people concentrated at convenient points: its patrols could not climb every ridge, find every new garden and visit every family. The government agents (the village constables, luluais and tultuls), and the government servants (the medical aid post orderlies and teachers) also needed villages. But once the government concentrated people at one point then problems of land ownership and old clan enmities intensified; many people, especially the women, faced long journeys to their gardens; and pigs and dogs were more likely to be a nuisance. For many people in the ‘nation of villagers’, the village is not much older than the nation.

For convenience of administration, villages needed a name, and even that seemingly simple requirement could raise problems. Patrol Officer D.G. Calder said that when the Pare, living northwest of Lake Murray, were asked the name of their village they gave the name of the nearest stream, the longhouse, or the totem of the clan living there. 32 Similarly near Lake Kutubu a community sometimes gave the name of the land on which their hamlet was built, a clan name, or the name of the headman, and a kiap in the upper Chimbu decided that the name of the men’s house was the best choice. The hamlet was scattered, but at least the men’s house fixed the home of the bigman of the clan or subclan. 33 Three years later the Assistant District Officer at Kundisawa, B. Hayes, was still recommending that the Chimbu sub-district be censused uniformly on a ‘group/clan/sub-clan basis’ and that they be named according to a consistent policy. 34

Among people who were in villages and accustomed to ‘lining’ for the government, a field officer could give warning of his visit and expect the people to gather in their family groups and be checked against the village book. In 1954 on the fourth postwar census patrol into the Kongara on southwest Bougainville the kiap was able to say that all men except one had lined, and the tultul had been told to bring him into Kieta and report. 35 That indicated a high degree of government control and village conformity, but even on Bougainville there were people beyond government control and on the margins of government surveillance. At Subiaia the people were still living in their dispersed hamlets, and the kiap from Wakunai found the people ‘timid’. Although he waited for two nights at least seventeen people did not lain. He told the luluai to

32 Lake Murray Patrol Report 7 of 1952/3.
34 Comment by B.Hayes on Chimbu Patrol Report 3 of 1952/3.
35 Kieta Patrol Report, March 1954.
find them and meet the patrol at another village. They did not appear.\(^{36}\)

F.J. Martin patrolling out of Dreikikir into the Muhiang area found that half the people at Moi No 1 fled into the bush, but he waited two days and they came back. At Ilahita he added 180 new names to the census, although he believed that through south Muhiang many people had not been seen by the patrol.\(^{37}\) On the Sepik River at Wasurian village, the *kiap* went around all the houses and by presenting the people with steel blades and fish hooks was able to induce them to line. At Chenap the villagers sat in their canoes just off the bank and just shook their heads when he asked them to line. Eventually the police ‘working literally like a sheep dog’ herded them ashore.\(^{38}\) South of Aiome on the Ramu the Maring people were pugnacious, refused to trade, and rather than line fled, shouting warnings to others and the relayed calls could be heard in all directions.\(^{39}\) A patrol visited a longhouse in the Biami area of the Western District but

> Everybody barricaded themselves inside and no inducement whatever could get them to come out and meet the patrol. The only response obtained at all was for a hand to appear through the barricaded door and indicate quite obviously that the patrol should be on its way.\(^{40}\)

In the neighbouring Supei and Kubor areas, the villagers tried to hurry the patrol on its way and deliberately directed it away from other villages.

Reactions in the Highlands varied greatly. In the Nebilyer Valley some people were enthusiastic about having their names recorded in village books: they thought it distinguished them from the ‘kanakas’ who were yet to make an alliance with the government. The census took place with a ‘maximum of noise’ and swarming mobs of people.\(^{41}\) In the upper Lai the people wanted the government to ‘sit down’ on their land, and they, too, wanted their names recorded.\(^{42}\) On the first patrol for two years into the Kup area of the Chimbu sub-district, Routley wrote:

> The Patrol was well received at all points. Roads and pathways in the vicinity of Resthouses were in several places strewn with flowers and the

\(^{36}\) Wakunai Patrol Report, September 1953.


\(^{38}\) Ambunti Patrol report 6 of 1952/3.

\(^{39}\) Madang Patrol Report, June 1953, into Gainj and Maring.

\(^{40}\) Lake Murray Patrol Report, July – September 1953.

\(^{41}\) Mt Hagen Patrol Report of August-September 1952.

\(^{42}\) Wabag Patrol Report 4 of 1952/3.
Resthouses themselves were liberally decorated with blossom and greenery. As the patrol arrived at each Resthouse it was met by the greater part of the population adjacent thereto, and many bands of natives travelled quite long distances from other Census Sub-Divisions merely to look on. The shouting, singing and gestures of welcome were quite overwhelming in their enthusiasm. Large quantities of food were piled at each Resthouse preparatory to our arrival, and this was purchased with Trade Goods. 43

No wonder that it was to those times and those patrols that kiaps in their retirement were pleased to recall. 44

By contrast, C. Terrell reported:

In the lower Tari, conducting a census is a painful affair, but in time the people will realize what it is about, stop treating it as a joke, better avoided if possible. I am of the opinion that there are still large Nos in this area who remain unrecorded. 45

On patrols through heavily populated country where the people were keen to line, a patrol might record over 10,000 names. Yet even in the Kainantu sub-district of the Eastern Highlands only two-thirds of the estimated total population were recorded in the village books. 46

When people living in scattered hamlets were sufficiently familiar with the government to be censused then decisions had to be made about how to define the group to be entered in the ‘village’ book. In the Upper Chimbu the people were lined by clan and sub-clan, but in the Nebilyer Valley the people all wanted to ‘bung’ on the same day, disputes broke out about which line should be censused first, people kept detaching themselves from one line and joining another, and refugees from clan warfare had to be fitted in somewhere although they might soon leave to reclaim lost lands. 47

Once the group was defined, the people were gathered into families. But what constituted a family was often unclear. In the Lumi area of the Sepik a kiap confessed it was almost impossible to reconcile the village books with the

43 Chimbu Patrol Report 6 of 1952/3.
46 Kainantu Patrol Report 5 of 1951/2. In 1953 the Annual Report gave just over 4000 as ‘estimated’.
47 Mt Hagen Patrol report of August-September 1952.
groups in front of him:

Children are exchanged and passed around in a most bewildering manner and few women appear to be able to keep a check on the number and disposal of their offspring from year to year. This constant adoption and passing back of children makes the accurate compilation of family groups a particularly difficult task and it is likely that every patrol officer considers the colleague before him a fool and an incompetent idiot. 48

Further complications arose where the people did not have a fixed name to be entered in the book. Patrolling on the headwaters of the Wantoat, Leron and other rivers between the Finisterres and the Markham, P.K. Moloney complained that he could not find the ‘owners’ of many of the names he called. He found that people adopted different names at different stages of their lives and some could not remember the name they had given at the time of the last patrol. Forced to make a quick decision on a new name they seized on the obvious so that ‘Names like Katap (fire) Yanga (water) Ikwap (river) and names of the topography are common’. 49 Other people also chose any convenient noun when asked for a name. A kiap at Atiera on the east of the Eastern Highlands found himself reading out the names trees, birds and stones, and the Anga speakers in the Menyamya Sub-District had to overcome strong cultural aversion to giving their real names. 50 The patient officer found himself being given the words for ‘stony ground, a pig, a dog, the leaf of a tree, hungry, and skin and bone’. He was also amused at apparently ‘ferocious natives’ putting on the ‘bashful girl act’ as they hesitated before giving a name. An apparently casual approach to families also prolonged the census. Children seemed to attach themselves to any adult and elderly women with withered breasts came forward with newly-born babies in string bags. When confronted with the biological improbability of their claim to recent motherhood, the old women calmly insisted that they had indeed just given birth. And at the end of the census a number of children remained unclaimed by any family. The kiap wrote:

Liars I have met. Men would stand in front of me almost with tears in their eyes and tell me that their wife was dead, that he had the worry of looking after the family of small children when all the time he had told his wife that he didn’t want her to have her name recorded with his. 51

48 Aitape Patrol Report, patrol to Lumi 1951.
49 Morobe Patrol Report 4 of 1951/2.
50 Kainantu Patrol Report 9 of 1952/3; and Menyamya Patrol Report extract.
51 Menyamya Patrol Report extract.
While far from complete, the census was, the *kiap* claimed, better than the previous one, and it would be ‘even better next time’.

From this survey of Department of District Services and Native Affairs patrols, it is apparent that as the postwar decade came to an end, much administration was still concerned with what was broadly concerned with ‘pacification’—extending Australian control by patrolling, setting up new patrol or police posts in frontier areas, stopping local warfare, providing initial health services, getting people accustomed to the presence of patrols, entering their names in village books, appointing village officials, and encouraging the people to take disputes to Australian field officers. Attempting to combat a cult in the Bamu area of the Western District Assistant District Officer, B.B. Hayes told the people about the advantages that had come with Australian administration: he spoke of peace, and with it security of life and land and freedom to travel, medicines, and the introduction of axes, knives, cups, plates and calico to make life easier.\(^{52}\)

Cadet Patrol officer P. Healy was more specific about the work of the government in the Eastern Highlands:

> It can be said that the Government is accepted automatically as the arbiter in their disputes and the people are quick to take advantage of it in this role. And while the people identify the Administration as the power for law and order their conception of it stops there.\(^{53}\)

Even medical services, Healy said, were thought of as bilas: very few people made voluntary use of them.

The territories’ basic statistics justified the Administration’s emphasis on extending and consolidating government control. In 1953 there were, the Administration thought, just over 1,536,000 people in Papua and New Guinea. Of these 290,000 were estimated. That is, just under 20% were yet to have their names entered in the village books. In fact, when the Administration reassessed its figures the next year, it found that there were many more people who were ‘estimated’. The main change was in the Southern Highlands where an estimated 77,500 people in 1953 had suddenly increased to 164,600 in 1954. The total population of the Southern Highlands had grown from 82,000 to 170,000. The result was that over 25% of the population of Papua and New Guinea were then ‘estimated’. That is, they lived in areas variously classified as ‘penetrated by patrols’, under partial government influence, or under government influence,

\(^{52}\) Gaima Patrol Report 4 of 1950/1.

\(^{53}\) Kumiava Patrol Report 17 of 1952/3.
but outside ‘Administration Control’. Further changes were made in the next few years so that the assumed total in the Western Highlands went up by over 60,000. By the time that the first comprehensive census was taken in 1966, the known and estimated total population of 1953 of 1.5 million was 2.2 million, well above the rate of natural increase.

The fact that the administration could add 150,000 people to the totals of two districts was evidence of both the lightness of Australian control in many sub-districts and the size of the task that the Australians faced. It was not as though there was a frontier of control moving west across the highlands. In 1953 in all three sub-districts of the Eastern Highlands people were yet to be censused, and many had recently had their names recorded. Two years earlier only two-thirds of the Kainantu Sub-District peoples had their names in village books. And it was not simply in the Highlands that people were yet to line. There were 37,000 ‘estimated’ in the Gulf and Western Districts, 39,000 in the Sepik, 34,000 in Morobe, and 20,000 in Madang, and 1,900 in New Britain. From Bougainville to Vanimo and Kiunga there were people who were beyond Australian authority or so nervous in the presence of field officers they could not yet be asked to line. The 1953 estimate of the people yet to be censused could have been doubled: one third of the people were then in no more than a cautious, intermittent relationship with the few field representatives of the Australian state.

The Australians had no doubt that they could impose peace. They had done so in many other parts of Papua and New Guinea; the challenge to the government patrols in the Orokaiva, Binandere, Nakanai, Sepik and elsewhere had been violent; but everywhere sustained patrolling had led to a breaking of the old cycles of raids and wars, and an apparent permanent acceptance of a new order. So in January 1953 a kiap wrote after a patrol from Minj into the South Wahgi: ‘all is now quiet and peaceful – the warriors have turned their warlike prowess into more pacific channel and are working generally for the enrichment of the area’. Another officer recorded 13,600 names in the Jimmi Valley and wrote: ‘These tribes have accepted the morals of the Administration’. Further west, where the transition from stone to steel was still taking place, a kiap observed: ‘The natives of the Tari and Wage are an agreeable and happy people and the

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54 Population figures and classification of degrees of control are from Annual Reports.
55 Kainantu Patrol Reports 5 of 1951/2. (Sub-district boundaries changed and the area beyond Lufa was not then in the Kainantu Sub-District.)
56 Figures from the Annual reports have been rounded.
57 Minj Patrol Report, January 1953.
Hank Nelson The View from the Sub-District

officers chosen to work amongst them should find them orderly and tractable.\(^{59}\)

Patrol by patrol the confirming evidence accumulated: Australian control was being accepted and as peace was one of the great benefits of intervention there was no reason why it should not endure.

The confidence of the Australians in their ability to impose peace was not because by the early 1950s no Papuan or New Guinean equipped with bow and arrow, spear or axe would dare attack a patrol. They did so in the newly contacted areas of dense population in the Southern and Western Highlands; and in the reporting year 1951-1952 Papua New Guineans attacked patrols in the Sepik, Eastern Highlands, Madang and Morobe Districts.\(^{60}\) And late in 1953 two Australians (Patrol Officer Gerald Szarka and Cadet Patrol Officer Geoffrey Harris) and two Papua New Guinean policemen (Constables Buritori and Purari) were killed at Telefomin.\(^{61}\) The planned attack on Telefomin and the realization that more Papua New Guineans on the station could easily have been killed, reminded kiaps and more distant Australians of the dangers of enforcing sudden and profound change on Papua New Guinea communities. But that did not reduce the Australians' belief in their capacity to disrupt fighting and ensure a permanent peace. That is why they were surprised when Department of District Administration and police parties were again attacked in the Western Highlands—three times in 1971 and seven times in 1972.\(^{62}\)

What was not clear in the 1950s was that the first stage of the imposition of Australian rule was based on false assumptions: the people of Papua and New Guinea lived in villages, the village site was fixed and its population stable, all people had one name by which they were known to all people for all their lives, the village population could be divided into stable families, and the government could appoint village leaders with authority over other villagers. Government officers knew that all of these in some places were fictitious, but they rarely acknowledged the extent to which they were untrue right across the maps of both territories. In the highlands, where the populations were dense, fragmented, mobile and turbulent and where so many were added so quickly to

\(^{59}\) Wabag Patrol Report, March-April 1952.

\(^{60}\) *New Guinea Annual Report, 1951-52*, pp.30-2. Of these attacks it seems like only one (on a patrol out of Menyamya) resulted in the return fire killing an attacker. The language used by officers in their reports when they or their police used rifles is worth further study—and that is not attempted here.

\(^{61}\) R.T. Gore, who heard the cases against those accused of the Telefomin killings wrote of the incident in *Justice versus Sorcery*, Brisbane, 1965, pp.150-65.

the census, the problems of adapting the fictions to the people or the people to the fictions were much greater than at any other time.

Given the need to bring government to 500,000 new people, the postwar Australian administration had few resources to meet the expectations of those who had had their names in village books for thirty or forty years. In the 1945 speech in which he spoke of Australia’s ‘debt of gratitude’ and its ‘bounden duty to further to the utmost the advancement of the natives’, Eddie Ward, Minister for External Territories, had promised the ‘natives’ a ‘greater participation’ in government ‘eventually’.63 During his brief time as Minister for both External Affairs and External Territories, Percy Spender in 1950 said that the ‘indigenous inhabitants…will be unable, for many years to come, to play any part in the executive government of the country’. In a long speech, Spender gave cautious approval to the nomination of three Papuans and New Guineans to the proposed Legislative Council. And that was the only role they were offered in non-executive government.64 Soon after he became Minister for Territories, Paul Hasluck said that the native population, ‘very gradually, over a number of generations, will take an increasing interest both in running their own enterprises and in taking a share in their own government’.65 All of those terms—‘eventually’, ‘many years to come’, ‘over a number of generations’ all indicated that political advances would be slow, and the end point of any change was a ‘share’ in government. In its first postwar issue of 22 March 1956, the Rabaul Times in its front page editorial said it would support ‘any plans to end the trusteeship and bring New Guinea into full membership of the Commonwealth of Australia’. It was exceptional only in that was an explicit statement: most assertions about the aims of Australian policy spoke with appropriate vagueness about a time so distant.

In 1953 the three indigenous members of the Legislative Council were Merai Dickson, mission teacher of Milne Bay, Aisoli Salin, government school teacher of New Ireland, and Peta Simogun, ex-policeman and soldier from the Sepik. In the twelve months before 30 June 1953 the Legislative Council met just twice for a total of three weeks. The Council gave few Papua New Guineans brief, nominal experience of part of the process of making Territory laws. There were

65 South Pacific, January-February 1952, pp.226-7. In the July 1952 issue, p.360, Hasluck made another statement—again stating that political change would be slow—following social and educational advance.
then no immediate plans to change the Council’s composition or increase its powers. (The pressure for change came from white settlers who wanted more elected representatives.) The one point where the Administration said it would ‘foster … political advancement’ was at the village level where appointed officials were to be replaced by elected councils, and these in turn would lead to area, then district and ‘maybe regional councils’. Democracy was to grow from below. By mid-1953, there were six councils in New Guinea, five on the Gazelle Peninsula, and one, Baluan, on Manus, and in Papua there were two, Hanuabada in Port Moresby and Ealeba in Milne Bay. The population covered by the eight councils, 30,000, was 1.5% of the total. In 1955 there were still just 37,000 people in the councils. The rapid growth did not begin until the late 1950s, and even in 1960 there were still only 265,000 people, or less than 15% of the population in the councils. By 1953 town and district advisory councils had been formed but they had no Papuan or New Guinean representatives. The Australians reported to the United Nations that the ‘interests of the indigenous people [were] adequately protected by the policy of the Administration’.

In 1953 few field officers commented on council matters: there were none in most sub-districts and there was still going to be none at the end of the decade. The comment by the kiap at Aitape was unusual. The people along the coast to the east, he said, were ‘progressive and alert’, relatively wealthy and wanted to ‘participate in public affairs’. They would, he suggested, be suitable for ‘village council experiments’.

Australian education policy in the postwar was repeated in the Parliament and in annual reports: the aim was ‘universal literacy, and the extension of English as an eventual lingua franca’. Field officers were expected to report on schools, but as with councils there were often none to write about. In 1953 there were only 4666 Papuans and New Guineans in Administration schools. Nearly all were in primary schools that went just to standard five. Just over 800 were in standard six and above, including those in technical training. Nearly any were in classes higher than standard eight, and probably no girls. Proposals to send the first twenty students to Australian secondary schools were underway, and they were to leave Port Moresby in 1954. Included among them was John Natera who

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66 New Guinea Annual Report, 1952-53, p.23-4. There were also some unofficial councils covering small areas.
69 Aitape Patrol Reports, May 1954(?).
71 Statistics from Annual Reports.
would be the first Papuan university graduate. The only government school in the highlands was a station school at Lake Kutubu with twenty-four pupils. But even in some longer-contacted districts, government schools were few; just two primary schools in the Western District, Milne Bay and Madang, and only one on Bougainville. Many more students were in mission schools: a total of nearly 127,000, but most were in low-level village schools. Twenty years later, in 1973, there were over 220,000 Papua New Guineans in government primary school, and that was about half of those of school age. In 1953, eight years after the end of the war, less than 2% of those of primary school age were in primary schools.

The field officers had more to say on economic development. In the Eastern Highlands the people had already started planting cash crops: coffee, quinine, peanuts and passionfruit. Near Kainantu some New Guineans were working alluvial goldfields. Cadet Patrol Officer Healy wrote that the only time the Highlanders did not think of him as a policeman was when he talked about economic development. On the coast many villagers had their own copra driers and were selling copra, and some were selling direct to the Production Control Board and not to missions or private traders. In the council areas on the Gazelle, each with a tax revenue of 4000 to 7000 pounds, there was more evidence of economic change. Cocoa fermentaries and drying sheds were being built, trucks bought, and the Rabaul market improved. But the kiaps were also required to report on two other aspects of economic development: the land that was available for economic development and the potential for labour recruitment. Both implied they were concerned with opportunities for white settlers. In 1950 Spender had certainly signalled that there would be much more economic development in the hands of Australians. While he continued to talk about the wartime debt of gratitude and claim that Papuans and New Guineans would ‘participate to an ever-increasing rate in the fruits of... development’, he made it clear that it was the administration’s task to find and assess natural resources and these would be exploited by ‘private enterprise’. The land laws were to be revised, he said, ‘with a view to facilitating the taking up of land by people who wish to settle in the territories’, and he favoured the opening of some areas to soldier settlers. The great ‘limiting factor’, Spender thought, was the availability of labour. The minimum contract period of one year was to be extended to eighteen months, and the old Department of Labour discontinued and most of its functions handed to the Department of District Services and

73 Kumiava Patrol Reports 17 of 1952/3.
74 Saidor Patrol Report of November 1953 to the Rai Coast.
75 New Guinea Annual Report, 1952/3, p.27.
Native Affairs.\(^{76}\)

In 1953, the policies for the economic development of the territories were at an interesting point. The cooperative movement that had been important and successful in the postwar years was not going to be given the same significance by Ministers Spender and Hasluck and Administrator Cleland. The space and role given to the cooperatives in the annual reports both declined, and the number of cooperative officers within DDSNA remained small—only seven out of a total of 221 in New Guinea in 1952.\(^{77}\) The Highlands had just been opened to labour recruiting in 1950, and while almost none had gone from the Western and Southern Highlands, over 2000 a year were leaving the Eastern Highlands (then including Chimbu). In spite of postwar inflation, the minimum wage rate remained at fifteen shillings a month for ‘agreement workers’. The ‘coffee rush’ of settlers into the Eastern Highlands had started and in 1953 was curbed by Hasluck who instructed that there should be no more release of land unless at the same time ‘we are taking steps to ensure that the natives can and will make better use of the land remaining to them’.\(^{78}\) In 1953, economic policy that had been directed towards making Papua New Guineans the beneficiaries of economic growth had briefly swung back to private enterprise and settlers, and now the talk was of ‘partnership’, balance and mutual benefits.

Field officers were sometimes photographed sitting at a folding table, a policeman and interpreter standing to the side, the accused in front, a circle of respectful villagers watching, and beyond them thatched houses and rain forest. It was the Australian government officer bringing and dispensing law. That picture was both ideal and reality, but it did not happen all that often. At the end of a patrol from Sohano along the northeast coast a *kiap* wrote:

> In the legal sphere people prefer to settle matters themselves, or leave them unsettled if of minor importance, rather than take them before the Administration official – people avoid what appears a final solution.\(^{79}\)


\(^{77}\) *New Guinea Annual Report 1951/2*, p.128. The total turnover of the cooperatives was still increasing rapidly and new cooperatives being formed—but that was partly a result of earlier commitment to the movement.


\(^{79}\) Sohano Patrol Report, extract, 1954.
Along the coast east of Vanimo the people had ‘few complaints’ and they were confined to ‘woman troubles’. In the Bamu Delta, a government officer wrote: ‘I am sure many disputes warranting hearing had been forgotten and others healed by time’. At Dreikikir F.J. Martin said that ‘Very few disputes’ were brought to his notice, and his colleague in the Burui Kunai near the Sepik found most disputes were minor and settled by arbitration but ‘As usual a number of old land disputes were brought before the “new officer” in the hope that a new decision would be given’. In the Highlands some people initially greeted ‘courts’ with the same boisterous eagerness that they met other material and immaterial signs of a new way of life. Acting Assistant District Officer, B. Hayes, in the Sinasina area of the Chimbu heard just thirty cases in a formal court but thought he settled ‘some four to five hundred petty disputes’ by informal discussion. Routley, also patrolling in the Chimbu, decided six cases in court and many out of court because the ‘people appear to be under the impression that an Administration officer’s one delight is to hear “court”, and matters of the most trivial nature were dragged up, and sometimes from the remote past’.

The total number of Papuans and New Guineans convicted in the courts for Native Affairs and Native Matters in 1952-53 was 9576. To that number may be added those cases referred to higher courts, but there also needs to be some discounting for the convictions in the Courts for Native Matters and Native Affairs that were against laws introduced by the Australians. For example, over 1000 convictions were for gambling, 250 for drinking intoxicating liquor and many others were for violating the laws that controlled labourers or those living in towns: they were absent from their quarters during prohibited hours or they were found on the employers’ premises without permission. But as the government officers recognised, on their patrols—even in long contacted areas—they were hearing few of the cases that were important in those communities. Although the patrols were often welcomed because they brought peace and the kiap’s court was a convenient way to settle or sidetrack some disputes, the Australian administration did not bring a new and comprehensive system of justice. In 1953 two systems of dispute resolution and crime control were operating, and except in the most serious cases that could not escape
notice, the village system was connected to the formal system only by an intermittent choice exercised by the villagers.

In the immediate postwar, the Department of Health was confident that it could do good. Its confidence and energy came partly from its Director, John Gunther, and from what had recently been achieved by the new drugs and what had been demonstrated in wartime by using increased resources to maintaining health in the tropics. Where the prewar administration officials had accepted malaria as an inevitable part of their lot, the Australian army had become so convinced of the effectiveness of its drugs, sprays and preventive actions that it thought a high incidence of malaria was evidence of lax discipline.86 Because of the appointment of European refugee doctors to Papua and New Guinea from 1950 and the early and extensive training of European Medical Assistants, and Native Medical Assistants and Orderlies, the Department of Health had the trained personnel to patrol and establish hospitals and aid posts. And the first Papuans and New Guineans had gone to the Central Medical School in Suva. From its analysis of its own data, the Department seemed to have clear targets: malaria, yaws and tropical ulcers were the most common diseases, and malaria, pneumonia, tuberculosis and dysentery were the main causes of death. The Department believed that it could do something to alleviate their symptoms or cure or prevent all them. In 1953, the aid posts in Papua claimed to have given 281,276 treatments.87 Even given multiple treatments to many, that was an exceptional reach of services. The Department of Health looked most likely to help Australia pay the ‘debt of gratitude’ and carry out its ‘bounden duty to further to the utmost the advancement of the natives’.88

Patrol Officer R. Jeffrey after a long 64-day patrol to the Upper Kaugel and Nebilyer Valleys of the Western Highlands wrote: ‘The blue ensign was flown and compliments were paid to it at sunset by the Europeans and native members of the patrol. The significance of the flag was constantly pointed out to the natives’.89 Just what the significance of the flag was, and how this was interpreted and received by the patrol that added over 5000 new names to the

87 Papuan Annual Report, 1952/3, p.54.
89 Mt Hagen Patrol Report 3 of 1951/2. That wording about the flag being flown, respects paid, and the significance explained recurs in other patrols reports, eg, A. Keogh, Chimbu Patrol report, 8 of 1952/3: ‘The Blue Ensign was flown during the stay of the patrol at each rest house. Officials were invited to participate in the lowering of the flag each day, and the significance of the ceremony was explained to them’.

37
census, is uncertain. But that was one of the field officers’ few references to the fact that they were engaged in the great enterprise of preparing two million to enter the international community in some as yet uncertain constitutional form. In the early 1950s the task for the field officers was overwhelmingly one of meeting and guiding people—who variously welcomed and resisted change—through those first years of contact. From the perspective of most sub-districts, the perspective presented with such detail in over 400 patrol reports each year, the policies of the central government, whether they were concerned with the broad political aims or the attempts to set up councils were irrelevant. The field officers, spread so thinly across the territories, were trying to make some compromise between the assumptions about people who lived in families and villages under headmen and the apparent fragmented physical and institutional reality that confronted them. They had their priorities right and they had become efficient in their tasks, but it was the next step that was difficult and at risk. That was how to connect the scattered and fragmented hamlets and communities into a centralised system, and how to get the centralised system into the villages and hamlets. In 1953 in law, education and political and economic development this was happening only in exceptional places. The Health Department alone seemed to be reaching a significant number of people, training Papua New Guineans at high and basic levels, and connecting the centre with village institutions. The technical and institutional weaknesses that were later to emerge in the Department of Health were a long way away. Even if the Australians had known in 1953 that they had just twenty years and not several generations, and that they were making an independent nation and not preparing Papua and New Guinea for some form of constitutional union with Australia, it is doubtful that they could have done much better. We still do not know how to make nations from the fragmented Melanesian populations.
Taim Bilong Kiap:
Looking back at Government by Patrol
in Papua New Guinea

William C. Clarke

By the mid 1960s there was a House of Assembly meeting in
Port Moresby and Local Government Councils operating
through much of the Territory; but most villagers still thought of
government as the kiap. ’Government’ was one Australian
field officer.


Government by Patrol, 1965

During 1964 and 1965 I spent 13 months carrying out geographical and
ethnobotanical research in the Jimi and Simbai valleys in the highland fringe to
the north of Mt Hagen (Map 1). This is an area where the heavily populated
broad open basins of the highlands give way to rougher, often forested
mountainous country, where population density is low, and where Australian
administrative influence came late. Because of this, I was able to see at firsthand
the operations of ‘government by patrol’—the term used by Lucy Mair in her
1948 book to describe the establishment of government control in Papua and
New Guinea.

It was in April 1965 that I was allowed by the then Australian administration to
accompany a patrol officer and a cadet officer on a ‘patrol of contact’ into the
lower Jimi Valley. I later published a long account of that journey, describing in
some detail the secondary vegetation, house types, garden and tree crops, and
landscapes seen along the way (Clarke 1977). But I also took note of how
government influence was extended into a recently contacted area, an area
where it was believed there were still a few small groups who were said to have
‘not yet shown themselves to the kiap’, that is, who had not yet been officially
contacted by the administration. In this paper, I look mainly at the ways in
which patrols extended government influence, affected public health, and
helped establish educational facilities. Then I examine the implications of the
decline of government by patrol in the decade following 1965. The paper ends
with a consideration of the relationship between government by patrol and the
discipline of anthropology.

To set the broader scene before focusing in detail on this single patrol, I will
turn to the comments made by anthropologist Buck Schieffelin and geographer
Robert Crittenden at the beginning of their book *Like People You See in a Dream: First Contact in Six Papuan Societies*, which describes the ill-fated Strickland-Purari patrol of 1935 and how it was perceived by the people along its route. Although they are writing of pre-war Papua, not post-war New Guinea, and the political history of the two territories is different, what they say applies well to the New Guinean situation I will describe (Schieffelin and Crittenden 1991, 13):

Patrols, consisting of one or two white officers, a number of armed Papuan police, and a line of carriers, walking from village to village along an established route, were the chief means by which the native peoples of Papua were governed between 1885 and the early 1970's. For most Papuans, experience with patrols was the only basis they had for understanding anything about the ways, let alone the institutions, of their colonial masters. Government officers were responsible both for maintaining peace and order in their districts and for exploring their unknown regions, contacting newly encountered tribal peoples, and bringing them under administration influence.

Those motives remained after the war and were joined in the 1950s and 60s by instructions to the people that they should work toward achieving something called development, and then by the late 1960s and into the 70s that they should prepare themselves to experience, first, something called self-government and, then, something called independence.

The patrol I will describe was not one of initial exploration and was on a far smaller scale in time and distance travelled than the Hagen-Sepik patrol led by Jim Taylor and John Black in 1938 and 1939—the patrol so thoroughly described and analysed by Bill Gammage (1998) in *The Sky Travellers*. But in a modest way the 1965 patrol in the Jimi Valley contained the basic essentials of the whole system of government by patrol.

The patrol was led by the *kiap* (Tok Pisin term for patrol officer) of the Jimi River Patrol Post, one of the many isolated outstations of the then Australian Administration (Map 2). The Jimi River Post was established in the late 1950s following preliminary sallies by patrols from previously established stations in the Highlands to the south. In the mid-1950s one of these patrols had been attacked by some 200 warriors, ten of whom were killed by the patrol, lending urgency to the establishment of a pacifying presence in the region.

As was true of most government outstations in New Guinea at that time, the dominant feature of the Jimi Post was the airstrip, which was grass covered and slightly less than 500 m long. Trailing up the ridge above the strip were a small
trade store, a government school, a chapel, warehouses, sleeping quarters for labourers, prisoners, New Guinean police, and other people connected with the Post. There were also food gardens, a medical aid post, and near the top of the ridge, set among attractive lawns and decorative plants, the government office and the Patrol Officer’s house. From this headquarters, the Jimi River *kiap* administered many hundreds of square km and about 26,000 people. Thanks to the efforts of several successive *kiaps*, all the area within two or three days’ walk of the Patrol Post was by 1965 under effective government control and was linked to the Patrol Post by narrow earthen vehicular roads or good walking tracks. The only part of the area within the jurisdiction of the Jimi River *kiap* that was still to some extent uncontrolled was the westernmost end of his territory, several days’ walk down the Jimi River valley. (Map 2). Not far to the northwest of this area is the territory of the famous Hagahai “lost tribe” of the Schrader Mountains, supposedly first contacted in 1983—a claim gainsaid by Mangi (1985) and Boyd (1996), who report the passage of various patrols in earlier years. But it was the case that in 1965 the area had not yet received permanent administrative attention.

The patrol began early in the morning on 8 April 1965 with great excitement as local men sent their yodelling cries sounding through the valleys around the patrol post. By this characteristic means of distance communication, they were calling for men to assemble to carry the patrol’s supplies on the first leg of the journey. Amid the raucous noise, the bags and metal patrol boxes were laid out, and two-man loads were tied to carrying poles. The initial patrol included about 80 men: sixty locals serving as temporary carriers and twenty permanent members of the patrol, the latter group including three white men (the *kiap*, the Cadet Patrol Officer, and me), together with six native policemen (chosen from the eighteen who made up the police force at Jimi River Post), a native Medical Assistant, and several cooks, interpreters, and miscellaneous auxiliaries.

After leaving the Patrol Post—with the carriers yodelling in unison and stamping their feet in excitement—the patrol walked toward Kwibun on a earthen road suitable for four-wheel drive vehicles. This stretch of road, which was only a few km long, was of necessity deeply cut into the steep slopes that lead down to the Jimi River and took over a year to build. The entire construction was done with hand tools by drafts of native labourers, who at first worked with reluctance but then came to anticipate the potential uses of the road, which, it was said by the *kiap*, would eventually lead southward over the Wahgi-Sepik divide and vastly expand the Jimi Valley’s connections, which in 1965 were almost entirely by air.

Along the road to Kwibun among the productive local subsistence gardens and
orchards, were some small shaded plots of coffee, grown from seedlings provided by the Department of Agriculture and earlier distributed to the local gardeners by the kiap or the agricultural extension officers who sometimes also went on patrol. By the mid-1960s such high-quality mountain coffee had become the major crop of the Central Highlands and often spread quickly into newly contacted areas, partly because of promotion by the Administration but also because it fitted easily into the patterns of local agriculture, where trees were often planted in old subsistence gardens.

When I look back over nearly forty years to those roads and walking tracks, I remember how pleasant they were, often lined with flowers and brightened by the green, yellow, and reddish leaves of decorative shrubs. Best was how much easier to walk on they were compared with the steep, narrow, muddy local trails they replaced. Now, everyone I ask about the current condition of the kiap-built tracks and the later roads built in the Jimi and Simbai valleys (and elsewhere in the country) assures me that in recent years they have all deteriorated. Even by 1977, when I returned to the Simbai Valley for the last time, what had been well-graded walking tracks were not being maintained. The seeds of their deterioration began with their construction, which was decreed by the kiaps and enforced by the native police, who would live in local communities while the roads were being built. Having accepted the message that the roads meant progress and would bring European goods and coffee buyers to their isolated valleys, the local people came to have inflated expectations about the benefits of roads. When the expected benefits only trickled in if they came at all and when coffee prices recurrently slumped, as they do, people's enthusiasm for road maintenance fell. Further, the enforcement mechanisms inherent in frequent patrols had begun to break down by the early 1970s as independence approached.

Not far along the track from the Jimi Patrol Post, we came upon the neat grounds and corrugated metal buildings of a Nazarene mission. A few kilometres farther along, across the Jimi River, was the Anglican mission at Koenambi. To its east up the valley was a Catholic mission. Each religion had staked out its own spiritual claims, thus creating a patchwork of 'parishes' of different religions. This curious division of the larger landscape happened widely in the 1950s and 1960s with the founding of new patrol posts following the pacification that preceded the lifting of the 'restricted territory' classification. Missionisation was an accepted part of Administration policy, as set out in a statement of Australia's tasks and policies in New Guinea by Paul Hasluck, Minister for Territories in the Australian Parliament. As Hasluck put it in 1958, one of the objectives of the Government’s policy was the voluntary acceptance of Christianity by the native peoples, this in the absence of any indigenous body
of religious faith, founded on native teaching or ritual (Hasluck 1958, 98). Hasluck also argued (1958, 89) that the Christian religion and the English language could become two of the great unifying forces bringing together the disparate peoples of New Guinea. The reality was that doctrinal schisms were inherent between the different but contiguous faiths, and were sometimes over-emphasised by semi-literate indigenous evangelists. Different religions also at times competed for converts, a struggle that increased with the later entry of aggressively pentecostal sects.

In his discussion of the impact of the Christian missions in his book *The New Guinea Villager* (1965), Charles Rowley points out that rapid (sometimes mass) conversions could be interpreted as a ‘package deal’ whereby local people accepted the white man’s beliefs and ideals of behaviour in the expectation of getting the white man’s rewards—material as well as spiritual. Further, the New Guineans, who believed in the efficacy of magic spells, could reasonably have assumed that Christian rituals and ceremonies were the way to open the road into the newly revealed European world and its wealth of goods, which were somehow accessible to the *kiaps*, missionaries, and other outsiders.

Continuing on our journey, the patrol reached Kwibun *haus kiap* (the name for the rest houses built at the *kiap’s* orders in each community), where we were met by a fresh contingent of carriers, who would take us on the next leg of the patrol. The vehicular road ended at Kwibun, and we descended the steep inner valley of the Jimi River on a government walking track, crossed the roaring river on a traditional suspension bridge of quivering thin poles and swinging ragged vines, and climbed up slope to Koenambi, the site of a new Anglican Mission and a 400 m airstrip under construction. As with road-building, all the excavation and filling necessary to make an airstrip were carried out by hand tools, and the excavated earth was removed by four men carrying it in mounds piled on stretchers of hessian. Such airstrips may take as much as two years to build but were considered absolutely essential for the operation of missions and patrol posts in rugged, roadless country—essential to the extent that the Jimi River *kiap* had assigned a policeman to help the mission staff recruit and supervise the local labourers.

Such government aid to the mission at Koenambi represented a general pattern of cooperation between Administration and missions. Aside from facilitating the spread of Christianity, the missions performed more mundane services for the Administration, particularly the running of clinics and schools. Lacking staff and funding to carry out such work themselves on the required scale, local administrators as well as Paul Hasluck, the Minister for Territories in Australia, valued the contribution of the missions highly.
Hasluck was quite open about his dissatisfaction with his accomplishments in education. In his account of his time as Minister for Territories in a chapter entitled 'Not Enough Schools', Hasluck observes that the years from 1945 to 1955 were years of poor achievement, but he also notes that they would have been worse without the mission schools. A report he distributed at the end of 1955 showed an increase in the enrolment of native children in mission schools since 1950 from 105,000 to 153,000 and in Administration schools from 2,690 to 6,000 (Hasluck 1976, 99). Of course, some of the mission schools were poor educationally, but they had the great advantage of being there, out in the local communities, and some religious organisations, especially the Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists, and Anglicans, ran some good schools. Hasluck made an ad hoc decision to support the mission schools financially, with the support being subject to conditions about standards of teaching. Hasluck particularly favoured the wide dispersion of local primary schools, which only the mission base could provide. His stated goal was ‘...to bring a sound elementary education in English to every child in controlled areas’ (Hasluck 1958, 98). Hasluck’s views faced opposition from others in the Administration who pushed for directing more funding to regional secondary schools and national tertiary institutions intended to produce an educated elite. Debates of this sort over education were nothing new; nor was Administration support of mission schools, which in Papua dates back to 1920 when Lieutenant-Governor Murray announced a scheme to subsidize mission schools and admitted that the colonial government had done very little for the people’s education (Haihuie 2003, 222).

After overnighting at Koenambi, the next day’s route for the patrol lay along the government walking track that connected a series of haus kiap sited on ridges along the south face of the Bismarck Range. On reaching the first of these haus kiap, at a place called Yembugema, the patrol was met by an animated crowd of local people. Speaking in Tok Pisin, the kiap announced that he would soon return to take the annual census and to hear any court cases that the people or the tul tulis and lnuais cared to present. Tul tulis and lnuais were officials appointed by the kiap in each community. Lacking much authority, their function was to act as intermediaries between the people and the government and to encourage obedience to the kiap’s orders concerning such matters as road building and maintenance, constructing haus kiap, or behaving in new ways such as practising burial of the dead instead of laying bodies out on platforms to decay, as was the custom in this area. Once the people became more familiar with European ways and imperatives, a local government council of elected members was instituted. This body had more autonomous authority than the lnuais and tul tulis and was considered a step toward self-government and eventual independence.
After the kiap's speech in Tok Pisin had been translated into the local language, the patrol's cargo was transferred to Yembugema men, who carried it to the boundary with the community censused at Bokopai, people who were traditional enemies of the Yembugema. Six years ago, when there was a carrier exchange here during one of the first patrols to enter this region, the police had to carry the cargo across the boundary because neither group of men would venture into the territory of an enemy clan or clan-cluster for fear of retaliation by sorcery if not by arrows and spears—retribution for as yet unavenged killings in the past. But today the transfer of the cargo to Bokapai carriers was done easily amid the usual yodelling and shouting. I think I am right in saying that local men viewed the Administration's ban on warfare with mixed feelings. Certainly, there was an element of pleasure in the antagonistic relations between enemies, and men boasted of exploits in pre-contact wars with excitement and glee. But they also frequently asserted that life was better since the kiap came because now people could walk about without fear. As a mark of this feeling people had erected near this boundary, a 'shrine' of cordyline and other ritual plants to mark the spot where a kiap on one of the initial patrols (probably in 1956) had announced the government's intention to prohibit wars.

Bokapai offered a good example of further outreach by both missions and the government. The Koenambi Anglicans had a school at Bokapai, staffed by coastal Papuans, who taught about 70 children and also provided religious instruction. Nearby was a government medical aid post staffed by a native Aid Post Orderly. After receiving training, such orderlies were assigned to more remote communities. Often their supplies were meagre, and their salaries low, but the 'doktaboi' improved health conditions: yaws was all but eliminated, skin and respiratory infections had been treated, anti-malarial medicine distributed, and people had learned new habits of sanitation from the orderly. Having spent at least two years at a training centre in a town, the orderly also served as a link to educate local people about the nature of the outside world.

As the patrol reached each haus kiap along its route, a large crowd always waited in response to the messages sent ahead calling on the people to assemble. All listened with some degree of attention to the kiap's talk. On reaching Waim, four haus kiap beyond Bokapai, about 120 men were gathered, some from Waim and nearby communities and some from communities down slope near the Jimi River. From this assembly, the kiap selected 60 permanent carriers because beyond the next haus kiap (Tsarap), the patrol would enter uncertainly controlled territory, where it might be impossible to obtain a new set of carriers for each day's journey. Unlike the temporary carriers used so far, the permanent carriers would be paid, each man receiving every day one Australian shilling, food, and a stick of tobacco.
In 1965 Tsarap *bans kiap* was the last of the chain of official *bans kiap* along this part of the south face of the Bismarck Mountains. Beyond to the west there were no registered *tul tul* or *lulua* and there had been no contact between the local people and the administration or the missions aside from short and sporadic patrols. Along the route so far, local people had, as requested, supplied food to the patrol: mostly sweet potatoes, pumpkins, and the edible leaves of *Hibiscus manihot*, which is a widely planted garden shrub and an important source of plant protein in the local diet. The food supplied to the patrol was paid for with salt, face paint, beads, and other trade goods. From Meren on, the *kiap* did not expect the local people to supply enough food to feed the patrol, so the carriers would eat the rice and tinned meat included in the patrol’s cargo. Three hours’ walk beyond Tsarap, the good government walking track that the patrol had used for the last four days came to an end, to be replaced by a rough local trail cleared more by occasional use than by design. In the forest it consisted of tree roots and mud, and at times tunnelled through secondary thickets of sprawling ferns.

While still at Tsarap, the *kiap* had sent a message ahead for the people at Meren to assemble for a census and medical treatment. 116 people showed up, compared with the *kiap*’s previous visit eight months before when only 64 appeared, the rest remaining hidden in the forest. During these early stages of contact, people are always urged to appear to be censused, to have their names recorded in the village book, but there is no penalty for absence. Later on, apprehended absentees might receive a short jail sentence. On the patrol’s arrival at Meren, many local people, especially the women, sat in clusters with their backs to the men of the patrol as though they were not there, but gradually the women warmed and began to show interest as the police and carriers set up camp, the Australian flag was raised, and the census book and medical equipment laid out. This initial response of seeming to ignore the newcomers was not uncommon, but it is impossible to know its exact basis beyond assuming that at least in part it was a mixture of fear and puzzlement. Schieffelin and Crittenden (1991, 5) suggest that, whereas the patrol members have a category of ‘native’ or ‘buskanaka’ (hillbilly) in which to place the newly contacted people and have the upper hand in strength, the local people have no easy category in which to place the newcomers, who appear immensely powerful and who might be supernatural. Faced with this quandary, they turn their backs on the dangerous and the difficult-to-explain.

Since the *kiap*’s last visit to Meren, the people had built a bamboo and grass *bans kiap* and had cleared and fenced the area around it, showing that the *tul tul*, who had been provisionally appointed on the earlier visit, had powers of persuasion over the people. So the *kiap* asked the *tul tul* if he would accompany the patrol
back to the Jimi River station, whence with other new appointees he would be flown to the highlands town of Mt Hagen to be registered as a *tu tul* in the district office. Then, when he came back to the Jimi Valley, a policeman trained to lay out roads would escort him home, where the new *tu tul* would be expected to lead his people in extending the government tracks, using the shovels that he would carry from the Jimi Patrol Post. Making this journey is also intended to lend him authority at home as well increase his knowledge of the outside world.

For the next eight days, while the patrol moved through the area not yet fully controlled, the *kiap* would tell each assembled group about the Administration’s goals and describe the benefits to the people of accepting the government and welcoming the missions. A census would be conducted if enough local people appeared, and all the people present would receive an anti-yaws injection of penicillin. Any food brought to the camp would be purchased in exchange for bush knives, steel axe blades, salt, matches, beads, face paint, and mirrors. At Meren, as elsewhere, once the first census was complete, a record, or ‘Village Register’, was left in the charge of the *tu tul*, who was instructed to guard the ‘book’ until the *kiap’s* next visit. During the interval, the registers stay wrapped in leaves tucked under a smoke-darkened roof support. Rarely lost, these books that mysteriously hold people’s names so that they can be spoken when the *kiap* comes again is yet another indication to the people of the Administration’s power.

Once the *kiap’s* tasks for the day were done, he ordered the flag lowered, and while he and the husky native police stood at attention, the people watched in silence—not knowing the meaning of the ritual but seeming to be respectful. Many patrol officers and others have remarked on the tractability of the local people whereby one *kiap* who lived several days travel away can end traditional wars, introduce other new ways, induce people to build *haus kiap* and roads, and to give deference to the Administration. Among the several explanations for this tractability is that the natives, being practical people, quickly realized the superiority of rifles over bows and arrows. Another explanation has to do with the often asserted materialism of Papua New Guineans who decided that the road to the desired goods was going to be more easily opened by cooperation than by hostility. Still another explanation was that the traditional antagonism between neighbouring populations made impossible the formation of any sort of united resistance to European penetration. Finally, the people’s docility may in part have been illusory: in the 1950s and 1960s they may not have felt as ‘controlled’ as the Administration and the *kiaps* liked to think. Most New Guinean groups were used to being temporarily subdued by a stronger neighbouring force but, as anthropologist Ronald Berndt (1957, 413) suggested,
being temporarily defeated did not mean that they could envisage being permanently under the control of an external power. Certainly, the collapse of the *kiaps’* prohibition against wars between neighbouring groups bears out this argument (Gordon 1983).

On the rough trail between Meren and Benjem we heard the call of a bird-of-paradise and saw a flash of yellow in the treetops. Quickly the *kiap* cautioned the patrol members not to try to shoot the bird for its valued feathers because to do so might offend local people who would feel that their hunting rights had been violated.

At Benjem, the Taun clan was assembled, again in higher numbers than on the previous visit. The Taun told the *kiap* of two groups who had not yet appeared before him. One of these groups lived near the Jimi River, far down the slope from the route of the patrol. Because they were said to be few in number and had not recently attacked any of their neighbours, the *kiap* decided not to seek them out on this patrol, hoping that when they heard of the medical treatment and trade goods the Taun had received, they would show up when the patrol next returned. The other group lived along our route at the confluence of Kinent Creek and the Kaironk River. A Taun messenger was sent to tell them that we would meet them in their home territory the next day.

When local people travelled from Benjem to Kinent Creek, they descended a small steep stream down to Kinent Creek, but the streambed turned out to be too boulder-strewn for the heavily burdened carriers to manage so it was necessary to cut a new track through old secondary forest. After an hour or so of slow movement, still cutting our way, word passed along the line of the patrol that the guides ahead had met a boy of the uncontacted group. He said the other members of his family were coming toward the patrol. Soon we heard a baby crying, and down the slope came two women, a boy of about seven, two younger children, and the baby in a string net bag on the back of one of the women. They all acted withdrawn but sat down on the forest floor where the *kiap* indicated. To talk with them two interpreters were needed, one from the Patrol Post who translated the *kiap’s* Tok Pisin into the Taun’s language, and a Taun man who could speak the language of the uncontacted group. The *kiap* queried the woman about their husbands (*they were hunting*), did any other people live nearby (*no*), had they ever before seen outsiders like those on the patrol (*no*), where had they lived before marrying (*they had always lived here*). After a few more questions, the *kiap* gave them a bush knife, told them about the good intentions of the government, and urged them to come with their husbands to Benjem the next time a *kiap* came. Then the little group departed among the trees, and the patrol continued westward. Most probably, members of the newly contacted
group did show up for the next patrol, ‘their friendship having been won’, or at least their acquiescence gained, or curiosity aroused. Such calculated gift-giving features in similar encounters at least back to the fifteenth century when Christopher Columbus gave red caps and beads to the newly contacted native Americans ‘in order to win their friendship’, and later James Cook threw nails and beads ashore to newly met Pacific Islanders (cited in Neumann 1994).

At each camp the *kiap* conducted a census, gave penicillin anti-yaws injections, spoke to people about the government’s intentions, and appointed provisional *tul tuls*. At Auremp Camp three interpreters were required to communicate—dubiously—with people who appeared, again, to be impassive or indifferent but who became more animated and laughed and talked when trade goods were exchanged for the food they had brought. It was near Auremp camp that the only overtly hostile act of the entire patrol took place, this when a man with an arrow held to his drawn bow leapt from the bush onto the trail in front of some carriers, who dropped their burdens and ran away. When they looked back, the menacing figure had disappeared and was not seen again.

On reaching Tsengapi, the patrol spent two days so as to give the police and the carriers time to build a permanent *haus kiap* there. This was done to ensure Tsengapi’s future as a place selected to be the site of a medical aid post, a Nazarene mission, and an airstrip, all of which I have been told now exist. After leaving Tsengapi, the patrol’s work was done because after crossing the high pass into the Kaironk valley the patrol entered the jurisdiction of the Simbai Patrol Post, which was part of the Madang District, as it then was.

**Aftermath, 1965 to 1977**

During 1964 and 1965—aside from going on the patrol just described and carrying out ethnobotanical surveys in several Maring-speaking communities in the Jimi and the Simbai valleys—I spent most of my time among the people who lived in the easternmost settlement in the Simbai Valley (marked by B/A on Map 2). Consequently, I was able to see what government by patrol was like over time at one place as well as seeing it on the patrol during one time in many places. The people I lived among were a clan cluster known as the Bomagai-Angoiang, whose agriculture and landscape are described in my book *Place and People: An Ecology of a New Guinean Community* (Clarke 1971).

When I went to their territory in 1964, the Bomagai-Angoiang had been contacted only six years before by a patrol from the Jimi River. The events of that first contact are described in *New Guinea: The Last Unknown*, a book by Gavin Souter (1963, 235–236), who accompanied Barry Griffin, the *kiap* on that patrol in 1958. As Souter describes the meeting, Griffin spoke to the assembled
group of men through an interpreter, calling the people the Gants, a mistaken name for the Bomagai-Angoiang and a neighbouring clan cluster. Griffin said:

‘I am the Kiap. I am the Government.’ I have built my house at Tabibuga (that is, the Jimi Patrol Post) and I look after all the people that live there. . . . Now I have come here to your place. . . . I want to tell you something very worth while. This talk of mine must go right inside your head, and it must stay with you, and you must give it much thought.

Souter continues: ‘When Griffin had finished telling the Gants that they must no longer kill or steal, and that they must help the Government build patrol roads, the sun had almost set. But there was still time to lower the Australian flag, which had been hoisted beside our tents earlier in the afternoon. As the flag slid down its bamboo pole Griffin came to attention and saluted; his police slapped the butts of their bayoneted .303s, and the poor bewildered Gants stood gaping.’

Two years later, in 1960, another patrol came, this time from the newly established Simbai Patrol Post. Since then, the region has been administered from the Simbai Post, but because the region is thinly populated and on the outer limit of his jurisdiction, the Simbai kiap only visited once a year during the 1960s, spending a day or two to hold court and take the annual census. But the people did receive other early western visitors, including labour recruiters, geologists, anthropologists, geographers, entomologists, missionaries, didimen (agricultural extension officers), missionary medical patrols, and medical researchers.

When I arrived in 1964 the principal physical manifestation of the administration was a *haus kiap* on a hilltop. By 1970, when I returned for a second visit, a medical aid post with a *doktaboi* had been established, and, more impressively, a Papua New Guinean Luthern pastor had come there from the Jimi Valley and persuaded the Bomagai-Angoiang to build a grass-roofed church, the largest building in their territory. The people congregated there daily and especially on Sunday to hear the pastor evangelise.

By 1977, on my final visit, commerce had replaced the gospel. Now the first building to be seen on entering Bomagai-Angoiang territory was a typical trade store, a local materials shed big enough for one man to stand in and sell goods through an opening in the wall. The store was closed during my visit because it was too hard to tote the goods all the way from the Simbai airstrip, especially since the road and walking track had deteriorated. Nonetheless, the store remained a focal point in the community’s life, perhaps being symbolic of
money and modernity even though its few flimsy shelves were empty. A disintegrating haus kiap did remain but the church and the aid post were gone, with a patch of tobacco growing on the ash-rich soil where the church had been. Men were growing coffee now but were reluctant to haul it on the shoulders for hours to a road head when the prices were low. The nearest aid post was now a day’s walk up the Simbai Valley. The Anglican mission school, which had been located only a few hours up the Simbai Valley in 1965 and 1970, was also closed. A few boys crossed the Bismarck Range to go to a school in the Jimi Valley, where the Bomagai-Angoiang had traditional affiliations.

Most symbolic of the dwindling outreach was that during the first three elections (1964, 1968, and 1972) special patrols came and set up polling stations at the haus kiap in Bomagai-Angoiang territory. But during the 1977 election, two years after PNG’s independence, those Bomagai-Angoiang who wanted to vote had to cross a rugged river gorge and walk four hours to a polling place. I was told that only four men had done so. To the Bomagai-Angoiang, whose only experience throughout the 1960s and into the early 1970s had been of the government (and the missions) coming to them, the withdrawal of services and visits was confounding. One Bomagai-Angoiang man told me in 1977 that his people were angry at the *kiap*. ‘The *kiap* has abandoned us,’ he said, ‘and now we’re going to abandon the *kiap*.

This decline in contact between agencies of the government and the Bomagai-Angoiang is described in more detail in my paper entitled ‘At the Tail of the Snake’ (Clarke 1980), a phrase that would fit the experiences of many other people in rural areas across much of the country. Writ large, this loss of attention to its people could be seen as part of the evolution of Papua New Guinea towards becoming a ‘failed state’. If that is going too far, it could at least be said that people ‘abandoning the *kiap*’ shows that the concept of being citizens of a nation had not been built into the minds of Papua New Guinea’s disparate people and, for various reasons, the government became less and less capable of maintaining services while ‘government by patrol’ was diminishing. Looking back, one can only agree with August Kituai (1998, 41) when he says that the *kiaps*, along with their loyal police, were once the backbone of the Administration.

Gordon and Meggitt (1985) in their account and analysis of ‘the decline of the *kiaps*’ among the Enga people of the highlands of Papua New Guinea comment that it was unfortunate that the decline in extensive patrolling should coincide with the increasing localization of *kiaps* because this resulted in the invidious inference, made by the Enga themselves and by some academics, that *kiaps* became ineffective simply because they were nationals. Rather, Gordon and
Meggitt argue, it was the experience of being on long patrols that was the making of both the *kiaps*, the police, the interpreters, and even the carriers, and this experience led to a bonding among the patrol’s participants. Freed from overcentralised decision-making, the *kiaps* in little-known or unknown regions of necessity assumed power, authority, and effectiveness on their own part. Gordon and Meggitt (1985, 67) comment further:

In reading accounts of early patrols of the *kiap* and his small contingent of police and large train of carriers labouriously walking to and from distant destinations, one is struck by the similarity between patrols and religious pilgrimages. Like the shrines that the pilgrim visit, the rest houses and the census points to which the patrols went were on the periphery of the circle of power and authority. . . . *Kiap* work — especially patrolling, which was often defined by the participants as adventurous — bred a remarkable self-confidence in young officers, as the pilgrimage may among its participants.

**Anthropology and Administration in Papua New Guinea**

In accelerating numbers from the late nineteenth century onwards, anthropologists have explored Papua New Guinean ways of life. In these ventures, it might be conjectured that the anthropologists’ activities or ideas would rouse antagonism on the part of officers of the region’s colonial administration, given that the goals of the officers were different from those of the anthropologists. The officers sought, first, to control local people and then to impart ‘new and better’ ways to them as part of their path to becoming efficient workers and good citizens in due course. Although before World War II, many anthropologists believed in the practical value of ethnography with regard to the administration of ‘backward peoples’, others sought only to understand ways of life (particularly ‘traditional’ or pre-contact ways) and to explicate people’s beliefs and behaviour (Gray 2003; Campbell 1998). After World War II, as support for colonialism waned, anthropologists began to doubt the propriety of being closely associated with government. But where antagonism may have existed between *kiaps* and anthropologists, it was generally muted. For instance, to the best of my firsthand knowledge in the Simbai and Jimi valleys during the 1960s, when at least nine anthropologists or researchers with ethnographic interests lived in the area, relations with the *kiaps* were seldom strained, and the *kiaps* willingly expedited mail and supplies and were ready to discuss the anthropologists’ work and ideas. There could of course be conflicts, such as one in another part of New Guinea in 1968—although this had more to do with indiscretion on the part of a journalist than with
impropriety on the part of the anthropologists (Errington and Gewertz 1995). Or see McAuley for discussion in 1953 of a ‘... certain amount of tension, or mutual dissatisfaction’ between anthropologists and administrators (McAuley 1953; cited in Westermark 2001, 52). And James Sinclair, a longtime kiap, describes how in 1948 as a young cadet patrol officer taking the preparatory ‘short course’ at the Australian School of Pacific Administration (ASOPA) in Sydney prior to his first posting in Papua New Guinea he encountered conflict between an anthropologist instructor and an officer with long familiarity with Papua New Guinea (Sinclair 1978, 15).

That the anthropologists and their discipline were accepted to the extent that they were, even supported, rested in large part on the institutionalisation of anthropology into the administrations of both Papua and New Guinea (before the two were united) and the requirement that patrol officers study anthropology academically and include ethnographic material in their patrol reports. This support began with J.H.P. Murray, Lieutenant-Governor of Papua, who became interested in the usefulness of anthropology and anthropologists when in 1904 he met C.G. Seligman, who had carried out an ethnographic survey in British New Guinea in that year and in 1910 published The Melanesians of British New Guinea. By 1919 the Papuan colonial administration under Murray had come to require, where staff numbers permitted, training in anthropology for both cadet officers and senior staff. To that end and to raise the discipline’s status in Australia, Murray was instrumental in the establishment in 1926 of the first chair of Anthropology in Australia, with the appointment of A.R. Radcliffe-Brown as Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sydney. As Campbell (1998, 70) comments in his article on ‘Anthropology and the Professionalisation of Colonial Administration in Papua and New Guinea’, the establishment of anthropology in Australia would almost certainly not have happened until after the Second World War without Murray’s realisation that ‘... a prerequisite for successful government of any people was knowledge of its customs, languages and habits of thought, especially if one wanted to draw them by gentle means to a new order of living.’ Murray’s support of anthropological knowledge and concern for the welfare of Papuan people is remarkable given the prevalence of racism and policies of labour exploitation among the most aggressive white settlers in Papua throughout his years as Lieutenant-Governor (1908–1940) (Griffin, Nelson, and Firth 1979, 23–33).

Not only did Murray advocate that patrol officers study anthropology academically and include ethnographic material in their patrol reports, in 1922 he appointed F.E. Williams to act as government anthropologist in Papua, a position Williams fully occupied from 1928 almost to his death in Papua New
Guinea in 1943. The most accomplished of the government anthropologists appointed to Papua or the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, Williams was an Australian Rhodes scholar who had studied anthropology and psychology at Oxford under R.R. Marett. Although Williams accepted Murray’s belief that anthropology in the service of administration was not to be doctrinaire or theoretical, but practical and at all times subservient to the administration’s requirements, Williams also strove to use his meticulous fieldwork, his photography, and his publications to establish the intrinsic significance and merit of Papuan cultures. In an address to the Adelaide Anthropological Society in 1930, he said: ‘The great value of anthropology for administrators of native races is that it teaches them that their culture is not the only one of value; it broadens the mind, roots out prejudice and the evil of national arrogance’ (Young and Clark 2001, 9, 16).

To an extent, Williams did take up theory but in a way that accorded with Murray’s dictum that the needs of good administration must take precedence over anthropological principles or theory, functionalism in this case. The functionalist paradigm was dominant in British social anthropology in the 1920s and 1930s and brought the potential for tension between the anthropologists and government officials charged with administration. Anthropologists holding strict functionalist beliefs were concerned that change was harmful because functionalist orthodoxy stresses interdependence of patterns of culture and the institutions of a society and their interaction in maintaining cultural and social coherence—taking a piece out of the system will break the unity and cause the whole to fall apart or stop working like a watch with a gear taken out. Since the job of the kiaps was precisely that—take some pieces out and put new ones in—dedicated functionalist anthropologists worried about the integrity and survival of local cultures. In reality, Papua New Guineans proved far more resilient to even very rapid change than functionalism posited, and the anthropologists could see, no matter what their intellectual beliefs, that rapid change was inevitable and a ‘preservationist’ policy not practical. Although by training and early inclination Williams supported functionalism, in his work he was also charged with the expurgation of ‘bad’ customs such as head hunting, sorcery, insanitary burial rites, and prolonged seclusion of widows. In his attempts to apply the values of the administration, he tangled with functionalist doctrine and found it wanting. Rather, he put forward the possibility of the blending of cultures, wherein replacing some old ways with new ones would not bring the destruction of the whole (Young and Clark 2001, 25; Williams 1929). Later, Williams went one step further in his criticism of functionalism in his paper ‘Creed of a Government Anthropologist’, wherein he announced the functionalist heresy of ‘cultural rubbish’. Arguing that functionalist doctrine as it applied culturally and to human societies had been overstated, Williams wrote
the degree of integration revealed by any organism is wholly beyond that achieved by any culture.’ Deliberately provocative, Williams went on to compare culture to a heap of rubbish in the back garden. It is true that adding to or removing something from the heap of rubbish may disturb the whole but that does not mean that the pile (or the culture) is a fully integrated whole (Young and Clark 2001, 51–53). But in this venture into anthropological dispute, Williams maintained both his respect for Papuan cultures and his practical approach to change, noting that while he believed it justifiable to eliminate ‘ . . . some things from primitive cultures that lie, so to speak, at our mercy, I would not dream of suggesting that we do so merely because they “outraged civilised notions of propriety”’. But, he added, there may be good reasons of other kinds (Williams 1939/1976, 411).

Mention should also be made of the appointment in 1924 of E.W.P. Chinnery as Government Anthropologist for the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, an appointment that was supported by Murray from the Papuan side (Campbell 1998). For much of his time in New Guinea (which he left in 1938), Chinnery served as an administrator as well as government anthropologist and published several anthropological reports (e.g. 1925; 1926). As an administrator, he promoted anthropological training for colonial field staff and also acted as ‘gatekeeper to the field’ by his supervision of the entry into New Guinea of many eminent academic anthropologists, including Gregory Bateson, Beatrice Blackwood, Reo Fortune, Margaret Mead, Camilla Wedgwood, and Ian Hogbin (Gray 2003).

The support given by Williams and Chinnery to an anthropologically informed colonial policy and practice became a legacy that lasted after World War II through the 1950s and well into the 1960s in the ethnographic information that found its way into patrol reports. During the 1945–1965 period, most reports followed a similar format, as Westermark (2001, 53) describes:

A diary of the day-to-day movements of the patrol was followed by accounts of such topics as the “Native Situation,” “Health and Hygiene,” “Roads and Bridges,” and “Village Officials.” These reports indicate the multitude of interests to which the kiaps were expected to attend, and which, of course, placed significant limits on their ability to collect much anthropological material. Generally speaking, such data were gathered through pidgin interpreters, and this, too, shaped the nature of the material. Nevertheless, the earliest reports from the postwar era begin to refer to “Native Customs,” though the preferred label soon shifts to “Anthropology” or “Anthropological Information.”
Westermark’s (2001) analysis of 330 patrol reports from the Eastern Highlands between 1945 and 1973 shows that anthropological information was clearly an expected part of patrol reports and an obligation that was given serious attention by many *kiaps*. Of itself, the necessity to pay attention to local ways of life must have had a worthwhile influence on the way *kiaps* would have related to and understood local people. But it would be wrong to think that the requirement for anthropological reporting necessarily brought a rapprochement between the *kiaps* and the communities they oversaw. I know from my own experience among the Bomagai-Angoiang that when census patrols arrived and people were required to ‘line’ at the *haus kiap* (that is, be present and respond to the calling out of their names), some people always stayed away in remote hamlets or in their gardens. After the patrol was gone they told me that they had hidden because they did not like the *kiap* or, as Errington and Gewertz (1995, 27) put it for another part of New Guinea, they did not like the experience of being ‘ordered’ (in both senses of the word) by beings more powerful than they were—especially since the rationale for the ordering remained at least somewhat mysterious.

As Errington and Gewertz express it in their description of the Karavaran people in the Duke of York Islands, the patrols and reports constituted a system of surveillance and control. The presence of the village book, which was left in each village and was consulted and augmented by each visiting patrol officer, provided for a dialogue between *kiaps* and asserted the continuity of colonial control. The village books examined by Errington and Gewertz (1995, 25-27) also showed a continuity of frustration on the part of the *kiaps*, if not at times outright contempt.

Patrol officers concerned themselves on patrols and in their reports with all aspects of life. Backward locals had to be taught the fundamentals of proper living and were judged and represented according to their willingness and capacity to conform to European standards (Errington and Gewertz 1995, 30).

In response to *kiaps’* enjoiners, some of which the Karavaran people found demeaning, misinformed, or foolish, the people sought to trick the *kiap* or otherwise aggravate inexperienced patrol officers. For instance, they responded to the Administration’s preoccupation with latrine construction by following the letter of the requirement but not the spirit: they built the latrines but didn’t use them. After all, they told the anthropologist, how truly embarrassing it would be if their affines saw them entering or leaving the outhouses (Errington and Gewertz 1995, 30).
On the other hand, since the patrol reports passed up through the chain of administrative command all the way to headquarters in Port Moresby, anthropological understanding would have reached into all levels of the administrative structure to at least some extent and would have served, again to some extent, to mediate between the administration’s goals and the measures taken to achieve them. As Westermark (2001, 58) says, it is difficult to ascertain from the reports how the collection of anthropological information may have affected administrative policy but there is evidence that the information was taken into consideration as, for instance, in the extremely significant matter of land tenure. It is not surprising that the collection of anthropological data built up only slowly during the post-war recovery of the latter 1940s, reached its peak during the 1950s as administrative control was widely extended and then began to lessen during the latter 1960s as the emphasis of administration shifted towards the political education necessary for the development of self-government and independence, and for the first time Papua New Guineans themselves began to take on the work of the kiaps.

References


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522.


Tom Kabu was a Papuan leader who was influential in the Purari Delta, in the Gulf of Papua, following the Second World War. A man of great enthusiasm and drive, his mission was to develop the region of his birth to a level approximating that of Australia as he had experienced it during the war. His primary focus was on cooperative economic activity and he encouraged local people to grow cash crops (especially vegetables) and market sago in Port Moresby. The transformations he envisioned were not, however, all economic. Kabu was also interested in changing the mores of the Purari people and sought to introduce Christianity and European-style dwellings and communities to the Delta. While some of his aims were shared by Australia’s post-war administration in the territories, with its ‘new deal’ for native people promising them the opportunity to participate in their own development, his methods were often antithetical to theirs. In the early years of his cooperative movement (referred to variously in patrol reports as the Kompani and the Ina, or Ena, Company), which was at its peak from 1946 to 1954, Kabu rejected the interference of the government in his schemes and discouraged his followers from working for Europeans.¹ Kabu’s followers in the villages of the Purari called him ‘our taubada’, our boss, and ‘King Tommy’.²

Many people living in the Purari villages, especially the young men returned from the labour lines, were hungry for change after the war. The old ceremonies had lost much of their significance, following the suppression of cannibalism and inter-tribal warfare and no suitable substitute had been found to fill this ontological void. Despite the lofty promises of Australia’s Labor Government, the Australian administration was slow in providing services, and even slower in providing capital, toward satisfying the people’s desire for change and opportunity. The developmental goals of the Australian administration in Papua and New Guinea during the period under review seem to have been mostly concerned with implementing a civilising project through a moral tutelage that was based on assumptions of European cultural superiority. The people in the villages consequently had little say about the direction that cultural exchange and

¹ He was not, however, anti-European and clearly distinguished between the Australians in New Guinea and his friends in Australia.
² Sam Tua Kaima, ‘King Tommy’s ideal dream is shattered’, *Times of Papua New Guinea*, 5-12 September, 1986.
village development might take. Furthermore, the assistance and guidance promised by the Patrol Officers working for the Department of District Services and Native Affairs (DDSNA) was not backed up by vital infrastructure, such as transport and marketing opportunities.

The Government and the people in the villages also clashed over the rate of development and change. For the Government change was to be gradual and controlled by the authorities and this cautious approach often suppressed and discouraged native incentive and enthusiasm. This was certainly the case with the Tom Kabu cooperative movement. In the villages of the Purari, many people became impatient with the pace of change dictated by the Government. This eventually subdued the enthusiasm of many people in the villages of the Gulf of Papua, even those that had experienced some success with cash cropping and cooperative associations. What followed was a period of increasing disillusionment and disappointment.

Most disturbing for the government’s representatives in the district, the Patrol Officers, was Kabu’s influence in the villages and the anti-government sentiment that this was believed to engender. The Patrol Officer was responsible for maintaining order in the villages and any sign of rebellion against the colonial administration was viewed as a serious matter and as a sign of the Patrol Officers’ failure to perform their duties. While the senior levels of government retarded native development, albeit not by design, through over-regulation, neglect (usually a result of staffing shortages), and administrative inflexibility, the Patrol Officers in the field did so through local squabbles over power and prestige. The more Kabu’s prestige grew the more the Patrol Officer’s standing seemed to diminish. A local power struggle ensued as the field staff tried to undermine Kabu and his activities so that the Government might claim absolute authority in the Delta. These were indeed the formative years, an era of hope and, unfortunately, missed opportunity. By not supporting strong indigenous leaders, such as Tom Kabu, the Administration missed a valuable opportunity to encourage and guide the energy of village life in post-war Papua New Guinea, creating a sound foundation for future development and economic independence.

Situated in the Western Coastal region of the Gulf of Papua, the Purari Delta is a maze of creeks and swamps where the most pervasive elements are mud and

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3 Development is an ambiguous term and I use it here to signify the colonial regime’s idea of development as progress, growth, and advancement according to a culturally arrogant civilising project.
Most of the land is barely a metre above sea level. For the local people the land provided for most of their needs: there were vast sago swamps and the creeks were alive with fish and crabs. Some Patrol Officers attributed the so-called laziness of local people to the fact that food was so plentiful and relatively easy to procure in the region. Life in the Purari, however, was not always easy. Crocodiles are common and the people of the region once had a well-deserved reputation as cannibals. The area was also famous for its huge men’s houses, the ravi or eravo. These long cavernous structures were once the spiritual centre of the village, but they lost much of their significance after the colonisers suppressed cannibalism and warfare. The imunu, the life spirit, had passed. The people of the Purari were left depressed and empty. Conditions were thus ripe for a visionary leader. The young men following Kabu said that they belonged to a new generation. They called themselves the ‘New Men’. For them, the time before Kabu’s Company was muru pani, a time of darkness.

Tom Kabu was born Koiva Aua sometime around 1922 in the Purari Delta. He left the village as a young man, as many did, and in 1937 was recruited as a native police constable in eastern Papua where he was stationed at Samarai. Early in 1942, he accompanied some Australian army officers on a small vessel from Samarai in eastern Papua to Cairns in northern Queensland. The Australians called him Tommy (which he later changed to the more dignified diminutive, Tom). He spent the following four years either in Australia or at sea serving with the Royal Australian Navy. In Cairns Tom Kabu was employed as an orderly by a senior officer with the Royal Australian Navy, Lieutenant-Commander Norman S. Pixley. He served for twelve months at sea and was by all accounts popular with the Australians. He made a name for himself as a clean

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4 In 1887 Captain J.M. Hennessy described a journey in the upper Vailala River country as one 'ample for the most greedy globe-trotter. Mud, mud, mud; nothing but soft, slimy mud covered mostly all the way, with about 6 inches of water.' J.M. Hennessy, ‘Report of a Trip to the Western Part of the South Coast of British New Guinea’, Proceedings and Transactions of the Queensland Branch of the Royal Geographical Society of Australia, 3 (2), 1887-1888, p.65.


living and dignified man who spent long hours reading the Bible. On his return to the Purari in 1946 he adopted the name Kabu, ‘the man who owns things’.

During his time in Australia, a period of approximately two and a half years, Kabu accompanied Norman Pixley’s family on holiday to Surfer’s Paradise and he lived for some time in Brisbane. He also stayed with the family of an Australian friend in Adelaide. This is significant as it meant that, unlike most Papuans, he personally saw the European world and gained some idea of its wealth and the source of this wealth. More importantly, he witnessed first-hand the social dimensions of European economic activity: the clean roomy houses, the power of cooperation, and the dignity that material wealth seemed to bring. These experiences fuelled his aspiration for a Papuan world based on the Australian model.

Kabu’s Australian experience apparently took a nasty turn in 1945, following the Japanese surrender, when Norman Pixley, with some regret, left Kabu at a repatriation camp for New Guineans and Pacific Islanders in Queensland. It was in the repatriation camp that Kabu was given a ‘refresher course’ in colonial relations. The officer in charge of the camp, an ex-New Guinea planter, was a subscriber to the old orthodoxy of white prestige and it has been reported that this officer beat Kabu for being ‘cheeky’. This really meant that Kabu had had the audacity to step outside the boundaries of race and to speak plainly and on familiar terms with the white authority figure. This reminder of colonial relations probably reinforced Kabu’s desire to achieve independence from European domination and to resist government interference in his schemes.

Kabu saw money as a necessary prerequisite if the living standards of the Purari people were to approximate that of the Australians. He wrote in 1956 that money was the ‘most important and powerful thing in the world’. Indigenous economic development, however, was not a great priority for the Australian administration at the time. Development, at least as far as indigenous people were concerned, was concentrated on moral education as part of an ill-defined civilising project, which in turn was based on the assumption of European cultural superiority. The Administration favoured indigenous productivity

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11 Pixley, ‘Tommy Kabu of Papua’, p.3.
13 Kaima, ‘King Tommy’s ideal dream is shattered’.
mainly as a way of regulating, settling, and pacifying native people so that they might be more receptive to the government’s doctrine of self-help, ‘cultural blending’, and assimilation. Catherine Snowden, historian of cooperatives and rural progress societies in Papua New Guinea, writes that ‘any entrepreneurial behaviour was viewed [by the Administration] with suspicion.’ There was, consequently, a good deal of conflict between Kabu and the local Patrol Officers, the ‘outside men’ as they were known prior to the war.

The Patrol Officer was effectively the government in the Purari and as such he expected to be obeyed and respected, both as a figure of authority and, at least covertly, as a racial superior. Any trouble, or even dissent within the subdistrict, reflected badly on him, personally in terms of his standing with the expatriate community, and professionally as an officer of the government. Kabu’s popularity undermined the standing of the Patrol Officer in the village and challenged the covert but persistent idea of white prestige by antagonising local expatriates. Consequently, on a number of occasions, the field staff purposefully sought to frustrate his activities. This was done by withholding funds held in trust, declaring one strategic village a ‘Forbidden Settlement’, by favouring pro-government leaders in competition with Kabu, and by promising government help, through state supervised cooperative societies, to compliant villagers.

In the 1920s the population of the Delta was estimated to be between 10,000 and 15,000 people, with some of the larger communities made up of 2,000 or more people. By 1947 there were roughly 9,000 people living in the area. Between 1948 and 1951, approximately a third of Purari villagers had migrated from the region, either temporarily for work or education, as was mostly the case, or permanently to live in Port Moresby. Some villages lost up to eight per

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15 Catherine Snowden, ‘Copra Cooperatives’ in Donald Denoon and Catherine Snowden (eds), A Time to Plant and a Time to Uproot, Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, Port Moresby, 1981, p.201.
20 Allen, ‘The Purari Kompani’, 9. This figure is confirmed by the annual census conducted by the Patrol Officers.
One of Kabu’s aims was to encourage the Papuan people to work for themselves, rather than for Europeans, and one of the benefits of this would be to provide an incentive for people to remain in or return to the village. The Purari villagers had a long history of trading with the Motuan people of eastern Papua. For hundreds of years, during the lean dry season, the Motu sailed their lakatoi to the Delta, to trade clay pots for sago and timber. It was Kabu’s intention to reinvent this trading relationship, the hiring, in a new form, by transporting sago to Port Moresby, not in exchange for pots, but for money. Aided by his immediate supporters, sometimes referred to as his lieutenants, satellites, or less favourably as ‘henchmen’, Kabu set up the Purari Sago Company in early 1946.

In 1947 Patrol Officer Francis Robb, an officer who for the most part seems to have supported Kabu’s ventures, reported that the activities of the Company were doomed to fail, not because the people were not productive, but because shipping was not available. The larger shipping firms were not willing to make space available for native produce. They claimed that the wet sago would damage the decks. The situation had not improved three years later when Patrol Officer Herbert Clark wrote that economic ventures in the region would not

21 Cadet Patrol Officer L.G. Bridges, Bera 2 1954/1955, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974, p.2. In 1970, Patrol Officer J.W. Boyes visited villages west of the Vailala during the Christmas period and found it remarkable how much livelier they were with the presence of the children and visiting relatives. By the time he finished his patrol the New Year had passed and ‘the usual atmosphere of depression and apathy re-asserted itself.’ Patrol Officer J.W. Boyes, Ihu 10 1969/70, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974.


24 Sago was shipped to Port Moresby until the Company folded in 1949. Oram, ‘Rabia Camp and the Tommy Kabu Movement’, 11. It is interesting to note that in 1952 there was a great demand for Motuan pots in the Purari and that the Airavi and Evara people expressed the desire for the Motu people to continue to trade pots in return for sago and canoe timber. Clark, Bera 5 1951/52, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974.

25 Patrol Officer Francis Robb suggested that the Government could counter Kabu’s influence in the Purari by raising the prestige of the Patrol Officer. This, he proposed, could be achieved by making regular, ‘extensive, and sustained’, patrols in a launch. Apart from the time that would be saved, Robb did not think that ‘the power, or prestige, of the government, is at present enhanced in this area by the use of a canoe, and such prestige was never at a lower ebb.’ He found, on a recent patrol, that many villagers refused to obey orders and pay due deference to his office. He writes that there were numerous cases demonstrating the ‘degree of respect, and obedience accorded to the Government and to the orders which I issued.’ Patrol Officer Francis Robb, Kikori 2 1947/48, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974, p.12.

succeed unless shipping and marketing could be assured. This was obvious to Kabu who set about collecting money to purchase a boat for the Company. With Kabu’s leadership qualities engendering a sense of optimism and confidence, contributors for his boat-buying scheme were not hard to find.27 According to the London Missionary Society’s Reverend L.W. Allen, thousands of people contributed to Kabu’s scheme, raising over £2,500. The Patrol Officers and Allen sought to dissuade them, advising the people to concentrate on smaller schemes within their own tribal communities.28

The Company purchased a 47 year-old schooner, the *Ena*, from the Royal Australian Navy for £3,000 in April 1946. Less than a month later, while docked in Port Moresby, it was burnt beyond repair when a crewmember used gasoline instead of kerosene to make a lamp.29 The Administration ruled that the purchase of the *Ena* had infringed the *Transactions with Natives Ordinance* and it was agreed that the purchase price should be refunded to the Company’s subscribers.30 Exactly how this money was to be refunded would be an ongoing problem for the Administration, especially officers in the DDSNA, which was responsible for the refund operation.31 When Patrol Officer G.P. Hardy spoke to the Purari people in 1948, he suggested that the refund of subscriptions should be paid to individual subscribers. For the most part the people disagreed, saying that the money should instead be handed over in full for Tom Kabu to use to buy a boat. The Crown Law Officer refused to do this, and vouchers showing the amount to be repaid to each subscriber were drawn up. In many of the villages loyal to Kabu, the people simply refused to accept the money and for the Patrol Officer this was a source of frustration and humiliation.32

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31 When the Company’s truck broke down in 1951, Kabu applied to have his own contribution to the *Ena* collection, which was the equivalent of $600, refunded in order to carry out repairs. Oram, ‘Rabia Camp and the Tommy Kabu Movement’, pp.14-45. The Administration refused to refund the money, either through malice, or because reliable records of the scheme had not been kept. Possibly the latter was used to justify the former. The *Ena* money was finally recovered in 1966 when a meeting of the Baimuru Local Government Council, attended by Kabu, decided that the money should be placed at the disposal of the Council so that they could purchase a boat. Seven years later a boat was built at Baimuru and delivered to the Council at a cost of around $6,000. It would be used to start a fishing industry with the intention of supplying the domestic market. Maher, ‘The Purari River Delta Societies’, p.221.
In 1950, more than three years after the *Ena* was destroyed, a patrol set out to return contributions to the individual subscribers, but it was largely unsuccessful. Patrol Officer E.O. Graham again found that most people wanted the refund to go back to the Company. He wrote that the refund exercise demonstrated the ‘more unwholesome aspect’ of Kabu’s influence, which was a general resistance to the government. Offering money to ‘natives’, and having it refused, was an undignified position for a government officer to find himself in and Graham related that he found it personally embarrassing to be in such a situation.\(^{33}\) A few months later, Graham wrote that, in his opinion, Kabu not only ruled the Purari people but ‘robbed them as well’.\(^{34}\) It could, however, be argued that it was the Administration that was robbing the people of the right to choose how their money could be used. The withholding of funds and the lack of assistance in procuring a replacement vessel would prove to be terminal impediments to Kabu’s Company.

Many of the Patrol Officers, and their immediate superiors, were convinced that Kabu was a shyster intent on taking advantage of gullible local people. This was an intolerable situation for the Patrol Officer, whose job it was to protect them. In 1949, the Acting District Officer, C.T. Healey, wrote that the Purari people had received no payment for producing the sago while Tom Kabu and ‘his satellites wax fat on expenses.’\(^{35}\) The Acting District Commissioner, L.J. O’Malley, concurred in 1951, saying that in his opinion the collection of shares was a hoax and that the proceeds were being used by Kabu to enrich his camp in Port Moresby. O’Malley assured his superiors that Kabu’s activities were being carefully monitored.\(^{36}\)

The local field staff were constantly reminded of the prestige and respect accorded to Kabu in relation to themselves. In 1948 Patrol Officer Ron Galloway reported that houses built for Kabu in the Purari villages were much better than the Rest Houses built for Patrol Officers. He also related that, when Kabu last visited the area, his houses were ‘piled with food’, whereas in only one village was food brought to the Patrol Officer and offered for sale. Furthermore, when Kabu entered the village everyone gathered to greet him, whereas only the Village Constable and Village Councillors greeted the Patrol Officer. Galloway writes that these were all ‘little things’ that indicated a swing.

\(^{33}\) Patrol Officer E.O. Graham, Beara 3 1949/50, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974.
\(^{34}\) Graham, Beara 2 1950/5, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974, p.1.
away from the Government, ‘as far as guidance is concerned’, to Kabu.\textsuperscript{37}

In 1947, the Senior Social Welfare Officer with the Department of Education in Papua, R. Thomson, questioned one of Kabu’s followers about the movement’s origins and aims. According to his informant, the villagers had originally approached Tom Kabu saying that they wanted to get rid of ‘all their New Guinea things ... and have things and utensils just like Australians.’ Kabu agreed to help. He told them to gather together all the ceremonial objects and, after a Bible reading and prayers,\textsuperscript{38} they were destroyed.\textsuperscript{39} There were rumours that a native police force was being drilled and that gaols were being built in those villages under Kabu’s influence.\textsuperscript{40} This, along with the burning of ceremonial objects in the villages, was too much for the Government, which suspected that Kabu’s activities might revive the inter-war cult described by the Australian anthropologist Francis Edgar Williams as the ‘Vailala Madness’.\textsuperscript{41} Kabu was subsequently brought in to Kikori, the administrative centre in the Gulf District at the time, for questioning. According to some accounts of the incident he was merely taken in for consultation, while others argue that he was arrested ‘with a considerable degree of force’.\textsuperscript{42}

The more militant aspects of Kabu’s movement were easily brought under control and after 1947 it operated, at least overtly, within the Administration’s

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\begin{enumerate}
  \item Galloway, Beara 3 1947/48, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974. The Patrol Officers could on occasion be quite petty about the situation in the Purari. For example, when in 1947 some Kinipo villagers, disillusioned with Kabu’s scheme, asked Patrol Officer Collins for help, he reminded them that only two months ago they had the opportunity to receive help but had declined the Administration’s assistance in favour of Kabu. Patrol Officer G.D. Collins, Beara 1 1948/49, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974.
  \item Allen writes that Kabu also read from Communist tracts. Allen, ‘The Purari Kompani’, p.5.
  \item Thomson, ‘Community Development in the Purari Delta’, p.17.
  \item These rumours were largely unfounded. There were guards parading with wooden rifles, but these were purely symbolic and used to ward off ‘evil spirits’. Thomson, ‘Community Development in the Purari Delta’, p.18. The anthropologist Peter Worsley referred to this force as a ‘paramilitary organization.’ Peter Worsley, The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of ‘Cargo’ Cults in Melanesia, Second Edition, Schocken Books, New York, 1968, p.193.
  \item Like Kabu, the cult ‘bosses’ had also discouraged members from working for Europeans and had displayed insolent behaviour. The cult activity, according to Peter Worsley, was a reaction to the new order being imposed upon the Purari people by the Europeans. It was an act of rebellion against the indigenous peoples’ subordinate position within this new hierarchy. Worsley, The Trumpet Shall Sound, p.89.
  \item Oram, ‘Rabia Camp and the Tommy Kabu Movement’, p.18. Catherine Snowden writes that another reason for the raid was Kabu’s ‘lieutenant’ Aua Akiia’s punishment of recalcitrant villagers. Snowden, ‘Copra Cooperatives’, p.186.
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framework. In 1948 and 1949, for example, Kabu invited the Administration’s assistance in training the Company’s clerks in book keeping. The Patrol Officers, however, never really forgave him for refusing their help and Kabu continued to be viewed as a threat by some officials in the Administration. In 1948 the Acting Director of DDSNA, John Herbert Jones, a man known to have been antagonistic to Jack Keith Murray’s ‘new deal’ Administration, expressed concern that Kabu’s authority in the area appeared to be adversely affecting administrative control. The Patrol Officers sought to reverse this trend by attempting to break up the Company and discredit Kabu.

One of Kabu’s many projects was to move Purari villages to more harmonious and advantageous environments. In 1951 Clark described the old Iari villages, where Kabu grew up, as a ‘quagmire of slush, filth, coconut husks and general food refuse’, with ‘disgusting blue blow-flies’ making conditions ‘most unpleasant’. The ubiquitous pig excrement further added insult to the village ambience. In contrast, Francis Robb described Kabu’s new Sago Camp village as ‘very clean’ with flowerbeds and watermelon patches planted throughout.

Another of Kabu’s new villages was Hevesea, which was situated opposite the Port Romilly Sawmill on the banks of the Wame River. Hevesea was the Company’s storage and shipping centre. The idea of situating Hevesea near the sawmill was to take advantage of the wharf facilities. While this was pragmatically a valid decision, the proximity of the European owned mill would prove a big problem for Hevesea and Kabu’s Company.

When Francis Robb visited Hevesea in August 1947, there were several

46 Clark, Beara 7 1951/52, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974. The situation in the Old Iari villages changed little over the following decade, with Patrol Officer J.P. Fowke reporting in 1961 that the housing remained ‘extremely poor’ and that ‘extremely malodorous sago pith’ dotted the landscape in rotting piles. Patrol Officer J.P. Fowke, Beara 1 1960/61, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974.
thousand coconuts, a great deal of fruit and vegetables, including corn, and 140 bundles of sago ready for shipment to Port Moresby. Since the next boat due to visit the sawmill would not arrive for at least two weeks, Robb expected most of this produce to rot before it could be delivered. The attitude of the sawmillers toward Hevesea was, according to Robb, 'most hostile'. He writes that, 'they will endeavour to prevent any of the company's [sic] produce being shipped', by refusing the use of the wharf and by filling each boat with timber so that there was no room left for the Company's produce. 49

According to the Reverend Allen, the manager of the sawmill had been 'very tolerant' until Kabu's activities 'retarded the efficient handling of timber and cargo.' Kabu had told his followers not to work for the Europeans after he had heard from labourers employed by the sawmill that they were being treated unfairly. 50 Ever the scribe of rumour, Allen writes that Kabu declared he would take over the Port Romilly Sawmill and banish the Europeans. 51 The Company was subsequently banned from the sawmill. Robb wrote that the 'virtual blockade is having the effect of strangling the Ena Company's activities.' He was sure that if 'nothing constructive' could be done then the Company should be 'closed down, and the people returned to their villages.' 52

It is no surprise then that, with the Australians united against them, Hevesea was declared a 'Forbidden Settlement' in 1950. This was quite unusual as mostly it was only derelict villages and *kombati*, isolated sago camps, which were gazetted as 'Forbidden Settlements'. The reason given was that conflict between the people of nearby Evara and Hevesea would eventually cause trouble, despite the fact that the people of Evara were supporters of Kabu and had given permission to use the land. The real reason for the declaration seems to have been the conflict between the sawmill's manager and Kabu and Hevesea's non-cooperation with the Government. It had, after all, been one of the villages to unanimously decline the refund of the *Ena* money. The easiest way to resolve these conflicts, from the Government's point of view, was to close the settlement down in the hope that Kabu's movement would fold. Many of Kabu's followers subsequently moved from Hevesea to Maipenairu, not far from Allen's London Missionary Society headquarters on Urika Island. 53

51 Allen, 'The Purari Kompani', p.5.
53 Graham, Beara 3 1949/50, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974. Apparently not all of the villagers willingly moved from the upriver villages to Maipenaru. Clark was told that a man named 'Auwa Ariki' had issued the order for one small village, Ravikivau, to move to
antagonism of the Patrol Officers toward Kabu continued unabated after Hevesea’s closure as the field staff discouraged the movement’s schemes at the new location.

Another method employed by the Patrol Officers to thwart Kabu’s activities was to support more compliant leaders in the region willing to oppose Kabu. One of these was the Village Constable at Maipua, east of Urika, Kiri Morea. In 1948, Patrol Officer G.D. Collins reported that Kiri Morea had built a new copra shed and planned to ‘work on his own account’ with the assistance of twenty supporters. The Patrol Officer felt justified in supporting Kabu’s rival as suspicion of the Administration, reported Collins, was only evident when Kabu himself was in the district. It was reasoned that if Kabu could be kept out of the area then this suspicion would disappear. Francis Robb wrote that the Government should encourage Kiri Morea’s ‘rebel group’, which was a small ‘core of opposition’ to Kabu’s Company, by providing copra bags and arranging transport through the Beara Police Camp, which was near the Port Romilly saw mill. Robb felt that Kabu’s activities could be ‘much reduced’ by supporting his competitors. Acting District Officer Healey wrote that, if Kiri Morea’s copra production was a success, then it might ‘go far to break down faith’ in Kabu’s Company. The Director of DDSNA, Jones, wrote to Healey asking why the Ena Company should be retarded. ‘Is it an unlawful situation?’ he inquired of the Acting District Officer. Healey replied that he did not know whether it was lawful or not, what he did know was that ‘on its present basis it is not good for the Purari people.’

Patrol Officer Robb was impressed by the considerable extent of Kabu’s power over the people and suggested that, if the government had a similar hold, the region would develop rapidly. He pondered whether some sort of company or cooperative could be built upon the foundations of Kabu’s Company and under Government control. In Robb’s opinion, a Cooperative Society would redirect

Maipenairu. The people were told that they would go to gaol if they did not obey. They then found upon arrival that they had no food, and no materials to make new houses. There were thirty-one people in the group and according to Clark none of them wanted to return to Urika. Clark, Beara 2 1951/52, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974.

54 Snowden, ‘Copra Cooperatives’, p.186.
57 Healey to Director of Department of District Services and Native Affairs, Jones, 9 September 1948, in Collins, Beara 2 1948/49, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974.
the people’s enthusiasm away from Kabu and toward the Government. What he failed to consider was that the Government would face many of the same problems as Kabu’s Company, notably the paucity of shipping, and that without positive results the enthusiasm of the people in the villages would be difficult to maintain. There was a shortage of staff available to oversee the formation and running of Cooperative Societies and this retarded the development of indigenous economic ventures in the region. In 1948 there were only six field officers with the Cooperative Section and in 1953 there were 28. Despite this increase, serious understaffing meant that the promises made by Patrol Officers, perhaps hastily made to sway Kabu’s followers, were not always backed up by action.

In 1952 Patrol Officer Clark wrote that a Cooperative Section Officer was sorely needed in the Purari, as the people were ‘anxious to commence some venture as an outlet for their energies and emotions.’ Clark was a dedicated officer, he had a reputation for conducting thorough patrols, and having persuaded the local people to trust the government he was aware how fragile that trust could be. He wrote to his superiors asking what was the possibility that a Cooperative Section Officer might visit the district to advise and authorise proposed endeavours, such as the setting up of Trade Stores and the marketing of agricultural commodities. Clark was told by his superiors not to make promises to the native people, as it would invariably lead to disappointment, disillusionment, and distrust. Clark recognised that to ignore the villagers’ enthusiasm would be to make them ‘discontented and frustrated’ and that this could lead to trouble.

Catherine Snowden argues that the cooperative societies were used to ‘guide potential forces of resistance into proper channels’. John Millar, who headed the Cooperative Section during the period, played up the control function of the Cooperative Societies, saying they were the best antidote to cargo cult activities and anti-government dissent in less developed regions like the Purari. There were fifty-three cooperative societies in the Gulf by 1951, though an officer

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61 Snowden, ‘Copra Cooperatives’, p.188.
64 Clark, Beara 5 1951/52, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974.
66 Snowden, ‘Copra Cooperatives’, pp.188-89.
from the Cooperative Section was not posted to the region until 1955. Many projects were suspended until an officer was available to supervise operations and this dampened the enthusiasm of many local people. In 1959, the Director of Native Affairs, A.A. Roberts, admitted that the staff position in the Cooperative Section was getting worse and it was unlikely that any support would be given in the Delta in the 'foreseeable future.'\(^{67}\) This meant that the Patrol Officer’s promise to replace Kabu with a government scheme was not backed up by action. The result was that local people lost faith in the government and so the cooperative movement was in many ways counter productive. By 1959 Kabu had lost much of his influence in the region, as the Patrol Officers had hoped he would, and so with no strong indigenous leaders, and with an apathetic Administration, conditions in the Purari villages continued to deteriorate.

In 1954 Kabu returned from Port Moresby and settled down in Akoma on Urika Island.\(^{68}\) In 1955 he attempted to revitalise a rubber plantation he had started five years earlier. He was told by the field staff that this was not a good idea since the trees would not produce for another eight years.\(^ {69}\) This contradicted Acting District Commissioner O’Malley’s suggestion in 1952 that the people should be encouraged to consider the long-term benefits of cash cropping. ‘If the people are not prepared to expend their energy at the moment in regard to long range enterprises’, wrote O’Malley, ‘they will never get anywhere, it is a risk they all must take.’\(^ {70}\) As was often the case, there was little in the way of a unified development policy in the territories, especially in terms of economic development.

Ever industrious, Kabu also planted rice on Crown Land behind the Beara Patrol Post. In 1956 Cadet Patrol Officer Wiltshire, who was stationed at Beara, wrote that if Kabu succeeded in growing rice then all the other villages would plant it, ‘as the man still retains a certain amount of power over local people.’\(^ {71}\) Kabu was also employed by the London Missionary Society on Urika Island to oversee a small copra-making venture.\(^ {72}\) In 1958 Patrol Officer P.J. Foldi

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\(^{67}\) A.A. Roberts, Director Native Affairs, 6 February 1959, in Patrol Officer P.J. Foldi, Beara 1 1958/59, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974.

\(^{68}\) Cadet Patrol Officer L.G. Bridges, Beara 1 1954/55, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974.

\(^{69}\) Cadet Patrol Officer J.A. Wiltshire, Beara 1 1955/56, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974.


\(^{71}\) Wiltshire, Beara 1 1955/56, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974.

\(^{72}\) The London Missionary Society’s Reverend G. Bents and his wife had by this time replaced Allen on Urika Island. Bridges, Beara 1 54/55, Gulf Province Patrol Reports 1912-1974.
described Kabu as the ‘leading “business man”’ in the area, although his ‘past ventures have led to failure and the people now give him little support.’ Foldi attributed these failures to Kabu’s contempt for the advice proffered by previous Patrol Officers. It could, however, be argued that it was the Patrol Officer’s contempt for Kabu that contributed to the failure of many of his schemes. In 1958 Kabu was still living at Akoma on Urika Island where he was building a hot air copra dryer. Healey, his attitude toward Kabu perhaps softened by familiarity, advised the Patrol Officer to give Kabu any advice that he could to facilitate this venture.73

In her book, *Left in the Village*, Louise Morauta writes that economic change in the Gulf District was not stimulated by copra production, it was instead encouraged by a demand for consumer goods, initially the desire for trade tobacco.74 If Kabu failed to bring the modern world and material wealth to the Papuan villages the Administration fared little better. In 1959, for example, a Cadet Patrol Officer visiting the Koriki area reported that the people were incapable of working beyond a subsistence level and that the cash economy had still not had a significant impact in villages of the Gulf. The Koriki producers still sold their coconuts to a European-owned Trade Store from which they received one stick of tobacco for every nine coconuts. The Cadet Patrol Officer inspected the Trade Store at Kinipo and found only four cans of dripping.75 There was, even by 1960, obviously little incentive to raise money.

The American anthropologist Robert F. Maher, who conducted field research in the Purari Delta during the mid-1950s, writes that, while the Kabu movement’s general principles were well founded, the basic skills required for their realisation were lacking. According to Maher the movement was destined to fail.76 Nigel Oram, historian of Port Moresby and the *biri* trade, in contact with Kabu in the early 1960s, challenged Maher’s assumption that failure was

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76 Maher, ‘Tommy Kabu Movement of the Purari Delta’, 82. This view was shared by a Cooperative Officer in 1952. Thomson, ‘Community Development in the Purari Delta’, p.19.
inevitable. Oram wrote that the ‘unco-ordinated policies of different government departments toward the movement’ impeded Kabu’s activities. He also noted that the over-cautious attitude of the paternalistic Patrol Officers, and their suspicion of Kabu, stifled the initiative of local producers.77 Maher concurs, writing that the Administration failed to follow its criticisms of the movement with ‘effective action of a positive kind.’78

There was a marked change in attitudes to patrols from the early 1960s when Patrol Officers were encouraged to spend at least one night in each village, not away in the Government Rest House. In 1966 the Director of Native Affairs, J.K. McCarthy, wrote that ‘from now on Administration officers generally should listen to what is being said by the local people rather than “talking at” them.’79 This would suggest that, prior to 1966, it had been otherwise. This certainly seems to have been the case in the relationship between the Patrol Officers and Tom Kabu, where the quest to maintain prestige was privileged over the desire to facilitate indigenous economic development.

Perhaps a valuable opportunity was missed when the momentum of indigenous desire for development, so overwhelming after the war, was lost, frustrated, and worn down by the unfulfilled promises of the Administration and its officers in the field. State paternalism meant that local people were protected and not given the chance to learn through experience, and so economic activity tended to be inhibited, not facilitated by, state intervention. There was a chance, in the first few years after the war, to foster grass roots development and to strengthen local markets. This would have required a flexible Administration with a mandate to encourage local economies, perhaps within a pre-existing indigenous framework, and to acknowledge local leaders, even if they sought a path independent of the colonial government. The Australians, however, were not ideologically prepared to meet such a challenge. The so-called failure of Tom Kabu’s cooperative movement was perhaps not so much a failure on the part of local people to adapt to European models of economic and social behaviour so much as it was a failure on the part of the administering officers to adapt to local conditions and indigenous relationships.

While Kabu’s regime failed to effect long-term economic prospects for the region, there is little doubt that he was an energetic and enthusiastic champion of Papuan autonomy and indigenous development. He achieved a great deal,

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77 Oram, ‘Rabia Camp and the Tommy Kabu Movement’, p.20.
especially in terms of bringing villagers together to live and work cooperatively. He was, for many of the Purari people in the late 1940s, the equal of the European, whom some hoped he would soon displace. Only toward the end of his life did Kabu run for public office. Albert Maori Kiki ran against ‘the once famous’ Kabu when the latter ran as a candidate for the People’s Progress Party candidate in the 1968 House of Assembly elections. Kabu was by then confined to hospital and the days left to him were few. Kiki said that in his heyday he would easily have won a seat.80 His popularity, like his health, had by this time faded.

The 1940s represent somewhat of a blind spot in New Zealand/Samoan history, despite the critical events which took place. Davidson, for example, has referred to the decade prior to 1948 as ‘marking time’ until political reforms moved Samoa closer to independence, while other historians have also given the period limited attention. Yet the years between the Mau protest of the 1920s and 1930s and independence in 1962 were formative, transitional and critical for Samoa and for New Zealand’s South Pacific policies in terms of searching for, and articulating, a relationship that would survive impending change. Through the 1940s New Zealand was to develop and formalise policies of international trusteeship and postcolonial development that were to serve as the basis of its relationship to its Pacific territories and beyond. Far from being peripheral to such events Samoa was firmly at the centre of evolving policy. In particular, the administration of Prime Minister Peter Fraser (1940-49) was significant in Samoa being held up, despite considerable reservations, as the ‘shining example’ of New Zealand trusteeship at the United Nations and later the South Pacific Commission (SPC).

Prior to the 1940s New Zealand had gained little respect in either Samoa or domestically for its administration of Samoa. As a mandate of New Zealand under the League of Nations since 1919, Samoa remained almost invisible in terms of public debate, but was a troublesome and at times politically anarchic project for administrators. New Zealand officials had struggled to develop an administrative policy which was acceptable to Samoans, expatriate residents of Samoa, and increasingly to New Zealanders themselves. Indeed, in the 1930s policy and administration appeared to be unravelling. Though Ian Campbell has

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1 This research was completed with support from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I wish to express my appreciation for the Historical Research Grant which funded access to the archival materials used in this chapter.

2 J.W. Davidson focuses mainly on constitutional issues; *Malama Meleisea, The Making of Modern Samoa* (1987) does not mention Prime Minister Fraser’s visit to Samoa in 1944 (see below) at all, and biographers of Fraser and Walter Nash only pay passing attention to their respective roles in Samoa. As Ian Campbell has recently noted: ‘In the history of Samoa in the twentieth century, two events dominate: the Mau protest and the early granting of independence—the first in the Pacific—in 1962’. ‘New Zealand and the Mau in Samoa’. Campbell, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 33:1 (1999), p.92. This research attempts to ‘fill-in’ the intervening years.

argued that resistance arose primarily because of New Zealand's liberal and calm approach to Samoan politics which opened the door to not Samoan, but planter and capitalist-led hostility who felt that 'pro-Samoan' policies were frustrating their commercial and political interests in the colony; there remained a lack of clear purpose, problems of inadequate administrative capabilities, and increasing social dislocation. Indeed, Samoan complaints over a lack of say on administration and resentment and dissatisfaction over the quality of staff in posts continued to be sore points raised at every possible opportunity with resident and visiting officials.

While great significance is often attributed to the election of the first New Zealand Labour government in 1935, as it had often been critical of administration in Samoa in the past and many Samoans felt it would be 'pro-Samoan', relations remained cool initially and 'no substantive changes of policy or procedure took place'. This absence of a committed and consistent approach to Samoa was exemplified in the attempted visit to New Zealand by a Samoan delegation in June 1936, which was delayed until late 1937. Despite the earlier 'Goodwill Mission' of two parliamentarians to Samoa and pleas from Secretary for Native Affairs Cyril McKay that 'beyond any doubt ... no obstacle should be put in the way of the proposed Samoan delegation to New Zealand' Prime Minister Joseph Savage refused to meet with the visitors. The delegation was finally received in Wellington, but not by the Prime Minister and only after they had paid for most of their own accommodation.

The ascendency of Peter Fraser to Prime Minister upon the death of Savage in 1940 signified a more consistent and personal focus to Samoan affairs. It was clear that policy in Samoa had only led to 'disillusion and disappointment'. Something new needed to be thought out. The inspiration for such a shift came from both within the region but also beyond. The 1940s witnessed an energising of New Zealand-Samoan affairs during which the relationship underwent substantial and irrevocable change. It was a period of unprecedented personal contact between the two nations. Indeed, Fraser and his administration were more active in terms of contact with Samoan representatives than any previous administration and this allowed the opportunity to develop new ideas, witness

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4 Campbell, pp.96, 104.
5 Ibid, p.92.
6 Memo to The Acting Administrator, 7/6/37. Visits to NZ by Samoan Delegations, Island Territories (IT) files, National Archives, Wellington. IT1 EX 88/3/2.
Donovan Storey

social and economic circumstances, and listen to grievances. No less than three visits by the Governor General took place between June 1942 and June 1944. The Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) visited Samoa to report on ‘scientific matters’ in 1946, and this visit was followed by a Public Services Commission (PSC) delegation examining labour and employment issues in 1947. Fraser himself spent Christmas in Samoa in 1944, meeting with the Fono of Faipule for several days, and played host to a Samoan delegation which extensively toured New Zealand in October 1945.

During this period Samoa was undergoing profound and rapid change as a result of the Second World War. American military bases in the Pacific had resulted in a significant expansion of capitalism and opportunity in Samoa, but had also resulted in concerns over the implications of this on ‘traditional’ life. One theme, which consistently emerged from visiting reports, was the significant impact resulting from the war and the increased role of capitalism in village life. The Governor General’s visit in 1943, for example, noted that US troops were having a marked effect on Samoans:

The normal life and economy of the Islands have been completely upset by the big money which can be gained from employment with the Americans, and when this has ceased to be available there may well be a recrudescence of former political trouble.... There is no doubt the Americans are covetous of Western Samoa...endeavours should be made to ensure that American influence does not become too attractive.8

Additionally the joint committee of the PSC reported emerging post-war economic pressures, notably a boom in post-war prices for Samoan products, especially copra and cocoa. This had led to a sharp increase in the price of basic foodstuffs and pressures from aiga (family) on salary earners in town. The PSC noted that the estimated cost of living for those ‘living in the European fashion’ had risen by over 60 percent since 1939, and forewarned that ‘the pressure from the outlying village on the salary and wage earner in Apia must not be encouraged so that the incentive to village food production is seriously diminished’9. To maintain this precarious balance, Samoans should ideally be kept on the land. Policy was to encourage some degree of change in Samoa, to meet rising expectations and needs, but just as importantly to ensure stability through conserving the past, especially in the form of rural-based development.

8 Visit of Governor-General to Islands, September-November 1943, IT1 EX 1/23/23.
9 Report of the Joint Committee Appointed by the PSC to visit Samoa, 1947. IT1 EX 89/1/32.
External Affairs staff in Wellington were also aware of the pressures of change. Hence Alister McIntosh, who served as both Permanent Head of the Prime Minister’s Department and Secretary of External Affairs from 1943-1966, counselled the DSIR prior to its visit that ‘industrial development is practically nil and in the present state of social organisation, development should be linked as closely as possible with agriculture’.

Nevertheless, coupled with a litany of complaints emerging from the PSC visit in 1944, it was evident that Samoa was undergoing profound social and economic change and that it was no longer the isolated rural, village country that it once was. Coupled with persistent petitions for greater autonomy New Zealand’s policy toward Samoa was clearly under stress. In particular there was a need to more effectively balance a number of pressures emerging from development while preserving fa’a Samoa (the Samoan way) as well as forging a new relationship away from colonial administration to meet the continuing demands for self-government—or even independence—while maintaining New Zealand’s strategic and commercial interests in the islands.

Arguably the most pivotal moment in New Zealand’s evolving policy in Samoa was the visit of Prime Minster Peter Fraser to the islands in 1944. As Minister of Island Territories, Fraser’s visit in December was to gauge the legacy of New Zealand’s role in Samoa but also to provide him with a first-hand experience of the mandate in preparation for assuming the role of chair of the proposed trusteeship committee in San Francisco in 1945. Fraser, the first New Zealand Prime Minister to visit Samoa, was evidently ‘appalled by what he saw’. As a result of the ‘long-standing lack of interest in Wellington toward the territories’ it was clear that New Zealand had not formulated either ‘a cohesive policy for their development nor any reasonable response to their needs’. Fraser openly regretted past mistakes, which he blamed on misunderstandings, and during the visit effectively apologised for the damage this had caused the relationship.

10 Memo from Alister McIntosh to the Secretary of DSIR, 27/10/44. IT EX 69/155.
11 A long list of issues were put forward to the Commissioner by the Samoan representation, complaining about the lack of opportunities for Samoans to get well-paid and high positions in the administration; poor and expensive housing; low salaries; the lack of development in the country after 30 years of New Zealand rule; putting curbs on contracts for NZ staff (to 3 years); sending back unpopular administrators; a lack of opportunity for Samoan opinions to be heard; and better educational opportunities in New Zealand for Samoan youth. Memo for the Right Hon. the Prime Minister, from the Commissioner of the PSC J.M. Boyes, 16/11/44. IT1 EX 89/1/32.
I regret that in the years that have gone serious mistakes were made and enormities were raised and the people divided through lack of understanding or appreciation of the difficulties peculiar to the country.  

The very nature of such a historic visit, coupled with the fluidity of the international system of the war and immediate post-war period potentially gave Fraser a significant opportunity to radically redefine New Zealand’s policy toward Samoa. Nevertheless, while Fraser was clearly more stimulated than his contemporaries by international events he maintained a careful and often conservative stance on almost any issue, however trivial. This was, in the end, Fraser’s enduring legacy on Samoan policy. While engaged in establishing a more informed perspective on Samoan issues and policy Fraser both promoted considerable change but also clung to pragmatic continuity. On the one hand he was fiercely pro-British, explaining to the legislative council of Samoa on December 22 1944 that

the British Commonwealth method, the NZ method, is to meet people, hold out a hand of fellowship, help them along, deliberate with them, consult them and advance together shoulder to shoulder in an unbroken line of progress. That is our ideal, that is the British way and this is New Zealand’s conception of what progress ought to be.

In this sense Ashby has described Fraser as a ‘structuralist, in that he believed an oppressive or inadequate structure should be replaced, not destroyed’. On the other hand he was pushed into action beyond indefinite tutelage based on his own Fabian beliefs, by advisors such as Frank Corner who argued that the control of Samoan demands for self-government was no longer avoidable, and also through his dealings with Australian Minister of External Affairs Herbert

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14 P. Fraser to the Fono of Faipule 20/12/44–26/12/44. IT 1 EX 1/67/1.
16 Prime Minister Fraser to the Fono of Faipule, 22/12/44. IT1 EX 1/67/1
17 M. Ashby, ‘Under Southern Skies: Sources of New Zealand Foreign Policy 1943-57’. PhD Dissertation, Victoria University of Wellington, 1989, p.367. Likewise, McIntosh has noted that Fraser was chosen to Chair the ‘Special Committee II/4: The Trusteeship Committee’ drafting trusteeship provisions because he was conservative enough for the British yet liberal enough for the US. McIntosh, 1977, p.16.
18 Frank Corner was an External Affairs diplomat who later served as First Secretary at the New Zealand embassy in Washington D.C.
Evatt, particularly at the San Francisco conference of 1945. These issues were not, of course, limited to Samoa, and clearly took place in a changing regional and global environment. Indeed, New Zealand's evolving policy on Samoa both shaped and was shaped by its emergent steps onto the international stage. This included New Zealand's delegation to, and more particularly Fraser's personal role in, the founding of the United Nations at San Francisco, and particularly his role in the Trusteeship Council. In this sense New Zealand's post-war Samoan policy was reflective of both the need to contend with the aspirations of newly emerging nations, but also the desire for industrialised states to control this process. Increasingly, this centred on negotiating the access of nations to emerging regional and global institutions of 'expertise' in return for technical, social and military assistance to aid in their 'independence' and 'development'.

In particular, post-war policy debates were increasingly being informed by the emergence of ideas which argued that 'development', and more specifically development aid, could effectively replace formal empire as a means through which to order international relations. Hence policy initiatives increasingly moved from justifying empire and toward encouraging (or at least not indefinitely impeding) the creation of new States linked to patrons through technical expertise and aid, thus providing 'a means by which imperial powers could reconcile themselves to their loss [or lack] of power, while maintaining a connection with their ex-colonies and a continued sense of their mission in shaping their future'. In New Zealand's case, it additionally provided a moral rationale of withdrawal for an increasingly reluctant colonial authority. Significantly, it also provided a podium for Samoan demands for greater self-government.

The challenge of marrying the expectation of progress with the desire to preserve Samoa's economic and social structure was one which Fraser, himself, was acutely aware of. In addressing the Legislative Council on 22 December 1944 Fraser summed up his appreciation of the shifting landscape and New Zealand's response:

I appreciate the great danger of people coming to the conclusion that

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19 It is widely acknowledged that Corner infused Fraser with ideas of Trusteeship, 'about which he previously had only vague and general ideas'. Ashby, 1989, p. 87.
20 See McIntosh, ibid.
because things have always been so that they must always remain as they are and that things that have endured for many years are static and immovable; that is equally wrong. In Samoa as in every other country, in varying degrees, the problem is how to conserve all that is good in the past in the people’s form of life and government, of their associations, councils, economic system, food, and all that their life in the past has meant and at the same time get all the benefits of the discoveries, research and progress of the world at large.....The guiding principle of New Zealand’s policy ... is the good, the advancement, the progress and the benefit ... and the happiness of the people of Samoa as a whole.22

Promises made through trusteeship and development however could also be turned into demands for greater autonomy. For example during Fraser’s visit the Hon. Ulupoao, in accepting New Zealand’s interest in Samoan affairs put the onus back on Fraser: ‘Your remarks reflect upon me two important points—firstly, the advancement and progress of the country and secondly, the cooperation and working together in good-will of the people to reach a required destination. I therefore wish to speak for the anxiety in my mind to see that the welfare of Samoa is vastly increased and the progress of the people is to be advanced23.

The doctrine of intentional development thus emerged as a key post-war ‘Samoan Doctrine’.24 It was both a conservative and radical policy—one which sought to re-establish New Zealand’s administration as a progressive force and antidote, both to traditional law (and Samoan authorities) and laissez-faire capitalism (or, immanent development). The justification was no longer colonialism, but ‘partnership’ towards a common goal, relevant to Samoa’s capacity and expectations. New Zealand’s post-war policy in Samoa thus became that of ‘organised social change’ and ‘organising or motivating societies to change’, directed by governments and mandated institutions.25

Establishing post-colonial machinery

Such an approach required a concerted effort of both the Samoan elite and New Zealand authorities (or ‘experts’) in order to share in ‘the intellectual universe

22 Fraser, in a speech to the meeting of the Fono of Faipule, Apia, 22/12/44. IT1 EX 1/67/1.
23 Hon. Ulupoao to Fraser, Dec. 1944, IT 1/67/1.
24 Indeed, ‘for the welfare of native peoples’ became the mantra of Fraser, and was reiterated at every conceivable speech (it seems) throughout the 1940s.
and in the moral community\textsuperscript{26} of development. But ideological unity was not necessarily enough: new organisations and international aid would also be called upon to promote economic growth, alleviate poverty and foster beneficial change.\textsuperscript{27} Once the principle of trusteeship, which would guide colonial powers in the administration of their dependent territories (and therefore be of universal application) was promulgated, it then became a matter to create the machinery. Two key institutions in this regard were the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations, and the South Seas Commission (later the South Pacific Commission), both of which offered a pathway to Samoa from ward to eventual independence, while concurrently creating mechanisms by which the region’s industrialised states could continue to shape and discipline the future\textsuperscript{28}.

The origins of New Zealand’s interest in technical assistance and aid institutions lay in initiatives taken in the early 1940s. In particular, point five of the Atlantic Charter (1941), in which President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill outlined a post-war world where the allies would ‘bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the objective of securing, for all, improved labor standards, economic advancement and social security’\textsuperscript{29} gave impetus to a post-war structure of guided development through institutions, rather than colonial possessions.

The Atlantic Charter was a direct impetus to New Zealand and Australia seeking to establish their own post-war policy in the Pacific, particularly with regards to their mandates. This view was more clearly established by the Canberra Pact of 1944\textsuperscript{30}. While much of what was discussed in order to develop closer trans-Tasman relations was soon forgotten or dismissed\textsuperscript{31} the legacy for development policy was clearly significant. Indeed, the Canberra Pact ‘pioneered … the policy of international technical assistance to backward peoples’\textsuperscript{32} with the enduring

\textsuperscript{26} Cooper and Packard, p.1.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} A third key plank was the establishment of a New Zealand aid programme, though this was not to appear in any significant form until the 1950s as a result of the Colombo Plan.
\textsuperscript{29} \url{http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/wwii/atlantic.htm}. The Atlantic Charter was also discussed between Fraser and the Fono of Faipule in Samoa, 1944.
\textsuperscript{31} In a letter to Carl Berendsen dated 29/5/50, McIntosh exclaimed that ‘I never did like the Canberra Pact, and I have always felt sincerely and deeply ashamed of my own part in it. It never was in our interests, and I doubt it will ever be, to work in double harness with the Australians’. Cited in I. McGibbon (ed.), \textit{Undiplomatic Dialogue: Letters between Carl Berendsen and Alister McIntosh 1943-52} (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1994), p.230.
\textsuperscript{32} J. Thorn, \textit{Peter Fraser} (London: Oldhams, 1952), p.221.
mantra being ‘the welfare of the native peoples and their social, economic and political development’. The Canberra Pact also gave impetus to the South Seas Commission (later the South Pacific Commission) and acted to promote ‘native welfare and the social and economic development of the inhabitants of the territories concerned’ especially with regard to ‘health services and education, the maintenance and improvement of standards of Native welfare, research in economic, social and anthropological fields, and in regard to material development, as, for example, expansion of production, communications, and marketing’. But while the South Seas Commission was established ‘to secure a common policy on social, economic, and political development directed towards the advancement and well-being of the native peoples themselves’, the Commission, in practice, ‘was planned for the peoples of the South Pacific but not by those peoples’.

Technical development assistance was increasingly seen as a precursor to, and even a precondition of, political development and ultimately independence ‘on the conviction that healthy political development is possible only as the inhabitants of the territories can be assisted to solve the problems which press most heavily and immediately upon them’. In time, the SPC came to fulfil its two critical objectives: it ‘produced for territories a forum for discussion and [it became] a clearing house for international aid’.

The second significant constituent in advancing New Zealand-Samoan relations in the 1940s was the United Nations Trusteeship Council. As a result of its mandate status in the League of Nations, coupled with Fraser’s commitment to the United Nations system and more particularly the Trusteeship Council in which he played a lead role as chair, Samoa became the first territory in the world to be granted trusteeship status (on December 13, 1946). While the Trusteeship Council was arguably less successful and enduring than the SPC, it nevertheless played a key role in guiding Samoa towards self-government and

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33 R. Kay.
34 R. Kay.
36 Smith, p.76.
38 Ratu Mara, quoted in T.R. Smith, p.80.
ultimately full independence in 1962. On the one hand the Trusteeship Council’s mandate acted to preserve the stability of colonial order through the United Nations. For example, its provisions required that ‘the tutelage of such peoples should be made, or should remain, the responsibility of advanced nations, who are best fitted to undertake this responsibility and who are willing to accept it; and this tutelage should be exercised by them on behalf of the United Nations’ 40. However, New Zealand more clearly saw that the Trusteeship Council could provide a transparent and progressive passage for the eventual independence of Samoa in line with international norms.

Certainly this process was hastened by Samoans themselves when, on hearing that they had been placed under the trusteeship of New Zealand, they almost immediately replied with a petition to the United Nations protesting their non-approval and calling for a more rapid passage toward self-government. New Zealand’s response, in order to appease Samoan protest but also to ensure it was seen as taking the lead in events, was to hasten a series of political reforms beginning with the shift toward Samoan self-government through the Samoan Amendment Act of 1947, the appointment of J.W. Davidson as Constitutional Advisor for Samoa, and the appointment of Guy Powles as High Commissioner in 1949 armed with the personal mandate of Fraser to prepare Samoa’s political and constitutional preparation for eventual independence. These latter two actors became central to the constitutional transition of Samoa from colony to independent State through the 1950s. 41

There was evidence nonetheless that New Zealand officials at the United Nations were less supportive themselves of the potential role of the Trusteeship Council in providing a framework for New Zealand/Samoan affairs. Over time, correspondence indicates that there was growing disillusionment regarding the role and effectiveness of the Trusteeship Council and it became less favourably viewed over time. Its reports became more onerous in terms of the data required 42 and inevitably it became bogged down in cold-war politics, as well as

40 Files from Committee 4 on the Trusteeship Council, chaired by Fraser in May-June 1945. In Fraser, P., Official Administrative Papers, Vol. 1 Series 3, Papers of the United Nations, National Archives.
42 And ‘development’ itself could now be measured (thus spawning an industry of indicators). In one Trusteeship Council meeting the Australian delegate stated that ‘progress’ could be measured and ‘stressed the importance of statistical information as a measure of the progress of the inhabitants of dependent territories’. June 19 Summary of the 15th Meeting of
conflict surrounding self-determination between newly independent Third World states and administering powers. In a memorandum to Fraser, John S. Reid (the alternate New Zealand representative on the Trusteeship Council) noted that the ‘character of the Trusteeship Council changed markedly’ by 1948 and that ‘administering authorities must in future be prepared, not merely for criticism but also for attacks’. Others were blunter in their assessment. Robin Miller, who worked for the Trusteeship Division and examined New Zealand’s submissions on Samoa and the Cook Islands had this to say:

I can mention these things to you without damaging my modesty; for the blunt fact is that so much of the work being done here is so shoddy that no great amount of effort or experience is needed to arise above it. On the way here I had had some qualms that my own rather formless background might show up badly in the brilliant company of the experts, but this has not been the case.

He then went on to advise that for future reports:

The first thing is to accept, as a fundamental condition, that your potential critics on the Council know next to nothing about the territory, modern methods of administration, and above all about the people and the way they live and are governed and educated and cared for as human beings. By giving them all the information, unlike Britain, Aust[ralia] and Belgium, you will disarm them. Let them see clearly and simply how a sick Samoan is cared for in a hospital, what his child learns at school, how his land rights are protected; translate your annual report into the lives and needs of individual human beings, and you will surely find the going smoother when they come to matters of policy.

**Conclusions and legacies**

According to a number of commentators, the onset of Labour rule resulted in
‘next to nothing [happening]’ in regard to New Zealand’s policy on Samoa. But the period was ‘radical’ and critical in several respects. Samoa, in the 1940s, was an example of ‘an experiment in maintaining empire against moves in world opinion, and a way of setting in motion ideas that would help to bring empire to an end’. In the case of New Zealand’s evolving policy on Samoa ‘it was Fraser’s intention, not only to help produce a sound basis for a realistic system of colonial advance and eventual self-determination, but also to produce a lead in the form of an enlightened administration of its own trust territory’. However, the goal was more than a rapid track to self-government. Policy was to focus substantially on utilising emerging development concepts of trusteeship, which sought to balance the present, future and past. This evolved in order that New Zealand could counter potentially destructive change but also to establish a post-colonial relationship in which New Zealand, through development aid, could continue to play a role in Samoan affairs. Accordingly, ‘the idea of development—and the relationship it implied between industrialised, affluent nations and poor, emerging nations—became the key to a new conceptual framework’ and also the basis of New Zealand policy in the Pacific. Samoan policy in the 1940s then both reflected and shaped emerging discourses and policies which sought to create order, through the ‘development project’, in a potentially chaotic post-war environment. Or, as McKay once noted:

If one could consider the welfare of Western Samoa in an abstract way, one could claim truthfully that it would be better for the present form of administration to continue until a nucleus of Samoans, educated and trained for administrative responsibility, is created, by scholarships or by any other means. But we are in a realistic world. Current history shows that brown peoples are insisting that they be kept subordinate no longer. It may be better to show leadership than to be precipitated by force of circumstances.

The 1940s should therefore be considered the opening act of a new era for New Zealand. However, the Samoans were not without their own ideas about their future. The Samoan National Congress (SNC) was formed in 1944 with the aim of promoting self-government for Western Samoa. The SNC was a broad-based organisation that included representatives from different groups within the community, and it became a platform for discussing and advocating for the rights and interests of the Samoan people.

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Zealand/Samoan relations. It did not necessarily involve great change in terms of people’s welfare\textsuperscript{51} or even radical political change but it did significantly alter the perception of what was to be done and create the institutions through which policy could be put into practice. Replacing the hierarchical colonial system of colonizer/colonized, was the more ‘progressive’ relationship between states at different levels of development: Samoa and New Zealand were now equal in principle, if not in practice.

The 1940s thus represent a significant, and in many ways successful, shift in New Zealand’s relationship with Samoa. To borrow from Cooper and Packard,\textsuperscript{52} development became the ‘framing device through which colonial regimes tried to respond to challenges and reassert control and legitimacy’. In the case of Samoa in the 1940s this meant the attempt to blend the preservation of traditional modes of life, with ‘useful features of modern civilisation’\textsuperscript{53}—or, the reconciliation of progress and order.\textsuperscript{54} However this was not the end point, as colonial and post-colonial authorities in Wellington, Samoa and the SPC may have wished, for the promise of development opened up a field of dialogue and contestation about both the ‘objectives and strategies’ as well as the ethical dilemmas of intervention, change, autonomy and ultimately development itself. These issues remain as unresolved today as they were in the 1940s.

\textsuperscript{51} Frank Corner (former Secretary of External Affairs) has lamented the unfulfilled nature of New Zealand’s commitment to Samoa as ‘an uneasy dualism between liberalism and imperialism’. F.H. Corner, ‘New Zealand and the South Pacific’, in T.C. Larkin (ed.), \textit{New Zealand’s External Relations} (Wellington: NZ Institute of Public Administration, 1962), p.139.

\textsuperscript{52} Cooper and Packard, 1997, p.18.

\textsuperscript{53} Notes for Hon. W. Nash on Pacific Confederation, MS-Papers-6759-020 (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington), 1943.


Donald R. Shuster

The Pacific War was a frightening event for the Palauan people. Thirty years of Japanese colonial rule ended in a cataclysm of bloody battles on Peleliu and Angaur islands and the bombing of the main islands of Koror and Babeldaob in 1944–45. The United States’ military, however, did not move onto the main islands until November and December 1945 and this gave the Japanese military on Babeldaob time to exhume bodies of at least six civilians and probably another six to ten American prisoners of war and to destroy evidence of their murders. When the US army did finally arrive, it had to round-up some 35,000 Japanese soldiers, who were eventually repatriated, and to feed, clothe, and provide medical assistance to the Palauans. Munitions and mines had to be disarmed and removed. American soldiers were everywhere in Palau; their blue eyes, cocked hats, and the unimaginable amounts of food they gave out made a lasting and positive impression on the Palauans. Food is valued highly in island societies and, after a year of near famine, some Palauans believed they had arrived at a heaven on earth.

But the United States’ design for the Marshall, Mariana and Caroline islands (Micronesia) was determined totally by strategic considerations. Civilian and military authorities at the highest levels of the US government agreed that the islands should be held as a United Nations' trust, a strategic trust under US administration. The Trustee Agreement (TA), Article 5, gave the US authority to establish military bases, to station armed forces, to make use of volunteer forces, and to close any part of the territory for security reasons (Article 13). Therefore, the defining years in Micronesia were dominated by US strategic needs: 65 nuclear bomb tests on Bikini and Enewetak atolls, and the closing of Saipan and Tinian from 1953–62 so that the Central Intelligence Agency under the guise of a Navy Technical Training Unit could secretly train Nationalist Chinese as guerrilla fighters for infiltration of Mainland China. It appears that military advisers for Vietnam were also trained at this facility.

1 Spanish colonial rule over Palau began nominally in 1885. In decline, Spain sold most of her Pacific holdings to Germany in 1899. The Japanese Navy expelled German authorities at the beginning of World War I and, in turn, lost their vast Micronesian holdings to the American military during the Pacific War, 1941–45. The Trustee Agreement came into effect on 18 July 1947. Freely Associated State (FAS) status began in 1986 and 1994.
Donald R. Shuster

The Beginnings of Elected Government in Palau

The dominance of the US military in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) was balanced by the United States’ obligation to promote political, economic, educational, and social development (TA Article 6). However, during the defining years, such development received far fewer resources than military activities. Be that as it may, significant political developments took place in Palau during this period and it is to these initiatives that I now turn.

**Beginnings**

With the arrival of the Americans, elected government was introduced and evolved from a purely advisory Palau Congress (1947-55) to a large and cumbersome *Olbiil Era Kelulau Era Belau* (1955-63). Both legislatures were the political arenas where Palau’s first generation of elected leaders cut their political teeth. These bodies were followed by the Palau Legislature (1963-80) and the Palau National Congress (1981 to present). Over the years, these assemblies became powerful forces on the local scene and winning election to a congress seat carried great prestige, status, and opportunity.

Nearly all of Palau’s post-war political leaders were legislators. The table below outlines Palau’s three early legislative bodies, their structure, membership, and political authority. It was there that Palau’s first generation of postwar leaders practised the western way of government.

*Table 1: Palau’s First Three Legislative Bodies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palau Paramount Chiefs, Ibedul and Reklai</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourteen highest ranking village chiefs</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixteen elected magistrates</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elected members</strong></td>
<td>Yes – 31</td>
<td>Yes – 37 (Chadal Olbiil)</td>
<td>Yes – 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advisory-liason group</strong></td>
<td>Palau Administrative Council including the 2 high chiefs and 8 other chiefs</td>
<td>Tebechel Olbiil of 14-20 advisers</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal Authority</strong></td>
<td>Purely advisory to the Civil Administrator</td>
<td>Power of resolution; power to receive and administer property; power to levy taxes and disburse funds</td>
<td>Same as OEKEB and: power to write bills; power to override veto of Distad to HiCom; power to conduct investigations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Traditional Government and Change**

One of Palau’s most important but nearly forgotten legends explains that Palauan political theory and structure came from the snake god, *Mesaod Ngerel*. Known as the ‘Mouth that Explains’, *Mesaod Ngerel* travelled throughout Palau during antiquity teaching *kelulau*, the nature of politics, and *kebliil*, the nature of clan.  

Accordingly, the autonomous villages and village-complexes of Palau were ruled by a village council, or *klobak*, that was generally composed of eight to ten male clan leaders. These clans were ranked hierarchically based on an affinity to the founding clans and persons of ancient days. The leading elder of the highest-

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ranking clan served as village chief. He ruled through persuasion and consensus, rather than by force and command because there were numerous checks on his authority, the two most important being the second-ranking chief with his faction of supporters, and the village religious leaders. In their attempts to manipulate the chiefs, these priests of the local gods were especially troublesome to both German and Japanese administrators. Although overt political leadership was men’s business, Palauan women exerted great behind-the-scenes influence on decisions that affected land, title, custom and Palauan money—and now, American money as well.

Since both the Spanish (1891–99) and German (1899–1914) colonial periods were relatively short and characterized by few colonists and little development, traditional political structures were not extensively modified by culture contact. However, during Japanese rule (1914–44) the indigenous political system was respected to the extent that its leaders did not oppose Japanese efforts. Such efforts were usually carried out with the aid of a collaborationist Palauan faction to suit the ambitious political and economic goals of the Japanese. Even today, older Palauans joke in a half-satirical way about the periodic ‘yes-conferences’ held for top-ranking chiefs to rubber-stamp various Japanese programmes of social and economic change. Nevertheless, the traditional chiefs remained important functionaries, so much so that ‘the Japanese administration was keenly interested in who was who and who did what among the hereditary leaders.’

Although Japanese political authority (in contrast to force) broke down during the fifteen months of war between Japanese and American forces in Palau, an alliance between hereditary chiefs and Modekngei religious leaders resulted in social and psychological stability. Anthropologist Arthur Vidich claimed that local control in the various villages and refuges was commonplace and that Modekngei leaders assumed a central role in directing Palau through the war crisis. This is a clear example of the resurgence of indigenous religo-political authority during a confusing time, influenced as it was by the dominance of the Modekngei religious leadership.

5 Vidich, Political Fractionalism in Palau, p.92.
US Navy Plans

Toward the end of the Pacific War, US naval authorities prepared five comprehensive plans for the civil administration of several groups of Pacific islands taken in conquest. On 17 September 1945, a month after Japan's 15 August surrender, a 'Proposed Plan for Civil Government by the Navy of Certain Pacific Islands Areas under United Status Control' was drafted. Given consideration of military security, the plan called for:

1. The adaptation of introduced government to the life and needs of the islanders.

2. The incorporation and maximum use of indigenous institutions into introduced government.

3. The preparation of islanders for self-government by filling governmental positions with islanders whenever possible.

4. The execution of government on a cooperative and consultative basis at all times.

5. The eventual granting of United States citizenship should be considered when these peoples are capable of assuming such responsibilities.

The fifth of these political objectives was an especially significant statement because it assumed that the island peoples wanted, or would in the future want, US citizenship. As conceived by naval authorities, the other objectives defined a policy for the evolution of self-government within a framework of native institutions. This policy was more fully elaborated in Admiral Spruance's directive of 12 December 1945. Known as the 'Pacific Charter', this statement assumed a period of direct military government during which the islanders would 'be granted the highest degree of self-government that they are capable of assimilating' and that 'local governments... should be patterned on the politico-social institutions which the inhabitants have evolved for themselves.'

In response to these political notions and unaware of cross-cultural complexities, US Naval authorities in Palau turned to the traditional chiefs for leadership and legitimizing authority. This move rejuvenated indigenous

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8 Ibid., p.307.
9 Ibid.
authorities that had had little power or influence during Japanese rule. This change temporarily undercut the political base of the former collaborationist group which had successfully mediated between the indigenous Palauan and Japanese systems. This change also stimulated the emergence of a very small group of radicals led by Ronald Sakuma, who had studied at a Seventh-Day Adventist college in Japan from 1939-1946, earning the equivalent of both B.A. and M.A. degrees. He was joined by Takeo Yano, who had also attended a Japanese middle-school and worked for the Japanese civilian government on both Palau and Saipan before the war. Sakuma’s ideas, with which Yano generally sympathized, envisioned Palau rebuilding its pre-war commercial economy, relying on an elite trained during the Japanese administration. Further, as Sakuma understood things, ascribed status would be replaced by achieved status and, finally, modifications would be made to Palau’s social system to eliminate the numerous exchange customs that were regarded as inhibiting development of a robust commercial economy. All this would open new avenues to greater power, prestige, and wealth for these young agents of social change and, in turn, threaten chiefly prerogatives.

This ambitious program devised by Sakuma and Yano matched neither the plans of the US military government nor those of the traditional chiefs. The chiefs, in fact, regarded Sakuma’s Japanese-style modernising programme as a serious threat to their newly-regained political status and therefore rejected it. The US had no plans for reviving the vigorous pre-war Japanese development programme and had neither the talent nor the resources for such an effort. In fact, nearly all the infrastructure built by the Japanese in Koror was destroyed during wartime bombing or dynamited and bulldozed afterwards. Sakuma’s ambitious economic plan was ignored.

The Palau Municipality

Even before Sakuma had pushed his modernization plans very far, the US Navy had started to implement programmes in infrastructure reconstruction, health, self-government, economic development, and schooling according to the guidelines of Spruance’s ‘Pacific Charter’. Commander Anderson, Palau’s Military Governor at the time, called upon the Palauans to establish a Palau government. The same two energetic men who had drafted the economic plan, Sakuma and Yano, were assigned this task by the older Palauan leaders. Sakuma and Yano had acquired some Japanese books on governmental theory and

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11 Ibid., pp.111-12.
structure and began making a plan. The two men recognised that the ad hoc Palau Administrative Office previously established by the military had no source of revenue and therefore would have very little authority. The Sakuma-Yano plan called for a representative form of government with legislative, executive, and judicial functions. The legislative function would be carried out by a congress composed of elected representatives with tax-levying powers. The executive function would be carried out jointly by the naval authorities and the Palauans with the latter administering and staffing the departments of education, finance, industry, general affairs, the judiciary, and the police. This plan did not include a role for the hereditary chiefs who then had the ear of the military governor.

The hereditary leaders rejected most of the Sakuma-Yano plan, but allowed the section on the establishment of an executive to be submitted to Commander Anderson. Anderson accepted this section with the proviso that the six heads of department be elected by those Palauans already employed by the military to carry out civilian functions. Even though the six heads of department already had been appointed, Anderson ordered that an election be held to certify the positions. Thus, Palau’s very first election under American rule took place in October 1946. Forty-six people then employed by the naval authority voted. They elected Joseph Tellei as head of General Affairs; Indalecio Rudimch, assisted by Sakuma, as head of education; Lomisang for Industry; Ngoriakl as head of the police; Takeo Yano as head of finance; and Pablo Ringang as head of the judiciary. All of these men had experience during the Japanese administration in the departments they had been newly elected to head up, though under military rule their authority was rather limited in scope. Joseph Tellei, in particular, was a man of great knowledge, ability, and experience and the others deferred to him as the key leader.

In April and May 1947, two incompatible directives concerning governmental structure were issued by the top military brass. ‘The Joint Chief of Staff Interim Directive for Military Government’, issued in April 1947, called for: the training and employment of qualified islanders to fill administrative posts; the creation of local legislative, administrative and judicial institutions conducive to the growth of democratic self-government; popular elections; and the protection of

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13 Reflecting on this plan in July 1981, Takeo Yano said, ‘At that time I didn’t fully realize the role and power of the chiefs even though my grandfather was the reigning Ibedul.’ Personal interview, Koror, Palau, 6 July, 1981.
the rights and fundamental freedoms of all elements in the population.\textsuperscript{14}

The May directive which, according to military historian Richard, astounded military government personnel, was a precise plan for the establishment of local municipal government 'to provide for a system of taxation to make municipalities self-supporting'.\textsuperscript{15} This, it seems, was in anticipation of sharp budgetary reductions that would accompany departure of military forces and establishment of the area as a United Nations Trust Territory administered by the US Navy in conjunction with civilian personnel. The directive stipulated that local municipal (or village) governments be headed by an elected magistrate assisted by an elected or appointed treasurer. Besides the collection and expenditure of tax revenues, the municipal government, as an arm of the American administrator, would be responsible for the local enforcement of his orders, particularly as regards police affairs, sanitation, and education. Terms of office and affairs of the municipal government were subject to approval, termination, or change by the military government authority.\textsuperscript{16} This was hardly the makings of the greatest degree of democratic self-government so often proclaimed in earlier military statements.

With President Truman's approval of the \textit{Trusteeship Agreement} on 18 July 1947, the title 'military governor' was changed to 'civil administrator'. Commander Ball, Palau's first civil administrator, took action on the April directive, which resulted in the rejuvenation of the Sakuma-Yano plan for a government structure. The revised version of this plan proposed a Palau Congress and a Palau Court as Palau's central government. Unlike the earlier plan that the hereditary leaders had rejected, the revised plan recognized chiefly power by including the two high chiefs and several other chiefs as part of the fourteen-member Palau Administrative Council (Table 1).

The military authorities accepted this plan. It seems in hindsight that the new government structure was, in many ways, Palauan conceived and administered, sensitive to indigenous institutions, and democratic in a way understood by Palauan leadership. As noted earlier, Admiral Spruance's 'Pacific Charter' maintained that island peoples be granted the highest degree of self-government possible, that they assume the management and conduct of their own government, and that 'local governments be patterned on the politico-social

\textsuperscript{14} Richard, \textit{United States Naval Administration}, vol. 2, p.311.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p.312.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
institutions which the inhabitants had evolved for themselves'. The Palauan plan for a centralized municipal government met the general conditions of both the ‘Pacific Charter’ and the April directive and thus merited full implementation.

The membership of the Palau Congress, as conceived by Sakuma and Yano, involved a concession by the chiefs in that the congress was to be composed of elected leaders only. The historical record is not clear on this issue, but the military governor’s report of 1 July 1947 indicates that Commander Ball had little confidence in the administrative abilities of the chiefs:

Most of the chiefs have had little or no experience in administration under the Japanese ... The anachronistic practice of previous Military Government officers in installing the hereditary offices, instead of electing or appointing trained Palauan administrators has caused reverses to the democratic ideal and created new stresses within the native society. The Palauans who have attended school disrespect the chiefs, and there is much complaint that the youngers do not hear the voice of the chief.18

Clearly, the military administration at this time favoured elected leaders over hereditary ones.

Furthermore, before the Palau Congress was formed, the military governor sent Joseph Tellei and Charlie Gibbons, two older and highly respected leaders (but not traditional chiefs), to Guam for a legislative workshop. After returning to Palau, Tellei and Gibbons persuaded two high chiefs, Ibedul Mariur and Reklai Brel, that a congress of representatives could be a unifying force, that it should include elected members to please the American overlords, and that the chiefs would have the leading role on the Palau Administrative Council. The Council was the main link to the foreign administration because the congress would meet for only a few days each year.19 In this act of political persuasion, Tellei and Gibbons instructed the chiefs concerning the newly introduced form of government. On Guam, Tellei and Gibbons had learned what a legislature was and, having served in important positions during the Japanese administration,
they recognized the importance of accepting foreign innovations. The two men became advocates of elected government.

A congressional convention was held in May 1947 and the first Palau Congress assembled on 4 July 1947. Palau's second election (the first was held in October 1946) under American rule was held during June 1947 and thirty-one congressmen were elected. They sat together with sixteen hereditary chiefs, who by charter had no role in the Congress but by virtue of their high social rank and title, knowledge, and prestige, wielded great influence during deliberations. The Congress itself functioned in a purely advisory capacity vis-à-vis the US civil administrator, who replaced the naval military governor in 1947. So that the Palauans might not misinterpret their new roles as congressmen, the Deputy High Commissioner reminded them that the Palau Congress was an advisory body and that ‘their government was in no sense an independent nation, but part of the government of the Trust Territory’.

**Sixteen Municipalities from One**

Under the more flexible military directive of April 1947, Indigenous leaders carried out the development of a Palau Municipality then made up of sixteen districts (villages). The US Navy noted in a 1948 report that the Palau Municipality in its brief period of operation had worked well. ‘The considerable revival of the power of the hereditary chiefs, which is involved in its operation, is tempered by the elective system relating to congressmen and district officials.’

With the changeover in mid-1947 from military government to civil administration, and complete demobilisation, there was a significant reduction in funding for the Pacific Trust Territory. During the transition to trusteeship status, the High Commissioner’s Office exerted pressure in late 1947 and early 1948 to have implemented the more specific directive of May 1947. This directive called for the establishment of numerous self-supporting local municipal governments headed by elected magistrates for the purpose of carrying out executive orders. This abrupt change in direction set up tensions between the Palauan-created central system and the military-supported decentralised system. In May 1948, the Deputy High Commissioner, Rear Admiral Carlton Wright, informed the Civil Administrator in Palau, Commander

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C.M. Hardison, that the Palauan-created centralized system ‘interfered with the
development of self-government on a community level.’ Hardison’s third
quarterly report (covering April, May, June 1948) clearly indicated that the
centralized system was being disbanded in favor of a decentralised system of
sixteen municipalities. Hardison and his staff met with the Palauan leaders who,
he said, ‘profess to understand what they had to do at the meeting but there
have been constant rumblings from them since... as to how and why.’

Despite ‘constant rumblings’, the Palauan leadership adjusted to the Deputy
High Commissioner’s request. A year after the June 1947 congressional election,
fourteen of Palau’s sixteen municipalities elected magistrates for one-year
terms. These elections were held under the auspices of the civil administration
during field trip inspections to rural villages on Babeldaob, Kayangel, Peleliu,
and Angaur. These elections were an introduction to the western method of
choosing leaders by one person one vote.

The second round of elections for magistrate was held during July 1949 when
two parties of administrative officials led by lieutenants H.L. Stille and C.L.
Frink toured the municipalities. As might be expected, voter turnout in the
municipalities varied, ranging from 50 to 90 percent, depending on the social
rank of the favorite candidates. The position of magistrate did not provide
much of a pay cheque. The monthly salary, which was paid from municipal
taxes, of the first group of magistrates ranged from a low of $US3 to a high of
$50. In essence the position was that of a messenger for the foreign
administration. Since the position carried little in the way of pay, prestige or
authority, elections for magistrates were generally dull affairs from their
beginning in 1948 to the mid-1970s. One of the few exceptions was the 1978
Koror mayoral race (the magistrate of Koror was called mayor) in which Ibedul
Gibbons defeated three challengers in a competitive election that pitted
ambitious youth against established older leaders.

23 Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Palau District, Office of the Civil Administration,
Manoa.
24 Because a field-trip vessel was not available to serve the south-west islands of Sonsorol and
Tobi, and because the whole concept of election was culturally foreign, Chief Nestor and
Chief Marino served as magistrates of those small islands. Taro was elected magistrate of
Sonsorol the following year, but Marino wasn’t elected until late 1950 or early 1951.
25 Palauans who made these trips were high chiefs Ibedul Mariur and Reklai Brel; Charlie
Gibbons, Eusevio Termeteet, Calarbai and Damaso as interpreters; Benjamin Mersai and
Takeo Yano as auditors; Hildelbul and Martin as sanitation inspectors; and Belsam, Vicente,
Bolis and Yoshita as boat crewmen.
The position of magistrate disappeared when Palau’s municipalities reorganized themselves into states in the early 1980s. After 35 years, the military rhetoric of self-government and indigenous definition of political structure finally became substance in Palau with the formation of state governments.

A New Legislature

The Palau Congress had no legislative power; it met for only four or five days each year in a purely advisory capacity. Recognizing its powerlessness, the Congress repeatedly registered its wish ‘to assume more responsibility in the administration of the [Palau] District’.27

Joseph Tellei and Rubasch Fritz, then leading members of the Palau Council, worked in 1954-55 with the district government’s Island Affairs Officer, Sidney Siskind, to define the structure and function of a new and more powerful legislative body.28 Although Palau’s two paramount chiefs—Ibedul and Reklai—were members of the influential Palau Council, neither they nor the fourteen other leading chiefs were official members of the Palau Congress.29 However, the hereditary leaders had been influential in Congress affairs and their influence continued into the new body, officially chartered as the Olbiil Era Kelulau Era Belau, (literally, Palau’s place for whispered decisions). Joseph Tellei claimed that both the Palau Congress and the OEKEB ‘were houses controlled mainly by the chiefs’.30 Assuming this was true, the hereditary leaders could determine who was elected to congress, who became magistrates in the village domain, and what was acceptable legislation.

26 On 25 January 1981, Airai municipality became Airai State under the leadership of Governor Roman Tmetuchl. The system of state government defined by the Airai Constitution is a mixed parliamentary-traditional Palauan system which, at that time, was controlled by Tmetuchl and his colleagues. During 1981, the municipalities of Koror, Ngchesar, Melekeok, Ngatpang, Ngarchelong, Ngaraard and Ngaremengui held constitutional conventions to become states. The remaining eight municipalities became as states soon after.


29 The southwest islands of Sonsorol and Tobi, closer to Papua New Guinea than to Koror, are linguistically and culturally different from Palau. The hereditary leaders of these two islands, both titled Tamor, have been included with the fourteen Palauan chiefs on a co-equal basis. For all practical purposes, however, the Tamor generally defer to the Palau chiefs.

Structurally the OEKEB consisted of the sixteen hereditary leaders, the Rubekeul Belau, sixteen magistrates, and some thirty-seven Chadal Olbiil (elected representatives), one of whom was chosen by his colleagues to be Bedul Olbiil or president. This officer had a group of advisers called Tebechelel Olbiil whom he appointed with the approval of the entire OEKEB and the American district administrator. The advisory group consisted mainly of younger metete (high ranking clansmen) who were generally employed in the district government administration. Ironically, it was Siskind, an American, who insisted that Palauan names be used for the various offices.

**Role of Hereditary Leaders**

Functionally the OEKEB had considerably more authority than the Palau Congress. The new body could collect taxes, authorise expenditures, receive and administer real and personal property, and legislate by resolution. Although all members could propose resolutions, only the Chadal Olbiil (elected members) could vote on their passage. Anthropologist Robert McKnight maintained that this denial of voting privilege was a slight to traditional authority, putting such authority in 'a back seat structurally' and inhibiting indigenous modernization. Given that hereditary leaders by weight of their influence controlled who won seats in the OEKEB, McKnight's claim seems an underestimation. Further reports issued by Francis B. Mahoney—a former Island Affairs Officer and Assistant District Administrator and District Administrator, 1951–61, and a trained anthropologist—indicated that there were no serious cleavages between the hereditary and elected members during the years 1954–60. In his 1956–57 report Mahoney wrote:

Palau’s present leaders are anxious for progress as much as possible within the traditional framework as witness the Olbiil era Kelulau’s concern for salaries not only for elected officials but for hereditary chiefs.

The hereditary leaders had not given up their mantle of leadership to the elected

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31 The Tebechelel Olbiil was a continuation of the Palau Administrative Council whose members had been appointed by the American District administrator. Though the membership did not change substantially from the old group to the new, the locus of appointment authority moved from American to Palauan hands. This was of significant symbolic importance.

32 Robert K. McKnight, ‘Rigid Models and Ridiculous Boundaries’, p.44.

33 Ibid., p.49. McKnight himself maintained that nominees for the position of magistrate ‘were those who were approved by the traditional leadership because they would cooperate... or might enhance the position of the chief’.

group. They held sacred titles. The chiefs remained powerful leaders, particularly in Palau’s rural areas.

**Elected Leaders**

Throughout the eight-year life of the OEKEB (1955–63), a new group of younger men, most of whom were born between 1920 and 1926, entered the political limelight. The second Bedul Olbiil (president) was Roman Tmetuchl, then just 30 years old. Toribiong Uchel, Tmetuchl’s older brother, was the last president of the Palau Congress and the first president of the OEKEB. Following Tmetuchl as president were Takeo Yano, Jonathan Emul, Thomas Remengesau Sr., and David Ramarui. All these men had attended Japanese schools before the war and had post-war educational experience overseas in either Guam, Hawaii, or the Philippines.

Returning to Palau with English language fluency, ideas, energy, and the prestige of overseas travellers, these elected leaders began making their mark on the Koror political scene. They and their followers recognized that with the establishment of the American system of elected government, Palau’s arena for political manoeuvring was suddenly much larger than it had been under the traditional system or during the Japanese administration. The franchise broadened the leadership pool far beyond that of the hierarchical traditional system. As noted by Mair, a social anthropologist, “This is one of the implications of the word democracy that is most congenial to men with ambitions. New fields are open for the attainment and exercise of power, and new men enter them—people who see how to take advantage of a new situation.”

Given this new enlarged political arena and the Palauan tendency for competitive, manipulative behaviour, the political situation soon became fluid and dynamic. These changes soon began to erode hereditary authority.

Changes in the relationship between the younger elected leadership and the older hereditary leadership became evident in the new attitudes displayed by the former. Some of the new acculturated leaders developed a disdainful attitude toward out-of-town leaders (the chiefs) who “couldn’t read English and didn’t understand democracy”.

The elected leaders were disparaging of the chiefs and the chiefs felt they were being rudely ignored by the younger elected leaders. Unlike the political style of the bai (traditional men’s meeting house) where only elder titled men spoke in whispers and through messengers, the legislative halls

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were dominated by outspoken and sometimes abrasive younger men as Roman Tmetuchl and Jonas Olkeriil. 37 These men were familiar with legislative procedures and sometimes used the meetings as a stage for manoeuvres and strategizing that was characteristic of traditional Palauan politics.38 The OEKEB sometimes had the atmosphere of a young men’s club house, the traditional training ground for future community leaders.

David Ramarui was Bedul Olbiil at the time when the chiefs threatened to walk out of the legislature’s chambers. He succeeded in persuading the hereditary leaders to remain by saying to them that their advice and consent were essential to the proper conduct of legislative deliberations.39 The chiefs agreed to remain. Seven years later, however, the chiefs in a dramatic move, walked out of the Palau Legislature—the successor to the OEKEB. Again, they felt their authority was being ignored. Commenting on the 1961 walkout, Reklai Lomisang said, ‘We allowed the creation of the present legislative body, and although we are not able to vote, we are still the rulers of Palau.’40

A New Legislature and Political Parties

In 1963, two important events happened in Palau, both of which were welcomed by the younger generation of political leaders. In that year political parties were formed, and the Palau legislature was established. With sixteen chiefs, sixteen magistrates, 37 elected members and an ideological cleavage, the OEKEB was too unwieldy to get much important political or practical work done. In eight years of deliberation it had passed less than seventy resolutions. The younger elected members agitated for a streamlined and more powerful organisation. As noted above, in 1961 the hereditary leaders dissatisfied with the ‘new ways’ gave notice of their intent to withdraw from the assembly. Also in 1961, the younger membership engineered the passage of a bill to eliminate the magistrates on the grounds that they were part of the executive administration. The High Commissioner disapproved this action. Other amendments to the OEKEB charter were proposed, however, and this drive for change culminated

37 Tmetuchl had been a member of the Palau Congress since the early 1950s. He had a UN fellowship (1954-55) to study law and sociology in the Republic of the Philippines. Jonas Olkeriil won election to the OEKEB in either 1960 or 1961 and became locally famous for his outspoken and unorthodox behaviour.
The new charter for a Palau legislature was written mainly by Lazarus Salii, then a fresh University of Hawaii graduate who had majored in political science, and approved by the High Commissioner. Since 1955, Koror's representation in the OEKEB had increased from five to nine members. Besides Tmetuchl, the other Koror representatives were David Ramarui, Jonas Olkeriil, Lazarus Salii, Minoru Ueki, Moses Mokoll, Toribiong Uchel, Benjamin Mersai, and Indalecio Rudimch. These men were anxious for change. Their assertiveness prevailed in that the charter reduced elected membership to 28 by omission of the magistrates and nine elected member seats. The hereditary leaders, however, retained their position as non-voting members. 'They were too well-entrenched to be rooted out', recalled Lazarus Salii.42 The term of office, previously two years, was extended to four. The charter called for redefined electoral districts and a mechanism for reapportionment every ten years.

The new legislature's legal authority included all those powers of the OEKEB and was extended to include the power to override a veto by the district administrator (an American until 1970 when Thomas Remengesau became Palau's first and last Palauan district administrator) and to restrict his veto authority on appropriation bills to individual items. Further, the Tebechelel Olbiil was abolished because it was perceived to be working too closely with the American-dominated district government administration. 43 Four standing committees were formed in place of this council of advisers and the local flavour of the OEKEB was eliminated in two ways. Siskind's Palauan titles were dropped in favour of English ones, and compensation, instead of being determined by a legislator's local constituency, was established by law (i.e., by the legislators themselves). Furthermore, the hereditary chiefs continued to be marginalized because they were unskilled at parliamentary procedure and unaware of the many complexities of dealing with the High Commissioner's office and larger issues of the day.

In anticipation of the October election for seats in the first Palau Legislature, political parties formed in 1963. Traditionally, Palauan political activity took place in a bipolar arena, making competitive dualism a dominant feature of Palauan political culture. Therefore, the establishment of two political parties

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nicely satisfied traditional American norms and neatly coincided with the parallel structuring of competition traditional to Palauan life." It also began an interesting experiment in indigenous political education.

Manuel Godinez, appointed under the Kennedy administration to the position of Palau district administrator in 1962, was a native of Puerto Rico. After he had been in Palau for a year, he gathered Palau’s major political leaders together in May 1963 and suggested they form two political parties. Drawing on his experience of Puerto Rican politics in the late 1950s, Godinez suggested the names ‘liberal’ and ‘progressive’. Indalecio Rudimch, assisted by David Ramarui, agreed to head up the Progressive Party and Benjamin Mersai, assisted by Toribiong Uchel, accepted chairmanship of the Liberals. Both Rudimch and Mersai had been politically active since the establishment of the Palau Congress in 1947. In his 11 June 1963 report, Godinez expressed pride in this achievement. He perceived it in American terms. For him the parties had solidified themselves around a dominant issue—that of future political status: ‘The Liberal party, under the Chairmanship of Benjamin Mersai, champions independence for Micronesia; the Progressive party under the chairmanship of David Ramarui prefers commonwealth status for Micronesia.’

Godinez, however, spent more time fishing and enjoying himself than he did at his government duties and thus was often ignorant of the true state of affairs prevailing in Palau. Much of the day-to-day work and the formulation of policy to deal with new problems was carried out by William ‘Vit’ Vitarelli, Lazarus Salii, and Takeo Yano. In the passage quoted above, Godinez was wrong on two points. First, the Liberals favored greater self-government but saw independence as an achievable status ‘sometime in the future’. Second, the first chairman of the Progressive Party was Indalecio Rudimch—David Ramarui was his assistant.

Several personal factors hovered in the background that reinforced the decision to establish political parties. As a political science student at the University of Hawaii, Salii had campaigned for John F. Kennedy and Patsy Mink, a candidate for the US House of Representatives, in 1960. Salii and Ramarui were the only

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44 Ibid., p.263.
46 Meller, *Congress of Micronesia*, p.263.
47 As a 1958 University of Hawaii B.A. graduate in anthropology, Ramarui was sensitive to the decline of hereditary leadership and the tension between the old and new political leaders. He recalled that it was Ramarui who persuaded the traditional chiefs not to walk out of the OEKEB in 1961.
two college graduates active in politics at the time and they were brimming with ideas and political models: 'I wanted to practice what I had learned in the 1960 presidential campaign', Salii said when reflecting on the formation of parties.48

Besides this enthusiasm for active political campaigning, political leadership was the force that attracted loyalties. John O. Ngiraked recalled that Palau's two parties originally were formed around personalities and not ideologies. 'Those with Rudimch represented one type of personality and those with Mersai and Toribiong another.'49 Initially the parties were loose configurations built around key individuals rather than around carefully worked out political platforms.50 Also, parties provided an outlet for political energies that previously found expression in church activity. The Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) group, of which Mersai, Toribiong, and Tmetuchl were leading members, was very active throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. During this period the SDA leaders consolidated a strong following and built an elementary school and large church near the site of the first Palau Congress building. Party activity provided an avenue for taking politics out of religion and religion out of politics. According to Salii, 'The feeling was that if we wanted to play politics, than we ought to play in political parties rather than involving the various religious groups.'51

US interests in Micronesia have always been driven by the strategic imperative: nuclear tests, secret training bases, strategic denial. Strategic needs dominated the years 1945–65, and the development obligations spelled out in the Trusteeship Agreement received little attention and few resources. Nevertheless, after the Pacific War US Navy officials introduced the idea of elected government that many Palauans found attractive. During the late 1940s and into the 1960s, elected Palauan officials gained progressively more authority in their home affairs. After eight years of an advisory Palau Congress that had no authority, elected leaders took the initiative to write a new charter to form the Olbiil Era Kelulau Era Belau. In 1963, two very significant events took place: the Palau Legislature was formed to replace the OEKEB and two political parties were established. These developments perpetuated the schism between traditional

50 Meller, Congress of Micronesia, p.263.
and elected authority and provided a significantly wider arena in which Palau’s first generation of elected leaders cut their political ‘teeth’ and established their leadership styles.
Post-War Development Proposals for the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony

Susan Woodburn

This paper examines two proposals for the post-war administrative reorganisation and development of the British-administered Central Pacific group of islands constituting the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony (now the independent nations of Kiribati and Tuvalu). The first of these was prepared in 1943 by the war-time appointee as Western Pacific High Commissioner and Governor of Fiji, Philip (subsequently Sir Philip) Mitchell, and the second in 1945 by H.E. (Harry) Maude, a long-serving Colony official then working as First Assistant Secretary within the High Commission. Though prepared in response to specific immediate circumstances and without direct consultation with the people of the islands, both were wide-ranging in scope and had the potential to ‘define’ their future. But while these proposals were both officially endorsed at some level, neither was comprehensively or effectively adopted into practice. It would seem that this had as much to do with internal considerations and the vagaries of bureaucracy as with the actual content or virtue of the proposals themselves.

This paper arose out of a larger study of the career of Harry Maude as a Pacific colonial administrator (and, subsequently, Pacific historian) which involved extensive readings of his personal and semi-official correspondence along with the official memoranda and despatches.¹ Such a perspective highlights consideration of the human element, individual knowledge and experience, competing demands and caprice at all levels of the colonial bureaucratic establishment in policy creation and adoption. While one cannot draw general conclusions from this instance², it seems nonetheless to provide a useful caution both to acceptance of the operation of some cohesive imperial ‘colonial policy’ and to our tendency as historians to pay too much attention retrospectively to the ‘evidence’ of policy documents, without consideration of the complexities of their authorship and context or their actual reception and implementation.

The war-time and immediate post-war interest of the colonial powers in the

² Although the papers delivered at the 2003 workshop by Ian Campbell and Donald Denoon both suggested the significance of the individual, their personality and their position or standing within the administrative establishment in getting policy adopted.
Pacific islands and their future extended even to the small and remote conglomeration of Central Pacific islands then known as the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony. The Colony had originated with a somewhat reluctant British imperial declaration of a protectorate over the islands of the Gilbert and Ellice groups in 1892. This was expanded to incorporate phosphate-rich Ocean Island (Banaba) in 1900 and in 1915 the two groups were proclaimed a Colony with Ocean Island, Fanning and Washington islands being added in 1916 and the potentially strategic Phoenix Islands being added precipitately in 1937.3

For 50 years after the declaration of the protectorate, the islands were of minimal interest to the Colonial Office, whose energies were only occasionally engaged by issues relating to the exploitation of the Ocean Island phosphate deposits. In the 1930s there was some concern at American and Japanese interest in the region, but this had the effect of encouraging further territorial claims (or at least 'effective occupation') rather than affecting the aims or style of colonial administration. Then, immediately following their entry into the war with the bombing of Pearl Harbour, the Japanese made bombing raids on Ocean Island, established a base on Butaritari and briefly landed at Tarawa, returning with a significant force in August 1942 to occupy Banaba and, in September, Abemama. It had always been made clear that British military resources would not be diverted to protect the Pacific territories, and though no damage or casualties were sustained in the initial bombing of Ocean Island, the colonial administration and most British and other expatriate traders and missionaries were evacuated from there and all the other islands shortly after the first Japanese raids, and all direct administration in the islands stopped.

For some time the Colony service personnel were scattered, in Australia, in New Zealand, on active military service, or seconded to other colonial services—but with the easing of the early threat to Fiji most were based at the Western Pacific High Commission headquarters in Suva. By mid-1943 plans were well advanced for the re-taking of the occupied Gilbert islands (which was done on 19 and 20 November), and in September 1943 Colony officials returned to set up headquarters in Funafuti in the Ellice Islands, which had not been troubled by the Japanese.

With this resumption of some form of 'normality', the Western Pacific High Commission began to get into gear for post-war planning. Two formal

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proposals were put forward for the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony. The first was by Sir Philip Mitchell, sent as a secret despatch to the Colonial Office on 30 September 1943, and the second was issued in June 1945 by Harry Maude, who had served as Assistant Secretary within the Commission for much of the war and before that as District Officer and Lands Commissioner within the Colony.

Mitchell, who had replaced Sir Harry Luke as High Commissioner in mid-1942 essentially to put Fiji on a war-time footing, had served for 30 years previously in Africa (in district administration in Nyasaland and Tanganyika and as Governor of Uganda from 1935), and had never visited any of the islands that comprised the Colony. Essentially he was concerned with its future as an administrative problem: a remote dependency with a small and scattered population that cost more to run than its anticipated future revenues could sustain—this predicated on the assumption that revenue from Ocean Island phosphates would disappear ‘at an early date’. His comments were blunt (including implied criticism that Colony staff were largely mediocre and self-interested) and his recommendations focused on cutting the costs of running the Colony—indeed, he made it clear that personally he would have liked to remove its independent status as a Colony altogether and merge it with Fiji.

Mitchell’s ‘solution’ was to transfer most administrative, financial and technical responsibilities as soon as possible to the islanders themselves (who of course could be paid less), and to have a much pared-down expatriate administrative staff whose functions would be primarily educational and supervisory. Even these would be largely appointed on secondment from the Fiji or general Colonial Administrative Service, with no permanent headquarters or other base in the islands but rather operating as a ‘sea-borne’ group from one or more Colony vessels, visiting the islands principally to oversee the activities of the island governments. A native legislative authority was vaguely outlined in the proposals and Mitchell conceded that a native executive authority capable of taking over responsibility for groups of islands, and perhaps eventually for the Colony as a whole, would have to be devised. Provision for increasing the responsibilities of native governments was not new: before the war much consideration had been given by some members of the Colony staff—including Maude—to modification of the more authoritarian and intrusive elements of

5 Mitchell, op.cit.
Colony laws and regulations, and to giving islanders greater responsibility for their own affairs generally: efforts that were ultimately embodied in the Native Governments Ordinance no.4 of 1941, ‘to provide for the administration by native governments of native affairs in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony’—though its implementation was deferred with the onset of war. Mitchell’s provision for an elective executive authority for the Colony as a whole was a significant new element, though sufficiently vague and futuristic not to be alarming, the time frame considered to be at least ten to twenty years.

Essentially what Mitchell was proposing was to prepare the islanders to run their own lives in the islands, but at the minimum possible cost that would enable the British Government to discharge its perceived obligations before eventually getting out, and on the unquestioned assumption that the legislative, administrative and judicial models that had been imposed over the life of British administration in the islands would be retained, and that other factors like acceptance of a subsistence economy and relative isolation would also continue in the post-war era.

One can only guess at the flurry created among Colony staff by this radical and in some respects bizarre and ill-informed despatch, especially as its author was both new to the region and already unpopular among Commission and Colony staff: ‘a vigorous man of strong personality … who quickly knows what he wants and proceeds quickly to get it’ the Pacific Islands Monthly had quoted one source on his appointment; less diplomatically, Mitchell was a man of ‘swollen self-importance’ according to Philip Snow, a contemporary in the Fiji service. His despatch was, however, apparently accepted by the Colonial Office without demur, returned and circulated as a Secret draft in June 1944 and printed in October as the official High Commission statement on ‘Policy and administration after the war’.

A new element in this final official Policy statement—or at least a subtle modification of Mitchell’s blunt comment about doing the minimum to discharge Britain’s obligations without leaving a legacy of discontent—was the suggestion that the policy statement was influenced by considerations of the

6 Macdonald, op.cit. p.139; Woodburn, op.cit. p.140.
7 An Executive Council was finally established in 1963. Even then all members were appointed by the Resident Commissioner, and it was not until a new constitution was introduced in 1967 that an elected House of Representatives was provided for.
9 P.E. Mitchell, Policy and administration after the war (Suva: Government Printer, 4 October 1944). Copy in Maude Papers.
perception of Britain as a colonial power on the international stage. The statement ended:

We have an opportunity such as seldom comes the way of Colonial Administrators to promote the future happiness and security of a fine people and to give an example to a critical world of what we mean when we claim to be the trustees of backward people; we must not fail in it.¹⁰

This may have been added within the Colonial Office—if so, it is the only indication in the Western Pacific context of the new directions and considerations in policy that were being implemented in India and Africa. The final statement also omitted some of the details of administrative costs and, indeed, strategically removed the emphasis on costs as the primary basis or motivation for policy—but otherwise the essential principles were as in Mitchell’s original despatch. Thus official Colonial Office imprimatur was apparently given to a smaller, largely temporary and sea-borne Colony administration, and to native governments (in future to be called island councils) being given additional financial responsibility—they would be assigned various sources of revenue, prepare an annual budget for the approval of the Resident Commissioner, and take responsibility for most local services—though the statement was still very short on detail and justified costings. The statement did not deal with land policy or prescribe the requirements for health and education services—these were to be the subject of subsequent memoranda—only in general terms indicating the problems of population saturation for the existing resources, and that if the Government was to maintain a level of content, it needed to provide improved social services.

At the time Mitchell’s proposals were being drafted and considered by the Colonial Office, Maude was working at Western Pacific High Commission headquarters in Suva as First Assistant Secretary. He had joined the colonial service as a cadet in 1929 on graduation from Cambridge and had served as District Officer and as Lands Commissioner throughout the islands for more than a decade. His immediate personal response to Mitchell’s proposals is not recorded, but it must have been mixed. Certainly he would have felt antipathy to the idea of visiting itinerant staff rather than dedicated permanent staff with local knowledge and experience, and probably he would have experienced anger and insecurity as a member of a group that was being presented as largely mediocre and unnecessary. But he had been deeply involved throughout the 1930s in the policy revisions that had won recognition of the principle of

¹⁰ Ibid.
increased responsibility of native governments embodied in the Native Governments Ordinance, and would have agreed with the establishment of the island councils. Moreover, Mitchells' proposals and the subsequent official policy statement left open the issues closest to his own heart—such as land regulation and re-settlement or colonisation schemes.

When he was asked to prepare a memorandum on post-war land settlement policy to flesh out Mitchell's own sketchy references to this important area, Maude was clearly influenced by the apparent Colonial Office endorsement of Mitchell's general line of argument. Thus he went totally against his own experience and judgement in endorsing the transfer of responsibility for the settlement of land disputes to the locally elected island councils, as against separate land courts consisting of the magistrate and kaubure and native members of the Lands Commission provided for in the draft Native Governments Ordinance. Nonetheless he used the opportunity to put forward his own long-held conviction of the need for migration and colonisation as the long-term solution to land problems, despite the clear reservations about migration possibilities in Mitchell's original proposals.\(^{11}\) When Mitchell was appointed Governor of Kenya a few months later, and left the Pacific as suddenly as he had arrived, Maude took heart once more, and began to prepare his own comprehensive Memorandum on post-war reorganization and administrative policy.

It is probable this memorandum was at least partly prompted by the revival of Maude's ambition to advance personally within the service on Mitchell's departure—an opportunity to show the new High Commissioner his depth of knowledge of Colony affairs—and to advance his ideas for the Colony in the position of either Resident Commissioner or High Commission Secretary, both of which were soon likely to fall vacant through the retirement of the incumbents.

It is also clear that Maude had been planning a composite reorganisation report with fellow officer Paddy Macdonald (then Assistant Secretary at the Commission) for some time: Macdonald had written to him early in 1942 regretting they would not be able to collaborate on it as he had been seconded to Barbados and urging him to 'do the whole thing' on his own.\(^{12}\) He may also have wanted to pre-empt or counter an anticipated reorganisation report by the Resident Commissioner, Vivian Fox-Strangways—his immediate superior—

\(^{11}\) Memorandum [on] Lands Settlement in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony: Post-War Policy (Suva, 29 June 1944). Copy (typescript) in Maude Papers.

\(^{12}\) Macdonald to Maude 14 April 1942 (Maude Papers Series J correspondence).
whom he thought inept and from whom he differed on most things to do with Colony administration. Maude had written a number of separate reports on aspects of administration during his time at the Commission, not only the general Lands Settlement policy statement requested by Mitchell but also a proposal for colonisation of Caroline and Flint islands and further reports on Colony cooperatives and trade schemes. On Mitchell’s departure he had quickly begun to indicate areas of opposition to his proposals, writing to the Resident Commissioner in March arguing the need for permanent Colony headquarters and ridiculing Mitchell’s conception of staff ‘peregrinating in perpetuity round the archipelago as one big happy family’.13

Maude’s final memorandum, drafted and printed while he was in New Zealand in June 1945 was much more comprehensive than Mitchell’s—38 closely printed pages dealing most extensively with administration and staffing but also with general economic and commercial matters, the location of Colony headquarters, the future of the Banabans and the establishment of a Council of Representatives.14 In the preamble Maude declared that the general lines suggested were largely based on the principles set out in Mitchell’s original despatch and subsequent official Policy statement, ‘deliberately and from a genuine conviction that Sir Philip Mitchell’s proposals offer the most practicable method of ensuring the progressive advancement of the Colony and its peoples’.15 Overtly it was in accord with Mitchell’s proposals, specifically those in support of the potential of native governments, the stemming of the growth of the central group of European officers, the training of islanders to take over positions, and the proposed institution of a Council of Representatives. But in a personal letter sent with the first draft to H.H. Vaskess at the High Commission Maude had stated that:

It represents my own personal views, as gradually built up during the last few years from the experience gained during my earlier service in the field, and I do not expect that anyone would agree to all the recommendations without modification or amendment.16

Thus—sometimes subtly and sometimes openly—Maude modified and undermined Mitchell’s proposals, showing for example that revenues were unlikely to support even the current minimal expenditure, so island

13 Maude to Fox-Strangways 16 March 1945 (Maude Papers Series J correspondence).
15 Ibid.
16 Maude to Vaskess 11 June 1945 (Maude Papers Series J correspondence).
governments would need to draw on grants from the central government, and that a central Colony government would still be needed for colony-wide services and infrastructure and to coordinate the work of the local governments, and that this would have to be European until islanders had been trained. He devoted much attention to fixing the location of the Colony headquarters that Mitchell had declared should not exist, and to the additional costs involved in Mitchell’s supposedly cost-saving exercise of using officers on temporary secondment from Fiji. The Memorandum was also a vehicle for Maude’s own particular hobby-horses of colonisation and cooperative schemes that were absent from or poorly considered in the official policy statement. He also took a side-swipe at the limited discussion on land in the official policy by prefacing his proposals regarding the Lands Commission with the comment:

> It will be generally agreed by all who have more than a superficial acquaintance with the Colony that by far the greatest problem to be faced by the administration is that of native lands...and pointing out inconsistencies in Mitchell’s proposals.17

Sir Alexander Grantham, who had succeeded Mitchell as High Commissioner, sent copies of Maude’s memo to the Colonial Office in October, with the comment that he agreed with it as a statement of policy and, ‘subject to modification on points of detail’, that it should be worked to. But it appears to have fallen on deaf ears at the Colonial Office—not being just delayed, but disappearing without trace. Soon afterwards, Maude was appointed to the position of Resident Commissioner—not to the position of Secretary to the High Commission that he would by then have preferred, and where he might have been able to pursue an official response. He effectively retired from the Colony in 1948, on secondment to the South Pacific Commission, physically exhausted, isolated from his colleagues at Tarawa (where the new Colony headquarters had been established, contrary to his own preference), and frustrated by what he saw as the sabotage of his colonisation schemes by the man who succeeded him as Lands Commissioner.

Although Maude was involved in the creation of the official postwar ten-year plan of reconstruction and development and had begun to implement some of its modest aims in his short tenure as Resident Commissioner, reconstruction was slow and other developments went almost totally in the opposite direction

17 Apart from the fact that the settlement of native land disputes by Europeans is contrary to the general plan of training native organisations to take over their own affairs, it is obvious that the Administrative staff of the Colony, even though assisted by a permanent specialist officer, could not cope with the work.
to his proposals over the next two decades. While island councils with local responsibilities were provided for when the Native Governments Ordinance was finally enacted in 1948, the 1950s and 1960s saw strong centralist tendencies in administration, with an increase in the authority of the Resident Commissioner. In contrast with the expectations of the 1940s, money was fairly liberally thrown at the Colony, and developments in services and infrastructure were funded by grants that were beyond the level the island economies could hope to support, and that saw an increase in the number of Europeans in charge of projects and in the civil service. There was a lack of funding for education and a mismatch of training and employment prospects, uneven economic growth, increasing reliance on remittances from overseas labour, and the urbanisation of—and massive movement of population to—south Tarawa (an increase from 1640 in 1947 to 17,000 in 1977). The only 'new' colonisation schemes were the resettlement in the Solomon Islands of the Gilbertese and Ellice Islanders from the Phoenix Islands Settlement Scheme that Harry had organised in the late 1930s, which was thus implicitly branded as a failed undertaking. Later, education programs, the growth of a local civil service and a cash economy would erode the traditional role of the elders and of land as the basis of society—the foundations of Gilbertese society that Maude had sought to maintain.

Given that Maude's and Mitchell's Memoranda did not significantly influence long-term policy for the Colony, why are these proposals now worth revisiting? From my own perspective, as curator of the Harry and Honor Maude papers and author of an account of their life, they have intrinsic interest for their content and authorship. But their major interest in this forum is in what they reveal about colonial policy planning as a bureaucratic process—an aspect that has been implicit in many of the papers presented over these last two days, and worth specific discussion—and, incidentally, about the dangers of the uncritical use of official documents in the writing of history.

In terms of content and authorship, it will be evident that these memoranda were not a 'vision for the future'. Mitchell was responding quickly to a rapidly assessed set of immediate circumstances with a view to solving a funding problem rather than contributing to the future of the islanders. The ideas in

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Maude's Memorandum were deeply conservative, in the sense that Maude's principal concern was to maintain a traditional way of life based on land ownership and use and the reinforcement of traditional authority structures, overcoming the inherent limitations of island resources in the face of population growth not by introduced 'development' but by arranging for new settlements, where traditional lifestyles could be maintained. Was this unrealistic and sentimental? Maude had not been back to the islands for four years when he wrote his Memorandum, had not seen the effects of Japanese occupation on the people or on the likelihood of resumption of phosphate and copra production, and could not yet know what impact the British abandonment of the islands and islanders during the war and the American 'liberation' and subsequent extended stay on Tarawa might have had on local perceptions. At the same time Maude himself had not been out of the islands for fifteen years nor (beyond a brief and entirely unhappy few months in Pemba) had he experienced other styles or models of colonial administration. Certainly he would later be suspect (usually implicitly but more recently openly challenged) for his failure to endorse the economic and political modernisation that would be seen as the logical end of 'development'. But perhaps it was not unlikely, as Maude believed, that in the immediate post-war period many islanders would have wanted a return to the known and relatively benign paternalistic structure of the colonial administration after the uncertainties or trauma of their war-time experiences.

Beyond the documentation of the views of these officials about the future for an island community, Maude's and Mitchell's proposals reward study for what they reveal about colonial planning in general. For what has been most striking about the papers on policy and planning at the workshop is how deeply this was (with the exception of Palau, where an administration was being created, not reconstituted) a centralised bureaucratic process, often remote from the ground, and influenced by factors that had very little to do with island realities. Questions about why, for example, administrators in the Solomon Islands and PNG didn't learn from each other, miss the reality that (at this time at least) each colonial administration worked within its own strict linear and hierarchical world, and did not seek advice or exemplars from outside. Reports and proposals were generated by, and themselves generated, other reports and proposals: they might become policy with little discussion (as Mitchell's), be long deferred (as Marchant's on the future of the Solomon Islands) or fall into a hole, as with Maude's, but the end result might have as much to do with the vagaries of Colonial Office receptivity, individual official interest, work flows and other demands, as with the worth of the proposals themselves.

Harry Maude knew this as well as anyone from his years within the Secretariat, and indeed in the early 1930s had resigned himself to periods at Ocean Island
headquarters as an opportunity to put some of his own ideas into practice. This particular occasion, where he was seemingly faced with the situation of having to accept and implement policies with which he disagreed, presented him with the dilemma that anyone involved with government or universities over the last 30 years will recognise: whether to resign, bunker down and wait for a more sympathetic climate, battle it out head to head with those in power, or join them and hope to obtain concession and change from within their ranks. Conflict and direct opposition didn’t come naturally to Harry Maude, and his time in the service and especially at the Secretariat had reinforced a personal diffidence. Indeed, he was to say at this time that he had been acting so long for so many people that he had become if anything too used to thinking and working along lines set by others. The depth of Harry’s disagreement with Mitchell’s policy was also obscured by a particular personal quirk of elaborate deference when opposed to the ideas of a superior (a peculiarity evident later at the South Pacific Commission in his dealings with Ralph Bedell and, I understand, during his time at the Australian National University when he disagreed with Jim Davidson), which requires one to read closely between the lines of his official communications.

In writing about colonialism and the transition from colony to independence historians and others have tended to give most attention (and support) to those who have acted or spoken for change, rather than those who have worked from within to maintain the status quo. Maude and his role in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony administration have rarely been directly criticised, but there are certainly suggestions in Barrie Macdonald’s history of Kiribati and Tuvalu, Cinderellas of the the Empire, that he was suspect as one who did not have the agenda of the ‘inevitability’ of not only self-government but political independence. His colonisation schemes of the 1930s were later seen as flawed and he has taken a pasting (along with others) in Katerina Teaiwa’s recent doctoral thesis on Banaba for his ‘strategic’ role in the Banaban ‘solution’ and for attempting to ‘freeze’ Gilbertese culture. But one of the most interesting—and to me heartening—aspects of an investigation like this is to see how little all

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19 Cinderellas of the Empire, op.cit.; R.D. Bedford, ‘Resettlement: solution to economic problems in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony’ (M.A. thesis, University of Auckland, 1967); Martin Silverman, Disconcerting issue: meaning and struggle in a re-settled Pacific community (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1971); Katerina Teaiwa, ‘Tirawata irouia: re-presenting Banaban histories’ (M.A. thesis, University of Hawaii, 1998), ‘Visualising te Kainga: History and Culture between Rabi, Banaba and Beyond’ (PhD thesis, Australian National University, 2002). It should be noted, however, that Maude was recently (as part of the 25th anniversary celebrations of the establishment of the Republic of Kiribati) awarded further honour and recognition for his contribution to recording and preserving I-Kiribati history and culture.
this mattered in the long term: the drama, with all its pain and tensions for those involved, was played out in the very limited arena of the Colony administration.

As historians we probably give too much weight to these formal proposals simply because they exist as documents and are easy to use as ‘evidence’. So we examine minutely memos and reports that possibly had very little influence beyond the narrow confines of the bureaucracy that created them. When we look at the reality of the creation of such documents, and see the myriad and very human elements of conviction, experience, theoretical leanings, personal ambition, insecurities, conflicting demands and imperatives that went into their creation and adoption, it provides a nice counterfoil to clichéd views of some monolithic power called colonialism or colonial policy against which historians of particular periods and other post-colonial critiques have been wont to rage or moralise.

In truth, neither Maude’s 1945 Memorandum, nor that of Mitchell or the later ten-year Colony plan, were seminal. Rather than the immediate post-war period being defining years for the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, or even the refining years of some existing clear conceptual plan for the Colony, things muddled along for 30 years with numerous changes of direction and focus. In this instance there was enough good intention, funding and mutual goodwill and respect to allow a peaceful transition to independence without radical or irrevocable alteration of the society or alienation of the people. This may be about as good an outcome from colonialism as is possible. In Kiribati, aspects of history, written by I-Kiribati under the guidance of Ron Crocombe as part of the achievement of independence in 1979, there is very little mention of Harry Maude, a conflation of Mitchell’s and Maude’s reports as if they had some unity of purpose, and a relatively minor place given to the whole period of colonial rule generally. Harry Maude the colonial administrator might have minded such an omission, but Harry Maude as a historian, and as someone with a deep and sincere affection and respect for the Gilbertese, should I think be content.
If any word sums-up post-war health strategies in the Pacific it would be modernity, or at least the faith in an illusion of modernity. Health policies and practices have been a cornerstone of this especially within the colonial setting. After World War II the regional health initiatives of earlier years were developed. Modern health programmes sought to probe and restructure intimate personal spaces. However, the label ‘programmes’ may seem grandiose when the realities and complications of grassroots development are reconstructed. This becomes apparent when addressing one of the most intimate and diffuse areas where the state, legal and medical agents and lay people extended control, care and possible cure: that is over the disordered mind. This chapter explores this in Fiji.

It is problematic to assign the period after World War II until Fiji’s independence in 1970 as defining years in health, especially in mental health. There were, however, highly significant discursive and technological changes during this period. This was not, as is often assumed, a top-down process initiated by hegemonic policy but was initiated from ‘experts’ in the field. The most significant new technologies were shock and drug therapies, then considered modern and revolutionary in the treatment of the equally ‘modern’ ailments of madness. These technologies were highly experimental and medical experts had a relatively open arena in which to explore these. By 1970, these technologies were entrenched within Fiji’s psychiatric hospital, St Giles, but this was in a society in which development was uneven and in which health facilities were under resourced.


It is suggested here that medical technology reflects broader issues of social history and the contradictions of late colonial modernity which emphasised individual responsibility (the concept of a normal individual) as well as national or group conformity. These tensions are common to modernity but have special resonance within Pacific societies during the post-war period. Madness disrupted such agendas. We begin this chapter with an assessment of mental health services in Fiji after World War II and then explore some principal trends in mental health transition during the defining years, 1945-1970. These include the radical technologies and changing discourses associated with mental illness, the localisation of mental health workers and broader expert analyses of this transitional period in mental health demographics, diagnosis and treatment. These analyses are especially pertinent to the general themes of this volume and indicate how experts assessed contemporary change and resultant problems in the Pacific during these years.

Fiji’s post-war mental health services: diagnosis and prognosis

With a designated mental health facility, Fiji’s institutional mental health services were relatively more developed compared to the rest of the Pacific Islands and, indeed, to many other colonies. This facility started in 1884 as the Public Lunatic Asylum, but by World War II it had been renamed the Suva Mental Hospital. By the end of the 1960s, the name had changed to St Giles Hospital. Mental health provisions and legislation were considered more modern and humane in Fiji than in many other British colonies with, for example, a separation of criminals and those certified insane. Fiji, unlike many other colonies, did not follow the practice of establishing separate hospitals for Europeans, although inside hospitals, including the asylum, there were separate spaces and programmes for Europeans and non-Europeans. Mental health recovery programmes especially centred on work therapy, allowing patients to contribute to the hospital's maintenance. In 1946 Fiji’s Governor was ‘impressed by the cleanliness and generally cheerful atmosphere: almost unique, I imagine, in an institution of its kind.’

The Governor was presented with institutional tidiness during pre-arranged inspections, but impromptu visitors reported a more disturbing environment. In 1951, Edward Woodward, Chair of the Board of Visitors, arrived during a tropical downpour to find sixty men and women, many without blankets or

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4 CP (Colonial Paper) 1/48, Annual Report Mental Hospital Suva (AR), 1946.
mattresses, sleeping on exposed verandahs.\(^5\) This report raised the ire of unofficial members of Fiji’s Legislative Council.\(^6\) Other poor conditions included bars in all the wards, open drains through the centres of the Native wards and a severe shortage of bed space.\(^7\) Separate facilities for Europeans and Natives continued. Coercive regimes still predominated in the treatment of patients. Restraints included solitary confinement, withholding food, using straight jackets for confinement and water blasting patients (the ‘hosepipe treatment’).\(^8\)

Drugs were primarily administered for sedation and control or to alleviate conditions such as epilepsy and syphilis. During the early 1950s death rates were still high in Fiji’s mental hospital, reflecting substandard institutional conditions and the incapacitated physical state of several patients upon arrival. Despite this, growing numbers of admissions and low discharge rates resulted in severe overcrowding in the mental hospital.\(^9\) Bed space was officially limited to 80 patients, but by 1955 there were 143 patients resident in the hospital. Overcrowding was considered not only inhumane but was regarded as being conducive to encouraging violence and homosexuality: ‘over-crowding of mentally deranged patients on verandahs requires constant supervision if the perils of homosexuality are to be prevented.’\(^10\)

Along with these negative diagnoses, the prognosis of the future of Fiji’s growing mentally ill population shifted after World War II with the introduction of ‘shock treatments’ and the ‘pharmacological revolution’. This gave optimism that some patients could be restored to ‘normality’, but the primary agenda was to reduce overcrowding and return patients to the community. Subsequently work therapy came to be renamed ‘occupational therapy’, considered more possible with the new technologies that controlled but allowed a degree of permissible ‘normal’ functioning. Jokapeci Koroi, Matron of the Colonial War Memorial Hospital, observed this in 1964: ‘most of the patients out on a picnic, remaining ones playing games in the recreation room. What vast progress in the treatment of these people.’\(^11\) But the modern post-war technologies lauded so much in mental health were equally accused of numbing patient motivation, so

\(^{5}\) Unpublished AR, 1954 (St Giles).
\(^{6}\) F48/524, Complaints re treatment of patients, Director Medical Services to Colonial Secretary, 4 Oct. 1955.
\(^{7}\) Oral testimony has confirmed these accounts.
\(^{8}\) F48/4/5, AR, 1938.
\(^{9}\) CP 12/68, AR, 1966.
\(^{10}\) AR, 1954.
\(^{11}\) Medical Case Book, St Giles, 6 October 1964.
that in 1967 Dr Macgregor, Superintendent of St Giles, identified a lack of occupation as a major problem for patients.\textsuperscript{12}

After World War II the demographic profiles of patients certified as mentally ill shifted radically. Increasingly a higher percentage of admissions were ethnic Fijians, compared to Indo-Fijians and other ethnicities.\textsuperscript{13} Even more striking was a gendered shift. Before World War II, women comprised about 25 percent of admissions but between 1955 and 1960 males and females had almost equal admission rates. Ethnicity also was significant with more Indo-Fijian females admitted to St Giles than Fijian females. Indeed between 1955-60 more Indo-Fijian females than Indo-Fijian males were certified under mental health legislation.

These ethnic and gender patterns become even more sharply defined when age is considered. The post war years saw a much greater number of young patients being admitted to the hospital than before. Records indicate that between 1947 and 1962 at least 25 young people aged sixteen and under were admitted to St Giles. The youngest was an Indo-Fijian girl admitted in 1961 aged seven with a diagnosis of post-encephalic dementia. Indeed the majority of these young patients were female Indo-Fijians, although most were older. Diagnoses ranged from paranoia to schizophrenia, to hysteria, to idiot. One thirteen year old was deemed a psychopath.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to fully understand these patterns. An obvious question is why some Indo-Fijian females approaching menarche were certified as insane and admitted to the mental hospital? Very young individuals can be seriously disruptive to self and others and require intensive care. Perhaps in post-war Fiji some families and communities increasingly accessed medical and state institutions like the mental hospital, rather than keeping ‘madness in the family.’ Dr Sell, Superintendent of St Giles, observed this trend in 1969: ‘Ironically, the more adequate provision of facilities for the care and treatment of the mentally ill increases the rate of hospitalization.’\textsuperscript{14}

\textit{Localisation of mental health workers}

A defining feature of the public service in the Pacific during these years was the...
move towards the ‘localisation’ of public sector workers.\textsuperscript{15} As in other sectors, this had contradictory implications for health services. The commitment to localise health personnel tended to be at lower and middle levels, while expatriates retained increasingly more specialised roles, both as scientific experts and in exercising executive authority. To a limited degree the rhetoric of localisation had some reality but it was haphazard, slow and reinforced expatriate authority. This precipitated the strong unions that emerged in the public sector in Fiji after independence.\textsuperscript{16}

The primary front line staff at the mental hospital had always been the attendants. They were also referred to as warders and, by the 1940s, as orderlies and as ‘nurses’ by the 1960s. The 1950s and 1960s were in a sense defining years in the transition between the custodial function of the institution to the 1980s when modern psychiatric clinical nursing was introduced. Two processes became entwined during this period: the modernisation of nursing care for the mentally ill and the localisation of nursing staff.

Long before World War II, Samoans had established their dominance in the custodial and caring roles at Fiji’s mental hospital. This drew concern from Fiji’s Great Council of Chiefs which in 1940 urged government to employ more Fijians and Indians as warders.\textsuperscript{17} In 1954 this policy was entrusted to the newly appointed Head Attendant Charlie Sachs, so that by the 1960s very few Samoans were employed at the hospital. Despite the high proportion of Indo Fijian patients, an Indo Fijian attendant was not appointed until 1966. Sachs was also dedicated to improving nursing and physical conditions and was instrumental in the radical decline in death rates at the mental hospital.\textsuperscript{18} According to Dr Macgregor before 1951, 10-30 percent of patients died within two years of admission to the hospital but after Sachs’ arrival this rate fell to five percent and by 1961, one percent.\textsuperscript{19} He energetically worked with the new modern technologies so patients were discharged much earlier than before. Before 1961, only 35-65 percent of patients were discharged within two years but after the new drug regime was implemented in 1961, 97 percent left the

\textsuperscript{15} Jacqueline Leckie 1997, To Labour with the State, The Fiji Public Service Association (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1997), pp.41-2.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid: 49-72.

\textsuperscript{17} F29/159, Extract, Proceedings Council of Chiefs 1940, resolution 4.

\textsuperscript{18} CP 12/68, AR, 1964.

\textsuperscript{19} D.F. Macgregor, ‘Notes of a Meeting Between Three South Pacific Psychiatrists’, in South Pacific Commission, Mental Health In The South Pacific: Report of a meeting of experts held at Suva (Fiji) from 23 to 27 May. Technical Paper no 154. (South Pacific Commission, Nouméa, 1967), pp.1-10.
hospital within two years. Sachs also encouraged work and occupational therapy for in-patients.

Post World War II mental illness technologies in Fiji

From a European standpoint, Fiji may have been considered an island in a distant sea, but local medical experts were in touch with global psychiatric modernity, notably through the application and experimentation of highly invasive therapies. These relied upon diagnosis. Mental health strategies therefore echoed the globally increased faith in, and the use of, testing in medicine after World War II. Tests became more prevalent in diagnosis and also represented the application of scientific measurement to determine normal and abnormal bodies, minds and social behaviour. Discourse in social service agencies now included delinquency and deviancy. Fiji's first qualified psychiatrist, Dr Macgregor, recognised that mental illness differed from one country to another but 'it was something capable of being measured or counted once it had been defined.' In Fiji tests were primarily orientated to finding an organic cause and possible treatment of madness. Blood, sputum, stool and venereal tests were common for most new admissions to the mental hospital after World War II. This was an adjunct to, and sometimes replaced by, the subjective and lay evidence provided in earlier admission papers for patients. The Kahn blood test was favoured during these years as it was relatively inexpensive, considered valid in diagnosing syphilis (despite its instigator later dismissing this test as inaccurate) and could screen for tuberculosis, malaria, leprosy and dietary deficiencies, such as anaemia. The regular testing of patients' physical conditions in the mental hospital probably contributed to declining death rates there.

In contrast to the utilisation of organic tests for mentally ill patients, there were few of the psychological tests favoured in institutions elsewhere, notably the USA. Such tests were expensive, time consuming, required expertise for administration and analysis and problematic when applied to languages and cultures outside the tests' norms. Limited psychological testing was applied during the 1960s in Fiji:

20 Testing was also increasingly administered to measure intellectual normality during this period. By 1937 the Fiji Test of General Ability attempted to measure the intellectual capabilities of school children in Fiji. By the 1950s the Fiji Institute of Educational Research was concerned with the standardisation of attainment tests. M. Bennett, 'Patterns of psychological test response as indicators of cognitive growth in Fiji' (delivered 13 October 1970), Transactions and Proceedings of the Fiji Society for the Years 1968 to 1972, 12(1978), p.96.

On testing he stated that he knew what a proverb was but could not be bothered to explain what he meant. There was a drift towards concretization (horrible word) in his attempt to explain the meanings of proverbs. The 100-7 was performed rather slowly—with a break in the 60’s—but he carried on to the end. He was able to repeat 7 digits forwards after studying the figures for 1 1/2 minutes but could not repeat them backwards though he understood what was required.

During the mid-twentieth century, shock and coma therapies had a radical impact upon mental health therapy throughout the world. These were enthusiastically applied to Fiji where convulsions to the brain were induced by Cardiazol (Metrazol) and electro-convulsive therapy (ECT). Cardiazol, along with insulin therapy, soon had limited use in the technologies of global psychiatry. This was partly because of the dangers and severe side effects from insulin and Metrazol and the apparent ease and acceptance of ECT. The experimental nature of these technologies meant that one method quickly superseded another.

A few people in Fiji were administered insulin coma therapy, but fortunately when this was introduced to Fiji in 1955 it was under the rubric of modified insulin therapy. This was important because insulin coma therapy had a very high mortality rate and required intensive and skilled medical supervision. Modified insulin therapy still carried potentially life-threatening risks. Although it required trained nurses, attendants who were not qualified nurses oversaw insulin therapy at St Giles. Patients were not supposed to fall into coma or experience seizures, but records from St Giles show that some did. The dosages of insulin administered sometimes exceeded twice the international guidelines.

Experimentation continued with selected patients being injected with Cardiazol to induce convulsions. An early experimental subject was Mrs DV, an Indo-Fijian woman who was initially diagnosed with hysteria sixteen days after childbirth. Her diagnoses changed to schizophrenia and later manic depression during a lifetime of convulsive and drug therapies. This began in 1948 with a course of 22 Cardiazol injections. This form of therapy was traumatic:

the patient does not lose consciousness before the onset of the

22 Medical Superintendents' files, St Giles.
24 This is the author's abbreviation.
convulsion, which starts several seconds after the injection. During this interval he experiences a very unpleasant feeling of impending death and precordial sensations which are remembered as a frightening experience, and the fear derived therefrom is a severe setback for subsequent treatments... Failure to obtain a convulsion makes the patient very apprehensive and uncomfortable.25

Mrs DV undoubtedly would have undergone these terrifying experiences especially as she did not always have convulsions after being injected. Her veins thrombosed and she regressed and strongly resisted injections towards the end of her Cardizol therapy. Although she was discharged, her mental condition worsened and she was readmitted to St Giles for ECT therapy.

ECT for humans had developed from experiments with pigs in a slaughterhouse in Rome. By the 1940s–1950s it was being extensively used in the treatment of schizophrenia and depression. Dr Oldmeadow introduced ECT to Fiji in 1947 amidst acclaim from the mental hospital’s Board of Governors: ‘this public-spirited service on the part of Dr. Oldmeadow deserves commendation.’26 ECT was at the forefront of other modern scientific therapies applied to the mentally ill in Fiji. Besides insulin and Cardizol, other modern therapeutic trials at St Giles included ‘deep sleep’ or Pentothal (thiopentone) narcosis (1947) and ‘acid’ treatment (1954).27

ECT, like many other modern medical technologies, gave as many problems as therapeutic benefits. During the early years of its application in Fiji, electric currents were difficult to control and anaesthetics and muscle relaxants were not used. Some patients sustained injuries such as broken teeth and bones. Undoubtedly there was memory loss and trauma; in 1968 a patient remained unconscious for three hours following convulsions from ECT. The rationale for such intervention was ‘treatment’, but oral and written evidence indicates that the new technologies were also a threat or means of control and punishment.28

The medical superintendent’s handwritten reports during the early 1950s clearly

26 F48/10, Board of Visitors, annual report, 1949.
27 It is not clear what this was. Modern psychiatric treatments during the 1940s administered nicotinic acid and glutamic acid, along with vitamin therapy treatments to treat confusion and delirium, especially with senile psychoses. See A. Ferraro, ‘Organic Conditions: Senile Psychosis’, in Silvano Arieti (ed.), American Handbook of Psychiatry Volume 2 (New York: Basic Books, 1959), p.1041.
28 c.f. Joel Braslow, Mental Ills and Bodily Cures; Psychiatric Treatment in the First half of the Twentieth Century (Berkley: University of California Press, 1997), pp.104-111.
state that ECT was administered to pacify ‘rowdy’ patients. Shock therapy appears to have been widely administered to patients with a wide range of conditions, including epilepsy. Records indicate that patients were separated according to their suitability for ECT. Gender also appeared to underscore the application of shock treatments. Fiji probably reflected global patterns where women more than men were more susceptible to such therapy.29

A major breakthrough came when the ‘pharmacological revolution’ of psychotropic drugs offered the possibility for seriously mentally ill patients to participate more in institutional treatment and in the community outside the institution. This usually required passivity and being able to work. Some new psychotropic drugs were dispensed in Fiji from the late 1940s but the major shift came in 1955 with the introduction of Largactil (chlorpromazine), only two years after its adoption in Western Europe and the USA.30 Largactil was both a major sedative and an anti-psychotic drug, offering the potential for severely disruptive mentally ill people to function within institutional and community environments. Dr Macgregor articulated this when he outlined the ‘therapeutic revolution of 1961’:

The regime used was that of bringing patients rapidly under control with large doses of the appropriate drug, followed by a gradual reduction to the minimal dose compatible with social integration within the hospital environment. Provided that the patient remained reasonably well on this maintenance dosage, he was retained in hospital for as long as improvement of his condition continued and was then, wherever possible, released on trial to continue therapy on a domiciliary basis.31

This quotation also indicates how ‘curative drugs’ such as Largactil could be used to restrain patients in Fiji, as was the practice in hospitals elsewhere.32

The adoption of pharmaceutical technology as a mainstay in the treatment of Fiji’s mentally ill necessitated a shift in expertise among primary mental health workers. By the 1980s, primary mental health workers were being designated as ‘nurses’ rather than attendants or warders. Although many still lacked formal

30 Medical Case Book, St Giles, 14 March 1955.
training in the new technologies, they had a primary role as nurses with the application of shock and drug therapies. Mental health attendants witnessed the profound side effects of ECT and drugs:\textsuperscript{33}

Indeed, this greater emphasis on nursing, rather than discipline and restraint, required from the staff was brought about, in part, by the side effects of the drugs used, since some patients felt these effects to quite a marked degree.\textsuperscript{34}

The new technologies of testing, drugs and shock therapies represented Fiji's arrival in psychiatric modernity, but this was often at odds with the wider social and economic environment. Contrary to initial expectations, admission numbers, particularly re-admission numbers, did not fall. The numerical decline of in-patients was fleeting. Instead, a revolving door scenario emerged whereby patients were hospitalised for shorter periods than before. They were then released on trial but many were soon readmitted to the mental hospital. The primary cause was attributed to patients defaulting on their medications. Fiji lacked infrastructure outside the hospital to provide adequate community care for the mentally ill. Social therapy programmes, or psychotherapy, were non-existent. By 1963, authorities recognised that patients were being discharged prematurely from the hospital: 'it is becoming apparent that in the less sophisticated social climate of Fiji, a more conservative attitude is required.'\textsuperscript{35}

Medical supplies were unreliable, especially in outlying areas. This applied particularly to psychiatric drugs. Moreover, there was almost no training in psychiatric medicine and nursing. While at some levels Fiji's mental health services were in a transitional stage, the new expertise did not filter down to community levels and tended to remain the preserve of expatriates.

Cultural understandings of madness also contributed towards the limited success of the new technologies. Madness was often interpreted as punishment for a wrongdoing by an individual, family or community. Within many Indo-Fijian families, public acknowledgement of a mental illness tended to bring dishonour upon the family. Like elsewhere, silence and denial often surrounded

\textsuperscript{33} Side effects could include syndromes that were anticholinergic, extrapyramidal, parkinsonism-like and which could eventually result in tardive dyskinesia. The effects on the patient could range from dry mouth to blurred vision, constipation, urinary hesitance, falls, bizarre muscle contractions, sedation, emotional blunting, withdrawal, apathy, shuffling gait, akathisia (motor restlessness), involuntary bizarre grimacing, lip smacking and tongue protrusion. The effects depended upon the severity and length of medication and whether or not counter-active medication was prescribed.

\textsuperscript{34} CP 39/62, AR, 1961: 10.

\textsuperscript{35} AR, 1963.
mental illness in Fiji. Even when family support was forthcoming, education about the effects of the new medications was usually absent. Compounding these problems were the physiological implications of the new neuroleptic drugs on patients. Rather than returning a person to normality, medication side effects often accentuated their difference and inhibited acceptance back into the community. A sudden cessation of high levels of psychotropic drugs could have a rebound effect and accentuate the primary mental condition. As Michael Goddard observed with the introduction of psychiatric technologies in Papua New Guinea, there was no community level ‘capitulation to authoritative discourse about mental illness’.36 Instead, the medical-scientific treatment of madness depended on the ability of doctors and technologies to return individuals to social normality. Once that normality appeared restored there was little motivation for families to insist upon individuals continuing with medication.

Despite the need for community support, the responsibility for compliance with drug regimes increasingly became an individual’s responsibility. For example, in 1948 Prakash, aged nineteen, was diagnosed with schizophrenia. He was treated with Cardiozol injections and had to sign a statement upon discharge promising to return for further ‘injections as directed by the doctor and attendants’. He had to agree ‘that the injections are necessary and are for my own good and I intend to keep on having them for as long as my doctor advises’. Prakash ignored this contract and when readmitted to the hospital his diagnosis had shifted to depression.37

Expert analyses of mental health transition

The development of regional initiatives in Pacific health policies after World War II followed earlier initiatives of the Rockefeller Foundation.38 The South Pacific Commission (SPC), established in 1947, was pivotal in this regional approach. Policies based on scientific research and expertise were increasingly to the fore in identifying and rectifying problems linked with modernisation in the Pacific. The tenth session of the SPC in 1952 ‘was concerned about the problems of mental health which would undoubtedly become more and more acute in the years to come’ and adopted a causal, environmental model of

37 Admission papers, St Giles. Prakash is a pseudonym.
38 Stuart, 2002.
mental illness. This linked the expansion of urbanisation and associated urban perils with a rise in mental disorders and 'the rapid and irreversible acculturation of islands peoples'. This paradigm echoed the detribalisation model in vogue with anthropologists in African colonies during these years. The sixth South Pacific Conference held at Lae in 1965 recommended 'that Governments inquire into the causes of urbanization and promote measures to minimize the serious social and sanitary problems (physical and mental health) which it creates'. As a result three leading psychiatrists in the South Pacific, Drs D. F. Macgregor, B. G. Burton-Bradley and G. Zeldine met in Suva and Noumea during 1966. Macgregor and Burton-Bradley were respectively employed by the colonial governments of Fiji and the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, but Macgregor's expertise lay in clinical psychiatry while Burton-Bradley's penchant was ethnopyschiatry. Zeldine, a psychiatrist with the French Army in New Caledonia, preferred a public health model and quantitative research. They all endorsed the linkage between pathological mental states, urbanisation and modernity:

[I]t is logical to direct our efforts at those causes of tensions known to us to be stressful conditions of urbanization as contributing factors of mental disorders; these, in our territories, have included such things as over-urbanization, interterritorial migrant rootlessness (anomie), discriminations, educational and accultural disparities of spouses, problems of retirement, intergenerational conflicts, faulty race relations, and certain deleterious consequences, on the psychiatric level, of tourism.

Delinquency, alcoholism and prostitution were also correlated with mental illness. During the following decade some ethno-psychiatrists added decolonisation to the list of psychological stress factors.

Medical experts, therefore, represented the post-war decades as a period

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39 South Pacific Commission, Mental Health In The South Pacific: Report of a meeting of experts held at Suva (Fij) from 19 to 22 May and at Nouméa (New Caledonia) from 23 to 27 May. Technical Paper no 154. (South Pacific Commission, Nouméa, 1967), p.vi.
40 Ibid, p.vi.
41 Ibid, p.vi.
conducive to stress, manifested through what were considered to be social and mental pathologies. This model juxtaposed modernity with a stress free ‘primitive’ world. Goddard suggests this derived from early functionalist anthropology that depicted primitive societies to be in a state of equilibrium. Madness functioned as a ‘safety valve’ to restore harmony.

The wisdom of ethno and cross-cultural psychiatry was also used to explain mental disorders during the post-war years. Fiji’s ethnic complexity provided an ideal social laboratory for ethno-psychiatry: ‘As a meeting place of three or more very different cultures, the Fiji Islands form an ideal natural laboratory for the sociologist’. This perception was in keeping with the pervasiveness of race as a category for organising social, economic and political structures in Fiji. Macgregor refined the ‘modernisation and mental stress’ model with his reading of social change and race. A rise in Fijian admissions to the mental hospital after 1951 reflected:

The history of the Fijians over this period has been one of sustained resistance to urban and commercial influences, weakening since the war, but still a major source of conflict between traditionally minded Fijians and those wishing to take advantage of the technological and educational opportunities which are now open to them.

The urbanisation model also provided explanation for a post-war rise in the admission of Indians who, by 1951, ‘had already established their pre-eminence in all business matters and their numerical preponderance in urban centres’. This contrasted with an image of primitive harmony: ‘Commercial folk in any country tended to be acquisitive, litigious, and hypochondriacal; the peace of mind of Fijians might be due to their unwillingness to enter the commercial “rat-race”’. However, my research indicates that Fijians (and not necessarily middle class achievers and entrepreneurs) have been mental patients at the asylum since its inception.

45 Goddard, 1988, pp.81-82.
48 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid, p.5.
Ethnic stereotypes also crossed over into the discourse and technologies of mental health in Fiji. Dr Karim, a medical officer at St Giles appointed in 1961, told me in 1999 that he had ‘the impression working here that … certain types of illnesses were more common in different races.’ He then qualified any correlation between ethnicity and psychiatric nosology: ‘that was just impression, later on when we started looking at the figures and so forth it doesn’t hold up.’ Dr Macgregor was also careful to emphasise the difference between outward presentation and psychiatric diagnoses along ethnic lines:

I do not know why it is but here in Fiji I have found that depressive illness is very liable to present as something else: the Fijians start off with a fighting frenzy, the Indians with a paranoid reaction and the Europeans with a severe anxiety.52

Fiji’s cultural complexity offered fertile ground for the global drug trials that proliferated during the pharmacological revolution. Patients at Fiji’s mental hospital could be studied within a controlled environment where reliable statistics were recorded according to race. Medical consultants were keen to trial new products, especially drugs that were unavailable or not affordable in Fiji. In 1963, at the suggestion of pharmaceutical giant Searle, Fiji’s Medical Department trialed a few patients with the anti-psychotic drug Serenace (Haloperidol).53 Dr Macgregor suggested that ‘we get as big a free sample as the makers will give us. I would undertake to report to them of its use if their response were generous enough.’ The following year Macgregor responded to literature from pharmaceutical multinational Roche promoting the sedative Mogadon, by requesting a sample to conduct an open, uncontrolled trial, before ascertaining if a fuller investigation was warranted. A visit to Suva in 1965 by an expert from the Medical Trials Unit of May and Baker prompted proposals for a comparative trial of antipsychotic drugs Majepil and Neulactil (pericyazine) in the control of ‘acute maniacal excitement’.54

Canadian transcultural psychiatrist, H. B. M. Murphy, visited Fiji in 1973. He learned (as I later would through oral testimonies) that health workers tended to administer higher doses of Largactil to Fijians than Indo-Fijians. He offered to
supply the drug Stelazine for trials with patients at St Giles. This followed from a conversation with Dr Hawley, Dean of the Fiji School of Medicine, in 1973. Hawley’s impression was that ‘the Fijian, although relatively resistant to chlorpromazine, was very sensitive to phenobarbitone.\(^55\)

This was also a period when ethno-psychiatry sought to validate its expertise by classifying ‘culture bound syndromes’ or mental states specific to certain cultures.\(^56\) In his correspondence with the medical trials department of pharmaceutical company Roche, Dr Macgregor initiated the identification of Pacific mental syndromes:

> the commonest form of breakdown in the South Pacific is an acute excitement with insomnia. The insomnia often persists after the daytime excitement has subsided. The next commonest trouble is insomnia in expatriates unable to relax at night because of the discomforts and unfamiliar noises of tropical life.\(^57\)

Drs Price and Karim correlated a Pacific syndrome with the Fiji syndrome, locally known as Matiruku. This literally means ‘low tide in the morning’ and in research undertaken by Price and Karim, respondents considered that affected people would be most severely affected when the tide was very high or very low.\(^58\)

> [P]ersons resident in this part of the world are liable for a variety of causes to burst out in a transient, paroxysmal, frenzied turmoil of excitement or confusion. With or without a corresponding degree of psychotic disturbance such as thought disorder, hallucinations, delusions and disturbances of the will. One is often surprised by the triviality of the cause, the speed of recovery and the absence of after-effects; the rarity of major mental illness as a cause is also surprising.\(^59\)

The Fiji Syndrome was eventually discounted, but like other culture-bound syndromes it represented a curious mix of cultural and environmental analysis, and faith in medical scientific technologies that often pervaded health discourse in developing countries. Although there were concessions to hybrid transitions

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\(^{55}\) Correspondence on STG 2/3, 4 October 1973 (St Giles).


\(^{57}\) MS 8, 24 December 1965 (St Giles).


\(^{59}\) CP 12/68, AR, 1966, para. 108.
between local and introduced medical systems, the preference clearly fell to utilising modern technology.

In tropical countries mental disorders are of sudden onset and short duration and it would be more economical if all medical officers knew how to treat psychiatric cases in emergencies with the drugs now available.\(^\text{60}\)

This advice did not address the discrepancy between instruction in the new technologies and the realities of how such resources were transferred to local sites, especially outside the capital cities.

\textit{Madness and the Defining Years}

The post-war years in the Pacific accentuated ambiguities within colonialism and development that would erupt through the crises of postcolonialism. This chapter has touched on one aspect of this period: health services and specifically mental health. Mental health services within the Pacific Islands were extremely limited and mostly non-existent. The discourse and technologies of introduced mental health control and care is highly relevant because it concerns not only colonial subjects’ minds and bodies but also colonial definitions of normal and abnormal. Culture and ethnicity in Fiji complicated these definitions.

After World War II, the promise of modernity and progress permeated modern Western medicine. Dr Zeldine declared: ‘Psychiatry should feel honoured at being thus promoted from the “alchemy” of personal contacts between doctor and patient to the status of a necessary tool of public health in its preventative aspects.’ \(^\text{61}\) This vision reached out to colonies like Fiji. The prize was development yet experts such as Macgregor, Burton-Bradley and Zeldine echoed global discourse that the increase in mental illness was a corollary of modernization, urbanization and ‘deculturation’. These processes were constructed narratives that attempted to make sense of the social, economic and political change during the post-war years. Modernisation was never complete, urbanization was haphazard in the Pacific and cultures were not lost but changed as people negotiated identities against the structural realities. The ‘mad’ were too easily dismissed by experts as casualties of the broader social changes of the defining years. Regardless of the truth in that social narrative, mad people

\(^{60}\) South Pacific Commission, 1967 (above), p.viii.

were controlled and treated as individuals who would respond to the new therapies. Despite the wonders of ECT and Largactil, the post-war years in Fiji could never really address the ambiguities between disordered minds being increasingly defined as individual subjects but also being perceived according to collective identities. Moreover, these individuals were expected to function within a society where resources were scarce and mental health was never a priority.

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In the middle of 1958, All Saints' Anglican School in Labasa, the main town on Fiji's second island of Vanua Levu, welcomed a series of visitors, all of whom recorded their impressions in the school's log-book. Bruce McCall, secretary of the Australian [Anglican] Board of Missions (the school's sponsors), described the school as 'very impressive', Mr Gwilliam of the Colonial Office commented on the 'opportunities for lively and creative activity' and the Indian High Commissioner thought 'the discipline excellent and the girls and boys neatly dressed and well behaved ... they looked intelligent'. At the end of the year eighteen boys were accepted from Class 8 into secondary schools and the Headmaster Rev. K. Appasamy could reflect on a highly successful year.

Indeed, the All Saint’s school log-books of the 1950s and 1960s show a thriving school. At a constant enrolment of around 400 students in Classes 1 to 8, All Saints' was one of the largest schools in the district. It had a boarding hostel for around 20 boys, but most of the students were from the town and immediate surrounds—the children of shopkeepers, tradesmen and civil servants. With fees of 30 shillings a term, it was beyond the financial reach of most small agriculturalists. This was acknowledged by the governing board, but they had little alternative if the school was to keep afloat financially. Rev. Appasamy commented in 1956: ‘What we lose in quantity may be balanced in quality’. He noted with approval that in July 1957 75 percent of the boys were wearing shoes, clearly a marker of affluence. While it had a majority of Indo-Fijian students, All Saints' offered the relatively rare experience of a multi-racial education, with around 50-60 Fijian and part-European students, according to the few figures available of the racial composition of the school. Both Hindi and Fijian were taught alongside English. The school was co-educational in the first three years, the girls (or at least those whose parents allowed them to continue, a proportion which grew over the period) then going mostly to St Mary's

\[ 1 \text{ The All Saints' School log-books for 1924-39 and 1952-70 have been filmed by the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, ANU. They are to be found at PMB 430 and are referenced hereafter as ASL. General information in this chapter, unless otherwise indicated, comes from these log-books.} \]

\[ 2 \text{ This was the figure in 1956. Boarding fees were then £10 a term, or £7 plus 60 lb of rice (ASL 27-11-1956).} \]

\[ 3 \text{ ASL 27-11-1956, 28-6-1957.} \]
Anglican School, two miles away.

It was a lively school. The school’s scout troop went on regular hikes and camps: in 1952 they climbed the peak of Bukalevu in March, and went on a ‘tramping and island camp’ in June. In 1958, and in later years, the school troop won the local proficiency challenge. There was a Brownie pack for the young girls. The school regularly displayed produce at the Young Farmers’ Club Shows, sometimes winning prizes. The grounds were planted with shrubs and trees, for beauty and as an agricultural exercise. In 1957 the boys planted 500 sticks of cassava, 50 pineapple plants and a row of banana trees, and constructed a pergola with creepers to camouflage the septic tank, while the following year, under Augustine Sitaram’s guidance, senior boys planted a row of trees for Arbor Day.4 Soccer and athletics were popular activities, All Saints’ soccer team proving particularly successful in the early 1950s when one of their teachers, Mohammed Yasim Khan, also played for the Labasa team. The students were regularly reminded of the Empire and their loyalties to it. Empire day school gatherings were addressed by the District Officer.5 Students attended films such as ‘The funeral of George VI’, ‘Royal destiny’ and ‘A Queen is Crowned’.6 Year groups went on end-of-year picnics to Malau, Batiri or the Three Sisters. Nurses and doctors visited the school to inspect teeth—finding in the process a distressing number of dental caries—and inoculate children against tuberculosis and typhoid, and by the mid-1960s, against the scourge of polio. All in all, this was a thriving and successful school.

And it was a Christian school, following a long tradition of mission involvement in education. When the Methodists, the first Christian missionaries in Fiji, started village education, it was primarily to make their converts literate, able to read the Bible. Alongside this was the aim of ‘civilising’ Fijians and introducing ‘British values’. Both Christianity and literacy were readily adopted by Fijians and the small schools started by the Methodists soon become part of the village scene. Most were taken over by village committees during the 1930s, while the Methodist mission maintained responsibility for teacher training at Davuilevu (near Suva) and some secondary and higher elementary schools, including Lelean Memorial School for boys, Ballantine Memorial School for girls, Lautoka Boys School and Jasper Williams’ School for girls.

In relation to the Indo-Fijians the situation was different. Until 1901 the Methodist Church paid little attention to the girmitiya, the indentured Indians.

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5 ASL 23-5-1952.
6 ASL11-7-1952, 7-5-1953, 1-10-1953.
Although the Indian catechist John Williams arrived in 1892, the Mission Board in Sydney saw evangelising *girmitijas* as low on their list of priorities. What concerned missionaries was the influence of Indians on their Fijian converts who had accepted Christianity at the hands of the Methodists, but who were as yet ‘babes in the faith’, had not reached Christian maturity and might be easily subverted by ‘evil’. The relative success of the mission to the Fijians, especially when the converts themselves became missionaries, to New Britain in 1875 and later to Papua, led to a particularly proprietorial attitude on the part of Methodist missions. European Methodist missionaries referred to ‘their’ Fijian converts, reacting to both successes and failures in a particularly personal manner. This is clear in the 1910 comment of a Methodist visitor to Fiji, Mr. Morley: ‘If we do not Christianize these Indians, they will Paganize our Fijians’.

While those who worked with Indians—particularly Hannah Dudley, John Burton and Richard Piper—saw their conversion as an end in itself, the view that it was merely a means to the end of preserving the faith of Fijian Christians was prevalent amongst Methodists.

Education amongst Indo-Fijians was initially, as amongst Fijians, an aid to conversion and to enable the reading of the scriptures. But few conversions took place and Indians showed little interest in Christianity. Evangelism proved fruitless and frustrating, indeed so frustrating that in 1919 the Methodists handed over their Indian work on Vanua Levu to the Anglicans and concentrated their efforts on Viti Levu. This explains why the non-Catholic Christian schools for Indo-Fijians in Labasa were run by the Anglicans. All Saints’ School was started in 1924 by Miss Irene Cobb, an Australian lay missionary.

However the *girmitijas*, while resisting attempts to convert them to Christianity, showed great interest in the education offered by the missions. This remained true throughout the twentieth century. Although the *girmitijas* early recognised that education was their best means of economic advancement, indeed even survival, the colonial government was not much interested in providing such education. Until the 1918 establishment of (government-run) Natabua Indian School, mission education was the only education available to Indo-Fijians and

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it remained important, especially at the higher grades. In 1944, 63 percent of those Indo-Fijian children attended committee schools (schools set up by a committee, which was responsible for the buildings, made up of parents, community leaders and/or local religious groups; the government supplied the teachers). Seven percent attended government schools and 30 percent attended Christian mission schools.\(^9\) While the absolute number of Indo-Fijian children in school was higher in the 1950s, the proportions in the various types of school remained fairly constant. Some writers have suggested that Indians resisted mission education;\(^{10}\) certainly the Hindu reformist group the Arya Samaj worked to develop schools for Fiji’s Indian population in the 1920s. But while many Indo-Fijians might have preferred it to be run by groups other than Christian missions, they welcomed any high-quality education. As the Anglican priest C.W. Whonsbon-Aston put it: ‘The Indian of today in Fiji...is healthy and eager for education and filled with the growing pains of emancipation’\(^{11}\). Clearly Indians worked hard to establish their committee schools in the 1920s and 1930s, they welcomed the involvement of the Hindu groups Arya Samaj and Sanatan, and advocated the establishment of more Government schools. Indian opinion welcomed the Stephens report (1944), which suggested gradually abolishing the ‘voluntary system’ (whereby the colonial government gave grants-in-aid to mission and committee schools rather than establish their own schools). This would have secularised education and, Stephens envisaged, would have encouraged multi-racial schools.\(^{12}\) But when the government rejected most of Stephens’ recommendations, there was little Indians could do about it. In practice any high quality education was accepted, and most mission education was academically good. The Christian schools such as Marist Brothers High School Suva and other Catholic schools, the Methodist schools in Lautoka and Suva, and the Anglican schools on Vanua Levu were always oversubscribed.

From the point of view of the missions—Methodist, Catholic and Anglican—church schools had a twofold purpose: they were a way to expose students to

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\(^{10}\) E.g., Padmini Gaunder, Education and Race Relations in Fiji 1835-1998 (Lautoka, Fiji: Universal Printing, 1999), p.36.

\(^{11}\) ABM Review (the monthly journal of the Australian Board of Missions, Sydney), Oct. 1953, p.151.

Christianity in the hope that they might convert, and they were in themselves a service to the community. The hope of conversion was always present, but the very low success rate meant that arguments in justification of Christian schools were developed which acknowledged that most students were—and remained—non-Christian. These arguments centred on the ‘moral uplift’ Christian education offered to all who were exposed to it. Few in Fiji expressed the issue as succinctly as the Education Committee of the World Missionary Conference (held in Edinburgh in 1910) when discussing Christian education in India, where the issues were similar. In India and Ceylon, Christian mission schools and colleges were maintained not just for the education of converts, indeed it was a matter of concern that few Christian children were in school. Rather, there was a perceived need to change general attitudes in India—to introduce Christian morals and ethics, if not belief. The report writers put it this way:

So far as the ideals of “the new India” are Christian or semi-Christian; so far as the conceptions of Divine Fatherhood and human brotherhood, and Christian moral ideals, have come to prevail; so far as caste distinctions have weakened and the true position of women recognised; so far as prejudice against Christ and Christianity has been broken down,—it is to the education given in mission schools and colleges that a great part of this good result is attributed.13

This was called the ‘leavening’ or diffusion principle. It was acknowledged that most pupils in Christian schools and colleges were not Christian, but missionaries hoped that increased ‘spiritual influence’ might lead to a greater moral awareness and concern for other people which would lead to a better society.

The same ideas can be seen at All Saints’. In 1939 the Headmaster of All Saints’, Rev. R.L. Crampton, wrote in the log-book:

As a teacher one is aware of the great responsibility involved in preparing young Indians to take their places in the community of this Colony. Firmly believing that our Lord’s teaching is the best foundation in life, we endeavour to hand on this teaching.

Or as Canon W.G. Thomas, in a general article on Fiji for an Australian audience, wrote:

In [the Labasa Anglican schools] many hundreds of young men and women have been helped to become good and useful citizens and the influence and example of dedicated mission teachers have helped to shape their characters.\textsuperscript{14}

But the argument for church schools could be developed beyond the 'leaven principle'. During the 1920s, influenced in part by the principles behind the Covenant of the League of Nations, Christian scholars began to argue that for moral and humanitarian reasons they should prepare 'less-developed peoples' for self-government and the end of colonialism, primarily through education. In other words, assisting the secular education of Pacific Island peoples could be seen as a Christian duty. In Fiji there were two aspects of education where the missions believed they possessed unique insights rooted in Christian ideals—in running multi-racial institutions and in the education of girls. Most mission schools, on principle, at least attempted to attract students from varying ethnic backgrounds, though language difficulties could make this difficult at the primary level. Christian missions had long regarded the respectful treatment and advancement of women—in theory at least—to be a marker of Western Christian culture. Both Methodists and Catholics emphasised the importance of girls' education; the Methodists prided themselves on the success of Dudley House School, Suva and Jasper Williams School, Lautoka in attracting and educating Indian girls.

The Anglican mission felt it important that All Saints' remain a multiracial school, even with a large Indo-Fijian majority, and made considerable efforts to have one Fijian teacher on the staff, teaching Fijian language, even though the turnover in such a position was high. While it was predominantly a boys' school, the acceptance of girls in All Saints' junior classes was an attempt to encourage girls' education, for it was believed that parents would be more likely to let their girls go to school if they could accompany their brothers while small. The Anglican mission took as much care and effort over staffing and equipping St Mary's Girls' School as All Saints'. Indeed missionary teachers were employed at St Mary's for considerably longer.

It was, however, debatable whether schools were effective as evangelistic institutions. The expense of running high-quality schools, with little evangelical 'success', had long worried the Methodists. In 1922 the Mission Board expressed 'alarm' at 'the huge and growing expenditure on education in Fiji, especially in the Indian work' and 'the impossibility of maintaining such expenditure'. It was suggested that more emphasis should be placed on 'the

\textsuperscript{14} ABM Review, Sept. 1954, p.140.
education of the Christian community in Fiji for Christian leadership' rather than the general education of the non-Christian population.\textsuperscript{15} This was a cause taken up with vigour (and indeed partly instigated) by Richard Piper, the enthusiastic and somewhat maverick missionary in Lautoka. Piper was convinced that Indians would respond more favourably to medical than educational initiatives and that the Methodists should abandon all but two or three 'good central schools'. For 'one mission hospital at the present time would do more to commend Christianity than all our schools. It is LOVE IN ACTION'.\textsuperscript{16}

Piper's arguments centred around the need, as he saw it, to make the Indo-Fijian church self-sustaining and self-governing. Influenced by the writing of Ronald Allen, who advocated the rapid development from 'missions' to indigenous independent churches,\textsuperscript{17} Piper believed that Christian schools should be run primarily 'in the interests of CHRISTIAN children', they should be 'centres of evangelistic life', using the vernacular rather than English and including theological training. Instead, the Methodist Mission had been seduced by government grants into providing secular English-medium education. This might be what the government wanted but was not, in Piper's opinion, what was needed by the embryonic Indo-Fijian Christian community.\textsuperscript{18} Piper's proposals were opposed by the rest of the mission staff and, more tellingly, by Indian Christians themselves.\textsuperscript{19} For the moment mission policy was unchanged, but concerns about cost and about the lack of converts remained.

In the 1940s the Methodists, facing the same issues as in the 1920s, reconsidered their education policy. A questionnaire was sent out from the Methodist office in Sydney to all involved in the Indian mission attempting to ascertain why there were so few conversions amongst Indo-Fijians. Reasons suggested by missionaries for the lack of interest in Christianity included the growth of Indian nationalism, the arrogance of European missionaries resulting in perceived discrimination against Indians, the growth of the Arya Samaj, and disunity and bickering amongst Indian Christians. Questions were also asked about the effectiveness in evangelism of the schools. Stanley Andrews suggested

\textsuperscript{16} Richard Piper, 'Indian Reorganisation: Is the Indian Mission on the Right Lines?', paper to Synod, 3 Sept. 1922, MOM 238. Piper was somewhat addicted to the use of capital letters.
\textsuperscript{17} Roland Allen, \textit{Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?} (London: Butterworth Press, 1968(1913)).
\textsuperscript{18} Piper, 'Indian Reorganisation'.
\textsuperscript{19} Wood, \textit{Overseas Missions}, vol. 2, p.49.
that ‘the influence of Christian teaching and example is remarkable ... no-one leaves hostile to Christianity’.

Ivy Lapthorne commented on ‘the educated, happy children in the schools’ and especially noted the number of girls undertaking nursing courses after Christian education. Norman Wright saw schools as having ‘the advantage of systematic Christian teaching and the opportunity to show the poverty and inadequacy of the old thought’. But he also noted how rare conversions were: between 1922 and 1944 1,021 boys had passed through Lautoka Boys School, but only 24 had been baptised as a result of their Christian education. In general the missionaries advocated more direct evangelism—more public preaching, home visiting and systematic Bible study. Ramsay Deoki pointed out that most Indian Christians, certainly ‘the most satisfactory and staunchest supporters of our work’, had converted after direct evangelism rather than through the schools.

In general, direct evangelism was increased by the Methodists in the 1940s and 1950s. No new Indian schools were opened, though existing ones developed their secondary classes, and two of the existing schools were handed over to committee control in the 1950s. Established schools seem to have accepted that while conversions were unlikely, in the words of A. Harold Wood ‘the schools were respected in the community for their integrity of purpose and the quality of their teaching’. A commentator in 1954 noted that although, in the face of government reluctance, the Methodist Church ‘had of necessity’ to provide education to Indo-Fijians and could in doing so impart a useful ethical grounding, ‘the Christianity of the schoolroom is hardly the Christianity which brings a church to life and nourishes it in the Faith’. While the Methodists may have come to this conclusion by the 1950s, the Anglicans, later in the field, were still struggling to assess the effectiveness of church schools; in many ways the story of the 1950s and 1960s at All Saints’ is the story of the Anglicans coming to terms with the limitations of schools as evangelistic institutions.

In part the missions’ dilemma arose from the dual role of Christian schools: while originally founded to teach Bible literacy they were also effectively acting as agents of the state. They accepted grants from the government, especially for teachers’ salaries, in return for a certain level of supervision. The Stephens Report (1944) had expressed grave concerns about this ‘voluntary system’. It

21 Ivy Lapthorne to Burton, Oct. 1941, MOM 238.
22 Norman Wright to Burton, MOM 238.
23 Ramsay Deoki to Burton, Dec 1941, MOM 238.
saw 'the almost complete lack of integration' as the main defect, with 'overlapping ... resulting in excessive and wasteful expenditure' and also 'gaps which it [is] nobody's responsibility to fill'. Stephens was also concerned that to encourage religious bodies to run schools was to perpetuate a racially-divided education system—a fear the Christian schools did their best to dispel. However, the colonial government rejected Stephens’ call to end the voluntary system. This was largely on grounds of cost—mission and committee schools had to find most building and capital costs themselves, costs which would otherwise fall to the government—but also from the ideological position, prevalent in Britain, that the religious voluntary-aided sector was a valid part of educational provision. Indeed, in many respects government and missions had similar aims, which included multiracial education and the education of girls as well as academic excellence. Between 1944 and the early 1950 the level of supervision and integration of all types of schools increased, with teacher training centralised at Nasinu Teachers’ College in 1947 and most teachers becoming civil servants in 1948. The All Saints’ log-books show the regularity of visits from various education inspectors (especially to observe the work of first-year teachers), agricultural advisers and health workers. Since the government was increasingly footing the bill, it believed it should set the rules. Missions and school committees were suppliers of education to the colonial government. These rules did not on the whole limit the freedom of the schools to appoint the staff they wanted or to have religious instruction, but they did limit some initiatives. In 1956 Rev. Appasamy opened an evening class for ‘average, over-age boys’; that is, boys over 16 years who had not qualified for secondary education, and were now in work. But by March he had to close the class, as the Education Office regulations would not support it.

In spite of many aims in common there remained a tension within church schools between their role in preparing children for secular citizenship, as desired by both government and mission, and the exclusively mission role of evangelism. This tension showed itself over two practical issues: Christian staff recruitment and religious holidays. Until 1960, the headteacher of All Saints’ was a missionary, usually a European priest, though from 1953-55 a New Zealand woman missionary, Miss Margaret Young, was in charge and from 1956-59 the head was India-born, US-educated Rev. K. Appasamy. A Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society with degrees from Hartford and Boston, it is not clear why

28 ASL 9-2-1956, 12-3-1956.
Appasamy was in Labasa; the Indian High Commissioner certainly thought he was wasting his time in a provincial primary school. Headteachers aimed to have Christian staff, but scarcity made this difficult. Because they could not find sufficient Christian teachers, the Anglicans surrendered two small schools on Vanua Levu to committee control in 1949.\(^{29}\) In most years only 3 or 4 members of All Saints’ staff were Christian, though others, like R. Chellappa Gounden, were married to Christians.\(^{30}\) As Rev. Wallace commented in 1952: ‘the only way to get a Christian staff is to have our own Christian boys stay on as recognised teachers’ (i.e. as unqualified teachers). He readily took on ‘Jairam who has recently been baptised’ and had just left Class 8.\(^{31}\) There was competition between Christian schools for the few qualified Christian teachers. Jagdish Ram Sahay, a new teacher at All Saints’ in 1961, left after two years to gain wider experience with the Methodists and became headteacher of Dudley High School in the late 1970s.

Since most students and staff were non-Christians, their desire to celebrate their own religious holidays became a contentious issue. A pragmatic man, Wallace closed the school in 1952 for the Holi festival and for Ram Lila. When Muslim teachers and students asked for leave for Eid, they were told that ‘they were free to join in the worship of the festival and should count that their duty instead of coming to school, but that those who did not attend the festival should go to school.’\(^{32}\) Miss Young found herself in conflict with her staff when she tried to enforce only Christian holidays. She disapproved of teachers taking a day off for Holi, and when they requested leave for Diwali she refused, telling them it was not a school holiday. Three members of staff took absence regardless and were reported to the Education Officer Northern, the colonial government official in charge of education in Vanua Levu.\(^{33}\) Appasamy, was more pragmatic; faced with the choice of making Diwali or All Saints’ Day (1 November) a school holiday he chose Diwali because, he wrote, if he chose All Saints’ Day most of the school would be absent on Diwali anyway and more time would be wasted.\(^{34}\)

In 1960 the first local, Mr Jwala Prasad Singh, was appointed as Headmaster. A Christian, he was married to Ethel, daughter of the Methodist minister Ishwari Prasad, and they had both taught at All Saints’ since 1947. In 1953 Jwala Singh was sponsored by the Anglicans to go to Auckland University for a year’s study

\(^{29}\) *ABM Review* May 1949, p.71.
\(^{30}\) *ABM Review*, May 1956, p.76.
\(^{31}\) ASL 2-6-1952.
\(^{32}\) ASL 24-6-1952.
\(^{34}\) ASL 1-10-1956.
at undergraduate level, and on return gained promotion to Grade 1 teacher. In some ways his promotion surprises the reader of the school log-book, as it is clear there were conflicts between Appasamy and Singh. Critical of Singh's lack of classroom preparation and inaccurate register, Appasamy claimed that Singh 'caused plenty of trouble', though his main complaints centred on challenges to his own authority. Highly educated, Appasamy may have expected more deference than Singh was prepared to grant him.

As Headmaster from 1960 to 1962, Jwala Prasad Singh appears to have run a successful school—with an immaculate log-book. The government inspectors praised his administration, and the visiting teacher Moti Lal wrote, 'a very good start has been made by the present Head Master. Discipline has vastly improved.' Secondary Entrance results improved from eight passes in 1960 to thirteen in 1961 and twenty in 1962. In practice places at the less prestigious secondary schools were available to some children who had completed Class 8 but failed to pass all subjects in the Entrance Examination, so the numbers continuing on to secondary schools were somewhat higher. No fewer than four visiting clerics wrote glowing reports of the school in the log-book between September and December 1962. Singh ran his school with moderation and pragmatism; there were few disputes over religious matters, good relations with government authorities epitomised the way the voluntary system was supposed to work.

There were, however, occasional dissenters from this view, as the story of All Saints' in 1962-63 makes clear. In September 1962 the 'senior Indian Christians' raised unspecified complaints to the Bishop against Singh and pressured for his resignation. The cause of the controversy is unclear, given the glowing testimonials and good results. In the log-books there is, for example, no suggestion of financial or sexual misdemeanor. But the resolution removing Singh had as its last clause the request 'that a missionary Headmaster be sought'. It seems that Singh had failed to maintain a sufficiently strong Christian presence in the school and that the emphasis developed was too academic and secular. His successor, Rev. Peter Thirlwell wrote in the log in January 1963: 'After a year of much trouble and unpleasantness, it is the hope of the mission staff that All Saints' will once again become an effective instrument in the evangelization of this island'. The school day was extended to allow for fifteen minutes of divinity for all students daily, though this soon proved

35 ASL 5-2-1959, 26-4-1959, 5-8-1959.
36 ASL 10-3-1960.
37 ASL, footnote to the entry of 6-12-1962, dated 'September'.
38 ASL 1-1-1963. Emphasis in the original.
problematic since there were only three Christian teachers on staff. When students and teachers were absent for Holi they were reprimanded with the comment that ‘this school observes Christian holy days’. May Day was ‘observed in the Christian tradition as a day of our Lady’ with a sermon from the vicar and a hymn singing competition, and Ascension Day was similarly marked. All Saints’ Day became the school holiday of choice, and when Hindu teachers requested leave for Diwali they were refused it. Half the students were absent anyway and the Hindu teachers complained to the Education Officer Northern—who was not inclined to become involved. The new regime did not last. In many ways it was untenable, given the lack of Christian staff and the desires of the majority of parents, as opposed to the ‘senior Indian Christians’ who were understandably concerned by the lack of converts. Thirlwell left in under a year, and his term can be seen as a last evangelical fling before the school settled down to being an academic school, without undue emphasis on religion.

During the 1950s and early 1960s the Anglicans, like the Methodists, had changed their evangelistic policy to place more emphasis on direct approaches to the Indo-Fijian community, rather than relying on the indirect influence of schools. Mr. Jivaratnam, who had been the woodwork and Hindi teacher at All Saints’, left teaching to become a full-time evangelist with the Anglican Mission in 1955, and by 1958 a woman evangelist was being sought from India.39 It was now recognised that concentrating on the children was not enough, adult evangelism, bible study, home worship and village meetings were critical.40 These years saw other Anglican initiatives with the development of the Bailey Clinic in Suva, and Sister Betty Slader’s evangelism and medical work around the Rewa Delta from 1960. These projects, rather than the schools, were seen as the future of Anglican evangelism to the Indo-Fijians. The acceptance at St John’s College, Suva, of Edward Armogam, the first Indo-Fijian Anglican ordination student, was a matter for great rejoicing.41

Back in Labasa, R. Kalyan Chandra, another Indian Christian, was appointed Headmaster at the beginning of 1964. He ran a regime much like Jwala Singh’s. Visitors again commented on the high standards of academic and agricultural work, comments which suggest such standards may have slipped under the previous regime. Nonetheless, Chandra’s administration satisfied the religious authorities. Bishop John Vockler, visiting in late 1964, noted: ‘I have been very impressed with the appearance of the grounds and the School, which I believe

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41 ABM Review, June 1960, p.74.
to be the outward appearance of a good spirit’. After only nine passes in the Secondary Entrance Examination in 1963 under Thirlwell results steadily improved again; sixteen out of seventeen students passed in 1964 and all 28 candidates were successful in 1966. The new South Pacific Commission Tate reading scheme was introduced. All Saints’ students won essay and other national competitions. In short, by the mid-1960s, the Anglican mission seems to have accepted the inevitability of very limited evangelical success, and concentrated on academic excellence and the extension of the school to secondary level in the mid-1970s. Its main task was now seen as the preparation of its charges to be good citizens of the new independent Fiji. Indeed the school, its evangelical role now subordinate, was conforming to the government’s expectations of the voluntary system: providing good education for citizenship.
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